“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother
SUCCESSFUL FUTURE
(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella
Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels
CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS ................................................................. 6

Developments in Russia and Ukraine ..........6
Protests in China ......................................................... 8
International Conferences:
G-20 Summit in Bali and
COP27 Climate Conference ....................... 9
Iran’s Protests and Geopolitical
Fallout in the Neighbourhood .................. 10

The Truth About Modern Polity – 7........... 13

4. The Present Condition of India.........13

B. The Current Scenario ................................. 13

(i) Secularism.......................................................... 13

(ii) The Effect of the Web of the Modern
West-Inspired Institutional Set-up........... 13

(iii) The Problem of Science ......................... 30

a. The Fundamental Problem with Science ..... 31

b. Contribution of Science to
Our Well-Being ................................................. 33
A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.
We do not fight against any form of government.
We do not fight against any social class.
We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.
We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.
We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)
HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Even as the war between Russia and Ukraine progresses without showing any substantive sign of resolution, Russia is set to suffer a new phase of backsliding on several fronts.

First, as per a new set of sanctions approved by the G7 countries capping the price at which Russian oil is sold in the international markets to $60 per barrel, exceeding which would deprive the importing countries of shipping and insurance services, will deal a further blow to the already battered Russian economy. Already Russia is chafing from the loss of the European market, with no new lucrative markets in sight. Back in 2021, Russia exported 155 billion cubic meters of natural gas to the EU. This accounted for as much as 61.7 percent of total Russian gas exports that year and 73.8 percent if one counts only pipeline gas exports, excluding liquified natural gas (LNG) supplies, realized in large part thanks to the vast pipeline network linking Russia with Europe, notably the Nord Stream One pipeline under the Baltic Sea, the Yamal pipeline via Belarus and Poland, the Brotherhood pipeline via Ukraine and the TurkStream pipeline under the Black Sea.

Second, Russia’s weapons stockpile continues to deplete and its relations with other countries continue to wane and enter complicated waters. This has been confirmed by both US as well as Estonian intelligence inputs, and is borne by the fact that Russia has now reached a stage where it is buying weapons from a pariah state like North Korea. Besides procuring from North Korea, Russia has also gravitated closer to Iran and has steadily bought weapons from the country.
has also cultivated ties and signed short-term trading arrangements with Taliban and Pakistan, and hopes to influence the region with China through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). None of these actions have endeared it to India, which considers CPEC to be illegal and illegitimate. These ties are not fruitful for Russia in the long-term. Even Russia’s closeness with Iran comes at a cost. As Russia encourages Iranian economic investment, Iran is using the opportunity as a pretext to expand into Russia’s Muslim-majority provinces of Middle Volga and North Caucasus, where Russia is now worried about Iran’s rising religious and cultural influence and possible radicalization. Even though they are Sunni-majority, Russia is unable to limit Iran’s ‘long game’ on its territory.

Third, instability within Russia is increasing at an alarming pace. Especially in border areas near Ukraine, the increase in crime rates is massive, as guns from the war make their way into the hands of local Russian criminals, returning soldiers and forcefully drafted personnel. The number of such crimes is up nearly 30 percent so far this year compared to the same period in 2021.

Fourth, Ukraine’s success on the battlefield is amplifying. Despite repeated Russian attempts to wage a war of attrition against Ukraine in seeking to bomb its critical infrastructure, Ukraine is facing no major losses. The combination of Western aid and Russian miscalculations and backfires on the battlefield has consistently been to Ukraine’s advantage. Its successes in Kharkiv and Kherson have given it reason to repeatedly rebuff attempts at a truce or a ceasefire as is being subtly pushed by Western countries, such as U.S., France and Germany. Having learnt its lessons from history, especially the failure of Minsk
agreements, Ukraine is determined to see this war to the end. Their main objective is to reverse Russia’s aggressive ambitions so completely that the question of any threat to Ukrainian sovereignty would never arise again.

Protests in China

In an unexpected turn of events following Xi Jinping’s imperial decree according to himself the privilege of ruling for an extended term, China has witnessed massive protests across the country that have directly threatened the topmost leadership of Jinping. The protests were triggered by the fire that killed ten civilians in Urumqi at a building, which was under lockdown due to the country’s zero-Covid policy. Thereafter, the protests spread to more than 50 university campuses across the country, especially in metropolises like Beijing and Shanghai. The protestors have used blank placards to signal their dissent against Jinping.

From protesting the draconian and illogical zero-Covid policy, the protests soon became wide-ranging in their dissent, targeting the regime of Xi Jinping himself, angered by his recent dictatorial consolidation of power and demanding a more open system. These protests represent the biggest challenge to the Chinese communist state in more than three decades. The last such challenge was in the form of Tiananmen Square student protests in 1989, following which China embarked on a path towards a relatively open system.

The future of these protests is yet unclear. They have waned somewhat since their inception, as the Chinese government decided to heed the protestors and open up the Covid-induced restrictions, despite seeing a massive surge in the record number of infections. However, the intensity of the protests show
that the fire of antagonism has been lit in people’s hearts and regardless of the pacifying actions of the government or the apparent subsiding of the protests, the collective angst will persist until Jinping himself steps down.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES: G-20 SUMMIT IN BALI AND COP27 CLIMATE CONFERENCE**

The G-20 summit in Bali was significant for many reasons, the foremost being the baton of leadership being passed onto India. The summit was also crucial for occurring at a time of Russia-Ukraine war. It did not see the active participation of Russia, and issued an important joint statement which, among other imperatives, emphasized that this is not an ‘era of war’, borrowing from India’s PM Modi’s words to Russia’s President Putin. With India now in charge of the G20 for one year, a new dynamism has been infused into the conference. This is the first time that three developing countries viz. Indonesia, India and Brazil, are hosting the conference successively.

The G-20 conference in Indonesia also saw first formal exchanges among leaders of China and U.S., rekindling hopes for some pacification of relations and the resumption of climate cooperation. For India, the assumption of G-20 Presidency raises a host of challenges. Its priorities include:

First, seeking to build consensus among countries in an increasingly polarized world. The impact of continuing Russia-Ukraine war will persist in a deleterious fashion and India will attempt to initiate a rapprochement. India has also sought to emphasize how high energy prices and economic instability from the war has adversely impacted developing countries.
Second, India will likely seek to use its leadership position to advance its aims of counter-terrorism cooperation to achieve some substantive outcomes. The recent conferences chaired by India on this issue were significant.

Third, most importantly, India will seek to use the G-20 platform for advancing stalled climate action. In recent times, India has become among the biggest advocates of clean energy and sustainable transitions. However, no international outcome in this regard has been achieved at the formal climate conferences, which remain deadlocked. India may try to position G-20 as a grouping for advancing a new agenda for climate action and justice.

The stalled nature of climate action was particularly visible during the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) climate negotiations which concluded recently in Egypt. Despite being hailed as an ‘implementation COP’, it could not achieve any tangible outcome, except the formalization of a ‘Loss and Damage Fund’. The latter was hailed as a ‘victory’ by poor and vulnerable countries. But even this is illusory, for, it is not clear how this fund would be mobilized or what purpose it can achieve. More importantly, the COP served to underscore the fact that countries, despite increased climate action, will not be able to meet the targets that could sufficiently forestall the breaching the critical climate threshold of 1.5C, crossing which would result in irreversible climate disasters and irreparable ecosystem changes.

**Iran’s Protests and Geopolitical Fallout in the Neighbourhood**

Iran’s protests are continuing steadily. The regime has come
under increasing pressure from the protestors. Notably, the protests have been successful in mobilizing people from the extreme conservative areas of Iran as well. They further announced large-scale mass protests between December 5th and 7th, in response to which the Iranian state dangled the unverified candy of abolishing the country’s morality police. Even such attempts were rebuffed by the protestors as being ‘fake’ in nature.

The protests are unique, as they are continuing strongly even without any proper organization or leadership, and, are directly demanding nothing short of downfall of the regime. Such mobilization has not been seen in any previous Iranian mass movements, except perhaps the 1979 Revolution.

In the context of these protests, Iran’s relations with Azerbaijan have also deteriorated over a range of issues. Despite sharing a Shia majority demography with Iran, Azerbaijan has been in confrontation with Iran over the treatment of minorities and the repressive policies in the neighbouring country. It has sought to brandish itself as a secular, progressive state, as opposed to Iran’s Islamic theocracy. Azeris also constitute a significant proportion of Iran’s population – nearly one-third – south of Aras river. They are increasingly becoming discontented with Iran.

Further, Azerbaijan is also rapidly gaining influence in Middle-east politics, seeking to create its own independent sphere of influence. It seeks to upend Russia, China as well as Iran. Its recent hosting of head of Tatarstan (part of Russia) prove that. It has also declared that ‘the Turkic world consists not only of independent Turkic states. Its geographic borders are much broader’ – that is, it includes places such as Tatarstan, currently within Russia’s borders, and Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang), currently within the borders of the People’s Republic of China. It is also
arm-twisting Turkey to settle scores with Iran. It has successfully executed rapprochement between its two major allies viz. Turkey and Israel. It also became the first Shia Muslim country to, most recently, open an embassy in Israel, much to the outrage of Iran, which has threatened to attack Azerbaijan over this. Indeed, Azerbaijan’s victory over Armenia in the Second Nagorno Karabakh war as well as its success in the intensive confrontation with Armenia in 2022 was pivotally due to arms supply from Israel – the latter supplies 70% of Azerbaijan’s arms imports, while Azerbaijan supplies nearly 60% of Israel’s oil needs. All these changing conditions have increased the threat for Russia and Iran in Eurasia.
4. The Present Condition of India

B. The Current Scenario

(i) Secularism

(ii) The Effect of the Web of the Modern West-Inspired Institutional Set-up

“Our first condition in the evolution of a human society is such that the forms and activities of communal existence in it are marked by the spontaneous play of the powers and principles of its life. In the early Indian communities which naturally and freely found their own norm and line, the forms of the social and political institutions were cast out of the vital (life) intuition and temperament of the communal being. This spontaneous principle of life continued to be respected during the age of growing intellectual culture. “A profound respect for the creations of the past as the natural expression of the Indian mind and life, the sound manifestation of its Dharma or right law of being, was the strongest element in the mental attitude and this preservative instinct was not disturbed but rather yet more firmly settled and fixed by the great millennium of high intellectual culture.” (CWSA 20: 402)

“As a result we do not find in India the element of intellectually idealistic political progress or revolutionary experiment which has been so marked a feature of ancient and of modern Europe.” (CWSA 20: 402) Thus the advantages of the idealising intellect were absent, but also were absent the
disadvantages of the mechanising rational intellect. Historically “…Indian polity never arrived at that unwholesome substitution of the mechanical for the natural order of the life of the people which has been the disease of European civilisation now culminating in the monstrous artificial organisation of the bureaucratic and industrial State.” (CWSA 20: 402) According to Sri Aurobindo, “The Indian mind has always been profoundly intuitive in habit even when it was the most occupied with the development of the reasoning intelligence, and its political and social thought has therefore been always an attempt to combine the intuitions of life and the intuitions of the spirit with the light of the reason acting as an intermediary and an ordering and regulating factor. It has tried to base itself strongly on the established and persistent actualities of life and to depend for its idealism not on the intellect but on the illuminations, inspirations, higher experiences of the spirit, and it has used the reason as a critical power testing and assuring the steps and aiding but not replacing the life and the spirit – always the true and sound constructors.” (CWSA 20: 402-03)

With the coming of the British in the eighteenth century, India progressively moved – very slowly in the beginning – towards the monstrous artificial organisation of the bureaucratic and industrial State. In the decades after Independence in 1947, it culminated in the creation of a huge and intricate web of economic, political, educational, legal, judicial and administrative machinery run by a corrupt and inefficient bureaucratic machinery of the Central, State and Local governments. The action of all these seems to have replaced or at least thoroughly restricted the action of the traditional web of Dharma which while accommodating the spontaneous principle of life – not subjecting it (the life-being) to the constructed mental ideals as in the West – subjected it to a
lofty idealism received by Indian mind (not constructed by itself) through the illuminations, inspirations and higher experiences of the spirit. This resulted in a greater, freer and loftier play of the powers of life because of the elevating influence of the greater controlling power. The post-independence elected governments – enamoured of the ideal of democratic socialism – attempted to control the life and thinking of the people to push them in this direction. But all such attempts failed because of the gift of a special genius with which Nature has endowed all Indians; the genius for spontaneously organising the necessary machinery for an unbridled pursuit of life’s instincts and intuitions against any external control. The enactment of more and more elaborate law and rules and construction of more novel institutions and increasingly intricate administrative machinery to regulate the life and actions of individuals amounted, in effect, – in spite of the appearances to the contrary – to no more than an attempt to plug the round holes by driving square pegs into them. This left plenty of room on all the four sides of the peg (of external laws and regulations) for the free play of life’s ingenuity which came to be labelled “Corruption” but was, to a certain extent, a manifestation of the survival instinct of the system from some of the most inept, psychologically untenable and often even outrightly foolish governmental laws and provisions. As things stand, even today the attempt of the system to buy its way out of the clutches of the self-serving governmental bureaucratic machinery accounts for a good proportion of what would be legally termed corruption. During the past seven decades, the virile survival instinct of the system – especially the economic system – always got better of the more and more elaborate attempts of the government to regulate (strangulate) it.
The situation on this front at present has become really ominous with the new tools that the continuing advancements in IT are going to put in the hands of the governments around the world. Still, human ingenuity can be expected to outdo — perhaps with a little longer time lag — the governmental efforts to regulate it beyond a point. The governments around the world and, especially, the Modi government in India is so allured by the IT’s potential — especially for controlling corruption by leaving less and less room for the play of human craftiness — that it is trying hard to have the government exercise an increasingly pervasive control over the functioning of individuals and institutions with a view to improve the quality of their functioning and thus help lead the country towards the path of Progress. Even after the bitter experience of past one hundred years, humanity, at large, seems to be in no mood to pay heed to Sri Aurobindo’s warning that no outer machinery can help it to achieve perfection unless it changes its consciousness — what one is within that one shall enjoy outside. No outer machinery can rescue one from the law of one’s being. Yet, with the projected advancements in science and technology the continuing frantic attempts to regulate the life of individuals and collectivities are likely to reach such dangerous levels as to prove suicidal for the human race. Even as it is, the scenario is frightful even in democratic countries like India. If we take the free play of life in ancient India under the web of Dharma as akin to the free flow of Ganga then all the novel institutions and the jungle of laws and regulations that have sprung up during the pursuit of the Western notion of Vikas are like so many huge drainage pipes – Courts, Hospitals, Police, Government Departments, Political Parties, Parliament, Assemblies, Universities, Colleges, and the
epitomes of, what Sri Aurobindo termed, ‘organised selfishness, cruelty and greed,’ – the Industries and what not. All these are continuously delivering filth into the incorruptible – but increasingly scarce and dammed – waters of the Ganga of life. Anyone who comes into contact (and for the duration he is bound to remain into contact) with the above mentioned monuments of modern culture, becomes a lesser person – comes down into a lower poise of his normal consciousness which makes him more self-centered and vulnerable to the action of the lower forces behind greed, lust and ambition. It is only due to the all-pervasive and invincible action of the Divine Grace that, in spite of the relentless non-stop action of the Levers of Downward-Pull, the country is still in one piece and even seems to be getting along smoothly in some areas and in some sense.

In the light of the above discussion, there seems to be, apparently, no way out of the present situation as there appears to be no prospect in sight of any let-up in the continuous action of the centres of degradation with their built-in tendency to help and reinforce each other. All the attempts of the last seven decades to change and improve the condition seem to have been either ineffective or have contributed to further deterioration. Thus, one does not know where to begin and with what? The Drainage Pipes continue to pour filth and corrupt the life of all the individuals while all the “wise people” keep sitting on the fence helplessly watching the show. It is truly a dismal scenario.

Those who pin their hopes on Science and eulogise Western culture and would like to see India grow into a slightly modified copy of it feel that the ever growing advances in science and technology together will somehow or the other – not sure
exactly how – resolve the current difficulties, for nature always works things out and there is no serious cause for alarm and fretting, which, those having a predisposition for such things will always tend do. This is one way of looking at the present scenario. On the other hand, those who put their trust in the religious spirit and traditional values pin their hopes on a return of the good old days by a replacement of the socio-economic system and utilitarian spirit of the present materialistic culture by the traditional Indian culture with its ethical and religious system and a widespread spirit of belief and piety. In their view, without a return to the enduring and well tested values and ways of being, there can be no security in blindly treading into an uncertain future on the heels of science and technology, for it can be clearly seen that the present course has been leading us towards an increasing corruption of the minds and hearts of the people.

Among those who are favourably disposed towards a religious or moral solution, there is a very small number who have a taste for and an actual experience of genuine spirituality. Such a group will tend to see the present crisis as the crisis of consciousness due to an imbalance between the “inner” and the “outer” progress. For, “Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant
unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being; but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger
existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life.” (CWSA 22: 1090-91)

In the case of India, in an attempt to have some perspective on the present “muddle”, one may usefully look upon it as the result of a conflict between the two opposing currents – a conflict that has become bitter and acute after Sri Narendra Modi’s government with a nationalist agenda came to power in 2014. Now, what are the two opposing currents? Sri Bipin Chandra Pal, writing during the early years of the last century on Sri Aurobindo’s genius, most aptly described the two currents running through the country since the middle of the nineteenth century. “One was the current of Hindu Nationalism – of the revived life, culture and ideals of the nation that had lain dormant for centuries and had been discarded as lower and primitive by the first batch of English-educated Hindus, especially in Bengal. The other was the current of Indo-Anglicism – the onrushing life, culture and ideals of the foreign rulers of the land, which expressing themselves through British law and administration on the one side and the new schools and universities on the other, threatened to swamp and drown the original culture and character of the people.” (The Mother India, January 2020, p. 43). The foreign culture had almost completely succeeded in doing during the first seven decades after Independence what it had been struggling (threatening) to do during the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The nationalist cause found some support only after the coming of the Modi government to power in 2014.

However, the Nationalist cause was not altogether without
support during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It received tremendous support from Swami Vivekananda through his bold and inspiring speeches and from Sri Aurobindo through his fiery writings in the Bande Mataram. Describing the prestige and the supreme importance that this paper acquired during the early years of the Independence Movement, Sri B.C. Pal wrote, “The Nationalist school was without a daily English organ. A new paper was started. Aravinda was invited to join its staff. A joint-stock company was shortly floated to run it, and Aravinda became one of the directors. This paper – “Bande Mataram” – at once secured for itself a recognised position in Indian journalism. The hand of the master was in it from the very beginning. Its bold attitude, its vigorous thinking, its clear ideas, its chaste and powerful diction, its scorching sarcasm and refined witticism, were unsurpassed by any journal in the country, either Indian or Anglo-Indian. It at once raised the tone of every Bengali paper, and compelled the admiration of even hostile Anglo-Indian editors. Morning after morning, not only Calcutta but the educated community almost in every part of the country, eagerly awaited its vigorous pronouncements on the stirring questions of the day. It even forced itself upon the notice of the callous and self-centred British press. Long extracts from it commenced to be reproduced week after week even in the exclusive columns of the “Times” in London. It was a force in the country which none dared to ignore, however much they might fear or hate it; and Aravinda was the leading spirit, the central figure, in the new journal. The opportunities that were denied him in the National College he found in the pages of the “Bande Mataram,” and from a tutor of a few hundred youths he thus became the teacher of a whole nation.” (The Mother India, January 2020, p. 50)
The other opposing current which reposed its faith on the Western science and culture was nurtured by the leadership of the Congress and progressively became, especially after the Independence under the garb of “Democratic-Socialism” and “Secularism”, anti-Hindu and anti-National. So enamoured was Pundit Nehru – the first Prime Minister of independent India – of the prospect of being looked upon as an apostle of Peace and Internationalism that, as a result, his consciousness got deflected and often the national interest suffered and did not receive its due. It was never realised that we must first live as a nation – and that too as a strong nation – before we can effectively live in humanity and truly serve the international causes. India’s ages old belief in “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” – the whole earth as one family – never dissuaded the barbaric invaders from bringing an unspeakable misery and degradation through their acts of rape, plunder and butchery on those who held such a noble belief and a feeling of kindness and tolerance for all.

Through it all and all along the British rule in India, sustained efforts were being made in the country – especially among the educated classes – to cultivate in the European fashion, the intellect – which had an array of impressive achievements to show for itself in the power and prosperity of the imperial European nations. After the achievement of Independence in 1947, for the first time we really got a chance to apply it to our pressing national problems. In this course we increasingly started – as was in vogue in Europe – making use of the advice of experts – initially, and for a long time, either foreigners or foreign educated Indians – and of the special committees and Commissions (consisting of such experts) for a settled understanding and approach to our collective issues and
problems. The result was that, during this process, most of our leaders, thinkers and policy makers increasingly suffered a refrigeration of their deeper parts and this left practically no room in their surface mentality for the expression of these parts – the intermediaries of the true sources of all light, power and love. Thus, there came to be left less and less room for the expression of the traditional spiritual genius of India. The trend for this kind of intellectual culmination must have been perceived by Sri Aurobindo even during the early years of the last century when he wrote, “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 Apara 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.” (CWSA 7: 891-92)

“There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following
certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there.” (CWSA 36: 503-04)

A serious danger was certainly there then and is no less serious even now. The situation at present is so critical that even those who represent the Nationalist cause seem to suffer a great deal from the malady of the intellect. This is quite understandable because during the last seven decades, three generations of Indian students have been subjected to an increasingly inefficient and utilitarian Indian version of the English educational system and a huge machinery of the government and society which kept on becoming ever more complex and corrupt. In such a spineless condition of the national psyche, what a democratic government can do, even if it be a nationalist government, is limited by what could be
appreciated or at least understood by the people at large. However, a broad direction may still be given, and is being given by the nationalist government under Sri Modi.

During past two centuries, the evolution of Western life, society and governance has taken place under the shadow of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity brought to the forefront of human consciousness by the French Revolution. These still continue to exercise a broad general control and provide direction to most modern societies. We have seen earlier, how the nations who put an exclusive stress either on liberty or on equality proceeded on their path and to what results in the absence of the deep spiritual ideal of fraternity – the base of the triangle. When men pursue a mental ideal they do not feel the need – unless they are highly developed and in touch with the deeper spiritual truths – to check if the report their mind is giving them is correct. The mental ideals and their pursuit tends to be inflexible and therefore, they are not akin to Dharma – the Indian system designed to help people make right choices – whose pursuit was rendered flexible by the inherent provisions that had its actual practice vary according to Desh (Place), Kal (Time) and Patra (Person). Because of its flexibility and its deeper origin, the system of Dharmas continued, for much longer, to remain open and expressive of the deeper and higher truths of man’s being and nature. The opposite is true in the case of mental ideals.

During the last century, the individual pursuit of mental ideals tended to be much more inflexible than it is at present. With the progression of the utilitarian spirit, modern man seems to have begun to live much more in his life being than in his mind. Desire and narrow self-interest seem to be the most important things for most and wherever and whenever there is
a reference to or a profession of an ideal or ideals, one is most likely to find a hidden vital agenda behind it and in most such cases – except in rare cases where the person is calculatedly insincere – the person (with the agenda) is not even conscious of it. The professed ideal serves as a glittering mask behind which the person may pursue his interest undetected. There are enough people with whom a mental ideal is a necessity and they just cannot do without it. Those who remain stuck in this kind of condition begin, progressively, to lose touch with the realities of life at present and are eventually rewarded with the gift of the irrelevance of their life and thought. Since the beginning of this century and especially during the last five years, things – the conduct of economic policy, politics and relations among nations and societies – have been moving in the most unwholesome direction according to some of the staunch idealists who believe that truth can be shut under the shining canopy of noble human ideals and that they are, to a large extent, in possession of it. Not only such people but most men do not question the thoughts and ideas of their mind. Except for some exceptionally developed or spiritual persons, most have not the least idea that their mind may be giving them an incorrect report and propelling them in a wrong direction and that it ought to be subjected to the scrutiny and control of the deeper and higher parts as was done in India by subjecting the mind and life to the rule of Dharma. This may be one of the reasons behind the present disheartening of the army of the ideal thinkers in India and around the world. When it comes to the life being, most people, at least have the idea that one must exercise control over one’s desires and impulsive movements of life. But this is not the situation in the case of the mind as succinctly pointed out by Sri Aurobindo in the
following quotation, “The point is that people take no trouble to see whether their intellect is giving them right thoughts, right conclusions, right views on things and persons, right indications about their conduct or course of action. They have their idea and accept it as truth or follow it simply because it is their idea. Even when they recognise that they have made mistakes of the mind, they do not consider it of any importance nor do they try to be more careful mentally than before. In the vital field people know that they must not follow their desires or impulses without check or control, they know that they ought to have a conscience or a moral sense which discriminates what they can or should do and what they cannot or should not do; in the field of intellect no such care is taken. Men are supposed to follow their intellect, to have and assert their own ideas right or wrong without any control; the intellect, it is said, is man’s highest instrument and he must think and act according to its ideas. But this is not true; the intellect needs an inner light to guide, check and control it quite as much as the vital. There is something above the intellect which one has to discover and the intellect should be only an intermediary for the action of that source of true Knowledge.” (CWSA 32: 617-18)

Now, coming back to the present scenario in India, the leftist – liberal intellectual class – ironically the greatest advocates and protectors of the most illiberal and intolerant faction of a religious sect – seems to be hell-bent – largely, perhaps, to protect their own political interests – against the most unholy government of Sri Narendra Modi with the claims of an unquestionable and holy truth behind their idea of “secularism” and their perception of the true national well-being which this government has dared to question and even
desecrate. They cannot even suspect that there could be something wrong with their idea of secularism which – the way it had been practiced during the past seven decades – has been responsible for an increasing wedge between the two communities and unless we change course, as the present government is trying to do, may prove disastrous for Hindu-Muslim relations in this country as the policy of the INC during the pre-independence days had proved to be. On the present problem of the Hindu-Muslim relations and the key issues behind this whole thing, the following words of Sri Aurobindo, spoken almost 8-9 decades ago, may prove illuminating for all reasonable people who are open to the idea of the need to look afresh at the whole-issue:

**Talk of 28-03-1923**

“Sri Aurobindo: I am sorry they are making a fetish of this Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; someday the Hindu may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given way. The best solution would be to allow the Hindus to organise themselves and the Hindu-Muslim unity would take care of itself, it would automatically solve the problem. Otherwise, we are lulled into a false sense of satisfaction that we have solved a difficult problem, when in fact we have only shelved it.” (Purani, Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, 2007: 301)

**Talk of 23-07-1923**

“Sri Aurobindo: You can live amicably with a religion whose principle is toleration. But how is it possible to live peacefully with a religion whose principle is “I will not tolerate you”? How are you going to have unity with these people? Certainly,
Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be arrived at on the basis that the Muslims will go on converting Hindus while the Hindus shall not convert any Mahomedan.

Disciple: There was only recently the boycott of a drama in Andhra because some Hindu in the show was represented as marrying a Muslim lady!

Sri Aurobindo: You can’t build unity on such a basis. Perhaps, the only way of making the Mahomedans harmless is to make them lose their fanatic faith in their religion.” (Purani, Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, 2007: 303)

**Talk of 30-12-1939**

“Disciple: Some people object to Vande Mataram as a national song. And some Congressmen support the removal of some parts of the song.

Sri Aurobindo: In that case the Hindus should give up their culture.

Disciple: The objection is that it speaks of the Hindu goddess Durga and that is offensive to the Muslims.

Sri Aurobindo: But it is not a religious song! It is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why shouldn’t the Muslims accept it? It is an image used in poetry. If in the conception of Indian nationality the Hindu viewpoint cannot find a place then the Hindus may as well be asked to give up their culture; it comes to this that we all become Mohammedans. They don’t say it now but they will say it later on, because they have begun to object to the worship of Hindu Gods in national institutions. Why shouldn’t the Hindu worship his Gods? Otherwise, the Hindus must either become Mohammedans or adopt European culture, or become atheists.
The Hindus don’t object to their “Allah ho Akbar”. (Purani, Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, 2007: 717-19)

“All fanaticism is false, because it is a contradiction of the very nature of God and of Truth. Truth cannot be shut up in a single book, Bible or Veda or Koran, or in a single religion. The Divine Being is eternal and universal and infinite and cannot be the sole property of the Mussulmans or of the Semitic religions only, – those that happened to be in a line from the Bible and to have Jewish or Arabian prophets for their founders. Hindus and Confucians and Taoists and all others have as much right to enter into relation with God and find the Truth in their own way. All religions have some truth in them, but none has the whole truth; all are created in time and finally decline and perish. Mahomed himself never pretended that the Koran was the last message of God and there would be no other. God and Truth outlast these religions and manifest themselves anew in whatever way or form the Divine Wisdom chooses. You cannot shut up God in the limitations of your own narrow brain or dictate to the Divine Power and Consciousness how or where or through whom it shall manifest; you cannot put up your puny barriers against the divine Omnipotence. These again are simple truths which are now being recognised all over the world; only the childish in mind or those who vegetate in some formula of the past deny them.” (CWSA 32: 109)

(iii) The Problem of Science

The past two centuries which have been called the centuries of science have been marked by the ushering in of the age of progress and development under the impetus of the impressive march of the ever newer and more and more potent inventions
and discoveries of science. With the beginning of this century the pace of the new discoveries and advances in all the fields of human endeavour have reached a dizzying speed – thanks to the latest advances and breakthroughs in the field of information technology. This visibly impressive march of the advances in science and technology and their deep penetration into every walk of life has hypnotized the common man so much that an overwhelming majority of them have – in spite of being not unaware of its very uncomforting and disastrous physical and psychological side effects – come to look upon it as the one effective way for the solution of all our problems. Before delving deeper into this issue it is well to have a glimpse and an overview of what science fundamentally can (or cannot) do for us. For having such an overview, one can do nothing better than look deeply into the whole issue in the light of the following words of Sri Aurobindo, “The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the one thing which it is most needful for us to acquire. That is why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race. Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being, in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature; our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence.” (CWSA 22: 757-58)
a. The Fundamental Problem with Science

Our Rishis had realized that the greater is the level of one’s consciousness, the closer one is to one’s true Self and the greater is the fulfilment enjoyed by one. The higher is the level of consciousness, the more powerful is its control over the outer instruments. When the consciousness is imprisoned into the surface physical being, one is forced to use the outer instrumentation and one’s consciousness gets further enslaved to it.

Science is concerned with the systematic study of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment based on the power of human reason. It brings about such a concentration on our surface self that our self-knowledge becomes meagre and painfully insufficient. It is of our surface and apparent phenomenal self and nature only and not of our true self and the true meaning of our existence. In such a movement, self-knowledge and self-mastery await in the individual, and as a result, wisdom and right-will is also lacking in his use of world-power and world-knowledge. The more the race is enamoured and mesmerized by the discoveries and new inventions of Science, the more lacking it will be in the right use of the potencies of science. The grave moral and environmental crisis facing us may be looked upon as one of the results of such a movement in the consciousness of man. Man seems to be becoming, increasingly, a slave of the outer instrumentation of physical nature and a plaything in the hands of the powers of ignorance that have come to dominate him because of his increasing isolation from his true Self and its uplifting consciousness which alone can lead him to true Knowledge, Power and Ananda.
Today we are seeking “Progress” through a gross and increasingly intricate machinery of science that inevitably enslaves us by tying us to our surface self by ministering to our desires and passions. Under our present psychological condition, science has become nothing but a bundle of some vicious and ambitious circles which, since they rely solely on outer instrumentation, are progressively leading to the refrigeration of our inner faculties. Fundamentally, any reliance on outer instrumentation tends to draw one away from one’s soul. And the more we move away from our soul, the more we lose touch with the Ananda or the true Delight of existence which alone sustains our lives. Only a very diluted and perverted form of this delight can be found in the brute physical and vital satisfactions offered by our surface physical self. Such satisfactions imply pulling things towards oneself resulting into a dilution of one’s relationships, affinities and good-will and the spirit of service to others which have been given supreme importance in our culture to correct our self-centeredness which leads to an immense suffering in the individual and collective social existence.

b. Contribution of Science to Our Well-Being

We should be under no illusion that for real well-being and fulfilment there can be an alternative to a change (increase) in the consciousness. The conditions in which we live are the result of the state of our consciousness. To seek to improve these without a change in the consciousness is a vain chimera. When the technology, the infrastructure and equipment and various amenities for physical life get better, we do not necessarily get better off because science and technology are a double-edged sword whose better or worse result or use depends on the consciousness of the person who is using
them. For instance, at present things have reached such
disgustingly low levels that one hears of big drug companies
producing and having ready large stock of necessary medicine
for containing an epidemic before they secretly disperse the
microbes that would spread it. It is the same in other fields as
well. It is quite commonplace to hear that big software
companies not only create anti-virus programs for computers,
but also create new viruses so that computers get infected and
people are forced to buy upgraded and more expensive anti-

virus programs. With technological advances, more and more
sophisticated and expensive equipment is available to doctors,
who in an effort to cover costs, or worse, to generate more
income, create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among
their patients in order to make them undergo unnecessary and
expensive tests and treatments and surgeries.

How can one take such things as contributing to one’s well-
being? In fact, such things are clearly leading to a loss of real
income and well-being as people have to spend more and
more time, energy and material resources on alleviating artificial
human-made ills like crime, pollution and progressive
adulteration in food leading to poor health and costly treatment
of illnesses resulting from this. As things stand at present, the
loss of real well-being resulting from these ills requires greater
and greater spending of money to partially mitigate these. All
such spending (done to mitigate the evil effects of problems
generated largely as a by-product of the process of
development) is counted as addition to the GDP which,
therefore, must invariably grow as spending on such things
grows. In such a scenario a good proportion of the growing
GDP is contributed by the growing human deprivation.” (The
Truth About Modern Polity, pp. 143-165)
The Plain Way for India: The Path of Religion

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