

Governance by Inner Consciousness

**[Text of Inaugural address delivered by Justice R.C. Lahoti (Fr. CJI)
at National Seminar on Governance by Inner Consciousness
co-organized by ICA & SAFIM on July 13, 2013]**

It gives me immense pleasure to find myself associated with the inauguration of this national seminar on Governance by Inner Consciousness co-organized by ICA, the Institute of Cost Accountants of India and SAFIM, Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Integral Management.

Ever since the dawn of human civilization, the Mind of Men has been dreaming of a perfect society. In its search the humanity has reached the day where we are living in an industrial and commercial globalism led by multinational corporations and propelled by an increasingly efficient and sophisticated 'management' and technology, especially 'information technology'. Experience tells us that these are means of temporary success not an assurance of perfect society.

What is the cause of this failure? According to Shri Aurobindo '... to hope for a true change in human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle'ⁱ. The futuristic vision of Shri Aurobindo has been the creation of a New Social Order. And, there enters the role of consciousness or inner conscience.

Let us be clear on the inter-relationship of conscience and consciousness. Conscience is an *inner sense* which tells us what is right and what is wrong. Consciousness is *awareness* of such sense. It is that awareness which enables exercise of discrimination by senses. Hence, the sane advice of the sages is: Be a master of your mind and a slave to your conscience.

SAFIM, a discreet unit of Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry is founded on the commitment to disseminating a new paradigm of management which proposes to transform values by applying in practice the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Sri Aurobindo has said – "we do not want to exclude any of the world's activities. Politics, trade, social organization, poetry, art, literature – all will remain; but all will be given a new life, a new form. If we are spread out everywhere as individuals, something no doubt will be done; if we are spread out everywhere in the form of a Sangh (i.e. a collective body, a divine fellowship), a hundred times more will be accomplished."ⁱⁱ SAFIM is, therefore, stretching its arms to collaborate wherever it can with any group of

individuals, preferably, the professionals, who have potential to advent a new world – a new order, and a willingness to dedicate themselves to accomplishing this solemn objective. SAFIM has drawn upon the Western Management skills and technology and set down to restructure them with the touch of deeper spiritual philosophy of Sri Aurobindo acting as a catalyst. The core of this philosophy is: unless an individual learns to manage himself he cannot manage others. To do so the managers (professionals included) have to develop their inner potential and express themselves fully.

This morning, while viewing TV, I happened to listen to a discourse by a learned person. He was addressing the youth and asking them to digest two tips: (i) Awake, and (ii) Create! Rise and be creative!! And, what is that which leads us from Awakening to Creativity? What is that which connects the two? It is consciousness, conscience. A poet says –

*Mire dosto wo hai mire jameer ki hukumat¹
Jo jodti hai meri jindgi² ko srijan³ se*

(1. Governance by conscience; 2. Awakening; 3. Creativity)

‘The switch over from the present materialistic society to a spiritualised society i.e. a new social order will not be ushered in either by a Royal Charter or by an Administrative Arbitor or by a Parliamentary Proclamation or even by sermons, preaching or slogans. The new social order of the Aurobindonian thought will be ushered in only in MEN – the individual. A society that lives not by its man but by its institutions, is not a collective soul, but a machine, its life becomes a mechanical product and ceases to be living growth. Therefore, the coming of a New Social Order must be preceded by appearance of increasing number of individuals who are no more satisfied with normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of men but perceive that a greater evolution is the goal of humanity.’ⁱⁱⁱ

For the New Social Order to descend, where the society would be full of peace, prosperity and pleasure, we need people with conscience. Conscience is that faculty of intellect, an intuition which enables distinguishing right from wrong. An inner conscience is the ‘voice within’. It is a debatable issue whether such voice is ruled by reason or the voice over over-rules the reason. But one thing is certain that conscience is that voice which originates from within and warns us that somebody may be looking though you are all by yourself. How beautifully the great poet Krishna Behari ‘Noor’ has put it in a couplet, which says –

*Main andhere main rahoon, ya ki ujale main rahoon,
Aisa lagta hai ki koi dekh raha hai yaro!*^{iv}

I am delighted to see SAFIM and ICA having joined hands to discuss certain aspects of Governance and creating right environment by realising the role of inner conscience as the tool of transformation. The importance of cost accounting as being central to the formation of Governmental and Corporate policies cannot be under estimated. Effective cost accounting assures efficiency and optimum utilization of scarce resources. Ever since cost accounting earned recognition it has been continuously contributing to the growth of the industrial and economic climate of the country. No wonder the prime object of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountancy is to function as a powerful tool of management control in all the spheres of economic activities. It seeks to promote and develop the adoption of scientific methods in cost and management accountancy. Often the Cost Accountant works in solitude dictated by none except by his own inner conscience, while formulating opinions and dictating his notes. Looking at the significance of the profession and far reaching implications which it has on shaping the economic growth it would be apposite to say that the conscience of a Cost and Management Accountant should be a sacred sanctuary where the supreme divine alone may be seated as a decision maker.

During the course of the day, the delegates will be deliberating over the Conscious Governance - need of the hour, role of values in Governance and creating the right environment. I would like to close by quoting the assurance of Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri* – “*even if the struggling world is left outside, one man’s perfection still can save the world.*” I hope that at the end of the day you find an answer to what the Mother had asked in one of her New Year Messages – *The world is preparing for a big change. Will you help?*

i) Dr. G.P. Gupta, *Designing a New Social Order – an Insight into Aurobindonian thought*, published by Shri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, pg-11.

ii) Towards Tomorrow – an introductory booklet, Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry, p.14

iii) Dr. G.P. Gupta, *Supra*, pg-11.

iv) If you have liked the couplet then yet another two lines for a change:

*Jiska koi bhi nahin, uska khuda hai yaro,
Main nahin kahta, kitabon main likha hai yaro!*