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TOWARDS *SIECLE DE LUMIERE* FOR ETHICALLY ENLIGHTENED MANAGEMENT

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Prelude

"Light..! More Light..!"

These were the last words of the great German philosopher and poet Goethe in his death bed.

The Age of Enlightenment in the 17th – 18th century Europe came with the promise of Reason, Freedom and Happiness. The power of the Mind as in rational view of the world was the instrument in understanding Reality as it unfolds to us. But where is its influence in the management scenario today?

Sumantra Ghoshal had rendered critical observations on the current mainstream management education in terms of 'Bad Management Theories'. Warren Bennis was worried about why and How Business Schools lost the Way? On and positive note, Howard Gardner at Harvard was illustrating on eight facets of Human Intelligence a Danah Zohar was working on Spiritual Intelligence while Laszlo Zsolnai among others at the European SPES forum was creating spaces for responsibility and ethics in Business education.

The present paper is an effort to address these issues from a perspective that is Indian with an appeal that is Eastern but seeking its relevance that is global in its reach and impact.

Those who can see deepest into the past can also see the farthest into the future. Let us begin this journey in small steps. All the the world over the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate philosopher-poet from India is being celebrated. In his award winning creation, *Gitanjali* (The Garland of Songs) the great master raised the question – "Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?"

"It was I," said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus, night and day, I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip."

The predicament of Management education worldwide can be succinctly described in these golden words of wisdom as above. The Iron Cage of Max Weber and the Scientific Management of F W Taylor have led us to a level of quantitative perfection to a fault without a halt. But the competence to deal with uncertainty, unpredictability and paradoxes is far from our access as leaders of tomorrow. Strangely enough, almost five centuries back, Leonardo da Vinci, upheld the principle of '*sfumato*'- the ability to handle complexity and paradoxes as a cardinal principle of learning and creativity. But the leaders of business are still comfortable in their zone of their obsession with numbers and calculations! Linear thinking and binary logic still dominate their minds creating formidable roadblock to expansion and enlightenment!

The current scenario in business worldwide can be captured in ***three T's***. These are the times of ***Turbulence*** as evident from the economic meltdown and its multifarious repercussions including the work – life imbalance in the personal quarter. When the waves of the ocean of life go turbulent as this, time is ripe to be open and willing for a phase of ***Transition***. It will entail questioning of our existing models of man, our models of development, our notions of progress beyond homo-oeconomicus man and techno-economic development. Classical wisdom of India as enshrined in the Upanishads extolled a vision of man far beyond the technical and economic identities. The sages of India had envisioned the human being as '*amritasya putrah*' – children of immortality, beyond the clutches of sorrows and even death. Internalization of this wisdom may lead to the final ***Transformation*** of thoughts and ideas, of beliefs and values, models and structures that we need to cope with the challenges of the current reality. As Socrates

said – “An unexamined life is not worth living.” But any engagement in re-examination starts with questions that are fundamental and often uneasy. Are we ready to welcome such experiences of discomfort for our own good in future?

The archetypal model of leadership thus stands subject to scrutiny. The charismatic, autocratic leader is rapidly losing its relevance today. The Child-like leader is here to emerge. Rabindranath Tagore in his poetic masterpiece ‘The Awakening of the Waterfall’ was overflowing with the exuberance and abundance of a child:

“I shall run from one hill top to another/

Roll in dust from one ground to the other/

Laughing aloud, singing aflow/

Clapping with every rhythm of life.” (Translation mine)

No wonder Tagore could not survive his short stints in schools of formal education and pioneered a movement in world education by creating a university in the lap of nature far away from the ‘madding crowd’. The institution was christened ‘*Viswa Bharati*’ (Global India).

Swami Vivekananda, another great Indian leader and a contemporary of Tagore, was the founder of the first Indian international organization, Ramakrishna Mission, dedicated to the service of humanity with a spiritual foundation. ’For the salvation of the self and the welfare of the world’ – was his chosen motto in this mission to resolve the age-old conflict of prioritizing between individual emancipation and social service. This was the original spirit of ancient India – not an either-or choice but a complimentary synthesis of simultaneous pursuit of material flourish and spiritual development.

The new and emerging paradigm in management must look into the past both in the east and the west to come to solutions of problems that are global and all pervasive – fro the highest echelons of power in organizations to the micro level of the individual and the family. Such a paradigm shift would require not only the courage to challenge the existing structures, systems and beliefs but a penchant to experiment with new and non-conventional sources and alternative methods of learning.

The present paper is more of an odyssey amidst the turbulent waves of the ocean of management thinking and practice. The agony and the ecstasy of a two decade long of journey with human values, business ethics and corporate social responsibility will be touched upon briefly in the right context. Alternative learning sources and methods like lessons from Nature, Silence, Meditation, Conversations and Dialogues, Storytelling, Arts and Literature, Poetry and Music etc will be highlighted as pathways to new frontiers of knowledge and meaningful action. All this has been born out of zeal to venture into unknown and uncovered vistas of knowledge beyond the corridors of structured and mainstream management education that is important but sadly not enough to deal with life.

Nietzsche, the great German philosopher had remarked: “If one is to live, one is to live dangerously.”

I chose to live a little off track, and somewhat dangerously to make life worth living for the students in the MBA curriculum. Otherwise inputs on Values, Ethics and Responsibility are disseminated in a manner that is so dull and dreary to the 21st century minds.

My only humble pledge was to make this transmission sound interesting and relevant to the leaders of tomorrow in business or otherwise.

Ethical enlightenment is not a flash of lightning or a peal of thunder. It is looking at the same reality but with radically changed perceptions. As the old saying goes:

“Before enlightenment, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers/

During enlightenment, mountains are no longer mountains, rivers are no more rivers/

After enlightenment, mountains are once again mountains, rivers are again rivers.”

The golden words on ethical enlightenment have been voiced by those two great Indians – Vivekananda and Tagore. Vivekananda had asserted that we never progress from falsehood to truth but from lower truth to higher truth.

Tagore expressed it elegantly in his immortal song:

"The scales of darkness will fall off the eyes/

Wherever you look, you can only see the Light!" (Translation mine)

May this herald a New Age of Enlightenment in this new millennium!

Objectives of Future Management Education

The future initiative will aim at achieving***holistic effectiveness*** in our personal and professional spheres by way of striking a ***dynamic balance*** between such apparent polarities as:

Skills and values

Intellect and Emotion

Knowledge and Wisdom

Work and Life

Quantity and Quality

Growth and Sustainability

Business goals and Societal Well Being

Profits and Planet

Areas of Concern and Activity

The key areas of concern for tomorrow and activities will revolve around the following:

a) Human Values in Business and Management for flowering of inner world of leaders

b) Business Ethics that deals with principles and practices at a functional level in management that business leaders must need to institutionalize on a top priority basis

c) Corporate Social Responsibility that expands the concerns of corporate leadership beyond the boundary of the organization to include the proximate as well as the distant stakeholders as an integral part of business strategy and policy

d) Sustainability of organizations, communities and the planet at large for creating a global vision and inspired action by business leaders

e) Integration of inputs from frontiers of knowledge and action (like Arts, Literature, Music, Poetry, Performing Arts, Films etc.) beyond the corridors of traditional management thinking for breakthrough ideas and innovative practices on Creativity, Leadership, Teamwork, Motivation, Stress Management etc.

f) Responsible Corporate Governance that will aim at disseminating inputs to organizations and implementation of best practices

g) Mainstreaming U N Global Compact Principles in the field of learning and education, management or otherwise

h) Evolution of an Alternative, Sustainable and Holistic Indian model of management with perspectives, principles and processes that are in consonance with Indian cultural roots but having significant global relevance and universal appeal

e) Integration of Spirituality and Management at a non-denominational level

Uniqueness of the New Pedagogy

The uniqueness of the new pedagogy will be in its conceptual diversity, multi disciplinary character, pedagogical innovations and state of the art delivery mechanisms that expose the participants to a whole

repertoire of alternative sources and methods of learning (Eastern and Western, ancient and modern) beyond the conventional modes of classroom lectures and case studies and discussions. These include:

Learning from Nature

Immersion in Silence and Contemplative as well as Meditative practices

Sharpening the Art of Seeing and Listening as a means to enliven experience and role effectiveness

Lessons from Illuminating Conversations

Integrating inputs from Arts, Literature, Music, Theatre and films for Leadership Excellence

Insights from Wisdom Literature of Oriental as well as western traditions, cultures and philosophy

Storytelling and Experience Sharing

Guidelines from Lives and Works of Thought as well as Action Leaders from different fields, both Eastern and Western

Participation in Dialogues rather than debates for Collaborative Learning

Beyond the cliché of changing the mindset, the Centre, with its thrust on alternative learning barriers to holistic perception and widened perspectives methods will actually help the participants to ***expand the mind space*** and thereby overcome the barriers to holistic perception and widened perspectives created by our dominant limitations of linear thinking and trap of binary and judgmental functioning of our mental faculties

The Learning Journey

The nee of the hour is to chart out a multi tier learning path for management students and corporate executives to graduate from **information** through **knowledge** to **wisdom**asoutlined below**.**

*Creating a platform of shared understanding through awareness creation and sensitization for ethical revitalization (**Business Ethics**)

*Opening up the leadership mind to broader issues beyond the limits of the self or the organization through creative stakeholder engagement and dialogues involving diverse constituencies (**Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development**)

* Igniting the fire or spirit within the deeper self prior to harnessing and unleashing our unlimited potential (**Human Values in Management, Indian Insights into Management, Spirituality and Management**)

* Raising our consciousness to an adventurous flight to scale the height of leadership wisdom for effective and elegant management of turbulence, uncertainty and crisis in future (**Enlightened Citizenship and Responsible Corporate Governance)**

Scenario Overview

In the wake of globalization when market economy has become the ruling ideology and fierce competition determines the nature and contours of relationships between people, organizations and even societies, the question naturally arises – what is the relevance of human values in this present scenario? When progress or growth is determined largely by technical and economic indicators, where is the space for ethics in our discourses on management? Where is the time to stand and stare, look back and think again at a time when, to use a Shakespearean phrase, 'times are out of joint'?

While it is indeed true that the world of business and industry is surging ahead towards the single most objective of attaining economic and material progress via the profiteering route, the search for excellence in the respective fields of human endeavour nonetheless continues. This drive for excellence implies that the human being is also gearing up to enhances one's own effectiveness. The vital question today is, what is the notion of this effectiveness that we are trying to achieve? Is effectiveness limited only to the notion of efficiency that is understood in technical and quantitative terms? Is there a need to look at effectiveness from a deeper, wider and a more holistic perspective which includes, and accords importance to the subtler and qualitative aspects of human development?

On the other hand, as the entire 'global village' is passing through its euphoric experience of the phenomenon of globalization, some of the biggest scams and scandals in the western industrial world have come to public knowledge. Yesterday's corporate behemoths like Enron, Worldcom and Arthur Andersen are facing ignominy and disrepute of alarming proportions. Surely enough, the masterminds of manipulation, compelled to achieve financial success at any cost, were not lacking in competence from technical and economic considerations.

However, absence of competence from humanistic considerations starkly revealed their failure to achieve effectiveness in a holistic sense. Irreparable loss of corporate reputation', that vital yet intangible asset, was the inevitable outcome.

If we now turn our attention to the individual, one finds a dominant trend of celebrating material progress at the dire expense of finer aspects of life and work. While there is no intrinsic problem with attaining material goals per se, but skewed emphasis on success and career oversets the balance of life. Standard of living becomes equated with standard of consumption as the pursuit of improving the quality of life loses its significance. Psychological energy hemorrhage and unmanageable stress in life and work become inevitable. What is more alarming is that these also produce a tremendous negative impact on the family, especially the children.

Thus, it is for the wellbeing of the individual and the benefit of the organization that there is an urgent need to arrive at a notion of all-encompassing, holistic effectiveness. The current literature on leadership places a lot of emphasis on the ability to have a 'big picture awareness' on the part of the leader. But prior to this, every individual must be equipped with the requisite competence to develop a holistic perception of life and work. Then only will it be possible to redefine effectiveness in an integral manner beyond the tunnel vision of efficiency with its technical and quantitative connotations. Such a notion of effectiveness accords due importance to skills development at a functional and operational level but places it on a strong foundation of human values. While the field of application of skills is the outer world of human action and endeavour, the space for culturing of human values is the inner world of the individual, through the process of 'Becoming'.

Where do we then begin our search for human values? They say, 'Those who can see deepest into the past, can also see farthest into the future.' So, let us go back 2500 years to Athens in Greece. In the crowded street of Athens, one can distinctly identify an old man, with long hair and unkempt beard and in tattered clothes, moving around with a lantern in broad daylight. When any passer-by would come his way, he would hold the lantern up close to the face of the stranger – looking for something! Then he would move on to the next person and do the same. A young man came near him and asked, "Signor! What is it that you are looking for, that you cannot see in broad daylight?" The old man stopped, dangled the lantern in front of the face of this youth and said, "Among these crowds of people, I am trying to find a human being". He then moved on to the next passer-by.

The above episode carries a symbolic message to us. As the process of 'becoming a human being' is going on within us, it is not quite visible to the outsider even in broad daylight. One would need a different kind of searchlight, like the lantern in the story, to have a glimpse of this inner world. Thus the search for effectiveness, managerial or otherwise, by culturing of human values is a journey within the individual, within the Self. This is the qualitative aspect of human development that is subtle, invisible, intangible and not amenable to measurements. No wonder the great management thinker Peter Drucker titled one of his recent articles in Harvard Business Review – ' Manage The Self '. Peter Senge, another leading management expert, places great emphasis on cultivating the art of 'Personal Mastery' in his famous book 'The Fifth Discipline'. Self-management thus holds the key to effective management of organizations in the outside world.

Whither Values?

What do we mean or understand by human values? Without trying to offer one single definition, we think it is more important to come to a shared understanding of human values. Often discussions on human values tend to get diverted to arguments stemming from differences in opinions on the questions of universality and relativity of values. Hence we would like to examine the whole issue of values from a psychological perspective in terms of the experience of the individual. There exists a nearly common agreement across cultures, religions and systems of thought on the perception of values like kindness,

charity, compassion, humility and the like, which are registered as 'positive vibrations' within the psychological space of the individual. Similarly the experience of greed, jealousy, suspiciousness, hatred and the like are registered as 'negative vibrations' within our psychological space. Instead of branding them as 'good' or 'bad', let us try to assess the impact of both these kinds of vibrations on human relationships in life and work.

In the phenomenal world of our existence, every individual needs to interact with other human beings. Simply speaking, the 'I' is constantly engaged in relating to the 'Others'. When the positive vibrations are at play within us, the 'I' naturally reaches out to the others and including the others within its domain of concern. Whereas under the spell of such psychological vibrations like greed, jealousy or hatred, the 'I' finds itself getting separated and isolated from the others. It is in this sense that the positive vibrations can be called desirable human values, whereas the negative vibrations are undesirable because these block the expansion of the 'I' into the others. It is this separateness from the others from where stem most of our problems relating to unethicality in our thoughts, decisions and actions. The pathway to effectiveness through human values thus requires conscious cultivation of our positive vibrations and vigilant awareness of our negative vibrations.

How then should one begin this journey? At the outset it is important to realize that the developmental process for culturing of human values begins with the individual and not the organization and the society, nor the systems and the structures. Each individual has within oneself one's own unique constitution of these vibrations – positive and negative. The first step is to identify one's own strengths (positive vibrations) and weaknesses (negative vibrations) through an honest and rigorous self-analysis or rather our own SWOT analysis, in the psychological sense. Then conscious effort is needed to strengthen and further develop one's own positive vibrations that are ever expanding in nature. Human consciousness has to be directed towards allowing for the expansion in our daily transactions with other human beings. Simultaneously one needs to be vigilant of the presence and activation of the negative vibrations so that one does not fall into the easy trap of that degenerative tendency of rationalizing one's own weaknesses. This holds the key to developing a positive approach to life, work and other human beings. This will practically translate into conscious effort to identify the strengths of the others and help them develop their positive qualities.

We have already mentioned that the interplay and development or decline of values occurs within the inner psychological space of the individual. Now the question naturally comes – which of the human faculties are involved in this process of development? Broadly speaking, the human being has two sets of faculties – rational (reason/intellect/logic) and emotional (emotions/feelings /impulses). Let us take a deep look at the entire spectrum of vibrations as we experience them psychologically. Honest introspection will tell us that we experience these vibrations in our domain of emotions and not the intellect. Charity or compassion, greed or jealousy are essentially feelings and not intellectual constructs. However our education system, right from the formative days in school up to the highest level, places primary emphasis on the development and sharpening of our rational faculties. Ironically enough, emotional enrichment of the individuals, which is critical to the values-development process, hardly finds a space in the modern curriculum. The situation becomes worse when one finds experts coming up with such smart yet ill-founded advice: "Don't be emotional! Be rational".

There is little appreciation of the simple truth that most of the values related problems primarily spring from the world of emotions and these cannot be overcome by sharpening of the intellect alone. It may be worthwhile to spend some time pondering over the following insights from two of the greatest personalities in the last century on this issue.

Albert Einstein: "And certainly we should take care not to make our intellect our God…The intellect has a sharp eye for methods and tools; but it is blind to ends and values".

Mahatma Gandhi: "And I know that ultimately one is guided not by the intellect, but by the heart… Man often finds reason in support of what he does or wants to do".

If we now look back at the sacred literature in all religious traditions, we find a unanimous emphasis on culturing of noble emotions for integral human development. The Bhagavadgita highlights the importance of '*chittashuddhi*' or emotional purification as an essential step towards one's progress to the ultimate

goal of Self-Realization, the *summum bonum* or purpose of life. “Blessed are they that are pure in heart,” says the Bible. And the Holy Koran spells the warning: “Greed robs a learned man of his wisdom”.

The last quotation from the Koran is indeed a revelation! And isn’t it so painfully true? Mastery in any discipline of knowledge is not sufficient to open up the doors of perception that lead to a comprehensive understanding of our life-world, which is what wisdom is all about. Nor does it equip us with the necessary competence that provides the momentum to our journey of human values through emotional enrichment. This is not to demean the importance of intellect in our developmental process. But the evolution of human consciousness to the level of wisdom from knowledge is not a function of intellectual learning from the available ‘Book of Knowledge’. One can understand why Bertrand Russell also had raised the alarm: “Unless men increase wisdom as much as knowledge, increase of knowledge will lead to increase of sorrow”. One only needs to take a deep look at the problems of modernity to appreciate the validity of this statement. No wonder why the great poet T.S. Eliot lamented in his famous poem, The Rock,

“ Where is life, we have lost in living;

Where is wisdom, we have lost in knowledge;

Where is knowledge, we have lost in information.”

Wherein then lies the key to wisdom? What are the sources of learning beyond learning from the Book of Knowledge through the exercise of reason and intellect? Modern education has perfected the learning process from the Book of Knowledge to a fault. But it has missed out badly on opening our minds to two other important sources of learning. – the Book of Nature and the Book of Life. Learning from Nature was an essential feature of education in many ancient traditions, especially the Indian tradition and culture. Unlike many other modern civilizations, the Indian civilization grew in the lap of Nature. Observation of Nature and learning from the workings of Nature was integral to our classical system of education. Nature can actually offer us profound messages relevant to us even today if we care to keep open our eyes and ears – our doors of perception. Let us take an example.

In the early hours of dawn, Nature is quiet and serene. Throughout the day there is a grand ceremony of incessant activity going on in Nature. And again, when the evening falls, the Nature recoils into silence. This cycle of conservation – application – renewal of energy takes care of energy replenishment in a natural way. The human being is also engaged in application of energy throughout the day in all kinds of activities. Nature gives us the key to achieving effectiveness in our energy application. If we care to spend some time and effort in conservation and renewal of energy before and after application, the chances of our energies getting dissipated become minimal. The Nature does not feel the necessity of going out on holidays or weekends like us for rejuvenation! Do we care to ask why?

But what are we supposed to do for conservation and renewal? This is the time for reflection and contemplation, self-analysis and introspection. The human energy or consciousness is always flowing out from within during the phase of application – the centrifugal movement. During conservation and renewal, this energy is drawn within us from the outside world. Unless this centripetal movement is introduced in our daily life cycle, the balance of life gets disturbed leading to disorder and disharmony in our psychological space leading to dissipation and stress. This ‘going within’ or interiorization of awareness is another important aspect of values-development through introspection.

If we take our time to look at the wonderful play of activities in Nature, we immediately sense a rhythm that brings joy to us. Nature transmits to us this rhythm and joy through her dance and movement. Effectiveness in our action also consists in transmitting this rhythm and joy through our actions. The journey through human values has to be made adventurous and enjoyable at the same time. Otherwise it may not achieve the real transformation, which is the transformation of human consciousness. That is why the great savant J. Krishnamurti had observed: “The problem is not in the world, it is in our consciousness”.

Another important source of learning is the Book of life. Learning from the Book of Life consists in keeping ourselves open and receptive to learn something from anyone and everyone we meet in our daily life – from the CEO to the doorman. Such learning is possible only when we have mastered the art of ‘seeing’ and ‘listening’. Most often we see things not ‘as they are’ but as we want to see them. We are more interested in talking than listening. And in the process we become ineffective in our decisions and actions.

Proper seeing and listening demand a high quality of our attention to objects and persons and that ispossible by improving upon the quality and intensity of our consciousness. Journey through human values is indeed an adventure of consciousness.

There is another source of learning that we often ignore and neglect. Throughout our life we learn from our teachers, parents, adults, experts and so many others. They mostly develop and perfect two dimensions of our personality - the parent and the adult. But the child in us fails to find expression and suffers in anguish. The child which stands for novelty, freshness, curiosity, spirit of enquiry and sense of wonder has been smothered in our present system of education. To bring back joy and vitality in our pursuit of values and search for excellence, there is an urgent need to resurrect the child in us. The best way to do so is to spend some time with children – not to teach them but to learn from them. The child also sends the message to us – transformation by values cannot ultimately become a reality without the magic touch of Love. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' was the cardinal message on values from Jesus. This is not just the message of Christ, the Messiah but the eternal Divine child within the Lord.

We began our journey 2500 years ago with the old man with a lantern in the streets of Athens. Let us conclude by keeping alive the search for this light – this time within ourselves – in the heartland of India around the same time - way back 2500 years. In the twilight hour, Lord Buddha is sitting with his benign smile in front of his chosen disciple Ananda. Ananda is beaming with confidence as he says,

"Lord, I am convinced that you are the greatest of all prophets and seers that have come on this earth. Of all their messages, yours are the most relevant to humanity at large. I have been fortunate to learn your messages, sitting at your feet. Now I seek your blessings and permission to spread your message to the world".

Buddha keeps silent. Then he smiles and says, "Are you familiar with all the prophets and sages that have come on earth?"

Ananda is silent.

"Have you understood the full import of all their messages?"

Silence.

"Have you understood the full import of all my messages?"

Silence.

"Then wherefrom do you get this confidence?"

Ananda breaks down and asks,

"What then should I do, my Lord?

The smiling Buddha gave a look radiating compassion. Then, from the depth of silence arose his eternal message:

"Atmo Deepo Bhavo".

"Be a Light unto yourself".

We are neither prophets nor seers. But let us all pray and hope that in the darkest hours of the night, in our moments of silence and solitude, may we keep this Lamp burning. This will be our homage to the great Lord and his message

"Atmo Deepo Bhavo".

The Spirit of Dialogue

The spirit of the dialogue, is ever a must for dawning of wisdom in our academia and business leadership. The present mood is dominantly of a debate which is often a win-lose situation whereas dialogue is for both individual and collective enrichment.

Romain Rolland, the Nobel Laureate literary figure from France, had offered to the world illuminating biographies of three great Indians – Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna (the Spiritual Master of Swami

Vivekananda) and Mahatma Gandhi. In fact Rolland concludes his biography of Vivekananda with a clarion call (Rolland 1975:315) to his fellow brethren in Europe:

"My European companions, I have made you listen through the wall, to the blows of the coming one, Asia ... Go to meet her. She is working for us. We are working for her. Europe and Asia are the two halves of soul. Man *is not* yet. He *will be*. God is resting and has left to us His most beautiful creation – that of the Seventh Day: to free the sleeping forces of the enslaving spirit; to reawaken God in man; to re-create the Being itself."

The Europe-Asia dialogue had already begun.

.The great poet Rainer Maria Rilke thus appeals to our patience:

> "I want to beg you as much as I can, to be patient
>
> Toward all that's unsolved in your heart,
>
> And to learn to love the questions themselves…" (Zohar and Marshal 2000:296)

And the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore composed the following masterpiece just ten days before his death (translation by Amiya Chakravarty):

> The first day's sun
>
> asked
>
> at the new manifestation of being –
>
> Who are you?
>
> No answer came.
>
> Year after year went by,
>
> the last Sun of the day
>
> the last question utters
>
> on the western seashore,
>
> in the silent evening -
>
> Who are you?
>
> He gets no answer. (Robinson 1989:42)

Who is it that asks questions out ofsense of wonder? It is the Child within all of us.

Quest for the Child Within

But where is the mind that chooses willingly to face turbulence, navigate through transition and embrace the quantum transformation? It cannot be a mind merely confined to limits of calculations around worldly affairs. "Let not earthly prudence whisper too closely into thy ears for this is the hour of the unexpected…" remarked Sri Aurobindo while heralding 'The Hour of God'. But how would the notion of God appeal to a rational, technical and skeptical 21st century mind? So where do we find God? The best answer comes from Sri Aurobindo himself:

"What is God after all - an eternal child playing and eternal game in an eternal garden?"

The child within us may have the magic mantra of this transformation but it has hardly been tendered for long years. Even great masters like Mozart or the volcanic Indian monk Swami Vivekananda were childlike in disposition. But we have sacrificed her beyond redemption at the altar of education. Tagore was sensitive enough to quit schooling in childhood so that that the child in him with a vibrant and beautiful mind could ever flow in abundance like "Awakening of the Waterfall' (*Nirjhorer Swapnobhongo*):

"I shall run from one mountain peak to the other,

And roll from a bed of earth to the other,

Laughing aloud, singing amuse,

Clapping with every rhythm of life!" (translation mine)

Postscript

Let me conclude on a personal note. It was 25 years back when I was a student of management at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. One Sunday morning while I was giving lectures on newly acquired Theories of Learning when I found a tall, fair and bearded man with imposing appearance came in front of me smiling. I was engrossed in my lecturing on Cognitive Learning, Action Learning, Experiential Learning and so on. He stopped me and asked, Do you know what is learning? The word Learn has five letters the last four letters being 'Earn'. So you earn something while you learn. But it is the fdirst letter 'L' that makes the real diference. If you earn something with LOVE then only it becomes Learning otherwise not. I was stunned to silence.

I never met the person ever after in life. But as I write this paper I offer my tribute to that unknown wise man from the streets of Kolkata in India who offered me a precious p[earl of wisdom that will remain with me for life.