



Aurobindo – a Brief Profile

Prof Tara Krishnadas*

Abstract :

Sri Aurobindo(1872-1950) was a great philosopher,yoga guru and educationist. Although he began his youthful life as a freedom fighter while being an administrative officer he later moved to a philosophical career and was deeply into spiritualism This he pursued till the end living in his Ashram in Pondicherry along with his disciples.

Aurobindo Ghosh was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bengal Presidency, India on August 15, 1872. His father, Krishna Dhun Ghose, was then assistant surgeon of Rangpur in Bengal and later civil surgeon of Khulna. He was member of Brahma Samaj and was fascinated by the religious reform movement. His mother Swarnalatha Devi's father Shri Rajnarayan Bose was a leading figure in the Samaj. Aurobindo had two elder siblings, a younger sister and a younger brother.

He and his two elder brothers were sent to English –speaking Loreto House boarding school in Darjeeling Since it was run by Irish nuns the boys were exposed to Christian religious teachings.

Krishna Dhun wanted his sons to enter the Indian Civil Service To achieve this they moved to England in 1879. The boys studied at Manchester Grammar school They learned history, Latin, French, geography and arithmetic Aurobindo was proficient in many languages - English, French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, German, Bengali, Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindi. In order to pass the ICS Aurobindo studied at Kings College, Cambridge and he later passed the written ICS Exam with a high rank. But he had no interest in the ICS.

However, he returned to India in 1893 after his father's death and joined the State service in Baroda. While in Baroda he started taking

* Prof. Tara Krishnadas is a former teacher of eminence in Science. She is an executive member of the Society for Professional Ethics and Management, and is involved in a variety of charitable social welfare societies and organisations. Currently, she is the Hony. President of the University Women's Association for welfare of women and children.

an active interest in Indian politics. In 1901 at the age of 28 Aurobindo married Mrinalini who was 14 at that time. She died 17 years later due to the flu pandemic.

He started revolutionary activities against the British rule. Between 1907-1908 he was actively involved in the nationalistic cause and travelled in Pune, Bombay and Baroda to garner support for the cause. He was even imprisoned in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case.

Once out of prison he brought out several publications and his writings indicated a slow shift from politics to spirituality. In 1910 he moved to Pondicherry where he dedicated himself to yoga, spiritual and philosophical pursuits. He established the Sri Aurobindo Ashram 1926.

Aurobindo's main disciple and spiritual collaborator was Mirra Alfasa who was called "the Mother" in the Ashram. Here Sri Aurobindo was converted from a political figure to a leading spiritual guru. He wanted to awaken the soul of India. He felt that India at that time was becoming a reproduction of Europe. As he wrote in his publication *Karmayogin* "If we had succeeded in Europeanizing ourselves we would have lost forever our spiritual capacity, our intellectual force, our national elasticity and the power of self-renovation".

While in Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo developed a spiritual practice he called "Integral Yoga". The central theme of his vision was the evolution of human life into a divine life. Integral yoga also called Supramental Yoga is the yoga based philosophy of Sri

Aurobindo and The Mother. According to Sri Aurobindo the current status of human evolution is an intermediate stage in the evolution of being which leads to the unfolding of the spirit and the self-revelation of divinity in all things. He defined yoga as an effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the secret potentialities latent in the being and the highest condition of victory in that effort. Yoga is a rapid and concentrated evolution of being which can take effect in one lifetime while unassisted natural evolution would take many centuries or many births.

Sri Aurobindo was an idealist to the core. His idealistic philosophy of life was based on Vedantic Philosophy of the Upanishads. He felt that the kind of education India needed was an education proper to the Indian soil, needs, and culture. Education according to him is not just acquiring information but to aim at building of the powers of the human mind and spirit. He wished for a healthy integration of God and man. The fellowship with God could be achieved only by dedicated action in society, meditation and self-forgetting devotion to God. Sri Aurobindo's guiding principle of education was the awakening of the individual as a spiritual being.

Aurobindo's voluminous literary output comprises philosophical texts, treatises on yoga, poetry, plays and essays. Some of his major works include "The Life Divine", *Essays on the Gita*, collected poems and plays, "Synthesis of Yoga", "The Human Cycle" "Ideal of Human Unity", *On the Vedas* among others.

Aurobindo died on 5 December 1950. The Prime Minister and President of India

praised him for his contribution to the Freedom Movement and to Yogic philosophy. His passing was mourned by National and international leaders.

The Mother using Aurobindo's ideas conceived of an international project to "Realize human Unity and establish an ideal society" "On February 28, 1968, more than 5000 people from 124 countries flocked to what, at that time was a desolate red desert and a dream. They carried flags and soil from their home countries. This was the beginning of The universal village of "Auroville".

References:

1. Britannica, Biography and facts, Aurosociety.org, Wikipedia.org
2. Sri Aurobindo, India, Ideological discourses – Debashish Banerji International Journal of Dharma Studies (Nov 2013) – Springer Publications. Springer Open website.
3. 'Sri Aurobindo as a Spiritual Optimist – The Life Devine and Synthesis of Yoga' Dr S Jayanti Shanmugam & M. Umai Arsi (K. S. Rangaswamy College of Technology) Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, Jan. 2016.
4. Sri Aurobindo 'An integral review' Nipa Sarkar, Dept of Education, Mahadevananda Mahavidyalaya, Barrakpore, Indian Journal of Research (ISSN No. 2250-1991), Vol.7, Issue 8 (Aug 2018)
5. 'Educational Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh' – Alka Saini, Journal- Recent Redsearch in Social Sciences & Humanities (Issue 2, Year 4, Jul-Aug – Sep (2017), pages 70-75, (ISSN 2348-3318)



**“No work is stressful, it is idleness
and your inability to
manage your mind and
emotions that make it stressful”.**