

AUROBINDO (1872 –1950)

Aurobindo was born in 1872 in Calcutta, Bengal. He was an extremist leader, political thinker and philosopher. He was a revolutionary freedom fighter who was convicted in Alipur conspiracy case. Thereafter, he retired from **Active Politics** and laid foundation of nationalism in India through his political thought. He is particularly known for his **Contribution to Spiritual Thought**. Although he was nationalist, he believed in human equality and universal oneness of all.

According to Aurobindo Ghosh, there is fundamental unity between God, human beings and universe. He argues that divine Brahma manifests itself into empirical reality through its divine play. He believes that chief characteristic of human being is his urge to fulfill divine needs which is essence of existence.

Aurobindo was of opinion that there was need to awaken Indian soul out of its slumber. It could achieve its glory through philosophy of Vedanta which gives more importance of spirituality than to sciences. The spirit of heart needs to be opened. He carried forward his idea of Vedanta and declared that to message of Vedanta was selfless action or Karma Yoga teaches us to perform selfless action.

Cultural-Spiritual Nationalism

Since nation is wish of God, therefore, it will make incarnation-**An Avtar**, which is an eternal force and manifestation of God, he said that British rule is denial of the creation of Almighty and against the serving of God itself.

Nationalism is not a Political programme is **intellectual fashion** but passionate aspiration for the relaxation of divine unity in nation, where all diversity and differences change in the spirit of oneness. He said that social and economic equality is not a primary factor for rise of nationalism but on the other hand nationalism becomes the pre-condition for social economic equality. One should work and live for the higher cause of humanity under the nationalism. Therefore he believes that nation is a divine entity.

Aurobindo said that nationalism in India is gift of **God**. Since God is **immortal**, thus creation of God is immortal. Nobody can kill nationalism in India. Even division of Bengal is also wish of God. Partition of Bengal inspired the feeling of nationalism in India. Sri Aurobindo's concept of nationalism was deeply influenced by Bankim Chandra, a great Bengali novelist. Nationhood can't be confined to just a piece of land or mass of human being or creation of mind. It is something more than a geographical unit and people's imagination. India is like Goddess mother.

A living soul and it was duty of everyone to ensure its dignity. According to Karan Singh, for Aurobindo, 'India was like incarnation of Goddess who for centuries has created and nourished her children and who, at the time was groaning under Yoke of foreigner'. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh advised his young compatriots to unite and work for her liberation. Nationalism is like religion. It is a faith and creed which one has to live. Nationalism his in Sanathan Dharma.

Liberation of India

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According to Aurobindo, realization of India's spirituality alone could make her free and great. Indian concept of 'spiritual freedom' is different from European 'mechanical freedom'. Which concentrated on outer social, political freedom and which is not true freedom? He believe that once political power is seized from foreign power, all other steps in the direction of national regeneration-moral upliftment, industrial and social development would be taken successfully. For Aurobindo, **Swaraj is more than political** freedom. It is a means to attain self-liberation and fulfillment Vedantic ideal. Through Swaraj, Aurobindo believes India could return to it 'old national individuality,' where it can play her great role in the redemption of the whole world. For Aurobindo national regeneration was not the final goal, it was stepping stone to universal regeneration.

Sanatan Dharma and World Religion

Sanatan Dharma is Hinduism is not a dogma. It is law of life. It alone can be basis of World Religion because it accepts all forms of religion – Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, yet it is none of these. It alone combines science and faith. He said that freedom without religious and cultural regeneration is not possible. For Aurobindo Nationalism is not exclusive, it is inclusive available for all classes and creeds. He said that India shall rise with the rise of Sanatan Dharma. India will become great with the greatness of Sanatan Dharma.

Nation is like Goddess mother. It is Sanatan Dharma nationalism is common sentiment. Geeta and Ramayana are the common culture source of unity in India. It is Vedic concept. Western concept of nationalism originates from language. Aurobindo nationalism is like Virat Purushka individual is the one element in Virat Purusha. It is spiritual. While moderates believed in political nationalism, extremist like Sri Aurobindo believes in **cultural nationalism** it includes common culture of Hindutva.

For Aurobindo, nation is above individual, family and community. It is like living organism with its own individuality and dignity. He exhorts patriots to self-sacrifice for its nationhood. He believes that man lives in geographical units, known as nation, which determine their life and they exercise their freedom within framework of those norms. He believes that nationhood is primary condition where individuals can exercise their freedom freely. He also believes that principle of freedom postulates that no nation should deny freedom to any other nation, each nation possess personality of its own.

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Sri Aurobindo used following techniques when he was indulged in active politics: -

1. **Poorna Swaraj:** He was critical of moderate leaders of Congress who adopted method like passing resolution, prayers and petitioning and who raised demand of self-government or dominion status within British Empire. Like Bipin Chandra Pal, he was also in favour of inalienable status of Poorna Swaraj or complete sovereignty for the country.
2. **Passive resistance:** The doctrine of passive resistance was articulated by Bipin Chandra Pal was potent economic tool to fight against imperialism and colonialism. It was based on notion of organized refusal to do anything which would help British administration. Inherent to programme of passive resistance was a larger programme of 'Boycott' which was economic tool to hit Britishers at their vital points. The concept of boycott extended to include four-fold non-cooperation with the British government:-

- a) The economic boycott
- b) The educational boycott
- c) The judicial boycott
- d) The boycott of executive administration

Aurobindo advocate peaceful opposition of the government. But support tit for tat. Violent action of British government needed befitting reply. Aurobindo's programme of passive resistance eventually embraced revolution to pave way to Independence. Aurobindo believes that varying doses of violence was indispensable. Aurobindo's passive resistance was different from Gandhi, who was completely opposed to any form of violence.

Criticism

Sri Aurobindo's spiritual nationalism was actually religious other nationalism particularly Hinduism. His nationalism on the basis of culture is dangerous for society or community. It is impractical and dangerous to mix nationalism with religion especially in multi-diverse country like India. it will leads to increase in communalism and which has subsequently partitioned the country on religious line.

Aurobindo believes that India's tradition of spiritual thought and practices is very advanced. And the whole humanity can benefit from this in its spiritual journey. He wanted India to play her due role in spiritual regeneration of the world.

Human Unity

Aurobindo became supporter of human unity in his second stage of his life from nationalist. Brahma (Supreme reality) is a source of everything. Entire universe is reflection of Brahma. Super mind is fullest development of consciousness in human being. **Mind is the link between Brahma and super mind.** Entire philosophy is based on sat (truth) chit (consciousness) Anand (bliss).

Unity in human being: Real Human unity lies in soul. It can attain through Yoga. Aurobindo Ghosh has consistently stressed about spiritual development of individuals. He believes that it will lead to spiritual unity among people. There will be harmonious relationship between the Nations an entire humanity. He believes that freedom, equality and justice can only be insured in spiritual society. It will negate the chances of clashes or conflict on the basis of nationhood. There would be unity among nations within group and there would also be ultimate unity and oneness of humankind.

Aurobindo argues that human society has to pass through following stages in the course of development. Political method is incapable to make Human integration liberty available in liberalism becomes license. Equality in socialism becomes artificial. Economic integration is insufficient to make unity. Political and economic means are external means to inculcate unity. Real unity lies in social that is inner.

1. Symbolic Society: It is more-closer to a tribal community. This is a stage of community formation and growth of its traditions, customs and institutional setup. People belonging to same race or kinship follow identical symbols which becomes religion for them. Thus, in this stage of development, natural instincts and religious symbols come together.

2. **Typal Society:** Moral ideals become more important. This is a stage of consciousness where people exercise their creative power and wisdom to think about their life's and problems.
3. **Conventional Society:** Conventions, rules and regulation becomes more rigid. Hierarchy of society is more fixed now. It is more similar to medieval society.
4. **Rationalistic individualistic Society:** Industrialisation and urbanisation, leads towards materialistic development. Individualism, scientific spirit and reason became cornerstone of the society. Liberalism, socialism, nationalism is the by-product of this modern society. But it is not highest stage of development.
5. **Humanity:** Aurobindo did not reject scientific or materialist development. But he said that, it is lower stage of Human development. Real and highest stage of development is spiritual and moral development. Unity lies in human soul. Spiritual person believes in universal brotherhood. Liberalism promotes political and economic unity. It is creating more conflict than cooperation. UNO and W.T.O. are failed to make unity in the world. USSR failed to empower the humanity. Capitalism is unable to fulfil aspiration of the people. Thus moral and spiritual unity is the need of the hour through yoga, in the age of the globalisation.

Synthesis of Scientific Development with spiritual development

While demonstrating the evolution of society Aurobindo believed that material scientific development is important stage of development but it is lower than spiritual development. Here idea of Aurobindo is very similar like the thought of Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Development in the Western World is materialistic and scientific, which is the lesser development. Apex stage is development is the spiritual and moral development where India is supposed to play or leading role in the world.

He said that super mind is the fullest **spiritual consciousness**. A link between **absolute** (Brahma) or **super consciousness** and the **mind** (ordinary consciousness) is **super mind**. Super mind connect mind to super consciousness.

An alternative of Liberalism and Socialism

Aurobindo says that socialism believes in economic equality but it is artificial in nature. Socialism failed to obtain the human unity because it tried to maintained human unity on the basis of economic equality. However, liberalism emphasize over liberty. Liberty becomes license in most of the nation. Liberty without spiritual and moral development becomes license. Therefore Aurobindo says that real unity lies in the soul, which internal and spiritual. That unity is possible only through Yoga.