



Sri Aurobindo : The Prophet of Nationalism

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Sri Aurobindo was a scholar, poet, revolutionary thinker, seer, philosopher, yogi and creator of an age. He is above all a 'Rishi', one who sees beyond, 'Kranti darsi', one who has realised his identity with the divine and wields His creative bow, *Sri* in his name means Glory, Glory of the Divine. *Sri* came to be used at a particular stage of his life when his consciousness underwent a revolutionary change.

The full name of Aurobindo was Aurobindo Ghose. After November 24, 1926 - the day of his *Siddhi*, realisation of Krishna Consciousness in the physical - he came to be known as Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo's father was Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose and mother Swarnalata. Sri Aurobindo was born at 4.50 a.m. on August 15, 1872 in Kolkata. He was the third of the sons of his parents.

When Sri Aurobindo was five years of age he was sent to Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling. In 1879, he was taken to England. Aurobindo was admitted to St. Pauls' School in September 1884 where he remained till 1889. He distinguished himself in classics and literature. In his final year at St. Paul, he took the ICS Examination. He had qualified himself for the Indian Civil Service, passed all the subsequent

examinations; but could not appear for the horse riding test.

Sri Aurobindo joined service in the Survey Settlement Department of the State Government in Baroda on Feb 8, 1893. Sri Aurobindo had acquainted himself about the political condition of his motherland and had committed himself to work for the liberation of the country. He married in April, 1901 to Mrinalini, who was fourteen years old.

Sri Aurobindo was the prophet of nationalism. He resigned from the post of Vice-Principal of Baroda College and came down to Kolkata into the open arena of politics in 1906. The same year renowned patriot Bipin Chandra Pal invited him to help him in launching a newspaper titled *Bande Mataram*. Sri Aurobindo extended his help. This newspaper soon became to herald the Indian revolution.

Sri Aurobindo took over as the Principal of Calcutta National College in August, 1906. But, the pressure of work on him of the *Bande Mataram* was heavy; so he resigned.

In frequently organised public meetings and through the pages of the *Bande Mataram*, Sri Aurobindo spelled out a concrete scheme to make the British rule impossible. Promotion of Swedeshi industries and national education and a



complete boycott of and non-cooperation with all government institutions and formation of a militant voluntary force constituted his scheme. There were three aspects of Sri Aurobindo's political ideas and activities. Firstly there was the action with which he started, a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central objective was the preparation of an armed insurrection. Secondly, there was a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence. Thirdly, there was the organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition through passive resistance.

Sri Aurobindo's journalism not only gave the call of freedom in its treatment of topics and style, it also ushered in a new spirit of freedom.

The powerful prose of *Bande Mataram* won wonder and admiration even from those who were hostile to it.

In 1907 the Government prosecuted the persons involved in *Bande Mataram* and also Sri Aurobindo as the editor for propagating against British rule. It created a country wide sensation. Rabindranath Tagore then wrote his famous poem on Sri Aurobindo, 'Rabindranath, O Aurobindo Bows to Thee!' The prosecution could not prove that Sri Aurobindo was the editor and he was acquitted. After the *Bande Mataram* Case, Sri Aurobindo became the recognised leader of nationalism in Bengal.

The Surat Congress made it clear that the Indian politics was entering into a new phase. Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up editing work of Bengali daily *Nava Sakti*. He was sent to Alipur Jail on charges of creating public discontentment. When he came out of the jail he found the whole political scenario of the country altered as most of the nationalist leaders were in the jail. He was determined to continue the struggle for national

liberation. He started two weeklies '*Karmayogi*' (English) and *Dharma* (Bengali).

After release from the jail he dissociated himself from all political action. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as was his personal retirement into solitude in 1910.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in his book '(The History of the Indian National Congress)' has said, "Aurobindo's genius shot up like a meteor. He was on the high skies only for a time. He flooded the land from Cape to Mount with the effulgence of his light." Subhas Chandra Bose '(An Indian Pilgrim)' has said, "On the Congress platform he had stood up as a champion of left-wing thought and a fearless advocate of independence at a time when most of the leaders, with their tongues in their cheeks, would talk only of colonial self-government. He had undergone incarnation with perfect equanimity.... When I came to Calcutta in 1913, Aurobindo was already a legendary figure. Rarely have I seen people speak of a leader with such rapturous enthusiasm and many were the anecdotes of this great man, some of them probably true, which travelled from mouth to mouth."

Sri Aurobindo in 'Savitri' wrote -

'As yet thought only some high spirits' dream
or a vexed illusion in man's toiling mind,
A new creation from the old shall rise,
A knowledge inarticulate find speech,
Beauty suppressed burst into paradise bloom,
Pleasure and pain dive into absolute bliss.

A tongueless oracle shall speak at last,
The superconscient conscious grow on earth,
The eternal's wonders join the dance of time.

'No one can write about my life because, it has not been on the surface for men to see.' This was Sri Aurobindo's warning to a disciple aspiring to write his biography. Manoj Das in his monograph '*Sri Aurobindo Makers of Indian*



Literature' said, 'But since write we must, to do so in full awareness of what he thought about it himself is perhaps the next best course we can follow.'

Chittaranjan Das, in his defence of Sri Aurobindo during the Alipur Trial described him as the poet of patriotism, the prophet of nationalism with love of humanity.

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Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the new bus stand at Bhadrak in the presence of Shri Bijayashree Routray, Minister, Health and Family Welfare, Shri Manmohan Samal, Minister, Revenue, Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare, Shri Jayanarayan Mishra, Minister, Commerce & Transport and other dignitaries on 25.7.2005.