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SRI AUROBINDO-THE PIONEER OF HUMAN UNITY: RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Sri Aurobindo was one of the thinkers and philosophers who emerged in the pure land of India in the nineteenth century. The transition of the revolutionary Aurobindo to the sage Aurobindo, who participated in the liberation war of the country from colonial rule and exploitation by the imperialist British power, was a breakthrough moment. In Sri Aurobindo's thinking, at the meeting place of our world consciousness, the inanimate is real to the mind (cit), and so is the truth to the mind and inanimate because the world is the soul and mind pervaded by consciousness, the light of one whole being. They are bridges between two entities. In this article, I shall discuss the aspect of Sri Aurobindo's establishment of universal unity by referring to the different aspects of his transition to the superman through the stages of the higher mind, illuminated mind, intuitive mind, and overmind. Next, I will analyse Sri Aurobindo's concept of unity through yoga. I shall also focus on the enlightened awareness of spiritual unity following Sri Aurobindo. Then, how Sri Aurobindo explains the real progress of civilization through Supermind will be discussed briefly. Next, I would also highlight Sri Aurobindo's thought on the integral approach to human unity. Finally, I would like to conclude the paper through a discussion of contemporary relevance and the need for real unity today.

Keywords: gnostic being, higher mind, unity, integral yoga, supermind

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, Sri Aurobindo was one of the greatest contemporary philosophers in India. The transition from colonial rule and exploitation of the imperialist British power to the revolutionary Aurobindo, who participated in the liberation war of the country and its people, was

followed by the sage Aurobindo. Instead of the violent revolution of the Indian independence movement, he armed the eternal spiritualist ideology of India. He believed that in the midst of spiritual ideals lies a dynamic, variable, and multi-faceted seed. Sri Aurobindo's concept of nationalism and independence was different from conventional ideas. On the one hand, there was motivation for the liberation of the homeland and the people; on the other hand, there was a burning religious feeling. He realised that a large section of the uncountable people of undivided India were poor, destitute, and neglected. But they are the real source of power for the country and nation. They need to be united in the formation of the country, both externally and internally.

According to 2009 UN Peace Prize winner Jehanbegaloo, Aurobindo believes that spiritual unity is not possible unless it is preceded by a general change in humankind's consciousness. Nevertheless, he made it clear that the spiritual transformation of humanity had nothing to do with religion. There is an opportunity to swing back from a systematic idea of life and society. The human mind may search for retreat in a return to the spiritual idea. A society directed or approved by religion. But systematised religion, though it can afford a means of internal enrichment for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to transcendent experience, has not changed human life and society. In reality, this idea of the human unity of Sri Aurobindo is currently under question because the sovereignty and human unity of the small states of the world are in crisis today due to the bloodshot eyes and the rise of some of the imperialist powers of the world. With the weak economic structure of small states, the people of those states are trying to create instability by exploiting religious and ethnic differences. In this situation, the relevance of Sri Aurobindo's idea of human unity and explaining the importance of establishing universal unity with human unity is very essential.

The main purpose of the work is to present a reevaluation of the concept of human unity by Sri Aurobindo in his magisterial work entitled "Life Divine" and other works in the light of his political philosophy and also the contemporary relevance of the need for real unity today.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted through conceptual analysis of Sri Aurobindo's original writings to fulfil its purpose. For this, we have collected and used primary and secondary resources. Analysed them and

selected the problems through the analysis of documents. Then, utilising the relevant concept and reviewing previous theories and concepts, we use the method of interpretation to draw a conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Unity Through Yoga

Sri Aurobindo was not a philosopher in the traditional sense because there was a great difference between his ideas about philosophy and the practice of traditional philosophy. In his words, "Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher, although I have written philosophy." (Sri Aurobindo, 1972). Influenced by the teachings of Vedanta, Sri Aurobindo read Vedanta in his own way. Sri Aurobindo, like western modern evolutionary philosophers, also believes that evolution is the natural course of the world. It is through this evolutionary process that life is transmitted to matter and consciousness is transmitted to life, and in the next stage, this consciousness is attaining perfection in self-conscious people. According to Sri Aurobindo, "There must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation. Last, there must be a supermental transformation; there must take place as the crowing movement, the ascent into the supermind, and the transforming descent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature." (Sri Aurobindo, 2001). Sri Aurobindo believes in absolute dualism: 'All is Brahman.' Brahma is the ultimate truth, but to him, the material world is not a lie. In his words, "The silent and the active Brahman are not different, opposite and irreconcilable entities, the one denying, the other affirming a cosmic illusion; they are one Brahman in two aspects, positive and negative, and each is necessary to the other." (Sri Aurobindo, 2001). For this, Professor Haridas Choudhary identified Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as integral non-dualism. (Choudhary, 1960).

Cohesion is one of the most important features of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. He thought that in all conventional philosophies, the effort to establish partial truth as full truth could be noticed. Overcoming these limitations, Sri Aurobindo sought to build a unified world consciousness, the essence of which was the pursuit of truthful philosophy and the search for harmony and equality among diverse entities. The main goal of Sri Aurobindo was to establish unity between the two tendencies of inanimate and conscious, body and soul, one and many, personality and society, eloquence and silence, knowledge and action, enjoyment and

renunciation. This unity, according to Sri Aurobindo, cannot occur unless man's dynamic and spiritual environment is improved by a spiritual supernature. Therefore, if true human unity is to be achieved, all individuals and nations must acknowledge the existence of God through free growth and full development. Man is eternally trying to find the ultimate reality, which Aurobindo calls *Saccidinanda* using the Vedantic vocabulary. "*Saccidānanda*", asserts Sri Aurobindo, "is the unknown (Jehanbegaloo, 2006). In Aurobindo's philosophy, the evolutionary progression of human unity is possible through Yogic experience. The way which indicates the divine life is "integral yoga." In his words, "All life is yoga" (Sri Aurobindo, 2002). Aurobindo thinks that every man is a Yogi, but not a conscious one. Men who have become aware of this progression through the Yogic experience can help others.

Enlightened Awareness of the Spiritual Unity

Sri Aurobindo believed in individualistic, conscious, and world-oriented evolution, just as Brahman, in the form of Sachchidnanda, is a combination of existence, consciousness, and bliss. So the manifestation of Brahman in the midst of inanimate, unconscious, and senseless things is not without purpose. It is from this state that the upward journey of creation begins, and it gradually transcends the level of inertia, life, and mind and reaches the level of the superhuman. It is at this stage that Sachchidnanda's recovery takes place. This is the main purpose of evolution. Evolution is the manifestation of a higher level of consciousness. Inanimate matter transmits life. The mind gradually manifests in life, but the last word of creation is not only the development of the mind. Man is a transient being. In the midst of this being is the manifestation of the supermind. Thus, Superman is created. In his words, "We call it the supermind or the truth consciousness, because it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts, and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things." (Sri Aurobindo, 2001). Sri Aurobindo used the word 'gnostic being' more than the word 'superman'. 'Gnostic being' is precisely a *parjnana jyotirmaya purusha*, a great man who has attained true knowledge, whose focus is on human welfare, and who can even accept death for the sake of higher ideals. It is possible to understand this super mind through a better state of consciousness: "It is difficult to conceive intellectually what the super mind is, and to describe it, another language would be needed than the poor abstract counters of the mind (Sri Aurobindo, 1963). Prof. B.K. Lal says, "The Gnostic individual, in reality, is the *inner person unveiled*, spirituality unmade" (B.K. Lal, 1973). Man

himself participates in this process of transcending himself for the sake of the existence of consciousness, which is called "yoga." It is through yoga that human power is engaged in the path of evolution determined by the Paramātman. Thus, integral yoga is a spiritual practice based on reasoning. Sri Aurobindo said, "Because it aims not at a departure out of the world and life into heaven or Nirvana, but a change of life and existence." (Sri Aurobindo, 2013). In the light of this discussion, Professor Haridas Choudhary suggests that "all Supermen or Supramental Gnostic beings can be thought of as Jivanmukta, but all Jivanmukta are not Superman." (Choudhary, 1951).

As a spiritual and practical mystic, Aurobindo puts a lot of stress on the transcendental aspect of man. For Aurobindo, the only response to the crisis in the human world is a rational mindfulness of the spiritual unity of our existence, through which sustainable world unity can be achieved. Aurobindo thinks that the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection. To him, perfection is yet to come because man has not yet constituted the final step in his evolutionary process. The aim of spiritual progress, therefore, should be the formation of spiritual human beings and spiritual communities. Prof. S.K. Maitra says, "From the point of spiritual evolution, this [attainment of the Gnostic state] would be only an individual liberation and perfection in an unchanged environmental existence, not the isolated realisation by a few individuals of their true inner life." (Maitra, 2001). Yet the unity of mankind, according to Sri Aurobindo, is obviously a part of nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Only it must be under other conditions and with safeguards that will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality and richly diverse in its oneness.

Progress of Civilization Through Supermind

According to Aurobindo, the development of a civilization is determined by its progress towards human unity. Aurobindo admits that the perfect society will be that which most absolutely favours the accomplishment of the individual. Also, the perfection of the individual will be imperfect if it does not help him reach the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs. (Brodov 1984) Ultimately, the largest possible human aggregate is the whole of a united humanity. Aurobindo has treated the perfection of the individual as a widening and a heightening in human and cosmic development. This heightening results in the integration

of all levels of life and the achievement of unity by the mind. To Aurobindo, man is a transitional being. He is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the joyful degrees that ascent to a divine supermanhood. Gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and successful evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature. In other words, the supermind helps man attain an integral realisation of his personality and of ultimate reality. The supermind is, according to Aurobindo, the absolute truth-consciousness. It is the infinite norm of knowledge. It is the crucial link between existence, consciousness, and bliss (*Saccidananda*). The phenomenal worlds of life and mind are also connected with those. As long as the mind is different from the supermind, it perceives only the particular rather than the universal. Thus, the mind cannot hold the infinite. It can only lie blissfully helpless under the glowing shadow of the real cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach. The supermind, therefore, can fetch a big, unworldly transformation in the nature of man, making possible the new integral personality. Sri Aurobindo claims that each sole individual has a particular path to apprehension of integral non-dualism. For this, he asserts that everyday action is itself a means of realization. One's practice of yoga is essential for the determination of developing one's internal spirituality. This is true because, as Aurobindo maintains, all of our lives are yoga. Thus, we can say that integral yoga creates the conditions for the descent of the supermind. The yogi becomes conscious of himself through the cosmos and through social life (Jehanbegaloo, 2006).

Obviously, there is a fundamental difference between the evolutionary theory of Sri Aurobindo and the conventional theory of evolution. Conventional evolutionism describes the flow of events, not elaborates. But in Sri Aurobindo's evolution, the development of the soul from the root and the development of the mind from the soul—that is, the mind and the soul, which were inherent or involution—are explained. We need to realise that society is not an isolated entity. Rather, every human being in society acts as a catalyst in the transition to the level of the supermind. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "a life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status might fitly be characterised as a divine life, for it would be a life in the Divine, a life of the beginnings." (Hechs, 1997). The search for truth in the midst of social and state thought is what Sri Aurobindo seeks as a sense of solidarity among the people of the world. He believes in the spirituality of the person. The presence of God is in the midst of man. Society is only a part of the life of man, not its

totality or wholeness. Sri Aurobindo thinks that the loyalty of a person is only to the truth and to God. Thus, as man attains spiritual liberation, he becomes aware of the presence of the same Paramātmān within the other; that is, he sees himself in the other. It is in this process of self-purification that solidarity with the whole is formed: "As he moves towards spiritual freedom, he also moves towards spiritual oneness." (Appadorai, 1992).

Integral Approach Towards Human Unity

An integral approach is essential to our improvement of human unity. The progress of a universal consciousness in the life of each individual would simplify the appearance of world unity. The emergence of an actual cosmic consciousness that fosters unity not only in the individual members of the human entity through a transformation of their nature itself but also in the organisations of the individual is a fundamental need. Thus, the universal problem of unity is an individual problem. The individual must transcend his approach and his mechanical rationality as well as his dynamic rationality. (Varadachari, 2011). The organisms of the individuals must undergo further evolution. In fact, a new force of being must be made active in the human individual through real cosmic intelligence and the discovery of the cosmic self.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo has dedicated the call of nationalism to the ideal of universal human unity in the wonderful harmony of the heart. His patriotism is incomparable, and his manner of expression is exemplary: "Have has a place in politics, but it is the love of one's country." (Gupta, 2000). Sri Aurobindo saw nationalism in the light of spiritualism. He found the manifestation of divinity in the midst of patriotism. And that is the manifestation of Brahman itself, which has no destruction. It is undoubtedly true that the traditional religion of Sri Aurobindo is Hinduism. Vedas, Vedānta, Gita, Yoga, Tantra, Purāna, etc. are the main scriptures of this religion. At the same time, Sri Aurobindo wants to remind us that Hinduism is not the religion of any particular community. This traditional religion is an eternal value that is not opposed to science or modernity. Traditional religion is a world religion. This world religion is a great combination: "It embraces science, faith, theism, Christianity, Mahomedanism, and Buddhism, and yet is none of these." (V.P. Varma, 1976). We find the concept of the world religion of Sri Aurobindo in the context of Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji also sought a fundamental spiritual unity among all religions; he has searched for a universal religion based on Vedānta.

In a speech, Sri Aurobindo said, "That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion because it is the universal religion that embraces all others." It is the one religion that insists every moment on the truth, which all religions acknowledge, that he is in all man and all things and that in Him we move and have our beings (Sri Aurobindo, 1983). In fact, Aurobindo sought to establish the foundation of universal brotherhood and the unity of human society in the omnipresence of the Supreme Soul.

Contemporary Relevance

Sri Aurobindo's concept of human unity seeks to establish the ancient Indian declaration of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. The whole world is one family. In the 21st century's world, the need for human unity has never been so great, and yet quite often this very unity, seen as expected, is superficial, somewhat threatening (Auroville, 2011), and even non-desirable. Prof. Adhar Chandra Das claimed that "the progress of mankind in politics, economics, art, literature, and other spheres seems to be left indifferent to the fundamental trend of the universe." (Das, 1934). We speak of globalisation, and in the same breath, we criticise the dangers of uniformity. We emphasise democracy as a universal ideal and the progress of all nations. Yet at the same time, this democratic model is perceived as a system imposed by some nations on others. We are facing an environmental crisis that threatens the very survival of our planet. Today's world is a global village. The technological progress has made our earth very small. News can rapidly reach every inhabitant of the earth through the electronic medium of information. But there is anxiety that this global village culture may remove the different cultures of the earth. The much-discussed liberalisation process is seen by many as an attempt to impose a capitalist model everywhere that suits only some countries. This is an attempt to spread the culture of consumerism everywhere. So the question naturally arises: with a computer for all and bread for only a quarter of the world's population, are we moving towards that goal?

In the 19th century, social reformers, thinkers, and intellectuals observed the growth of science as a great aspect that would lead to the unification of mankind. From the beginning, science has been thing common to all men. But at present, we have seen that science can be misused randomly. It is being misused to discover more and more means of destruction. We have lost trust in science as a remedy for all iniquities. In this case, as an alternative way to save mankind from the misuse of

scientific tools, we should follow Sri Aurobindo's concept of the ideal of human unity.

CONCLUSION

In the above discussion, we have concluded that we can say that egoism is the biggest difficulty to a life of harmony and peace on earth, but after so many centuries of civilization, no amount of religious agitation or moral teaching has been able to influence the ego to sacrifice its claims, as to speak to him of society is to speak to him of something essentially different to his nature (Auroville, 2011). In fact, we have initiated to recognise that if we need to realm the freedom for man to develop and develop in all liberty, this unity cannot be constructed through mechanical means. It cannot be realised as long as man does not identify a real unity between man and man. So, it becomes crucial to understand what this unity is towards which we feel pushed in spite of ourselves. Sri Aurobindo explores some possible paths to human unity. The first is the centralised world state. According to him, the unity that would result from this system would be mechanical, and the individuality of the nations would suffer. As a result, an undesirable homogeneity would be established. The second way is a loose confederacy of the states. This is the complete opposite of the first one. Aurobindo thinks that this system is temporary. This will result in strict centralization or isolation. He believed that universal unity was necessary, which was distinct from the first two. The United States of Independent Nations is the desired form of this desired world state. But this world unity requires a psychological component. The basis of this element is not merely the principle of mutual assistance but a deep sense of brotherhood that rests upon a genuine understanding of the inner world of human unity and equality. It is through this realisation that the individual finds his own fulfilment and the fulfilment in the lives of others. Through this realisation, human society as a whole gains the consciousness that the free and full life of the individual is the basis for the progress of the whole and the foundation of lasting peace. Sri Aurobindo called this psychological element 'the religion of humanity'. This religion is the way to establish Bhagavadhām on earth.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo believed that consciousness keeps itself hidden and restrained at a level of evolution in the mind. This entity is cloaked. It is surrounded by a dark cloud of mystery. Therefore, even if the message of that entity comes from the innermost part of the heart, the mind cannot

determine its source. That speech is covered in the coating of the mind. Whenever the physical encounter with the external entity is established, he searches for the transcendental entity. He is attracted to wherever the transcendental being manifests itself in the universe. But in this case, even if the outer nature is purified, the inner nature is not permanently and fully transformed. Whenever there is a permanent and complete transformation of the heart through internal purification, the idea of true human unity will be awakened in him, which will be transformed into the consciousness of world brotherhood. As a result, society will become a veritable paradise. Following Sri Aurobindo, we can agree and disagree; we are part of each other. Professor S. Roy rightly said, "In fact, the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo brought together Tattva and Yoga." (Roy, 2007) Until we realise this truth, there will be no peace and harmony in this world.

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