

Name of Scholar: Rima Ghosh

Supervisor: Professor Gautam Ghosal

Title: The Evolution of Sri Aurobindo's Political Philosophy: An Integral Approach

Registration No: VB-1864 of 2015-16

Date of Registration: 01.09.2015

Synopsis

Sri Aurobindo disclaimed the title philosopher and asserted: "I am primarily a poet and a politician" (Roy 100). He was surely trying to draw our attention to something more specific about him, to something which is more important than philosophy. He did shape out a philosophy through his experiential knowledge, but he was not enjoying the title "philosopher" tagged to his name. More intriguing is his claim to be called a politician, simply because the common knowledge about him is that his political life ended on July 4, 1910, when he reached Pondicherry leaving behind his eventful days in Calcutta. How did his political life survive through the last forty years of his life, when he was repeatedly discouraging biographers to write about his life because it was "not on the surface for man to see"?

As a matter of fact, he was deeply into politics from the moment his anglicized father changed with the times and turned a patriot. From 1885 onwards, he began sending clippings of newspapers to his sons showing the agony of Indian people under the British rule. Young Aurobindo was an unhappy person, an alienated student, not interested in sports and religion, brooding over the lack of affection from his insane mother. He was politically ready to join the nationalist movement even in the last two years of his stay in England. That might be the reason behind his loitering in the streets of London on the day of the I.C.S. riding examination. Immediately on his return to India in 1893, he began to Indianise himself (Iyengar). In 1894, he wrote for *Induprakash* nine political articles lashing out at the Congress for its lack of touch with the Proletariat and the subalterns. His underground revolutionary work from Baroda ended in April, 1906, when he took charge as the editor of Bepin Chandra Pal's *Bandemataram*. The editorials and the articles were fiery in the first two years, till the end of 1907, where he showed his traditional sense of the Greco-Roman satire in his hard hitters at the loyalists and the moderates, especially at Babu Surendranath Banerjee and N.N. Ghose. Branded an extremist, along with Bepin Pal and Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose claimed the title of New Nationalism for their aggressive stance, a nationalism which was the joint produce of Bankim and Sri Ramakrishna. His letters to his wife Mrinalini show us the first glint and glimpse of the Mother-worshipper (The country as not a piece of land but a living image of the Divine Mother).

The Doctrine of Passive Resistance (1907), a series of essays published in *Bandemataram*, introduced the theory of the "colonization of the psyche", which Fanon used much later in 1961 in *The Wretched of the Earth* (Patricia Waugh: 344-345). From May 1908 to May 1909, Ghose was kept in a small cell, in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case, where he had the first feeling of Cosmic consciousness and then a Knowledge by Identity. That was a turning point in his

political and spiritual life. Sisirkumar Ghose tells us: "Here was an extreme temperament". Coming out of jail he became quiet, his satire gone in a wave of silence. He started a journal called *Karmayogin*, which continued the agenda of New Nationalism as the voice of God, but the fire was gone.

From 1911, he started signing Sri Aurobindo instead of Aurobindo Ghose and between 1914 and 1921; he serialized his major prose works in the monthly journal called *The Arya*. *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *War and Self-Determination* were serialized in the Journal (1915-1920). While Rabindranath became silent after the strong reaction to his discourse on Nationalism (Kripalini) after 1917, Sri Aurobindo asserted in these later socio-political works that Nationalism will stay back for a long time till humanity is prepared for a new consciousness. Rabindranath must have read Sri Aurobindo's views on the evolutionary steps to Internationalism and it is curious that he became desperate to meet the recluse after 1920 and he finally met him in 1928 despite his bad health. Rabindranath's turning to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1940 and his acceptance of Subhash as the Deshnayak indicate the poet's response to the old brand of nationalism: the country as Mother, who is chained and has to be freed from the clutches of the colonial rule. Sri Aurobindo stuck to this politics of New Nationalism till his passing in 1950. "The Tiger and the Deer" written in 1942, shows his symbolic dismissal of the colonial powers. It is symbolic of the three types of colonization: territorial, psychological and geographical. His poetry till last bears the stamp of his early brand of Nationalism.

In fact, his politics is part of his theory of integral life and living, part and parcel of his psychology of consciousness and the concept of evolving humanity. Poetry, Psychology and Politics are rolled into one. There is no contradiction, as he claims in his celebrated aphorism, "All life is yoga." Speaking of global unity through an evolution of consciousness, Sri Aurobindo maintained throughout his life the need of a revival of the ancient Indian glory for the benefit of the world, of all nations. Even as a lover of humanity he stuck to the concept of India as the guru of the world. His final poetry *Savitri*, completed through dictations to Dr. Nirodbaran Batabyal, is replete with strong nationalistic messages within the dense texture of an advocacy for integral life, material and spiritual.

The theoretical framework of my thesis will be Sri Aurobindo's own concept of integral life, which takes within itself a large body of politics, mundane and occult, global and national. In an apparently strange spiritual move, Sri Aurobindo became a friend of the axis power as he believed and claimed to have seen Hitler trying to destroy the world. Subhash Bose unknowingly stood for this destructive force, while Sri Aurobindo changed his political stance to follow the play of forces. Sri Aurobindo claimed, infra-rational it definitely is, the hostile force in Hitler had thrown him downstairs one night in 1938. It was during that period of convalescence; Sri Aurobindo would sit in the evenings for talks with ten or twelve people around him. These talks were recorded by A.B. Purani and Dr. Nirodbaran Batabyal who was also his personal physician. I wish to explore these talks relating to national and world politics, which throw light on his inlook into, and foreknowledge of, Hitler's moves. A disappointed yogi remarked in the talks: "Bose is not a diplomat; Fazlul Haque is a greater diplomat" (Nirodbaran 167). He did not approve of Bose's quarrels with Jyotin Sengupta in 1938, as he himself had been in perfect harmony with Tilak, Bepin Pal and Lajpat Ray.

Politics, like poetry, was a lifelong activity for Sri Aurobindo, the politics which integrates the other reflections of life spontaneously: the psychology of Consciousness, the transformation of the lower into the higher, which is there in his plays too, the cosmic and material themes in the two epics, *Iliad* and *Savitri*, his translation tactics, adaptations, and all his cultural gestures against the western construct of India. Sachidananda Mohanty rightly says, "In him, binaries and conflicts are harmonized: the West and the East, English and the Indian languages, city and the region, merit and social justice, religion and secularism, pacifism and militancy, conservation and development, nationalism and internationalism, et al." (Preface). The purpose of my thesis is to explore the evolution of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy from 1885 to 1950.

Here is a tentative chapter survey:

Ch-1 – Sri Aurobindo in England

Ch-2- The Concept of New Nationalism and Bhavani Mandir

Ch-3: The Turning Point (1908-1909) and *Karmayogin*

Ch-4: The Glorious Individual and its Relation to Society and the World

Ch-5: The Ideal of Human Unity

Ch-6: Poetry and Politics: the Mature Years

Conclusion.

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From Aurobindo Ghose To Sri Aurobindo – The Transformation Of A Fiery Bengali Revolutionary. Meanwhile, half way across the world from Paris, an angry, idealistic alumnus of King’s College Cambridge, by the name of Aurobindo Ghose, then serving in the Indian Civil Service, was undergoing a mental and spiritual turmoil of his own. Drawing from the Sankhya system of Indian philosophy, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother expounded the notion of involution, as the reverse of evolution, which became a central feature of Integral Yoga. The process of evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo then involves taking the reverse path – from prakriti back to purusha, from matter back to the original state of consciousness – through the help of Yoga. 14K likes. exploring Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga. Sri Aurobindo studies takes up the review of the primary writings of Sri Aurobindo. In this interview, Santosh Krinsky of Lotus Press discusses how the evolution of consciousness offers hope for solving the existential crisis facing humanity. Learn more at aurobindo.net. Recommended reading: "Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness" and "Integral Yoga: Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Practice." <http://www.aurobindo.net> <https://www.lotuspress.com/sri-aurobindo-or-the-adventure-of-consciousness> <https://www.lotuspress.com/integral-yoga-sri-aurobindos-teaching-and-method-of-practice> The idea of this Commemorative Symposium on the integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo was first conceived while celebrating his birthday anniversary at San Francisco Ashram in August 1957. It was felt that the time was ripe for the message of Sri Aurobindo to be increasingly known to the wider public in different parts of the world. Dr Frederic Spiegelberg's article 'Sri Aurobindo and Existentialism' is based upon one of the three talks which he gave at San Francisco Ashram on August 21, 1958, in connection with the celebration of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. French Revolution Political Freedom Human Freedom Political Trusteeship Indian Imagination. These keywords were added by machine and not by the authors. This process is experimental and the keywords may be updated as the learning algorithm improves. Kishore Gandhi, Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age, 2 ed. (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 1991).Google Scholar. 4. R. C. Zaehner, Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 4.Google Scholar. 5. For a detailed comparison between Aurobindo and Marx see D. P. Chattopadhyaya, History, Society and Polity: Integral Sociology of Sri Aurobindo (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1976).Google Scholar. Sri Aurobindo is also known as Aurobindo Ghose and also spelled as Aravinda. He propounded a philosophy of divine life on earth and founded an ashram in Puducherry. His epic poem Savitri is one of the greatest works of him. He had written several books focused on Indian culture, socio-political development of the country, spirituality, etc. Sri Aurobindo: Facts at a Glance. Birth Date: 15 August 1872. Place of Birth: Kolkata, West Bengal, India (Present-day). Established: Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Philosophy: Integral Yoga, Involution, Evolution, Integral psychology, Intermediate Zone, Supermind. Literary Works: The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga, Savitri. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: The Man behind United India.