

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

THE EXPANSION OF INDIA: A PERSPECTIVE OF SRI AUROBINDO

APARNA SINGH

Research Student, Department of English, D.D.U.G.U. Gorakhpur

aparnasingh893@gmail.com



APARNA SINGH

ABSTRACT

Sri Aurobindo was the first Indian leader to advocate publically India's complete independence "Purna Swaraj". As a national prophet he has explored the nature of freedom very intensely and fervently. He has explained it as 'the longing to be free is lodged in such a deep layer of the human heart that a thousand arguments are powerless to uproot it'. Sri Aurobindo drew us closer to this notion of freedom foremost all the way through the eyes of a revolutionary political leader who was furthermore a poet, and afterwards a mystic and spiritual Guru that he turned out to be. As a mystic and seer he not only perceived how the future of India should be but also remarkably exclaimed about the role of India at global platform.

The core and crux of this paper is to highlight the dimensions of Indian freedom, expansion of India and her role in shaping up a new, unified human civilization, presented in Sri Aurobindo's radio broadcast on 14th August, 1947. What expectations and prophecies he had for India after independence and how he wanted to see India expanding is the subject matter of the study. This paper is an attempt to convey his vision for a global village.

Key Words: Message, Divine Will, freedom, unity & integrity, resurgence, human evolution, spiritual transformation, world community and role of India.

India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma. (*India's Rebirth*, 02)

- Sri Aurobindo

After almost 800 years of slavery, Indians got the opportunity to breathe in the air of a free country. 15th August 1947 was really a day of a great

celebration for India. The outer chains of slavery were broken but the signs and wounds are still there on the bosom of our mother land. She was newly born, turbulent without peace, scattered in various autonomous regions, divided and dipped in blood with the formation of Pakistan. The hands which were now holding her were almost new and inexperienced to shape her future and provide a basic and far reaching guideline to her new ways. The country was in need of path lightening-guiding insights and directions to keep sustaining the hope, faith and dream of a bright future. Sri Aurobindo saw a vision for the independent country and his radio broadcast, aired on 14th August, 1947, on the eve of the India's Independence, manifests his insights and dreams about her future. It was not

only motivating and encouraging to the early independent India but is also of special relevance and importance even now to the contemporary India. Sri Aurobindo has widely discussed about the future expansion of the spirit of free India. Every word of the utterance is over whelmingly pertinent to the future of India, indeed to all mankind, and it requires to be studied in its entirety.

The prophet of nationalism begins the ever inspiring message with the significance of 15th august and declares it, not only for India, 'the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age', but also for Asia and the whole world as it connotes the entry of a new-fangled power into the comity of nations with unimagined potentialities and possibilities which has to play a great role in shaping the political, social cultural and spiritual prospects of the humankind. As 15th august was his date of birth also, for him this 'coincidence' of the date of Independence is not just an accident but is a mark of 'the sanction and seal' of the Divine Power that steer his steps. It also suggests that all his ideas, prophecies and works are the will and wish of the Divine Being that will certainly be fulfilled on right time. He goes on to say that he had anticipated to witness five world-movements fulfilled in his lifetime, although they had seemed to be at first like 'impracticable dreams', but now he could perceive that they were on their way to achievement.

Sri Aurobindo speaks about the first dream that is by a revolutionary movement India will achieve liberty and unity, of which first part was accomplished. That day 'India was free but she had not achieved unity' but he affirms that unity must and will be achieved. The present India has achieved unity politically and geographically but integral unity is still in process as far as the walls between the communities are concerned. The gulf specially, between Hindu and Muslims is not filled that makes India weaken with the continuous communal riots as he mentioned:

The old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more

than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go.

He anticipated that we should hope that it will come about 'naturally, by an increasing recognition of not only peace and concord but of common action', he further adds that the accurate form of unity 'may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance', and asserts that, the division must and will go and 'unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future'. India has to secure her integral unity because it is the first and foremost need of this hour to provide a strong base for the future expansion of India.

His second dream was the resurgence of Asia and India's growing role and place in the council of nations, he says:

Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

Almost all parts of enlightened Asian continent were colonized by the Europeans till 17th century and the East was pushed into dark ages of slavery, torture and subordination. The burden of enslavement provoked the lands of Asia including India to revolt against it. With the independence of India many of them got their freedom and some years later Asia gained the complete sovereignty. In very short span of time Asian nations have emerged as the world powers and secured their places among the self-sufficient nations in UNO as well. India too has

played a great part in political arena of Asia and world whether in UNO, SAARC or G-20, everywhere she has taken the seat of the promoter of such principles like peace, harmony and co-operation and supporter of warless and arms free universe in form of her distinguished foreign policies like Panchsheel Treaty and Gut-Nirpekshita Policy. She has always inspired and motivated the countries of the world to establish association, equation, and coexistence and to work for a better human world. We can perceive that the dream has been largely fulfilled and can forecast the mounting possibilities of the future.

Sri Aurobindo's third dream relates with the idea of 'a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer brighter nobler life for all mankind'. It is under process. He admits the fact that the alarming complexities will always be there, standing in the way but furthermore declares that 'unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement' and that 'human imbecility and stupid selfishness' cannot take stand more in opposition to this obligation and the Divine Will. Indeed, despite all blindfold national competitions and the tussles between the power federations, the concept of 'One World' has taken root in the human consciousness in a way which would have been improbable or beyond imagination fifty years ago, and the inclination towards it is unmistakable. The spirit of oneness of which the world is unaware up till now, will emerge and turn out to be the central concept of humanity. But the responsibility of India is fairly large what Swami Vivekananda intended long before, "*India will lead the world in the regeneration of the brute into man, and man into the God*" (c.w.4:315), so as Sri Aurobindo contends;

India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure.

The fourth dream relates to the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge to the world. The work is half done as the process was started already during the 17th century when the oriental philosophy was accepted by Europe and by the American Transcendentalists who derived light from Indian scriptures, like Upanishads and Gita. With the advent of Swami Vivekananda it reached into the every corner of the world and had taken the whole world in its shelter. Sri Aurobindo proclaimed about the future possibilities of this movement;

That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

In the present scenario we can notice the facts of the growing curiosity in Indian spirituality and yoga all over the globe and of a widespread movement in this direction. The west, after experiencing the ever burning, unquenched lust of the physical world and the materialistic prosperity, is now much expectedly looking towards the spiritual treasures of India to provide the solution of all human problems. We are amazed to know that urge in west to explore it has made the researches and practices in this field even hundred times more than our own country. The scriptures of orient Vedas, Upanishads, Smrities, Puranas and the great masters like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo who have interpreted the principles of spirituality are being studied and explored in the west at a large scale.

To state the final dream of Sri Aurobindo, it was 'a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and bring the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society'. I think this dream is connected with his concept of evolution of the human consciousness and the vision of the emergence of the future man, the Gnostic Being. This dream actually indicates towards the destiny of man and this is the toughest task in all five of his dreams which has thousands of obstacles standing in its ways quite from the preliminary stage. If we put a glance over contemporary world

movements, we will find the urge to merge all kinds of diversions and divisions for the sake of humanity but this urge seems insufficient and always kneels down in front of the selfishness, greediness and lust of power and wealth which are the nature of the ignorant human mind. This is just because human consciousness at large is still living in lower hemisphere and is not free from the animal instinct. The process in present time is sluggish and limited to a few but we should remember that Sri Aurobindo's vision extends far beyond the immediate and apparently intractable problems of the day and the future will surely unfold the fulfillment of his prophecy. According to him, the steering position in this movement will be of India and she should perform her responsibility towards the universe as being the most ancient civilization;

If this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers. Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.

He explained about the direction in the following extract which is taken from his famous Uttarpara speech, where he speaks of his spiritual experiences in jail:

"Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world; it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising this nation to send forth my word...When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the *Santana Dharma* that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the *Santana Dharma* that shall be great. But what is the Hindu religion? It is the Hindu religion only, because the Hindu nation has kept

it, because in this peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and limited purpose...I say no longer that *Santana Dharma* is for us Nationalism... *Santana Dharma* is Nationalism" (*India's Rebirth*, 46).

India is progressing by holding this dream. On the outer ground we see India, confronting numerous problems itself, but at inner level the process has been started long before. As this is the period of transition for India, she is encountering the external problems outwardly and from inside she is developing her inner strength, rejuvenating her spiritual powers and gradually working and exploring the means of human evolution. Although the changes are not being seen explicitly on the surface, but the positive energy and a ray of light behind the surface can be realized everywhere. The blazing luminaries are silently working according to Sri Aurobindo's dream just like nature works secretly behind the scene before its complete manifestation. The message is a blazing light to the future. It is based upon his theory of Integral evolution and gradual advancement. From incontinent to conscious and subsequently to the transformation of consciousness into higher consciousness, in such way the advancement of the being has to be continued. Human being is evolved from the incontinent to consient and in coming periods it will achieve the super consient state as a Gnostic being and the nature has to be transformed into super nature. Every inanimate and animate being will attain the super conscious level of existence collectively through an integral process, this is the destiny. As in process of transformation an individual has to ascend himself first, the first necessity was to set India free from the stupor state

of slavery which has pushed the collective conscious of this awakened land.

The accomplishment of Independence was just a prelude to India's future responsibility as a world power - an indispensable phase consecutively that the traits of India's soul might re-emerge from the slumber of ages and be given to the world. But at the turn of the last century the immediate need was the liberation of India from foreign rule. Nation, like individual men, cannot progress to its fullest potential as the Swadharma is not able to articulate itself without restraint in the collective life. 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' was central formula to his concept of freedom but they are not on the outer and conceptual basis as it had been exhilarated in the French Revolution. His concept of freedom had widened to embrace the whole world, and he had come to see clearly the importance of harmonizing the claims of freedom with those of equality and brotherhood. Sri Aurobindo was convinced that, once given her freedom, India would develop in herself the means to reverse in spiritual terms the triangle of liberty, equality and fraternity. The message is also indicating towards the same as he, first talks about the liberation of India, then unity and equality upon which the idea of fraternity lies, and again it should be first realized on the national grounds and will go afterwards to the world, comprising the whole humanity.

This was Sri Aurobindo's sadhana for the Supramental Descent and it was for the fulfillment of this dream that he came. This message was the expression of his hope and vision that India will have a leading role to play in these movements - the message is indeed his call to the 'new and free' India to be true to her spiritual destiny and be the guide of humanity to realize its destiny. The real expansion and evolution of India as well as the world is possible by following these commandments which may take time but will be achieved. The pace of movement is slow but India, day by day is leading towards the goal by completing each and every step of it. I want to conclude with quoting the lines from the Mother where she takes up the idea and presents her imagination of such day, taking place on earth;

A new light shall break upon the earth,

A new world shall be born,

And the things that are announced will be achieved. (p.136)

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