



## CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION AND CONSCIOUSNESS: A STUDY OF HERO IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PLAY 'VASAVADATTA'

RANA JALPA

Research Scholar, Sainath University, Ranchi



### ABSTRACT

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) was a major Indian English playwright. He wrote five complete and six incomplete verse plays during 1891-1916. He was a great philosopher also. Glimpses of his philosophy such as idea of evolution and consciousness, intuition and love can be seen as major themes of his plays. All his plays are in the form of in poetry and romance. This present research article will study the hero of the play Vasavadatta in the light of Sri Aurobindo's thought and concept of evolution and consciousness. It describes the importance of Aurobindo's perspective and method of writing of plays. His sense and skills in play writing makes Sri Aurobindo's place inevitable in the area of education and literature.

Keywords: Evolution, Consciousness, Surrender

Article Info:

Article Received:20/04/2015

Revised on: 27/04/2015

Accepted on: 29/04/2015

©KY Publications

Sri Aurobindo is one of the leading writers in the field of Indo-anglian literature and his contribution in Indo-anglian drama is inevitable. He was dramatist, a master of prose art with his wonderful mastery over languages like English, Sanskrit and Bengali, poet of great power and versatility and critic of life and literature. Indian English dramas are influenced by the epic myths and legends. Most of Sri Aurobindo's plays are mythological or legendary. Sri Aurobindo has written many plays of which only five are complete: *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Vasavadatta*, *Rodogune*, *The Viziers of Bassora* and *Eric*. We also find the impact of Sanskrit playwrights like Bhasa, Kalidas and Bhavabhuti on Aurobindo.

He was a great philosopher and seer. One of Sri Aurobindo's main philosophical achievements was to introduce the concept of evolution into Vedantic thought. Most of this idea of evolution is reflected in Sri Aurobindo's poetical works. Faith,

cheerfulness and confidence in the ultimate victory are the things that help to make character's progress easier and swifter. All Sri Aurobindo's heroes and heroines exhibit this quality of cheerfulness and faith, making them possible examples of success among the ordinary conditions of man.

Sri Aurobindo bases himself on the Vedāntic view of consciousness, which says that consciousness is omnipresent throughout reality and that it visible as a range of ever-higher degrees of consciousness and being. According to Sri Aurobindo, "it is at this moment for the first time becoming possible to let a supramental consciousness enter into one's being and transform it in every respect". The comprehensive, supramental transformation of all aspects of human nature is the central theme of Sri Aurobindo's work. He says,

Consciousness is a fundamental thing, the fundamental thing in existence – it is the energy, the motion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it – not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself.. When it wants to liberate itself, slowly, evolutionarily, out of Matter, but still in the form, it emerges as life, as animal, as man and it can go on evolving itself still farther out of its involution and become something more than mere man.

- Sri Aurobindo

This passage contains, in a very simple form, the essence of Sri Aurobindo's concept of consciousness and evolution.

'Vasavadatta' is considered the fifth and the last of the complete plays of Sri. Aurobindo. It was written in 1915, when he had already completed other plays. In 'Vasavadatta' as usual, Sri.Aurobindo treats great material the Udayan and Vasavadatta legend. The story of Vasavadatta traceable to Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, dramatised by Bhasa in his Sanskrit play *Swapna Vasavadatta*, has been given more psychological treatment by Sri Aurobindo and the romance is heightened in the play. Vuthsa Udayan, the hero of the play, is the young king of Cowsambie. Udayan is a conscious character with intuitive mind. Sri Aurobindo has well put his idea what he wants to convey through the hero of the play in this context, the hero of the play Vuthsa Udayan promise interesting study. The attitude of Vuthsa to life based on life view which Sri. Aurobindo seems to consider essential for peace, harmony and true spiritual development. Udayan with his heart overflowing with love and his self-surrendering nature is open to the influence of the psychic to a great extent. He is essentially noble, loving kind, and bold and possesses all cultural accomplishments.

King Mahasegn in the beginning of play very well describes Udayan that how he is blessed with Luxmie Vishnu and Saruswathie Mahasegn:

Yet many gods stood smiling at his birth.  
Luxmie came breathing fortunate days;  
Vishnu Poured down a radiant sanction  
from the skies

And promised his far stride across the earth;

Magic Saruswathie between his hands laid down her lotus arts.

Sri.Aurobindo's Vasavadatta is deeply dyed with the colour of innocence and experience. The love story of Udayan and Vasavadatta symbolizes the harmonious alliance of mind and heart. Vathsa Udayan, King of Cowsambie is famous for his prowess and heroism; meanwhile he devotes his time in music and art also. This romantic nature of King Udayan makes his enemy Mahasegn, King of Avanthie feel that it would be easy to defeat him. In the beginning when Gopalaca comes for refuge Yougundharayan warns his son

Yougundharayan: We should know first what soul is this abroad

And why he comes

But intuitive Udayan very well know the purpose of Gopalaca and deliberately surrender his self and calls him friend and brother. He obeys what his heart says and has faith in his self.

Vuthsa: We'll learn that from his lips.

Frown not, my father. I obey my heart  
Which leaped up in me when I saw his face.

Be sure my heart is wise.

Udayan is a man of intuition his super mind knows how, Gopalaca, a son of King Avanthie getting his faith wants to make him prisoner in the palace. But it seems that Vuthsa allows himself to be captured. He offers friendship to his enemy Gopalaca brother of Vasavadatta.

**Gopalaca:** Thou heardst me well? I am thy foeman's son.

**Vuthsa:** And therefore welcome more to Vuthsa's heart.

Come closer. Child of Mahasegn,

**Gopalaca:** I shall use the trust And yet deserve it

**Vuthsa:** I love thee well, Gopalaca. How dost thou love me?

Again when Alurca Udayan's friend for whom Vuthsa Udayan is still child has doubt the way Vuthsa surrenders his self to his enemy but Vasuntha his companion knows Vuthsa's conscious spirit and he rightly describes him,

**Alurca :** When will this Vuthsa grow to man?

**Vasuntha:** There is a wanton in this royal heart

Who gives herself to all and all are hers.  
Perhaps that too is wisdom. O, Vuthsa's  
wise!

Because he seeks each thing in its own way,  
He enjoys.

Sri Aurobindo's teachings state that the one being and consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the process by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be careless and it leads to perfection. Here also in the play Vuthsa Udayan does not care about worries he just follows his heart and surrender his self to every situation that can be wisdom and faith in one's self.

In *Avanthie* he becomes the willing slave of Mahasegn's proud daughter 'Vasavadatta'. She is a beauty with brain. She is a contrast to the intuitive emotional Vuthsa Udayan. She is an obedient daughter of her father. He was treated well and requested to teach 'Vasavadatta' the art of playing lute. Udayan employs the power of love to uplift and harmony, which are conditions of the super mind. 'Vasavadatta' initially fails to comprehend Udayan's words. His skill as a worrier later as a musician and lover like lord Krishna charms all around the people. It is a great irony that it is art and love for music which becomes the prime cause of his capture. There is a fierce conflict in her mind and she becomes the captive of Vuthsa. She says,  
Vasavadatta: His music is a voice that cries to me

His songs are chain and hangs around my  
heart I forget that I am 'Vasavadatta'

My captive heart beats in world-Vuthsa

Sri Aurobindo makes a clear distinction between a person's ego and his or her individual essence. The ego is, according to Sri Aurobindo, no more than a temporary construction, made out of memories, habits, emotions, vital and mental preferences, and necessary to give form to individualization. Here also Vasavadatta is a proud and egoist daughter like her father who promises to keep Udayan as her slave but nature conquers her and she becomes passionate even to allow the wheels of Udayan's "fame go trampling over my house's head" and thus she becomes one with him in freeing themselves. Again she says:

**Vasavadatta:** I accept, my king,

Thy service and thy homage and thy  
love.

If in return the bounty of myself I lavish on  
thee, will it be enough?

Can it hold thy life as thou wilt fill all mine?

**Vuthsa :** Weave thyself into morn and noon and eve.

We will not be as man and woman are  
Who are with partial oneness satisfied,  
Divided in our works, but one large soul  
Parted in two dear bodies for more bliss.

Her proud heart ultimately yields and she learns that true job lies in surrender to the heart's desire. She understands words of her mother Ungarica and friend Manjoolica who know Udayan's intuitive nature. Vasavadatta's vaulting pride or Mahasegn's blind political ambition, not only proves ineffective before the imperatives of love, but is also destroyed.

Udayan's art, music has stolen 'Vasavadatta's heart, later on prevails over everything and wins the sweet love of arrogant 'Vasavadatta' and thereby wins the state in long run. Then, to be free from the bondage of Mahasegn, both Udayan and Vasavadatta escape into Cowsambie with the hearty assistance of her other brother Vicurna, her captive princess Munjoolica, and others. This prestige-hurting event increases the wrath of Mahasegn, who suddenly sends his forces to capture Udayan again, but in vain.

At the end of the play Gopalaca realizes conscious spirit of Udayan his intuitive mind for who trust and conscience is inevitable. One has to rise beyond all of them to find a truly insightful consciousness, essentially harmonious, perfect, one with the divine consciousness that upholds the universe. He says his father that being captive how Udayan has enjoyed freedom and won Vasavadatta's heart. He consoles him with wise words:

No dishonour tarnishes the deed

But as a hero with a hero's child

He by a noble violence answers us.

We sought to bribe him to a vassal's state

Dangling the jewel of our house in front;

He keeps his freedom and enjoys the  
gem.

Then reconciling himself to the situation, King Mahasegn sends Gopalaca to support Udayan's freedom and make Vasavadatta his queen.

According to Sri Aurobindo freedom is within call for evolving soul. These identical demands of our nature, act clearly to progress until man fulfils his destiny to exceed himself. Here in the Play also Udayan acts according to his instinct. Sri Aurobindo, s concept of Evolution and consciousness is brightly reflects in the hero of the play. The whole play is progressed around his positive and insightful action .Again Sri Aurobindo proves himself as the master of blank verse in this play also.

#### WORKS CITED

- Bhatta, S. Krishna. *'Triumph Of Love In Sri Aurobindo's Plays'*, Triveni, April - June 1975
- Cornelissen, R. M. Matthijs. *Sri Aurobindo's Evolutionary Ontology of Consciousness*. Indian Psychology Institute Pondicherry, September 2002
- Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. *'Drama in Modern India'* the P.E.N. All India Centre, Bombay 1961
- Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2007.
- Kulkarni, S. S. *"The Play of Sri Aurobindo, a Study"* Published by MKVP, 1993
- Prajapati, Jimmykumar. *'A Critical Study of Sri Aurobindo's Plays'*, Research Scholar an International Journal of Literary Exploration Vol. 2 Issue II May, 2014
- Rana, Jalpa. *Depiction of Ideal Leader in Sri Aurobindo's Play 'Vasavadutta' And Kanaiyalal Munshi's Novel 'Pruthvivallabh': A Comparative Study* .Wizcraft Journal Of Language And Literature Vol.2 Issu III 2013
- Sri Aurobindo, *Hindu Drama, The Harmony of Virtue: Early Cultural Writings* Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram 1972
- Thakor, Bimal Narayan .*"Poetic Plays of Sri Aurobindo"*, Northan Book Publication, 2004
- Yadav, Saryug .*New Perspective on Sri Aurobindo's Play*, Published by Creative Book, 2000