

## **Divine Consciousness of Aurobindo and his Educational Thoughts: A Philosophical and Spiritual Discussion**

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### **Abstract:**

Since time immemorial, India has been a land of philosophers, sages and social reformers as well as some recognized great personalities. In modern times, Aurobindo Ghosh is one of them, who is considered one of the most talented philosophers of the twentieth century. He was a great nationalist in terms of social awareness. His contribution to Indian politics is quite different as he had no significant role in politics. An important aspect of his life is to know how Aurobindo Ghosh's nationalist revolutionary life transformed into that of a moralist, spiritualist and educationist. The great philosopher and educationist Aurobindo Ghosh, observing the shortcomings of the education system, emphasized on spiritual education as the most important medium of education. Rishi Aurobindo's contribution to bringing about change so that future generations can acquire better systems and concepts in the field of education is immense. The specific aim of spiritual education is to help an individual realize the divine consciousness and become a perfect instrument for its expression. He was mainly known for his ideal of integrated education which is divided into five categories, namely; Moral, physical, spiritual, mental and intellectual. It is clear that the existing education system should adopt the principles and systems of education envisioned by Aurobindo Ghosh which can help in the development of innate values, spirituality and divinity. The present article will illustrate the philosophical contribution of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh in the field of education which will relate the significance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education to various elements.

**Keywords:** Educational philosophy, Spirituality, Discipline, Curriculum, Human spirit.

### **Introduction:**

Aurobindo Ghosh, the great Mahayogi, occupies a very important position in the field of education due to his vast knowledge about ancient and modern systems of education. Similarly, he has also been recognized as one of the greatest spiritualists among the

contemporary Indian philosophers those who have contributed the most in order to transform the human life into a divine life. He was not only a great philosopher but eminent idealistic philosopher, poet, guru, and educationalist also. According to Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Education True education provides a free and creative environment for a child to grow mentally, morally, aesthetically. It helps in developing his inner interest and creativity and ultimately leads to the development of his spiritual powers. Aurobindo himself said, "Divine truth is greater than any religion, scripture, idea or philosophy". According to him, education should be dynamic in such a way that it is able to meet the needs of the present complex life. Its central aim is to build the power of the human mind and soul. Aurobindo was against the conventional education system. He strongly believed that our education should be best suited to the needs of modern life. Sri Aurobindo himself wrote "True education should not be a machine-made cloth but a real edifice or living stimulus of the power of the human mind and soul". According to Sri Aurobindo, physical development and purity of mind are the main goals of education on which spiritual development is built. The second goal of education is to train all these senses, hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling, tasting. All the senses can be fully trained if the nerves, the heart and the mind are pure. The third aim of education is the development or enhancement of mental powers such as memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination and discernment. Another important aim of education is the development of morality. Sri Aurobindo stressed that mental development without moral and mental development is detrimental to the human process. The development of conscience (mind, intellect, knowledge) and spirituality are essential for the all-round development of a child. In Sri Aurobindo's words, the main aim of education should be to help the growing soul to bring out the best in itself and perfect it for a noble use. Aurobindo proposed that education should only bring out and nurture latent potentialities; to integrate oneself with oneself, to live harmoniously with society, country and humanity so as to develop oneself as a complete being or integral human being. He believed that the purpose of education is not merely the accumulation of information or facts as it will lead to the temporary achievement of life goals but rather education forms character, personality and values. He gave great importance to indigenous education, language as it will help the child understand his past and connect with the present so that one can prosper in the future. He was not against any Western education but he believed that we should learn from Western education about the advancement of knowledge. He believed that the main aim of education is the awakening of divinity in the

individual. This can be done through yoga, meditation. He set five secondary aims of education - physical, spiritual, moral, mental and emotional development which he later called Integral Education. According to him, the process of education is the development of the physical, vital, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects of man. He strongly believed that every country has its own values, culture and history and the responsibility of teachers is to make the students aware and develop them in line with the values, ideals and traditions.

**Major Thrust:**

Aurobindo Ghosh, afterwards known as Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) has been ranked as one of the creative geniuses of the twentieth century. According to Navajata (1992) 'A yogi who writes is not a literary man for he writes only what the inner will and word want him to express'. This can be said of all his writings as his works cover a variety of subjects such as philosophy, yoga, commentaries on Vedas and Upanishads, literature and politics. Sri Aurobindo wrote some significant books which reveal his maturity, spiritualism and practical outlook of life. In his writings there is a national ecstasy and inner pleasure. As far as the variety of subjects covered is concerned, he proved his theory that a yogi can turn his hand to anything. Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* is a supreme contribution to philosophical thought, referred to as Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, which is a luminous and voluminous treatise. In 'The Life Divine' (Vol. I, 1965), he described the nature of 'Omnipresent Reality' which is made up of two quarters; Sat (Existence), Chit (Consciousness - Force), Ananda (Bliss) and Supermind (Real-Idea) from the first quartet, while the second quartet is made up of Mind, Psyche, Life and Matter. According to him mind is the highest of the lower principle which constitutes our human existence. In its origin, it is divine when it views things in its totality and not in divisions. In one of his lecture, he said In Supermind is the integrating Light, the wide entry into the Supreme Ananda the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original delight of existence from which it came, overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure.

Aurobindo's philosophy is based on the original Vedanta of the Upanishads. He believed in the drawing of a new Gnostic age when the earthly man will become divine and live a divine life. Aurobindo's philosophy is integral. This integral philosophy is based on the concept of evolution. His special contribution is that he tried to make an attempt to integrate intellectual and cosmic outlook of the West with the spiritual and individualistic standpoint of India.

Aurobindo holds that the integral spiritual ideal is to be achieved through the practice of yoga based on an absolute surrender to God. He proceeded with spiritual sadhana and yogic disciplines, he perceived particular truths penetrated in the veil of psychic phenomena and found himself in the presence of eternally evolving spiritual persons. Aurobindo based his philosophy on his vision of the all-oneness in the supreme reality. This idea is to be found in his political writings published in *Bande Mataram* and *Karmayogin*. He described reality as *Sacchidananda*- which is nothing but a common name for the triune principle of Existence, Consciousness Force and Bliss. Sri Aurobindo made it clear in 'The Life Divine' (1965) that all realities and all aspects and all samblances are the Brahman, the absolute is *Sachchidananda*, Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is one in Many, subject as well as object, cosmic as well as supra-cosmic. Absolute is para-Brahman, indescribable, inconceivable which cannot be achieved by mental dialectics. Sri Aurobindo has reached it through yogic consciousness. Brahman, the absolute has no ends, no desires, has no deficiency. His educational philosophy explains the real, the end, the beginning, the present and the past. From an integral point of view, the higher sower explains, because it integrates and transcends it. Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy presents an ideal that satisfies the whole being of man. This educational philosophy provides a perfect harmony within himself and with his fellow men. Sri Aurobindo nurtures a divine society and a divine man. Therefore, his educational plan aims at achieving the divine perfection of man and society. As he cherishes a divine society and a divine man. Hence his scheme of education aims at the achievement of the divine perfection of man as well as of society. According to him education must lead a child from the present to the future, that is, it must teach a child to accept his social heritage and enrich it in such a way that a much more developed society may be created. To know thyself is the keynote of Aurobindo's educational philosophy. Aurobindo pointed out that if you can know yourself, you will know the whole world and have the key to unravel the mysteries of the universe. His concept of national education takes out culture as its foundation while not ignoring modern truth and knowledge at the same time. The concept of integral yoga is the key to enter into his domain of education. Education he said, must offer the tools whereby one can live for the divine, for country, for oneself and others and this must be made the ideal in every school.

He was somewhat fond of the British education system in India, because he called it a mercenary and soulless system that was enough to incapacitate the Indian brain. Most young

Indians were cut off from their deep roots and disconnected from their just traditions. He often found himself in the strange position of having to explain to some of them the symbolic meaning of ancient Indian myths, for example, or, worse, narrate the myths themselves. Again, a French or English child would be given at least some idea of cultural identity, whatever its value, but here, in this country which not so long ago had the most living culture in the world. Here, all children are given only food cooked in other countries and pickled in India. That is to say, there are many irrelevant principles. Sri Aurobindo described it as the culture of ancient India, attacked by European modernity, defeated in material terms, betrayed by the indifference of its children, doomed to eternal destruction along with the soul of the nation that retained it. He preached the idea of self-discipline which was the cure for right discipline. In his theory of education, Sri Aurobindo focused entirely on the development of the life, mind and soul of the students.

**Conclusion:**

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh put so much effort to philosophically merge both Eastern transcendent metaphysics with Western scientific rationalism into a holistic one. His academic interest was interdisciplinary in scope: political science, education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. He was deeply inspired by Western thought, most significantly, French intellectual Henri Bergson's philosophy of cognitive evolution and Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. The ideas of awaiting human evolution and global futurism became the foundation of his spiritual philosophy and educational thought. He considered education as a tool for the real working of the spirit of the mind, a body of the nation and individual. He involved all to uplift man from the present state to a brighter future. He thought of such education that is for an individual that will make it's one central object the growth of the soul, its powers and possibilities. He extended his philosophy into the sphere of education at the Ashram with the setting up of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education which has been acting as a veritable laboratory for applying the principles of his philosophy in education for the development of the inner abilities of the children.

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