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## Political Thought Of Maharishi Aurobindo Ghosh

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Aurobindo Ghosh was a great scholar, true nationalist, great humanist a prophet of spirituality and a great ascetic yogi. He gave a new direction to Indian nationalism in the beginning of the 20th century by his intellectual genius and spiritual knowledge, praised the greatness of Indian culture and established revolutionary nationalism on the background of spirituality. All his creations are the dense essence of the new and rising soul of India and contain a spiritual message for mankind. His epic Savitri marks a new era in the field of spiritual poetry and is a source of inspiration for spiritual thinkers. Aurobindo Ghosh was a forerunner of nationalism in an important spiritual institution in itself. The deep sense of nationalism that was seen in him was not seen in any other person. The knowledge of India's soul that he had was not even known to great men like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi. Aurobindo lived the life of an ascetic and yogi in Pondicherry and opened an Hermitage there and taught spirituality and yoga. Aurobindo Ghosh was a true nationalist, he wished that India should get independence very soon. By getting knowledge from Gita, Vedas, Upanishads, he discovered such methods which could play an important role in India's independence. After establishing an Hermitage in Pondicherry, he retired from his political life and continued the efforts of India's independence there through the power of yoga. Aurobindo was not only a nationalist but he was also an international activist. Aurobindo Ghosh was a bitter critic of the liberal policies of the Congress, he believed that the Congress did not have a clear outline to liberate the country. He was of the view that the means and principles adopted by the Congress were wrong. Aurobindo Ghosh used to strongly criticize the British government like the Congress. Aurobindo was a bitter critic of modern capitalism, he has openly condemned the imperialist exploitation of the British. Aurobindo Ghosh demanded complete independence for India. He was of the view that independent India could become the spiritual teacher of the world. Aurobindo laid the foundation of very high nationalism, awakened self-respect among the countrymen and clarified the picture of the soul in front of them. For Aurobindo, nationalism was not just a geographical plot but like a mother. Aurobindo Ghosh's biggest contribution to political thought is his theory of spiritual nationalism. He propounded nationalism on divine basis. The concept of universal brotherhood by the ideal of human unity is the right way to solve the international conflicts prevalent in modern times.

**Keywords:** Civilization, Nationalism, Capitalism, Independence, Intellectual, Forerunner, Self-respect.

## **Introduction**

Aurobindo Ghosh is regarded as a revolutionary nationalist in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. Although Aurobindo remained in Indian politics for a very short time, but in this short time, he played a role in the freedom struggle that he became immortal in Indian history as a revolutionary nationalist. Aurobindo had an unwavering belief that India had a storehouse of spiritual power. He considered India as a mother rather than a motherland. The basis of Aurobindo's nationalism is spiritual and its ultimate aim is to achieve the ideal of human unity. Aurobindo was a major architect of Indian nationalism. The main objective of his thinking was the maximum interest of all rather than the happiness of more persons. By getting knowledge from Gita, Vedas and Upanishads, he discovered such methods which could play an important role in liberating India. After establishing an Hermitage in Pondicherry, he retired from his political life and continued the efforts of India's independence there through the power of spiritualism and yoga. Aurobindo Ghosh's life has passed through many stages on the basis of which his political views can be understood.

### **The three stages of his life are as follows:**

- In the service of the King of Baroda (1893-1905)
- Being active as a militant in the Indian National Movement (1906-1910)
- Enlightenment of Spiritualism in Pondicherry (1911-1950)

After coming back from England in 1893, Aurobindo served Baroda King and worked as a fierce thinker for national independence by publishing secret articles. At the same time, he criticized the liberal policies of the Indian Congress and also criticized the methods adopted by him, petition letter, prayer letter, memorandum etc. He told the liberal litigants that they should try to make India independent on the strength of their self-confidence and fearlessness. While in the service of the King of Baroda, he along with Jatin Banerjee started efforts to form a revolutionary organization and actively contributed to the national movement on behalf of Bengal. He organized radical youth to bring freedom to India. But his dream remained incomplete due to the oppressive policy of the British. Even after this, efforts were made for the development of spiritualism and to get freedom for India through it. He later merged materialism with spirituality after establishing an Hermitage in Pondicherry. His political views can be understood as follows:

### **As a critic of the Indian National Congress**

Aurobindo was a bitter critic of the policies of the Congress, when he came back from England, then the Congress was dominated by moderate leaders. His main work was limited to handing over the memorandum to the British. So Aurobindo did not like his methodology and published his critical views in Indu Prakash magazine under the name 'New lamps of Old' Criticizing Congress's policy, methodology and leaders, he said that the leaders on whom this institution believes are not fit to be leaders. He made the following Four allegations on the Congress:

- The aims of the Congress are defective.
- The method and principles of the Congress are wrong.
- Congress ignored the common man.
- Lack of sincerity among Congress Leaders.

### **Criticism of the British Government**

Like the Congress, Aurobindo also strongly criticized the British Government. He said that the system of governance established by the British was not in favor of the interests of our country. He also criticized the education system of the British and said that English education has killed our soul. They have destroyed our rural economy and made the villagers financially poor. He criticized the behavior of the British officers and said that they do not have any kind of lofty feeling. They behave like landlords ruling over slaves. He believed that the people of the West did not have more qualities than the Indians. Indians can run their own government. Indians are victims of slavery only because of circumstances. Aurobindo said that it is not a difficult task to break the shackles of slavery. If all the people of India unite and try to drive out these traders of British power from here, they will certainly succeed.

### **Criticism of capitalism**

Aurobindo a bitter critic of modern capitalism, he has openly condemned the imperialist exploitation of the British. He was of the view that the British capitalists exploit the Indian workers, so the condition of the Indian workers is deteriorating. India's wealth is going to England. Congress is not ready to say anything against this British policy, so they have strongly criticized the centralization of modern capitalism. He was of the opinion that as long as the laborers continue to be exploited, there can be no development in the progress of the nation. He did not favor communism by criticizing capitalism. They say that Communism breeds class struggle and anarchy. Aurobindo's aim was to achieve the ideal of equality, liberty and fraternity.

### **Aurobindo's thoughts on socialism**

Aurobindo Ghosh was of the view that socialism and capitalism stood facing each other in Europe. Socialist ideology is becoming popular. This ideology can take a long time to turn west and it can also improve a lot. The labor movement is becoming socialist in its reformist form everywhere. The present European civilization, based on capitalist industrialism, has reached its monstrous peak and will collapse. Our future is safe only in a socialist society, these thoughts of Aurobindo reveal his socialist outlook. It becomes clear that he was an opponent of capitalism and a strong supporter of socialism. He was of the opinion that only democratic principles are nurtured in socialism and the person gets ample opportunities for development.

### **Views Regarding Swaraj**

Aurobindo Ghosh said that instead of complete independence, the Congress is a supporter of the demand for incomplete independence by believing only in the love of justice of the British. Congress demands dominion status for India. Aurobindo Ghosh opposed this and demanded complete independence for India. He said that British policies can never be beneficial for India. That's why it is necessary to fulfill the goal of achieving Swaraj. Independent India can become the spiritual teacher of the world. That's why complete freedom should be our priority. Describing the concept of Swaraj as a spiritual necessity, he has further said that if India does not become independent, then the world will be deprived of the spiritual type of India, so Swaraj should be our primary goal.

Aurobindo Ghosh did not believe in the moderate program of the Congress to achieve complete independence. He said that when Indians do not have their own constitution, then it is futile to discuss that constitutional means. That's why he supported armed rebellion and passive resistance to get independence.

### **Views regarding state**

Aurobindo did not consider the state as a complete institution. He was of the view that the state, though always savior of the interests of the people, is in reality an instrument by which the ideas of a few rulers are imposed on individuals in the name of collective interests. They used to feel that there is no harm in subjecting the person to the state for the interests of the person, but the person managing the state must be the owner of the best character and the best person of the nation. There is no soul of the state, nor is there any moral value for it, therefore the person cannot be sacrificed for the state. Aurobindo did not consider the state as evil, but he accepted that the state must do some beneficial work. They wanted to limit the functions of the state. They did not consider the state as an end goal but a means. Aurobindo was of the view that the aim of the state is not the welfare of the maximum number of individuals but of all individuals.

## Political Constructive Program of Aurobindo Ghosh

Most of the scholars believe that Aurobindo Ghosh has nurtured the destruction side by strongly criticizing the Congress and the British Government. But this is not completely true, Aurobindo Ghosh had rendered his creative side only during the service of Baroda king. He said that the goal of India should be to get complete freedom from the British rule. For this salvation, he should not depend on the kindness and mercy of his foreign rulers, but should take recourse to the infinite reserves of his inner strength and power. Aurobindo Ghosh believed that the goal of independence would be achieved only when we leave our personal interests and work with the passion of true patriotism and leave the craving for the pieces thrown away by the British.

### The main aspects of his constructive political program are as follows:

- Creating awareness about freedom among the masses.
- Organizing people through non-cooperation and satyagraha.
- To develop parallel Indian industries on indigenous basis.
- Dismantling the British economic structure.
- Organize armed revolutionaries against the British government.
- Complete independence from the British empire.

To give a working shape to his creative program, he formed the Kranti Dal in Bengal. He was of the opinion that the independence of the country can be achieved only by spreading the feeling of nationalism among the people. Thus it was an important step by Aurobindo to dare to raise his voice against the British Government.

### Aurobindo's thoughts on freedom

Aurobindo's ideas about freedom were also painted in spiritual color. He has given two forms of freedom: inner freedom and External freedom. By inner freedom he meant to develop his natural qualities freely according to the voice of his soul and create harmony freely in the external environment. He believed that outer freedom is meaningless without the realization of inner freedom. If a person acts under external pressure due to internal forces, then he cannot be called free. Aurobindo was aware that in Western civilization, more emphasis is placed on external freedom. The meaning of external freedom is to believe in freedom in the field of social, economic, political etc. For this reason, Aurobindo had kept Swaraj as his political objective. The word Swaraj is derived from the Vedas. The word Swaraj is derived from the Vedas, which means moral and spiritual freedom. Aurobindo was of the view that every nation must strive to achieve internal freedom in order to achieve political freedom.

## **Doctrine of spiritual nationalism**

Aurobindo Ghosh's theory of nationalism is a very important theory. Initially she was a person of nationalist ideology but after moving to Pondicherry she became a completely spiritual person and her Swaraj of nationalism also became spiritual. He propounded the concept of nationalism at a time when India was in the shackles of subjugation. Aurobindo did a very important job by adapting nationalism to ancient culture and tradition. Although Aurobindo's contemporary thought, those leaders were also inclined towards nationalism, but they did not pay any attention to the self consciousness. Aurobindo laid the foundation of very high nationalism, awakened self-respect among the countrymen and clarified the picture of the soul in front of them. For him the nation was not just a geographical plot but was like a mother. He saw the nation as a living being and raised it on a spiritual perspective. To him the nation was like a mother. He used to say that the mother is bound in the shackles of slavery and to free her, India should be ready to give every sacrifice to the sons of the mother. Aurobindo thought that nationalism cannot be suppressed, it is the result of divine will. Aurobindo's aim was to make India the spiritual master of the world. He said that nationalism is not the nationalism of people belonging to one language, one caste or religion. His nationalism is not Hindu nationalism. His patriotism is based on human love and universal brotherhood. His patriotism is based on human love and universal brotherhood.

## **The ideal of human unity**

The ideal of human unity is such an idea of Aurobindo due to which he is also called the prophet of spirituality. He has emphasized on people to be idealistic to establish human unity. Aurobindo said that the ideal of human unity can be achieved by establishing a world state or a federation of different national states. Aurobindo wanted to unite the entire humanity in the thread of unity, so he emphasized on the ideal of unity of humanity. He felt that the threat posed by the First World War to the existence of mankind was considerable. If people are not made aware of the horrors of war in time, then India's dream of becoming a spiritual leader will be shattered. Aurobindo thought that if we also want to establish the ideal of human unity in the form of a union, then we have to break the boundaries of narrow nationalism. Aurobindo also paid attention to narrow selfishness, narrow nationalism, the obstacles coming in the way of establishing the ideal of human unity. He said that collective selfishness or narrow nationalism can be overcome if we keep the spiritual religion of humanity before humanity. If we realize that God is in all of us and humanity is the supreme symbol of divine power on this earth, then the ideal of human unity can be easily achieved. Aurobindo was of the view that due to this psychological unity, eventually the world union would be established and India's role in its establishment would be that of a spiritual teacher.

## **Aurobindo's thoughts on violence**

Opinions of many thinkers regarding violence are different, some consider them as non-violenceists and some as violenceists. The truth is that he was a supporter of both non-violence and violence. In his political life, he gave the introduction of violence by emphasizing on armed revolution. But after retiring from politics, he did not give up violence completely even after adopting a spiritual path during his stay in

Pondicherry. He said that if violence is needed to protect the nation, then violence should be used. If nationalism is nurtured by non-violent means, then the use of violence is prohibited. Highlighting the importance of violence, he has written in the book "Geeta Rahasya", killing the enemies of the nation in religious war is also a part of religion. It is clear from this that he was basically a non-violenceist, but considered violence as necessary. He was not opposed to non-violence but was not ready to accept it in principle as the sole criterion. He was not opposed to non-violence, but he was not ready to accept it in principle as the only criterion. When necessary, he gave more importance to violence than non-violence.

### **Aurobindo's views on the theory of law**

Aurobindo Ghosh believed that law is merely an expression of public will. Good laws are a sign of good political system. Laws must be obeyed. Laws are the foundation of political organization in social life. But the law is obeyed or punishment should not be based on power. Laws should be made by the people themselves. The laws that are imposed on the public lack moral force behind them and they are not accepted by the public for a long time because brute force is working behind them. Laws are obeyed because they are useful. If the laws are absolute then they start being disregarded. Thus Aurobindo believed that the public should follow just and useful laws only. The people have the right not to obey those laws which hurt their soul. One should not follow unjust laws even if he is punished for disobeying.

### **Aurobindo's thoughts regarding social reforms**

Moderate leaders like Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale of the Indian National Congress gave more emphasis on social reforms. Aurobindo was not much bothered about social reforms. He was of the view that when Indians would get political power, social reforms would also take place gradually. He believed that talking about any kind of social reforms under political subjugation is imaginary and baseless. Aurobindo was of the view that political freedom is the life of the nation. It is ignorance and futility to strive for social reforms without attaining political freedom. Thus Aurobindo did not pay much attention to social reforms.

Thus, after studying the above political views, we can say that they did not agree with the aim and means of the Indian National Congress. He was critical of the British government and had no faith in the sense of justice and goodwill of the British. They wanted to achieve Swaraj and to achieve this objective they initially believed in armed rebellion and later became supporters of passive resistance. On moral grounds, he was not opposed to violence, but he believed that if a nation was capable of achieving freedom through violence, it should not hesitate to do so. He did not consider the nation as a piece of land or a figment of the mind, but in his view it was a great power based on spirituality. Aurobindo gave some topics of political thought, nationalism, individual freedom and unity of human being a spiritual basis. He propounded nationalism on a divine basis and breathed a new life into the Indian National Movement. The concept of universal brotherhood by the ideal of human unity is the right way to solve the international conflicts prevalent in modern times. From this point of view, his thinking is omnipresent and universal. Social

reform is important to him, but before giving practical shape to these, he considered it more necessary to achieve political independence.

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