

THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF SAGE AUROBINDO

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It is very few in the world, even in our own country, who have been able to appreciate or understand the great message of Sage Aurobindo, partly because of the lofty style of his writings and the elevated form of his thinking, which is lifted above the common man's thinking in terms of objects of sense.

Aurobindo's presence, his birth, his life, his career and his message have all been a great pride to our country, a matter of immortal memorial for the whole nation because his life and teachings were directed to the integration of the nation as a whole and, much more, the integration of the human personality and the universe in its proper perspective.

May I be permitted to take a few minutes to give an outline of what I have enshrined in my heart as the eternal message of this great sage, which I believe should become an object of contemplation for every one of us.

The great Aurobindo was a nation builder, as he was well known to everyone in our land. He was a vigorous thinker right from his early childhood, a dynamic yogi, a power in himself who wished to bring together the political forces of our country for the liberation of its spirit. We have to underline this word 'spirit'; Aurobindo wished to liberate the spirit of India from the clutches of alien forces, and in this attempt, God opened up a new path to him.

Many of you might have read his maiden speech, known as the Uttarpara Speech, which proclaimed the first word of his mission to mankind. After he was released from the Alipur jail in Calcutta, he spoke with the words of a godman, not as a politician. The humanity in him had been transformed into the divinity which was his spirit. Aurobindo the politician and the leader of the nation became Aurobindo the sage of Bharatavarsha and the liberator of the spirit of India, not merely the political liberator.

What miraculous and surprising experiences he had during the legal processes he had to pass through in the jail, and out of the jail; and the jail was the context of his marvellous speech. He was locked up within the bars of the jail, and the liberated spirit of Aurobindo spoke. "What did I see? I saw Krishna guarding me. They were not human guards who kept watch over me. Krishna was there. I saw Narayana parading in the jail. I was brought before the magistrate. What did I see? Narayana was there to judge me. It was not the prosecutor that was in front of me. It was Bhagavan Sri Krishna that was arguing." In this strain Aurobindo spoke, stirring the soul of his audience – not merely the audience that was there, but stirring the state of India as a whole, and sowing the seed of human liberation in its spiritual connotation.

He made up his mind, as you all know who have read his biography and his life, to dedicate his life for the higher cause of the cosmos as a whole rather than to a part of it, a footprint of it which is Bharatavarsha merely or even this Earth, so to say. He gave us a lead to set an ideal and an example. Then he deliberately shut himself up in a cave in Pondicherry, and this had no political background, though historically and chronologically we may say it had a political background. But I would say that apart from the chronological meaning of his going to Pondicherry as a historical event, there was a logical sequence in the working of his thought, his ideas, as a leader of the spirit of the nation and of the world.

There is no need to introduce Aurobindo to the intelligentsia of the world. There is no need to introduce his thought to the seekers of truth, the austere saints and sages of our country. He came as an eye-opener to the slumbering souls of our country. As Tilak and Gokhale and Gandhi, in their own spheres, came to open the eyes of the nation in a particular field of activity and duty, Sage Aurobindo came to open our inner eye of wisdom and illumination to see the truth of things as they are in themselves, and not as they appear.

As I began at the very outset, he came to integrate the nation and then to integrate the personality of mankind. Because his very watchword was 'integration', his yoga is known as integral yoga, or *purna* yoga. What is this integration that he was after, and what was he to teach mankind? It is the blending of the personality of man.

Aurobindo is a stalwart with tremendous distinction. He is not like other teachers of spirit, or spirituality. There is a marked difference in his teachings, which is his greatness and grandeur. The word 'integral' is known to everyone. It is in the dictionary and in the encyclopaedias of philosophy, and learned men know what integration is. But a new meaning was introduced into this word 'integration', or 'integrality', by Aurobindo in his novel yoga that he taught to all people in the world, not merely to recluses. It was not meant merely for the ascetic, not for those who have dedicated themselves in a segregated manner. Aurobindo was opposed to all forms of isolation and segregation of spirit, which is the very meaning of integration, which absorbs, includes and takes into consideration every aspect of life rather than excluding any reality of life as undeserving of consideration. Aurobindo's great message is that there is nothing untrue in this world. We do not rise from falsehood, or unreality, to reality, or truth; we rise from lesser reality to higher reality, from lesser truth to higher truth, so that we live in a world of truth alone, and not untruth or unreality.

According to his masterpiece *Life Divine*, which is considered a modern gospel of integral yoga, the world, the cosmos, is the expression of the superabundance of the *ananda* of the spirit, of Brahman or Ishwara. Where can be unreality or untruth in the creation of the Supreme Being? Can God, the Supreme Reality, create unreality, or anything untrue, meaningless, absurd, that we can shun, abandon or abnegate? Nothing of the kind. God, the Perfect, created the world that is perfect. But there are degrees of perfection, there are degrees of reality, and the message to us is that we rise from a lesser integration to a higher form of integration.

We do not live an integrated life. We are sick in spirit. The whole nation, the whole world, the whole mankind, we may say, is sick in its spirit because of a lack in the perspective of life.

This lack in the perspective of life is a lack of integration of consciousness. We take ourselves to be one thing and the world to be another thing, and we take God to be one thing and the world to be another thing, which is what Aurobindo was opposed to. We see there is something to be abandoned and condemned, and given up as ugly and undesirable, which was what Aurobindo was opposed to. He was a messenger of the spirit, a messenger of the Absolute. He came to tell us what God is, what truth is. And naturally, in this vast panorama of God's creation, the manifestation of the spirit, there cannot be anything wholly untrue or undesirable. There is an element of reality even in that which we regard as despicable and lowly. But it is a lower form of integration, and therefore, we regard it as something undesirable. We regard it as undesirable from the point of view of a higher integration. We always make comparisons. When we say something is undesirable, we are taking the point of view of a higher form of life and understanding. Well, even that which we regard as desirable becomes undesirable from the point of view of a still higher integration.

But why not take the standpoint of everything from its own position? Then we will find nothing undesirable in this world. When we look at a child, we take the standpoint of the child only. We should not take the standpoint of a genius, of Einstein or Kant or Plato, and judge a small baby, because it is an undesirable and unjustifiable comparison. We cannot judge any person without taking into consideration the historical, biological and personal associations involved.

If I am to be honest to you, I should judge you from your own historical perspective. That would be justice. I cannot compare you with somebody better than you economically, intellectually or spiritually, and then say you are good for nothing. This is not proper. This is injustice. I have to take you for what you are, and everything has to be taken for what it is. Even inanimate matter, even the subhuman kingdom, everything in creation has to be taken from its own point of view. Then it becomes God smiling at this vast cosmos which is wonderful, soul-elevating and energising, not only to the spirit in us but also to our intellect, the psychological organ, the mind, and the very cells of our physical body. We become healthy not only personally but also socially and nationally, politically, internationally. We become cosmic citizens. We become part and parcel of this wondrous creation of the Supreme Being.

We have to live a life of this spirit, not only in ourselves, but inculcate it into the minds of other people also, not forgetting that they are all values in themselves. They are sparks of divinity with a worth and significance and meaning in themselves. God speaks to Himself, as it were, in this majesty of creation. It is Ishwara beholding himself in this *ananda*, in this superabundance, which is the quintessence, as it were, of the great masterpiece of Aurobindo, *Life Divine*.