Chapter V

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Chapter V

LIFE SKETCH OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
AND SRI AUROBINDO

The aim of the chapter is to bring out a brief illustration of the life and times of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. The main objective of this chapter, rather than to dwell on their life, is to bring about clarity of their thought process regarding education. There are many similarities between these individuals, not just in their worldview but also in their life history. The first similarity is the fact that both of them were sanyasis. Both these individuals went beyond spiritualism and ventured into social activism. Both of them were products of the prevailing social condition. They were born in the state of Bengal, which during the course of the freedom struggle was the cradle of many revolutionaries. Both of them were born in wealthy families and yet in the course of the realisation of their ideas became bereft of materialistic wealth. Though travellers of the spiritual path, both of them gave more importance to social
revolution and political freedom of their country, rather than the emancipation of their own souls.

5.1 Swami Vivekananda - The Prevailing Social Condition during his Birth

It was 6 years after the brutal suppression of the first struggle for Independence in 1857 by the British that Swami Vivekananda was born. The revolt of 1857 had spread all across the country and had promised to liberate the nation from the yoke of foreign oppression. The crushing of this movement had a great demoralisation effect on all who had dreamed of an Independent India. It was at this dark juncture, when all hopes seemed to be lost, that Swami Vivekananda was born. It was this Swamiji who became the inspiration for all the future movements for the country’s independence.

5.2 Education and Family Background

Swami Vivekananda was born on Monday January 12, 1863 in the Datta family in Calcutta. The Datta family was renowned for many years for charity and the spirit of independence. His grandfather Durga Prasad was a great monk. His father Viswanath Datta and Mother Bhuvaneswari Devi
were also equally religious and pious who never cared to amass wealth for the family. This necessitated so many ordeals in his early life but Vivekananda faced them boldly and in 1883 he passed his B.A. degree examination from the University of Calcutta. “*He completed his law studies in 1886 but did not appear at the examination*” (Dutta. 1954, P. 153).

Vivekananda’s earlier name was Narendranath. He conferred with the name of Vivekananda only just before starting for the United States at the suggestion of the Maharaja of Khetri, who with the Maharaja of Mysore, paid the expenses of his journey. He showed all the qualities of a leader among the boys of his age and his teachers, including the famous Iswara Chandra Vidya Sagar, were sure that he was destined to make a mark of his life. ‘‘*Naren had his education at a period when Calcutta was affected by Western ideas at the expense of India’s cultural values. To meet this great challenge a movement was started to modernise Hinduism. This movement was called ‘Brahma Samaj’ which was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828*’” (Radhakrishnan. 1957, P. 527). Naren joined the Samaj while he was a student, but it did not satisfy his spiritual needs.
5.3 Spiritual quest and Life as a ‘Sanyasi’

Vivekananda remained a bachelor and led an ascetic life throughout. He heard about Sri Ramakrishna through one of his teachers, Prof. Hastie, and it excited his curiosity to meet that great saint. Sri Ramakrishna’s life was an experimentation of the realisation of the eternal values of India. In the small temple of Dakshineswar he staged a life drama - first part aloof and introverted and the second part intensively human, dealing with the poor and the distressed.

In November 1880, Naren got a chance to meet him. They had a brief conversation and Sri Ramakrishna invited Naren to visit him at Dakshineswar temple. Naren went to Dakshineswar with a divided mind; half for self-dedication and devotion, the other Western educated, full of doubts and criticisms. “At their second meeting Ramakrishna revealed himself quite differently as a being endowed with supernatural and terrifying power” (Swami Yogeswarananda. 1953, P. 22). Swami Vivekananda’s close association with Sri Ramakrishna led him to realise the ultimate truths of life. Sri Ramakrishna, with the love of a mother and with the patience of an ideal
teacher, initiated him step by step into the deepest mysteries of spiritual life.

Towards the last phase of his mortal life Sri Ramakrishna said with great confidence: “Narendranath will teach the whole of humanity” (Swami Apurvananda. 1961, P. 160). On the 16th of August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna went into final Samadhi. To Swami Vivekananda, the life of his guru was an embodiment of purity and self-control. At the time of Sri Ramakrishna’s leaving his physical form, there were only sixteen disciples, including Naren, Rakhal, Niranjan, Sarat and Sashi. They worked as a team to improve their vision by conducting serious studies on Kant, Hegel and Spencer as well as philosophy, religion, theology and literature.

5.4 The Role of his Travels all over the Country in Forming his Worldview

In 1888, he wanted to have his solitary wanderings as a ‘Parivrajaka Sadhu’ with the main intention of seeing people and their ways of life. Such wandering lasted for four years in India itself. These wanderings were very useful for him to study
the different facts of life from great scholars like Pavahari Baba of Gasipur.

During four years as a wandering monk, Narendra could observe the terrible deprivations under which most of our countrymen lived. He understood that under the British yoke his countrymen had lost their self-confidence and self-respect. He recognised that the people who were mired in superstition, castesm and social malpractices had not only lost political consciousness but also lost all vestiges of social awareness. His purpose in life became the emancipation of the motherland from this ill circumstance. He became a ‘Sanyasi’ who went beyond the mere quest for God-consciousness into someone who yearned for the social uplift and political freedom of the country. He called on the people, “Feel, my children, Feel; Feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden; Feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think that you will go mad- then pour the soul out at the feet of the lord, and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, P. 367).
5.5 Foreign Travels and the Religious Conference at Chicago

He recognised that the path to solve the problems of the millions lay with universal education. He wanted Indians to acquire modern scientific instruments and practices and at the same time wanted his countrymen to spread the message of Indian culture throughout the universe. It was with this aim in his mind that he agreed to participate in the International Religious Convention held at Chicago. In 1893 in the month of May, Vivekananda left by steamer for America with the funds collected by his well wishers, to attend the parliament of religions to be held at Chicago in September. He had not been formally invited and enrolled as a delegate. With some difficulty he managed to get into the parliament; he was too luminous not to be let in. It was therefore a case of conquest at first sight. When his turn came he addressed the people as “sisters and brothers of America” (Swami Vivekananda. 1972, Vol. 1, P. 3). Which fascinated very much the entire West.

In the Parliament of Religions Vivekananda made an important pronouncement that he belonged to a nation which
practised all the religions of the world with an undying spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding. Rising above petty feelings of caste, creed and communal distinctions, he spoke of harmony and universalism. He stayed many months in America lecturing and talking and helping the Westerners to study Indian Philosophy. Then he went to England and Europe for spreading his great message of purity and strength.

It was in 1893 that Swamiji gave his first address to the world community. He attained Maha Samadhi in 1902 July 4. He made a large number of orations within this short span of nine years. Only a few of these speeches have been documented. It was J.J Goodwin who accompanied the Swamiji at the end of 1895 who finally started the work of documenting Swamiji’s speeches. J.J Goodwin passed away in June 1898 and so his work of documenting speeches lasted just two and a half years.

5.6 The Triumphant Vivekananda

In 1897, Vivekananda returned to India as a world renowned philosopher and a great prophet. His native land gave him a very warm reception. From England he had taken with
him two of his most faithful and energetic devotees Captain Severe and J. J. Goodwin. Later he was assisted by Margaret Noble an Irish woman, who became Sister Nivedita and worked for the cause of Indian independence. Vivekananda reminded his countrymen of the Indian ideals of ‘renunciation’ and ‘service’ to humanity and roused in them a strong sense of nationalism. He said- “Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the light and the life of Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you will have the satisfaction that you have lived, worked, and died for a great cause. In the success of this course howsoever brought about, is centred the salvation of humanity herein and hereafter” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, Page. 199).

Until January 1899 Vivekananda lived in Calcutta and then he set sail to the West a second time, taking along with him Sister Nivedita and Swami Turiananda, one of his brother disciples. He had by that time organised the Ramakrishna Mission in the loving memory of his God- intoxicated master.
He spent most of his time in teaching the people of England and America the practical lessons of ‘Raja Yoga’ and also in giving them the discourses they required. From August 1, 1900 he was in Paris for a few days. “He returned to Belur Ashrama in December 1900 and visited Mayavathi Ashrama on January 3, 1901. It was by a Trust Deed in 1901 that the Sri Ramakrishna Mission was legally constituted on a permanent basis. The constitution and working of the mission was designed by Vivekananda himself as detailed in his Epistle dated 27th April, 1896” (Swami Vivekananda. 1969, P. 488). In making Brahmananda the president of both the Mutt and the Mission, Swamiji was setting the best example of renunciation.

Between the day of his arrival at Colombo on January 15, 1897 and the day of his ‘Samadhi’, On July 4, 1902 he had worked day in and day out without caring his mortal body, and had organised mutts and missions, relief centres, orphanages and schools, preaching work, magazines and book publications. He had taught his Western disciples to work in India and had sent Hindu preachers abroad thus setting the precedent for exchange of workers between India and the West.
In the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, the fundamental quest of all spirituality is to acquire knowledge. He believed that knowledge would set humanity free from all shackles. He believed that education was the sole instrument by which emancipation of the soul as well as the liberation of the nation could be achieved. Swamiji said “Our Upanishads say that the cause of all misery is ignorance; and that is perfectly true when applied to every state of life either social or spiritual. It is ignorance that makes us hate each other. It is through ignorance that we do not know and do not love each other” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, P.241).

5.7 Mahasamadhi

On July 4, 1902 Swamiji was found in a very joyful mood. As evening came Swamiji’s mind became more and more withdrawn. He experienced a rare silence at Beluer Mutt. He went into his prayer room and sat in meditation facing the Ganges. The deep meditation took him to eternal bliss. Thus he ended his mortal existence at the age of 39 years 5 months and 24 days fulfilling his own earlier prophecy, “I shall never live to see forty”.
Vivekananda, who had lived for just 39 years, 5 months and 24 days became a towering personality who redirected the future of the country. He could reveal the spiritual message of India to the whole world and reform the religious dogma prevalent in the country at that time. He was a great man who considered popular and universal education as a mandatory tool for social change. His very aim in life was to lead the people from the colonial shackles to political freedom and self-confidence. Within a short lifespan, he could create a generation of ‘sishyas,’ who upheld and spread his ideals, as well as establish the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. His life was meaningful as well as successful.

5.8 Life Sketch of Sri Aurobindo

The biography of a person is not the narration of certain events between the dates signifying his birth and death. It is a combined effect of his personality, his approach to the world, and his interaction with the society. Viewed from this perspective it cannot be said that anyone has been able to totally characterize Sri Aurobindo who was a multifaceted personality. The reason for this was that Aurobindo was a person who had
an internal existence rather than an external manifestation.

“What could people possibly know—or hope to know about so unique a spiritual phenomenon as Sri Aurobindo? Could a frail boat ever comprehend the ocean’s wideness or depth? One might try to establish a semblance of intimacy with one or another of his many powers and personalities; the dreamer, the idealist, the poet, the scholar, the critic, the teacher, the patriot, the revolutionary, the priest of the Temple of Bhavani-Bharati-the philosopher, the master of yoga, the architect of the life divine; but full comprehensions eluded one’s mental grasp, and one found it was far easier to feel awed, and to love and surrender” (Iyengar. 1972, P.1323).

Every life sketch is an account of external events in which the subject participated or which were caused by the subject. If the subject lived a meaningful and conscious inner life, it might or might not be reflected on the recorded events of his life.

But there could be some who lived an inner life too profound to be entirely reflected through the events and deeds of their external life. That is why there is nothing surprising in what Sri Aurobindo told a scholar who proposed to write his
biography – which no one could write about his life because it had not been on the surface for men to see.

5.9 Childhood and Education

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on the 15th of August 1872, as the third child of Dr.K.D. Ghose and Swarnalatha Devi. Dr. Ghose had received from the West not only a post-graduate medical degree, but also an uncompromising faith in the Western, particularly the English, values of life.

“Swarnalatha Devi’s father Rajanarayanan Bose, referred to as a Rishi and described by some of us ‘the Grandfather of Indian Nationalism’, had no chance to create any impact on this grandson of his, later to be hailed as the prophet of Indian Nationalism, for the child, at the age of five, was sent to Loretto Convent at Darjeeling designed for European children” (Das. 1995, P.1). Two years later, in 1879, Sri Aurobindo’s parents led him and his two elder brothers to England and left them at Manchester, under the care of a Latin scholar, Mr. Drewtt.

In 1884, the brothers were shifted to London and Sri Aurobindo entered St. Paul’s School. In 1890, he was admitted
as a probationer for the Indian Civil Service and also, on a scholarship, to the King’s College, Cambridge. In 1892 he passed the first part of the classical Tripos in the first class as well as the I.C.S. Examinations. But he did not present himself for the riding test even after he was given a second opportunity and thereby become disqualified for the service. Their efforts at getting Aurobindo into the service in spite of his disqualification would have succeeded but for the intelligence reports about the young Aurobindo’s participation in forming a secret society ‘Lotus and Dagger’ in London, with India’s independence as its goal and speaking at the Indian Majlis at Cambridge against the British rule in India.

5.10 Return to India

Sri Aurobindo reached Bombay in February 1893. It was a quiet home coming, preceded by a tragedy unknown to him. The ship he was to sail by sank off the coast of Lisbon. His father, Dr. Ghosh, had no knowledge of his son having changed his plan and boarding another ship. The news of the mishap resulted in Dr. Ghosh getting a heart attack and dying a few days later.
For Sri Aurobindo, however, touching India after an absence of fourteen years marked the beginning of a new phase of life. Since he set foot on the Indian soil at the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, he began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it, such as a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the imminent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time he found himself entering super physical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane.

5.11 Official Life, Freedom Struggle and Life of ‘Sadhana’

At Baroda, Sri Aurobindo’s life began to flow in at least three different streams simultaneously. While serving in a few departments of the secretariat and as professor of English and French at the Maharaja’s College, he began delving deep into the ancient Indian lore, mastering Sanskrit and Bengali and learning several other Indian languages. “Sri Aurobindo entered Baroda state service in February 8th of 1893. Technically he was employed at the Baroda state service till
June 6th 1907. Yet February to April of 1906 and from June 12 to July 12th 1907, he had taken leave from official duty to participate in political action" (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, P.11). But very few in those days knew that he had become the source of inspiration for some dedicated groups of patriots spread over different parts of India. In 1901, on a visit to Calcutta, he married Mrinalini Devi, daughter of Bhupal Chandra Bose. Except for a short stay at Baroda and another at Calcutta, she had no opportunity to live with him. She died in 1918 after afflicted by a fatal disease.

According to Aurobindo, he had three madness. “I have three madness. Firstly, it is my firm faith that whatever virtue, talent, higher education and knowledge and wealth which God has given me belongs to Him… The second folly has recently taken hold of me. It is this: by whatever means, I must get the direct realization of the Lord. The religion of today consists in repeating the name of God every now and then, in praying to Him in the presence of everybody and in showing to people how religious one is; I do not want it….

The third folly is this: whereas others regard the country as an inert object and know it as the plains, the fields, the
forests, the mountains and rivers, I look upon my country as the mother, I worship her and adore her as the mother. What would a son do when a demon sitting on the breast of his mother is drinking her blood? Would he sit down content to take his meals, and go on enjoying himself in the company of his wife and children, or would he, rather, run to the rescue of his mother? I know I have the strength to uplift this fallen race; it is not physical strength, I am not going to fight with the sword or with the gun, but with the power of knowledge.

_The power of the warrior is not the only kind of force, there is also the power of the Brahman which is founded on knowledge…”_ (Das. 1995, P.1). It can be understood that Aurobindo went through a deep spiritual experience. His spirituality was not just a personal affair. It had a societal facet. The idea of Spiritual evolution is Aurobindo’s contribution. It described the evolution of life from matter and then the evolution of this life into a ‘mind consciousnesses’. Arobindo was of the opinion that this gradual evolutionary process would lead to a supramental being. He had a strong belief that the consciousness level of the society would gradually acquire a ‘satvic’ form and this would lead to a new world order based on
refined fundamentals. Aurobindo has put forward a system of education which would accelerate this process of evolution. He said, “...But the acquiring of various kinds of information is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education: its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and the spirit, it is the formation of, as I would prefer to view it, the evoking of knowledge and will and of the power to use knowledge, character, culture - that at least if no more. And this distinction makes an enormous difference” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. 17, Page. 194).

That was the time when Curzon’s move to partition Bengal inspired a determined protest from all nationalists. ‘Never had India seen such popular demonstration’, wrote Valentine Choral, the correspondent of the Times of London. Sri Aurobindo became a frontline activist in the struggle for freedom. “For Aurobindo, the issue of freedom of the country was not just a political game. He saw this as the first step in the creation of the kingdom of God” (Sri Aurobindo.1972, P. 20). At the request of friends who founded the National Council of Education in Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo came over to Calcutta in 1906 to head a College that would be a bold alternative to the
system of clerk making education imposed on Indian by its colonial masters. Almost simultaneously Bipin Chandra Pal, a leading public figure of the time, launched a newspaper, ‘Bande Matharam’ and invited Sri Aurobindo to edit it. The enthusiasm with which Sri Aurobindo and Bande Matharam were greeted can be imagined from a comment in ‘Sandhya’ edited by the Veteran Brahmabandhau Upadhyay: “Have you ever seen the spotless all white Aurobindo (lotus), the hundred petal led Aurobindo in full bloom in India’s Manasarovara?… Our Aurobindo is a rare phenomenon in the world. In him can be marked the splendour of the sattvik, snow – white and resplendent. Great and vast – vast in his heart, great in his personal glory – his Swadharma pure… and complete a man, a fire charged thunder yet tender and delicate as the lotus – petal…The words of Bande Mataram will drive out your fear; of thunder; fire will course through your veins; death will put on a face of a spring time joy…….. True, Aurobindo has had his education in England, but he has not succumbed to its bewitching spell. An efflorescence of the glory of his country’s Swadharma and culture, Aurobindo is now at the feet of the motherland, as a fresh blown lotus of the autumn,
luminous with the spirit of his self offering..., There bowed down to the mother, with the mantra of Bande Mataram....’’ (Jayakar.1906, P.87).

5.12 Sri Aurobindo for National Education

Complete freedom, ‘Swaraj’, became the specific target to be achieved and Sri Aurobindo had spelt out the methods - boycott of British goods, national education, organisation of a volunteer force to fight for the cause, etc. Aurobindo, who was an active participant in the struggle for freedom, believed that in order to acquire national freedom it was imperative to banish the mental slavery of the people. In his words there was a message that the system of education should be tailor-made to invoke nationalism among the people. “National education cannot be defined briefly in one or two sentences. But we may describe it tentatively as the education which starting with the past and making full use of the present builds up a great nation. Whoever wishes to cut off the nation from its past is no friend of our national growth. Whoever who fails to take advantage of the present is losing us the battle of life. We must therefore save for India that entire she has stored of
knowledge, character and noble thought in her immemorial past. We must acquire for her the best knowledge that Europe can give her and assimilate it to her own peculiar type of national temperament. We must introduce the best method of teaching humanity has developed whether modern or ancient. And all these we must harmonise into a system which will be impregnated with a spirit of self reliance so as to build up men and not machines – national men, able men, men fit to carve out a career for themselves by their own brain – power and resource, fit to meet the shocks of life and breast the waves of adventure. So shall the Indian people cease to sleep and become once more a people of heroes, patriots, originators, so shall it become a nation and no longer a disorganised mass of men” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972,Vol. 1, P. 718).

5.13 Arrest and Life in Jail

On the 2nd of May 1908 Sri Aurobindo was arrested, implicated in several terrorist activities conducted under the leadership of his younger brother, Barindra, and from the 5th of May 1908 to the 6th of May the next year, he was lodged in the Alipore Central Jail, Calcutta. In this solitary cell, he turned his
ordeal into a unique opportunity, realising what he had already known - the cosmic consciousness and the Divine in every being and thing. So he said in his speech at ‘Uttarapara’ upon his acquittal: “I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no it was Vasudeva, who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sree Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade…. I looked and it was not the magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the prosecuting counsel and it was not the counsel for the prosecution that I saw, it was Sri Krishna who sat there… and smiled” (Das. 1995, P.7).

The exciting trail continued for a full year, Sri Aurobindo refusing to say or do anything to protect himself. But the young legal genius who stepped forward to defend him, who later on became famous as Deshbandhu Chittarajan Das, proved prophetic when he concluded his final submission with these words: “My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who
is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this court but before the bar of the high court of History” (Das. 1995, P.7). At the end of a trial lasting 131 days Aurobindo was acquitted in the Alipur Bomb Explosion case. During his one year in jail, he developed into a complete spiritualist.

5.14 His Contemplative Isolation at Pondicherry

On being freed, he moved from Calcutta to the French controlled Chandranagar and then from there to Pondicherry. This movement was based on his own intuition. On reaching Pondicherry in 1910, he started a process of ‘sadhananas’ in
complete solitude. He remained in Pondicherry till 1950 at the
drop of which he attained Samadhi. It was during his ‘Sadhana’
in Pondicherry that Aurobindo became aware of the eventual
spiritual evolution of the human race into a higher level of
consciousness.

According to Sri Aurobindo, “At present mankind is
undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a
choice of its testing for a stage has been reached in which the
human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous
development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered
and can longer find its way” (Das. 1995, P.7).Sri Aurobindo
visualised the next stage of human evolution possible with the
descent of a Gnostic power - the supramental, capable of
transforming the present man.

The Mother, (Mira Aditi) French by birth, though of
Middle Eastern ancestry, first met Sri Aurobindo on March 29,
1914. The ‘Arya’, a monthly, was launched under her initiative.
Many of Sri Aurobindo’s major works were first serialised in
this magazine. The Mother had to leave for France about a year
later, but the magazine continued to be published. The Mother
returned to Pondicherry in 1920 and the Ashram took shape
under her loving care Sri Aurobindo’s first book, a collection of poems, entitled (Songs to Myrtilla) was published in 1895. Between that and the last work to be published during his lifetime, ‘Savitri’ (1950), he had written extensively on Yoga, Culture, Sociology, in addition to his poetry and plays. He also answered numerous letters from seekers most of which are compiled as books. His major works are ‘The life Divine,’ ‘The Synthesis of Yoga,’ ‘Essays on the Gita,’ ‘The Foundation of Indian Culture’, ‘The future Poetry.’ ‘The Human Cycle’, ‘The Ideal of Human Unity,’ ‘Collected Poems and Plays’ and the Epic, ‘Savitri’. All this and his translations, letters and minor works were compiled and published in a systematic manner, after his passing away on the 5th of December 1950 and a new edition of them, in 30 volumes, was brought out on the occasion of his first birth centenary in 1972.

5.15 Mahasamadhi

Though Aurobindo spent his time after 1910 in intense spiritual endeavours, he withdrew into contemplative isolation after 1926. He withdrew into a system of sadhana and book writing and sought to isolate himself from his pupils and well
wishers. Sri Ma took over the practical aspects of running the ashram. He attained Mahasamadhi on Dec 5, 1950 at 1.26 A.M.

Though it can be stated that the lives of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo were similar, there were some rare differences too. Swamiji’s life was a brief affair spanning just 39 years while that of Sri Aurobindo's spanned 78 years. Unlike swami Vivekanand, Aurobindo had the good fortune to live in free India.

Swami Vivekananda was celibate all through his life. On the other hand Sri Aurobindo was a family man for a short period of his life. Aurobindo took part in the freedom struggle in an active manner. Swamiji’s participation was confined to the intellectual plane. Both of them believed alike that education was the mandatory tool for social change.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid. p. 7


8. Ibid. Vol.17, p.11

9. Ibid. p.194

10. Ibid.p.20

11. Ibid.Vol. 1, p.718

13. Ibid. p.199


