CHAPTER : II

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO
Sri Aurobindo is one of the greatest philosophers, mystics, and spiritualists the world has produced in the 20th century. He lived on the higher plane of existence. He remarked to his biographers “that it was difficult to write his biography because his life was not lived on the surface”. He was not only a politician & yogi but also a great revolutionary, a poet, and a scholar.

No one has tried to deal evenly with all the different aspects of his life; domestic, scholastic, literary, political, revolutionary, philosophical, spiritual. He has given spiritual guidance to mankind. Sri Aurobindo described his own philosophy as integral. He has dealt with the traditional problems of the relationship between the transcendental and the phenomenal world, the phenomenal world as reality and illusion, the hyper evolutionary process and ‘the destiny of humanity’. He has probed deep into the problems of human existence.

He has spoken of the supermind which is beyond the mind and logical reasoning. As we awaken to the inner reality of our self, we can merge ourselves with the supreme Reality which pervades the universe and dwells in each one of us. He has established relationship between the body, mind and soul. He says that the gulf between mind and supermind has to be bridged and this can be done by a triple transformation. His reasoning is that the individual should feel the Divine presence within him.
Sri Aurobinda's life can be broadly discussed under three phases: First phase from his early childhood to 1905; Second phase from 1905 to 1910 and third phase from 1910 to his death in 1950.

First Phase

Sri Aurobindo was born on August 15, 1872 at 5 A.M. in Calcutta. His father was Krishna Dhan Ghose who became a civil medical officer after receiving his medical education in England. His mother Swarnalata Devi was the eldest daughter of Rishi Rajnarayan Bose, a well known exponent of Indian Culture. His father gave him the name Aurobindo which in Sanskrit means 'Lotus'. Between 1872 and 1877 Aurobindo stayed at Rangpur where his father was serving. Occasionally the family visited the house of Swarnalata's father, Rajnarayan Bose at Deoghar. Aurobindo didn't know Bengali for the first five years. Rather, he heard his nurse in the house speaking in broken English and broken Hindustani. Rajnarayan Bose, his maternal-grand father was a great patriot and well-versed in Indian Philosophy and Culture. But Aurobindo's father Krishna Dhan Ghose having a fascination for English education had provided his children the same. In 1877, his father sent Aurobindo to Loreto Convent School in Darjeeling which was meant for the children of the Europeans in India. We have a very little knowledge about Aurobindo's school days in Darjeeling. Sri Aurobindo has described a dream at Darjeeling as follows:

"I was lying down oneday when I saw suddenly a great Tamas rushing into me and enveloping me and the whole universe. After that
I had a great darkness always hanging on to me all through my stay in England. I believed that darkness has something to do with the Tamas that came upon me. It left only when I was coming back to India."^4

Aurobindo's father sent his three sons to England for education. Not much is known about the first fourteen years (1879-1893) of Aurobindo's early life in England. But we can guess that these years must have been very formative in his cultural make-up and intellectual equipment. Aurobindo's father left Aurobindo in England at the house of Reve. William H. Drewett who lived in Manchester. He taught Aurobindo English, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Latin and French, Aurobindo had enough time to read the Bible, Shakespeare, Shelly and Keats. So, he developed aesthetic and romantic ideas. His father didn't want his sons to mix with Indians in England, lest they might be imbuded by their outlook and revolutionary spirit.

Aurobindo read in St. Paul's School in London and later in King's College, Cambridge. There, he studied the work of the philosophers, poets and dramatists in their original Greek language. Then he also mastered the German and Italian languages. He received many prizes and medals for his excellent compositions "in the classics, literature and history".5 He took his graduation degree from St. Paul's with honours and a full scholarship to Cambridge. In college he was attracted towards the "freedom and emancipation and reconstruction of India."6 For this purpose he joined a secret society known as "Lotus & Dagger" having the same end. At this time Aurobindo had a
premonition that a great revolutionary change would take place in the world and he would play an important part in it. In Cambridge at his father's request he prepared for the Indian Civil Service but he was not willing to serve under the British Government. Nevertheless, he appeared at the examination and scored very high marks in Greek and Latin. But in the horse riding test he turned up late and was disqualified. Though his father served under the British Government, yet in later years he got disillusioned with the British. Karan Singh aptly remarks: "In fact he (Aurobindo's father) began sending his sons cuttings from The Bengalee newspaper in which he marked passages relating to cases of maltreatment and insult of Indians by English men". He also sent letters to his son denouncing the heartless character of the British Government in India. These letters drew Sri Aurobindo towards Indian politics. He thought of liberating his country from British rule.

While in Cambridge, he joined an organisation known as Indian Majlis which was founded in 1891. He played an important role in the activities of the organisation and became its Secretary. He along with other like minded Indian students discussed Indian problems and gave fiery speeches against British imperialism. As we have said before, he had joined the secret society (The Lotus & Dagger). Later he attracted his brothers towards it. Each member of the society took a vow to work for the liberation of India. Each also took upon himself to achieve that end. It is presumed that he might have been influenced by Mazzini's Risorgimento. He was also influenced by Irish patriotic
movement which was in full swing at that time. It is evident from his later writings when he came to India from England. In 1891 when the Irish leader breathed his last, Aurobindo wrote a poem entitled 'Charles Steward Parnell – 1891'.

In England Aurobindo thought of 'his future worship of India, the Mother'. He was extremely moved by India's sorrow at the hands of the British Government and promised for her emancipation. This can be found in the pages of 'Indu Prakash', 'Bande Mataram' and 'Karmayogin' in which he wrote decades later. Aurobindo became impatient to return to India so that he could do something for his motherland. He got an opportunity to come back to India when the Maharaja of Baroda went on a visit to England. He was in the habit of employing fittest candidates for running the administration of his Estate. He had a meeting with Aurobindo and was very much impressed by him. He offered him an appointment in the Baroda State Service. Thereafter Sri Aurobindo sailed for India in February 1893. Thus ended Aurobindo's life in England and he became an apostle of spiritual nationalism. In Baroda he stayed for approximately fourteen years from 8th February 1893 to 18th June 1907. He served in various capacities at Baroda. He first served in the settlement department. From settlement department he went to the revenue department. He also served in the secretariat. He got permanent work in the Baroda College as a Lecturer in French. Dinendra Kumar Roy who remained with Aurobindo during 1898-99 has commented that "Aurobindo is not a man of this earth, he is a God come down from heaven by some
curse."¹⁰ "Sri Aurobindo's activity during this period can be divided into five parts: (1) service in the various departments of the state; (2) literary activity, reading and study connected with college work; (3) political activity – articles in Induprakash and the beginnings of the revolutionary movement; (4) spiritual life; (5) family life."¹¹

Whenever the Maharaja addressed social conferences, Sri Aurobindo used to write his speeches. Aurobindo also carried on "the major part of correspondence that passed between Indian Government and the Baroda State ..."¹² In the beginnings Aurobindo was a pacifist and criticized the congress for its moderate policy vehemently. In the 'New Lamps for Old' he criticized the congress policy. He wrote a series of articles in Induprakash with a view to pointing out the moderate policy of the Congress. He had met leaders like Deshpande, Tilak, Madhav Rao and others. Aurobindo's severe criticism of the Congress policy perturbed Mahadev Gobinda Ranade, the famous Mahratta leader. He requested Aurobindo to tone down his criticism, but Aurobindo didn't. Sri Aurobindo's companions at Baroda included Madhavrao and Khasrao Jadav, K.G. Deshpande, Fadke, Mangesh Kolasker, etc. Sri Aurobindo visited Bengal in 1894 and met all his relations including his mother, sister Sarojini, brothers Baria, Jogendra and others. At that time, Aurobindo's hair style and appearance was like that of an English man. It is incredible to know that due to his change of appearance, when he returned home, his mother couldn't recognize him.
While at Baroda, Sri Aurobindo started learning Bengali, he read the novels of Bankim Chandra and the poetry of Michael Madhusudan. Later on he learnt enough to write articles himself in Bengali. But, he was not so well-versed in the language as in English. He didn't venture to give speeches in his mother tongue. He also read Sanskrit and the works in Sanskrit. He felt no regret in "leaving England, no attachment to the past or misgivings for the future". He was very eager to return to Bengal from Baroda. He himself worked upon the Indian Army of which he had won over two or three regiments. He took a special journey into Central India to meet and speak Indian officers in the regiment. He went to Bengal "to see what was the hope of revival, what was the political condition of the people, and whether there was possibility of a real movement." Since 1900, Sri Aurobindo desired to enter into the political arena and to contribute all that he could to be forces which were engaged in working for India's empancipation. But in spite of his wishes he could do little in the direction. His own province of Bengal was not so much prepared for revolutionary action. It was the principle 'Bande Mataram' and the idea of revolutionary action that changed the people of his province into intense nationalism. While in Baroda state service, he had visited Bengal to see his grandfather. But his visits were for political purposes. Some scholars suggest that his visits were not concerned with politics.

It will not be out of place to mention a few lines about his married life. He married in April 1901. His wife, Mrinalini Devi was
the daughter of a well placed government officer, Gopal Chandra Bose. Aurobindo had to face a difficulty at the time of his marriage. He was asked to do 'Prayashita' but Aurobindo did not agree to such superstitious practice. However, the marriage ceremony took place according to Hindu rites. But, Aurobindo's marriage couldn't prove to be a successful one in his revolutionary and later in spiritual life. Aurobindo was also influenced by Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda. Ramakrishna Paramhansa advised him to build a temple for political Sanyasins but many years later Aurobindo could realize the importance of Ramakrishna Paramhansa's advice. "It was not a signal for the kind of physical temple ... but a call to build a temple to the Divine Mother in themselves, so that she may dwell in each one."15

In 1902, Aurobindo had joined a secret revolutionary society in Western India under the leadership of Thakur Ram Singh of the State of Udaipur. Aurobindo joined the Revolutionary Party and took the oath to work for the liberation of India. In 1902 also Sri Aurobindo met Hemchandra Das who was an important figure in Midnapore. It was there that a decision was taken to start six centres of revolutionary movement in Bengal. He also came into contact with Barrister P.Mitter and Jatin Banerjee who were engaged in similar work. Sri Aurobindo, was thus associated with two revolutionary parties: One in Western India and another in Eastern India. He had also come in contact with the revolutionary leader Lokamanya Tilak, who was very much impressed by the thoughts and ideas of the young
revolutionary, Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo also came with many eminent leaders of the freedom struggle. Among them mention may be made of P.Mitter, C.R.Das, Sister Nivedita, Jatin Banerjee, Surendranath Tagore, etc. It was the partition of Bengal on July 20, 1905 that gave Philip to the revolutionary movement.

Second Phase (1905 to 1910)

In 1905 Bengal was in a ferment due to partition of Bengal by Viceroy Lord Curzon. Lord Curzon took the step of partitioning Bengal with a view to suppressing the revolutionary activities of the Indians. Bengal was the largest province as well as the nerve-centre of all revolutionary movements. He divided Bengal into East Bengal predominantly inhabited by the Muslims and West Bengal predominantly inhabited by the Hindus. He wanted to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims. But it gave rise to revolutionary movement throughout India demanding its withdrawal. Lord Curzon turned a deaf ear to it. It "created a situation which Sri Aurobindo considered a blessing. He directly and actively engaged himself in the struggle for national freedom."16

During his stay at Baroda the plan of his future policy had already been framed in his mind. This aspect of his thought may be studied from two aspects, his theoretical approach to the problem of Indian freedom and the concrete measures whereby he envisaged this could be brought about."17 His theoretical approach was that Indian should get complete freedom from British rule. It is pertinent to mention that this idea came to him at the age of 21 when he had just
returned to India after a stay of fourteen years in England. It is evident that in Baroda, he was thinking and planning in terms of liberating his motherland. We have already given a hint as to how he was writing political articles in England with this end in view. After return to India he wrote extensively on political matters in order to familiarize the nation to his ideas and approach to the problem of Indian freedom. There were, as he refers three side to his political ideas and activities—"first, there was the action with which he started, a secret revolutionary propaganda of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection. Secondly, there was a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence... Thirdly, there was the organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermining of the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance". Sister Nivedita had the foresight to know that Aurobindo was really the guiding force behind the nationalistic movement in Bengal inspite of his physical absence.

On April 14, 1906 Aurobindo attended the Barisal Conference but this was declared illegal by the government. People protested against this declaration in a procession led by Sri Aurobindo, Bipin Pal and B.C. Chatterjee. But they were lathi charged and several persons sustained injuries. Sri Aurobindo's younger brother Barin published a weekly Bengali paper titled 'Jugantar'. Sri Aurobindo contributed many articles to this paper. He advocated open revolt and guerrilla warfare.
In August 1906 Aurobindo joined the National College of Calcutta as its first Principal with salary of Rs.150 per month. In 1906 Bipin Chandra Pal started the newspaper 'Bande Mataram' of which Aurobindo became the editor. Aurobindo persuaded all nationalist leaders in Calcutta to accept Bande Mataram as their party paper. The government stopped its publication while Sri Aurobindo was in prison. The paper also met with financial crisis. After returning from Deoghar by 26th December 1906, Sri Aurobindo participated in the Calcutta session of the Congress. In this session along with his colleagues, Dadabhai Naoroji presided. In that session a resolution was passed for 'Swaraj'. Swaraj meant "complete independence" from British rule. He also attended the Congress session at Benares with Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the chair. Although Sri Aurobindo actively engaged himself in the national struggle for freedom, he did it from behind a screen because he had not resigned from Baroda State service. He resigned it on 18th June, 1907.

In 1907 Sri Aurobindo & Bipin Chandra Pal had to face prosecution on the alibi that they have published a seditious article. There was every possibility that the editor might be severely punished. It is at this time that Rabindranath Tagore wrote his famous poem homage to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo was acquitted because Bipin Chandra Pal didn't divulge his name as editor. In November 1907 Sri Aurobindo led the Nationalist Party at the Midnapore session of the Bengal Provincial Conference. He put emphasis on complete independence; it was a part of an 'integrated world outlook'. It is
because Sri Aurobindo felt that India had a role to play in the comity of nations: The zeitgeist or the time spirit was working to bring about a great movement in the world. The world was in need of a change. In every session of Congress Sri Aurobindo attended, he emphasized the need for India's freedom. During this time, Sri Aurobindo was a petrel in Indian politics.

Sri Aurobindo attended the Surat Congress on 26th December 1907. By this time the gulf between the nationalists and moderates had increased. The rift between the moderates and extremists had centered on resolution passed by the congress at its Calcutta session. The extremists wanted to make it as a basis for their goal and proceed in its execution. The moderates on the other hand didn't accept the resolution of 1906 as binding. They had a majority in the Reception Committee. So the nationalists wanted to submit it before the open session. The trouble started over the election of the President. Surendranath Banerjee proposed the name of Dr. Ras Bihari Ghose to be the president. But Lokanayaka Tilak wanted Lala Lajpat Rai for the same. The workers of the Moderate Party became furious at the proposal of Tilak and tried to attack him with a chair. The extremists did not take it lying down. They also threw shoes at the dias. There was a great pandemonium and the police had to be called to restore order. Sri Aurobindo once mentioned in a private letter: "Very few people know that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress". This shows the behind scene activities of Sri Aurobindo in favour of the extremists.
Later he came out to the open to champion the activities of the extremists.

Calcutta had become the nerve-centre of all revolutionary activities. When Tilak had taken the leadership of the extremists, Maharashtra also became a province for revolutionary activities. When Gandhi took up the leadership of the Congress, Gujarat became the province from which revolutionary activities emanated. But that is not to say that Calcutta had lost its importance for the nationalists. Sri Aurobindo didn't believe in the moderates' goal and techniques. He wanted that only revolutionary activities can free India from the yoke of British imperialism.

Sri Aurobindo had joined a secret center for the revolutionaries. The center was situated at Maniktala garden in his family property. It was set up by his brother, Barin. There, they studied revolutionary literature and the Gita did meditation and made experiments in manufacturing of weapons. Sri Aurobindo's idea was not terrorism but an open armed-revolution in the whole country. The government very much apprehended the nationalist's demand for complete independence and took severe steps against them. One of the Magistrates of Calcutta ordered the flogging of a boy, Susil Sen in his presence. It was a brutal act. This infuriated the revolutionaries and Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki decided to take revenge. Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage, thinking that Kingsford, the magistrate was in it. But Kingsford was not in it. Rather two ladies,
one Mrs Kennedy and her daughter were in the carriage and they were killed for no fault of theirs.

When Sri Aurobindo heard this tragic incident, he could guess the things to happen in the immediate future. The police searched the garden on 2nd May 1908; it found some bumbs and weapons there. Barin and those with him were taken to police custody. Sri Aurobindo decided at this time to take charge of a Bengali daily 'Navashakti' and had shifted from his rented house in Scotts Lane, where he was staying with his wife and sister to the rooms in the office of the newspaper. Sri Aurobindo was in no way connected with the incident of Kingsford and Kennedy, but the police arrested him on 3rd May 1908 from his house in Grey Street in Calcutta. His house was searched and all his personal letters and writings were seized. Sri Aurobindo was taken to police station at Lal Bazar and from there he was sent to Alipur jail. In Alipur jail Vivekananda often visited him and gave advice on spiritual matters. His prison life began as an under-trial on 5th May 1908. The following year he was released from prison. In this way the Alipur trial was conducted. All the weapons police had seized were produced in the Court. It was a pity that one Indian, Narendra Goswami turned approver. He was shot dead by Kanailal Dutta and Satendra Bose. For this act of Kanailal, he was hanged in jail. The additional session judge was the contemporary of Sri Aurobindo at King's College, Cambridge. They were excellent students but Sri Aurobindo had surpassed the session judge in Greek. All efforts were made to have Sri Aurobindo convicted. Chittaranjan Das defended Sri
Aurobindo and tried his best to get him released. C.R.Das read out the statements of Sri Aurobindo. A line of it reads: "I have adopted the principles of the political philosophy of the west and I have assimilated that to the immortal teachings of Vedantism." The judgement of the Court described some prisoners including Sri Aurobindo not guilty. The other prisoners were convicted. Sri Aurobindo's brother Barin was sentenced to death but later it was commuted to life imprisonment.

Sri Aurobindo had already practiced 'yoga', 'pranayam' and 'asana'. After his acquittal in the Alipur trial, the true mission of Sri Aurobindo began. As Navajat remarks: "He was inwardly told that the liberation of India was sure, that the goal and the means were already laid before the country and that he must prepare for the next step - the liberation of the whole human race." About India he said that she is the spiritual leader of mankind. Her religion, Hinduism is the 'Sanatan Dharma'. When Hinduism declines, the nation declines. The Sanatan Dharma stands for true nationalism. He also wrote in 'the Karmayogin' in June 1909:

"Yoga is communion with God for knowledge, for love or for work. The yogin puts into direct relation with that which is omni-scient and omni-potent within man and without him. He is in tune with the infinite. He becomes a channel for the strength of God to power himself out upon the world whether through calm benevolence or active beneficence."
Sri Aurobindo's life was transformed radically. He had practiced yoga 'spiritual force and energy' and 'divine guidance' for the work in life. Apprehending lest of the government might take vindictive action against him. Aurobindo secretly escaped to Pondichery by the steamer Duplex. For this, he received a command from the above to go to Chandanagore where he remained in secrecy. He had sent a message to Nivedita to take charge of 'Karmayogin'. At Chandanagore he spent his time in intense meditation. Then he received an inner call to go to Pondicherry. Both were under the control of French Government. It was a pre-emptive bid on the part of Sri Aurobindo. It was kept a closely guarded secret. The steamer reached Pondichery at 4 O'Clock on 4th April 1910. There were many well-wishers who received Sri Aurobindo warmly.

**Third Phase (1910-1950):**

After reaching Pondichery Aurobindo gave up politics and embarked on a new path: intense Sadhana for the redemption of mankind. On 7th November 1910 Aurobindo wrote it in the Hindu, a Madras daily in the following way:

"I shall be obliged if you will allow me to inform every one interested in my whereabouts through your journal that I am and will remain in Pondicherry. I left British India over a month before proceedings were taken against me and, as I have purposely retired here in order to pursue my Yogic Sadhana, undisturbed by political action or pursuit and what already severed with my political work ..."  

His whereabouts was an open secret and well-known to everyone in
Pondicherry. A question arises why Sri Aurobindo gave up politics. We can get an answer to this question from the statement: "I may also say that I didn't leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there, such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I didn't want anything to interfere in my Yoga and because I got a very distinct adesh in the matter." During the year 1911 Motilal Roy came to Pondicherry and met Sri Aurobindo. He had given Motilal a 'mantra' which Motilal was repeating. Sri Aurobindo was interested in Motilal's Sadhana. Motilal used to come to Sri Aurobindo through the back door to maintain secrecy. All had thought that Sri Aurobindo's sadhana will last for six months and he would return to Calcutta. Yet one year passed but Sri Aurobindo didn't go back. Aurobindo had met many friends at Pondichery. One of them was K.V.R. Iyengar who met Sri Aurobindo regularly and another was Nanda Gopal Chetty who was very rich and influential. The British government sent secret agents to Pondicherry to get information about Sri Aurobindo, but to no avail.

Motilal used to send money to Sri Aurobindo from Chandanagore. It was possible because both Chandanagore and Pondicherry were under French control. On 29th March 1914, the Mother a French lady met Sri Aurobindo while she was 37. Her husband, Paul Richard was also with her. Both remained in Pondicherry. Richard had several meetings with Sri Aurobindo and one of his questions related to the symbolic character of the lotus. Sri Aurobindo explained that the Lotus represents the opening of the "consciousness to the Divine". The Mother had also seen Aurobindo
in a dream and when she saw him, she could recognize that he was
the man whom she had seen in her dream. Sri Aurobindo was
persuaded to start a philosophical magazine in order to give "to the
world his grand synthesis of knowledge and yogic experience in terms
of a rational exposition." Sri Aurobindo agreed and a new magazine,
named The Arya was published on his birthday. A French version was
also published in order to popularize Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in
France.

Before Sri Aurobindo’s coming to Pondichery he had a little idea
of philosophy. But he was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher.
But when he did yoga, the philosophical ideas came to him. To Sri
Aurobindo "the earth is a world of life and matter, but man is not a
vegetable nor an animal; he is a spiritual and a thinking being which
set here to save and use the animal mould for higher purposes, by
higher motives with a divine instrumentation ... The problem of
thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of
harmony ..."). In 1920, The Mother (Mira Richard) returned from
France and joined Sri Aurobindo in the spiritual work which she had
envisioned as needed for the earth. The Mother too had the
supramental vision of the future. On one occasion Sri Aurobindo said:
"The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same".

Aurobindo gave the charge of the Ashram at the Pondicherry to
the Mother. During this time Sri Aurobindo used to live in seclusion.
Seclusion didn’t mean for him "an escape from worldly activities, it
meant the proper atmosphere for the total dedication he needed to
fulfil his mission – to prepare the physical earth plane for the new supramental age, the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Gradually, there was a great intellectual and spiritual development in Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's resumption of action after having entered into seclusion was the principal turning point in his life. A yogin who realizes Brahman attains supreme knowledge.

In 1921, a curious incident took place which a large number of people witnessed. "It was one of those phenomena that constantly occur and baffle the empirical mind of physical science but are easily explicable to those who have some knowledge of the occult side of life..

At the same time many bizarre incident took place in Sri Aurobindo's living place. As mother recollected later: we had a cook called Vatel. This cook was rather badtempered and didn't like being reproved about his work. Moreover, he was in contact with some Mussalmans who had, it seems, magical powers – they had a book of magic and ability to practise magic. One day, this cook had done something very bad and had been scolded, and he was furious. He had threatened us, saying, 'you will see you will be compelled to leave this house'. We had not taken no notice of it.

Then some stones were thrown in the house. As the day declined, the number of stones increased. The Ashramites were terrified and informed the police. Then the stones stopped falling. Again the stones began to fall as usual and than stopped. Actually Vatel in connivance with a black magician was doing this. But Sri Aurobindo was totally unperturbed by this incident and continued his Yogic sadhana.
From the beginning of 1926, the pressure of Divine Power became irresistible. Then the great day for which the Mother was waiting for so many years arrived on 24th November 1926. Everyone was engaged in his activity. The sun at set. It had become dark. Then the Mother asked all the disciples to assemble in the verenda where the meditation was held. By 6 O’clock most of the disciples had gathered. At last, the Truth was descending. The curtain was hanged. There was a great silence. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with some kind of electrical energy. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo could be seen through the half-opened-door. Meditation was going on. All received the Mother’s blessings.

In the interval of silent meditation and blessings, many had distinct experiences. When all was over, they felt as if they had awakened from a dream. The Great ‘Supramental Power’ had descended and Sri Aurobindo was able to catch hold of it. Sri Aurobindo retired completely on 24th November 1926. It was the day of great ‘Siddhi’. During this time, the Mother remained in charge of The Ashram. Sri Aurobindo’s task was to being about the descent of the Truth, Consciousness of the Supreme Divine nature: The ultimate nature of this manifestation was to be the transformation and divinisation of ‘mind’, ‘life’ and ‘matter’. It would make man a superman.

Sri Aurobindo said that he knew the supermind to be Truth. In 1939, the Second World War broke out and the Nazi forces brought about havoc in the world. Sri Aurobindo described Hitler and Nazism
as Asuric forces. He believed that their success could mean enslavement of mankind.

Japanese forces had also advanced and captured Singapore, Burma and Malaya in 1942. It was by Sri Aurobindo's meditation that the advance of Nazism was checked and the Allied Powers achieved victory. The skeptics may not believe this, but it is not unnatural. In 1945, the Axis Powers surrendered to the Allied Forces. In India the movement for freedom continued and at last India got freedom on 15th August 1947. That coincided with Sri Aurobindo's seventy fifth birthday. Sri Aurobindo declared that "August 15th 1947 is the birth day of free India. It marks for me the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age ...."32

The period of Sri Aurobindo's retirement was marked by intense activity. The epic 'Savitri' saw its consummation during thirty's. It was an episode from the Mahabharat. He revised Savitri to make it higher and higher towards what he called over mind poetry. So he didn't regard it as a complete work. Though the "Life Divine' was written in 1914 and 1919 and had been published in the Arya, it was published in two parts in 1939 and 1940. Sri Aurobindo's social and political work, the 'Human Cycle' and the 'Ideal of Human Unity' were brought out in revision in 1949 and 1950. Besides, several sonnets, poems and literary works were produced after 1930. In 1944, Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future was commenced. Two years later an annual journal was published known as 'Sri Aurobindo Circle'. It contained some portions of Savitri and other writings of
Sri Aurobindo, and essays and poems written by his disciples. In February 1949, two other journals started: ‘Quarterly bulletin of Physical Education’ and fortnightly ‘Mother India’, Sri Aurobindo wanted to bring some inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth consciousness.

The ‘Mahaprayan’ of Sri Aurobindo took place on 5th December 1950 at 1.26 P.M. Arrangements were made for his burial. But the Mother denied it, because Sri Aurobindo’s wardly body was not decomposed. It seemed radiant. On 9th December, it was placed in a vault in the courtyard of the Ashram. On 7th and 8th December the Mother announced that Sri Aurobindo has promised to live among us until the earth is transformed. All that Sri Aurobindo said is perfectly true and the future course of events will prove this. On 9th December 1950 on the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo the Mother affixed a marble slab with the following lines written on it:

“To Thee who has been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who had done so much for us, who hast, worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment all we owe to Thee”.

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REFERENCES


11. Ibid, P.38.


22. Ibid, P.33.


