

Aurobindonian School At A Glance: Vision And Poetic Craftmanship

Dr. Kaushal Kishore Pandey

Lecturer, English , DAV Kotdwar

Abstract

The greatness of Sri **Aurobindo** ,the multi faceted genius, is universally acknowledged by great men of all times. His contribution especially in the field of literature garnered world wide acclaim. His magnum opus ‘Savitri’ ,often referred as the fifth Veda , is a master piece , an embodiment of his philosophy, Integral Yoga ,mysticism and divine life. Inspired by him, many people became his ardent disciples and owing allegiance and reverence to him propagated a school based on his principles and belief . Poetry of the Aurobindonian school is generally the work of those who seem to know that they may not attain perfection themselves, but who yet try to surrender themselves to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, believing that through the grace of their masters they will attain self- realization in some glorious future. What is most amazing about this school is the high metrical competence of these poets, rare in Indian English poetry. The paper makes an attempt to analyze the vein of the school corroborating its harmony with Aurobindo’s philosophy and studying the poetic talent and key characteristic of the disciple poets. An avid study of the school is the passport of future humanity towards enlightenment.

Sri Aurobindo, with his glowing promise of a new leap in the very texture of consciousness, stands as a pathfinder pointing towards the dawns of future. His yoga, his philosophy, his poetry, even his day-to-day living, everything is directed towards one objective:

the transformation of Nature as a whole from her lower state to the higher one and to bring heavenly perfection into the earth's stuff. A legend in his lifetime, his whole personality was charged with so much spiritual force that he was capable of changing earth's destiny. He left no stone unturned in his effort to take humanity from darkness to light, from death to immortality and from ignorance to knowledge. A man only of his calibre could have turned the phase of the traditional poetry and gave an entirely new dimension—the spiritual one. His followers follow his example and form a school of their own to propagate Sri Aurobindo's vision.

A majority of books on Sri Aurobindo are written by his disciples like Nolini Kant Gupta, K.D. Sethna, M.P. Pandit, Nishikanta, Arjava, Dilip Kumar Roy, Harindra Nath Chattopadhyay Rohit Mehta etc., or those who have been deeply influenced by him like Iyanger, Premanand kumar, V.K. Gokak, Sisir Kumar Ghosh etc. Most of the second group, incidentally, are professors of English. The first group, living under the tutelage of Sri Aurobindo and serving him with devotion, imbibed inspiration and tried their hand in poetry. The sheer number of Aurobindonian poets is astounding; in addition to those mentioned above, others of this school include Amrita, Nirodbaran, Punjalal, Anilbaran Roy, Sri Chimnoy, Prithvi Singh Nahar, Nishikanto, Romen etc.

Written by disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, this large body of poetry bears a distinct stamp of Sri Aurobindo's style and his philosophy. This is sound poetry formally, adhering to traditional metrical and rhyming patterns; in content, though the emphasis varies from poet to poet, sometimes it is love as in Themis, or beauty in K.D. Sethna and Nirodbaran, or, more often, devotion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as in Punjalal and Anil Baran Roy; but common to all is an affirmation of faith in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The most striking quality of this group is their surrender-total surrender to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The real surrender must be total and seize all the parts of the being. They do not make this surrender a cover of their desires, egoistic demands and vital intensions. Sri Aurobindo says about surrender in *The Mother*:

Surrender is the first condition of the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo. This leads to an opening to the divine power and gradually the seeker of yoga is prepared to reject the falsehood of mental, vital and physical being. This little opening gives way to the grace of the divine. The disciples know it very well that the slightest hostility would not allow their entry in to the divine kingdom. They keep this exhortation of the Master in their mind; “you must keep the temple clean if you wish to install there the living Presence----Detect first what is false or obscure in you and persistently reject it, then alone can you rightly call for the divine Power to transform you.” (The Mother 3)

The follower poets know that truth and falsehood, surrender and selfishness can never be allowed to dwell together in the house consecrated to the Divine. But in the name of surrender, inert passivity should not be confused with the real surrender. The inertia whether physical or mental, has no place in this yoga. Nishikanto is the burning example of absolute surrender. He wrote poetry but was unwilling to get it published. When he was requested then he innocently said, “If Mother wishes it.” In the present scientific age, the age of disbelief and doubt, questions and inquires, the concept of absolute faith and total surrender is unbelievable.

Almost all the poets write poetry but never hanker after fame and name. Not only Nishikanto but also many self-effacing poets have no desire to come in limelight. Poetry was a means of sadhna to them and they took it very seriously. The Aurobindo Ashram was not the place of spiritual discipline and austerity just like the modern ones nor his integral yoga is related to doing *pranayama* or *dhyana*. But one of the marked aspects of Sri Aurobindo's teaching and practice has been precisely his insistence on putting aside the inert and life-shunning quietism, illusionism, asceticism and monasticism of latter-day and decadent India. Nolinikanta says:

And, properly speaking, it is not at all a school, least of all a mere "school of thought", that is growing round Sri Aurobindo. It is rather the nucleus of a new life that is to come. Quite naturally it has almost insignificant proportions at present to the outward eye, for the work is still of the nature of experiment and trial in very restricted limits, something in the nature of what is done in a laboratory when a new power has been discovered, but has still to be perfectly formulated in its process. And it is quite a mistake to suppose that there is a vigorous propaganda carried on its behalf or that there is a large demand for recruits. Only the few, who possess the call within and are impelled by the spirit of the future, have a chance of serving this high attempt and great realisation and standing among its first instruments and pioneer workers.

(Volume-three 19-20.)

The disciples poetry is a clarion call to usher humanity in a world of new consciousness, soul-consciousness in man which will bring about by the very pressure and working out of its

self-rule, an absolute reversal of man's nature. It is the *Asuras* who are now holding sway over humanity, for man has allowed himself so long to be built in the image of the *Asura*. Their poetry attempts to dislodge the *Asuras* and the force of the Divine has to be brought into play. It is a stupendous task, some would say impossible, but it is very far removed from quietism or passivism. It is the discovery of a power house of tremendous energy within and of the means of putting it at the service of earthly life.

Aspiration and Grace are the words that have mantric effect for the poets of this school. A discontented humanity aspires for perfection, a happiness that does not wane with the shocks of life, and a victory over death – the greatest challenge before it. There is the old saying- 'where there is will, there is a way.' This will or aspiration is a great treasure, an internal richness in man which leads him to self-transcendence.

The poets of this school reiterate and remind the humanity, sinking into the pit of hopelessness that there are parts in man that are wedded to the lower consciousness, but there are parts in him that have kinship with the Divine. Occasionally man feels a descent of a higher power from above. With the help of aspiration, he has to persuade himself to aspire for a higher change and thus evolve himself from Man to Super Man.

The present age is really the age of rapid evolution and it always aims at the heightening and widening of the consciousness force. Along with Sri Aurobindo, the Aurobindonians give assurance that man's evolution is bound to take him one day to that stage where it will be possible for him to dwell permanently in that level of consciousness of which his present mystic experiences give nothing more than the faintest glimmerings.

The follower-poets are not visionaries or talk like ineffectual angles beating their luminous wings in the void. They are realistic and aware that this spiritual transformation is not

possible in one stroke. Whole cosmic as well as individual Nature has her own order, a peculiar design and a definite hierarchy. Mind, in its journey of evolution, discovers its greater ranges of higher mind, intuitive mind, illumined mind, overmind and the highest one, the Supermind. This stage needs time and enough patience. At times some of them express their anguish when they do not find any progress but being true Aurobindonians, soon they recover themselves and exhort themselves to be patient. About his integral yoga Sri Aurobindo says in *The Synthesis of Yoga*: “ certainly, this is no short cut or easy Sadhna. It requires a colossal faith, an absolute courage and above all an unflinching patience.” (41)

The poetry of the disciple-poets vouchsafe a message of hope and a bold declaration of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, a prediction full of surety and certainty for this supreme dawn of consciousness that is sure to come on earth. Their life at the ashram, their practise of the integral yoga has got the living experience of the oneness of existence. The Brahman, the Absolute, the Cosmic Nature and all else that exist are all essentially united in one indivisible Existence with one force of Consciousness determining, governing and leading everything in progressively manifest harmony towards its intended goal of the Divine Manifestation. Their poetry, standing above all doctrinal denominations and mind-made categories, calls upon the soul of man to awake and assert its divinity and fulfil the purpose for which it has come down to earth – the manifestation of God in matter. Absolute freedom, absolute purity and absolute peace base the incalculable movement of the rapture-drunk force of the Supernature. Light, Force, Bliss and Beauty reveal their inexhaustible riches in a mounting harmony of varied relations, and descend towards the earth for a progressive self-embodiment in matter.

All disciples were gifted with a mighty poetic genius and it is no exaggeration to say that no other school of poets can match their colossal and unique poetic talent in the whole range of English poetry.

REFERENCES

Sri Aurobindo . *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970.

---. *The Mother: With Letters on The Mother and Translations of Prayers and Meditations*.

Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972.

Gupta, Nolinikanta. *Collected works of Nolinikanta Gupta, vols. 1-8*, All India Press
Pondicherry: 1989. Print.