

# SRI AUROBINDO

His Life and Religious Thought

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# SRI AUROBINDO

## THE LIFE OF AUROBINDO

Among the great architects of the Indian Renaissance, the name of Sri Aurobindo is outstanding. His phenomenal contributions in the fields of politics, philosophy, religion, education and art make him one of the most creative thinkers of our century. The central aim of all his endeavours, however, was "to bring down God into the lives of men".<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of the eighteenth century many currents and cross-currents of influences had been shaping the life of India. The Hindu religion was faced with the challenge of Christianity just as Indian culture was experiencing the impact of the West. With the introduction of a Western type of education, with English as the medium of instruction, stirrings of a new awakening, a renaissance both of mind and spirit was being felt in India. Western education had become a fruitful channel for the disseminating of new ideas about the nature of man and his possibilities. A basic presupposition of these ideas was the theory of evolution and concomitantly optimism with regard to the nature of man and his future. Hardly noticeable at first, the forces of nationalism were gathering force, only to burst into full fury at the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905. These and many others were the outer forces that shaped the career of Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo was born of Brahman parents, in Calcutta, on August 15, 1872, the third son of Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Swarnalata Devi. While completing his medical training in Britain, Krishnadhan Ghose became utterly enamoured of Western ways. On his return to India, he established a Western-style home and sent his children to an English school.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Aurobindo, *Savitri*.
- <sup>2</sup> R. R. Diwakar, *Mahayogi* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1954), p. 50.
- <sup>3</sup> Aurobindo, "Uttarpara Speech", *Speeches* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1952), pp. 56-57.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
- <sup>5</sup> G. H. Langley, *Sri Aurobindo* (London: Royal India and Pakistan Society), pp. 17-18.
- <sup>6</sup> Diwakar, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
- <sup>7</sup> Quoted by Langley, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
- <sup>8</sup> Diwakar, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
- <sup>9</sup> N. K. Gupta, *The Message of Sri Aurobindo and the Ashram* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1951), p. 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol. I (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1947), p. 110.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.
- <sup>15</sup> Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol. II (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1944), p. 507.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 510.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-34.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.

- 31 *The Life Divine*, Vol. I., *op. cit.*, p. 160.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 34 Aurobindo, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press), pp. 57-58.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- 36 *The Life Divine*, Vol. I., *op. cit.*, p. 284.
- 37 *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- 38 *The Life Divine*, Vol. I., *op. cit.*, p. 222.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 222.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 307.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 308.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 309.
- 46 Aurobindo, *The Yoga and Its Objects* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1952), p. 11.
- 47 Aurobindo, *The Problem of Rebirth* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1952), p. 98.
- 48 *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 248.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 249-50.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39.
- 52 *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 145.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 145.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 57 *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 58 *The Life Divine*, Vol. I., *op. cit.*, p. 129.
- 59 Aurobindo, *The Riddle of This World* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1951), p. 94.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
- 63 *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p. 380.
- 65 *Ibid.*, p. 384.

- 66 *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 625.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 625.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 621.
- 69 *Ibid.*, p. 628.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 638.
- 71 *Aurobindo, His Life and Teachings* (Bombay: Dhawale Popular, 1960), p. 23.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 74 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 75 *Yoga and Its Objects, op. cit.*, p. 5.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 78 *Aurobindo, The Mother* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1960), p. 11.
- 79 *Yoga and Its Objects, op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 80 *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 835.
- 81 *Aurobindo, The Superman* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1950), p. 8.
- 82 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
- 83 *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 935-36.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 899.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p. 916.

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