



AUROBINDOS SPIRITUALITY IN CONTRAST WITH HEGALIAN DIALECTICS :- AN ANALYSIS OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

MANIS
Research Scholar,
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences
Motilal Nehru National Institute of
Technology, Allahabad, (INDIA)

DR. JYOTSNA SINHA
Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences
Motilal Nehru National Institute of
Technology, Allahabad, UP
(INDIA)

ABSTRACT

The paper analyses selected literary writings of G.W.F Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, and therefrom attempts to place in logical perspective, in the context of Indian renaissance, the similarities and dissimilarities between their political thought. It seeks to place in Hegelian perspective Aurobindo's view that realities, exterior to a citizen are in fact, materially tangible reflections of that particular individuals, internal calm or turmoil. The individual is for Aurobindo, both in spirit and consciousness, the microcosmic building block of a functional society, while in Hegels view the spirit, both individual and universal, is not a personal but a social construct. In the light of such fundamental premises, this paper seeks to comprehend, through bringing in sharp contrast the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo and Hegel, the antecedent phenomenology of political independence and its future manifestations in literature and society.

It is evident through literature review, inclusive of a parallel study of, the Phenomenology of Spirit, along with other monumental works of Hegel, that the thirst for freedom is preemptively a fundamental characteristic of the process of renaissance, wherein humans seek their Independence through a retrospective self-understanding. A similar stream of thought the paper discovers in the Life Divine of Sri Aurobindo. Where the presumptive all-encompassing spiritual objective of Sri Aurobindo is "to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities,"

For the purpose of its study the paper relies on on the views on spirituality, freedom and renaissance discerned in Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine and in the Phenomenology of Spirit, by G.W.F Hegel .The argumentative explanatory logic used to construe the rudimentary framework of the paper is drawn from the works of these two Thinkers. Nevertheless because of their seminal nature, the works and ideas of notable Indian and Western philosophers, find circumstantial mention, enforcing the viewpoint of the paper.
Keywords: *Spiritual freedom, Political independence, Society, Indian renaissance.*



Introduction:

It is of umpteen importance for those who live and die in a society to know what is a society, is it an instrument created by humans that is cleverly put to use by humans to secure their material interests, or is it a multifaceted complex organism conceived delivered and nurtured and guarded by nature manifest through the cosmic spirit, its predominant objective being to channelize the life force of all creation. Sri Aurobindo believes in the latter proposition. To him the society is an alive pulsating heterogeneous body constituted by many of its own kind, enlivened by mirror images of the universal soul.

Hegel on the other hand believes that both the society and the state are human constructs and that the state is fundamentally an ethical institution, hence founded not on coercion but on freedom. In this Hegel contradicts the opinion of Max Weber wherein Weber defined the state as the institution that claims a monopoly on the use of violence's. Moreover "since Hobbes, the state has been conceived mainly as a coercive institution: for conservatives a preserver of peace and order, for liberals a protector of individual rights, for radicals a promoter of ruling class interests, but always at bottom an enforcer". All the statutes and laws promulgated by it for the preservation of social order being backed by the "force of law".

The paper analyses selected literary writings of G.W.F Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, and therefrom attempts to place in logical perspective, in the context of Indian renaissance, the similarities and dissimilarities between their political thought. It seeks to place in Hegelian perspective Aurobindo's view that realities, exterior to a citizen are in fact, materially tangible reflections of that particular individuals, internal calm or turmoil. The individual is for Aurobindo, both in spirit and consciousness, the microcosmic building block of a functional society, while in Hegels view the spirit, both individual and universal, is not a personal but a social construct. In the light of such fundamental premises, this paper seeks to comprehend, through bringing in sharp contrast the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo and Hegel, the antecedent phenomenology of political independence and its future manifestations in literature and society.

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Working on the above mentioned framework, in the following lines we shall further explore, similarities and differences between the thought of Sri Aurobindo and Hegel with respect to the political foundations of the state and the phenomenon of renaissance.



Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo -

Sri Aurobindo in his work “The Renaissance in India”. Traces the historical cultural origin and development of polity in India. In the process he distinguishes between political institutions of ancient India and the existent polity of other societies that flourished in antiquity. He states that “Dharma”, as propounded and explained by the Rishis beacons the path of political progress at all times. The ruling elite had to ensure that they follow Dharma in the functioning of the state, duly accepting it as a fact that they are not above Dharma and that they have no right to interpret Dharma. Sri Aurobindo further states that, Dharma, the regulator of social behavior of the person and state and the harbinger of change in the same, does not trace its origin to an entity external to the body politic but in the collective consciousness of the society as a whole, communicated to the society by the Rishi. Hence “Change in the society was brought about not artificially from above but automatically from within and principally by the freedom allowed to families or particular communities to develop or alter automatically their own rule of life, “achara”. Likewise In the sphere of administration the power of the king was similarly hedged in by the standing constitution of the Dharma, its paramountcy remaining unchallenged.

Political Thought of Hegel -

Just as Sri Aurobindo stresses on the role of Dharma so Hegel emphasises on the role of ethics in the creation and sustenance of society and State. Now what distinguishes Hegel from almost all other modern social theorists is his view that the state is fundamentally an ethical institution, hence founded not on coercion but on freedom. From this assertion of Hegel we derive the inference that he sources the strength of the State not in force or violence but in the way society by means of social structures guards the rights, the subjective freedom and the welfare of individuals, uniting them in a harmonious organic whole, making possible for each person to recognize himself ascertaining his identity as a free person, “and a fully self-actualized human being”.

Renaissance in India –

The word renaissance literally means rebirth or revival. With reference to India renaissance means more of revival than rebirth. Nonetheless in the context of literature and society it means the rebirth of the dormant spirit of an old bygone era in new form and body. In India the remains of its ancient civilization had never really been entirely obliterated/erased. So the renaissance in India can not be categorized with the renaissance experience of Italy and Europe. In the Indian context it can be said that renaissance was in fact the rejuvenation of the old spirit in a new evolved culture. A movement towards freedom. Because It is evident through literature review, inclusive of a parallel study of, the Phenomenology of Spirit, along with other monumental works of Hegel, that the thirst for freedom is preemptively a fundamental characteristic of the process of renaissance, wherein humans seek their Independence through a retrospective self-understanding. A similar stream of thought the paper discovers in the Life Divine of Sri Aurobindo. Where the presumptive all-

encompassing spiritual objective of Sri Aurobindo is “to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities,” The freedom that Sri Aurobindo vouches for is infinite in the sense that it engulfs in its purview all conceivable aspects of a human’s life. Collective effort of the society towards such an all emancipating Hegalian renaissance is suggested by him.

Conclusion

Upon perusal of relevant texts we see that that the two theorists agree on the objective ends of society and individual (freedom) but not on the “original” process of the society.(dharma, divine will / collective force of social evolution) . Both Sri Aurobinndo and Hegel conclude that freedom absolute and sublime is desirable, and to fulfill this primordial human urge should be, the final end of all human endeavors. But the route to this state is different for the two theorists, Sri Aurobindo says that the divine spark is required preemptively to ensue freedom a state considered by Sri Aurobindo as concomitant to moksha. In counterpoint to the earlier surmised opinion of Sri Aurobindo, Hegel posits that the state of freedom can be reached through the internalized process of the dialectics. God playing no role in the achievement of the paranormal objective. Thus we see that the two theorists deploy contradictory approaches towards a common end, which is - Freedom.

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