CHAPTER FOUR

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4.0 The philosopher under discussion here is Sri Aurobindo. In the first section I wish to discuss the impact and trend of his philosophy, then I shall state the biographical details of Sri Aurobindo, and shall try to determine the psychological type of his personality and in the third section discuss the relation between his introversion and spiritualism.

4.1 As 'a metaphysician doubled with a Yogi', in his own words, Sri Aurobindo distinguishes himself from the rest of the contemporary Indian philosophers. He is always remembered as a foremost nationalist and a spiritualist, the former being a very short phase of his life, than the latter. As is the case with most of his contemporaries Sri Aurobindo carries the influences of ancient Indian philosophy - the Vedas and the triple texts - the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the
Bhagavadgita. However, he did not merely repeat the ancient systems or explanations but depended upon his own realization, which happened to be a realization of a mystic.

As regards his position in the contemporary Indian philosophy we have it described in a very pertinent metaphor by Dr. V.S. Naravane. He says that, the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is like a beautiful but somewhat inaccessible island in the river of Indian Thought. The river itself has absorbed the water of many tributaries. It has become calmer and wider with the passage of time. The island has become separated from the main current, though it is animated by the same breeze which blows over the river. On this island there are many imposing peaks affording sublime glimpses of the horizon. Those who climb these peaks find the path rugged and become breathless in the rarified atmosphere. But once they get acclimatized, the pure air elevates their spirits. It is a pity that many who sail on the river bypass this island while others, encountering on the island strange beings
whose language they do not understand, depart hastily without climbing the peaks. (1)

Many reasons have been given to explain his lonely position ranging from his physical seclusion to his rather other-worldly spiritualism, but certain is the fact that he is regarded with respect by all concerned. Many epithets have been used to describe his philosophy such as idealism, integralism, spiritualism, real Advaita. But among them 'Spiritualism' though not fully adequate, suits best. We shall see the reasons presently.

Remembered as a Spiritualist philosopher and a nationalist, Sri Aurobindo is also respected as a poet. His epic poem 'Savitri' is treated as a masterpiece, in which he has transformed the simple story of a devoted wife in a profound symbol of cosmic relevance. Right

from his school days he wrote poetry and afterwards it became an effective instrument for expressing his mystic experiences and philosophical ideas. 'Songs of Myrtilla', 'Collected Poems and Plays', 'Savitri' are some of the celebrated titles of his poetry.

He has also produced a considerable amount of prose in which he has covered a very wide range of subjects. Apart from the purely literary and aesthetic writings, he has written considerably on cultural and historical matters. To name some of his books - The Foundations of Indian Culture, The Renaissance in India, Indian Culture and External Influence. Some part of his writings is also devoted to political subjects. However, his writings on philosophical and spiritual matters stand out as his best ones among which comes his magnum opus, 'The Life Divine'.

In his philosophical writings his vision and creativity are remarkable. 'Sri Aurobindo is the greatest mystic of the Modern
Age', says Dr. Srivastava, 'There have been many movements and religious tendencies which dominated the thoughts of India, since the early nineteenth century till today but they all lack that mystic vision and dynamic creative synthesis which we perceive in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. The robust intellectualism, the powerful expression of philosophical thoughts, and the mystic vision are uniquely blended in Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, 'The Life Divine'...... in the renaissance of Indian Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo may be called as one with mighty imagination and consciousness, who has given a new philosophy and discipline to India.........' (2)

Bringing out his characteristics Dr. S Radhakrishnan writes, 'Among the present day Indian Thinkers Sri Aurobindo is the most accomplished. His firm grasp of fundamentals of true philosophy, his earnest attempt at the

(2) Srivastava Rama Shankar, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Delhi-6, 1st Edn., 1965, p.109.
cultivation of inner life and his abundant love for humanity and its future give to his writings a depth and comprehensiveness which are rarely to be met with .........." (3)

As far as the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is concerned we notice a difficulty which is common to almost all Indian philosophers where philosophy is not a mere rational investigation but a matter of realization, a Darshana, a Vision. Many of the Indian philosophers are such visionaries and their philosophical ideas and systems are blended with their realizations. However, since Sri Aurobindo had read Western philosophy and also traditional Indian philosophy and was a rationalist, he constructed a more systematic philosophical thought when compared with the other modern Indian thinkers.

It is sometimes argued that the

(3) Radhakrishnan S., in his introduction to 'Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo' by R.R.Diwakar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is so completely fused with his yogic experience that any attempt to study it is foredoomed to failure unless the student has himself been initiated into the mysteries of Yoga. This is one of those half-truths which have hampered philosophical enquiry in every age. A blending of thought and experience is to be seen in the ideas of every great thinker. Those who have had analogous experiences are certainly better equipped to understand the totality of a thinker's ideas than those who have not. Nevertheless, the sharing of personal experience cannot be made an absolute prerequisite of philosophical study. If such a precondition were to be insisted upon, very few historians of philosophy would dare to expound the views of Plotinus or the Buddha.

Sri Aurobindo's writings, in fact, lend themselves more easily to rational exposition than the philosophies of many other Indian thinkers of the modern age. His unique achievement is that he has constructed a complete, comprehensive system at a time when others were
content to speak in a general way about attitudes and 'world views'. He has examined all the traditional problems of philosophy and has offered answers to them which are internally coherent. He has tried to explain the 'how' and the 'why' of creation, the nature of Absolute Reality, the existence of Evil and Suffering, the status of the Individual self, the sources and types of human knowledge, the nature of values. His answers may or may not convince us, but they certainly provide an adequate basis for exposition. (4)

The difficulty, I have stated previously regarding the mixture of his mystic experience and his thought arises despite the systematized thoughts presented by him as said above. His mystic experiences get strewn in a language which is difficult because of its style. One gets the feeling that one is treading the normal course but soon finds oneself entangled in mystic webs.

(4) Naravane V.S., Modern Indian Thought, Cited, p.199.
In the core of his philosophy we find that he has considered major philosophical issues in his attempt. He has touched the main problems of philosophy such as - the origin of the world, cosmic evolution, nature of values, self and has taken into account the previous theories and explanations in connection with them and offered his own theories in their place.

While considering his metaphysics we notice a spirit of reconciliation pervading it. He gives consideration to the rival theories of Spiritualism and Materialism. In his 'Life Divine' he says, 'since then, we admit both the claims of the Pure Spirit to manifest in us its absolute freedom and the claim of Universal Matter to be the mould and condition of our manifestation, we have to find a Truth that can entirely reconcile these antagonists and can give to both their due portion in life and their due justification in thought.............' (5)

In an attempt to do that, he accepts the spirituality of 'Brahman' of the Vedanta but also ensures to accommodate materiality in Brahman which is not of a spiritual character.

We also notice the aspect of rationality combined with emotionality throughout his whole system. It is because of two factors - one is his study of Western philosophy which preceded his studies in Indian philosophy which also accounts for the logic inherent in his presentation and systematization of his thoughts and second his genius and poetic personality. The poet in him was always alive and working even when he philosophized.

As Mr. Diwakar suggests, his view will be more easily understood also, if we recognize that he studied Western philosophy first and then Eastern, and especially Indian thought. Thus Indian philosophy was superimposed on Western thought he had already imbibed, before both intermingled and blended into a single flow.
This sequence has left its mark on his writing method, as when he struggles hard to express his thoughts in English and then suddenly quotes Sanskrit texts from Indian sources. The English words and idioms he uses fall short of expressing his full meaning so he falls back on Sanskrit terms. While the assimilation of Western with Eastern thought is there, the final mould emerging is a digest with the full and original impress of his own thinking and experience.

The Western influences on Sri Aurobindo include the historical and scientific approach, a recognition of the powerful, inclusive evolutionary principle and the relentless pursuit of the truth of existence. Sri Aurobindo approached Indian thought and spiritual ideas with that background. This gave him an unusual opportunity of viewing the traditional thought, wisdom and yogic discipline of India and East in the light of a Western perspective. (6)

When we consider his philosophy, in general, we find one thing prevailing all through his philosophy and has been given a more important consideration and it is his theory of evolution. In his 'Life Divine' which contains his major philosophical ideas and theories, he has tried to delineate a theory of evolution which he terms as 'spiritual evolution'. This theory of spiritual evolution is a very systematic theory, the details of which have been very carefully worked out by Sri Aurobindo. We shall go into them in more details afterwards (4.3). But for the sake of getting its general idea few points are noted below.

To put it short, Sri Aurobindo believes that the Supreme Reality is Brahman, and the individual is the constituent of that Supreme Reality. But the true nature of the individual is hidden from him as he lives in a superficial consciousness, which forbids any attempt of inner inquiry into and about our true nature. It is only when man comes out of and goes beyond the limitations of the desire-striken
surface consciousness that knowledge of our true nature becomes possible.

Sri Aurobindo says, 'A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in matter in a constant developing self-formation till the forms can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of terrestrial existence.'

However he is aware that evolution presupposes an involution. Regarding it he says, 'the manifestation of the Being in our universe takes shape of an involution, which is the starting point of an evolution - Matter the nearest -most stage, Spirit the Summit. In the descent into involution there can be distinguished seven principles of manifested being, seven gradations of the manifested consciousness of which we can get a perception, or a concrete realization of their presence and immanent or a reflected experience. The first three are the original and fundamental principles and they form universal states of consciousness, to which we can rise;
when we do so, we can become aware of Supreme
planes or levels of fundamental manifestation
or self-formation of the spiritual reality in
which is put in front the unity of the Divine
Existence, the power of the Divine Consciousness
- not concealed or disguised as here, for we can
possess them in their full independent reality.
A fourth principle of supramental truth-con-
sciousness is associated with them; manifest-
ing unity in infinite multiplicity, it is the
characteristic power of self-determination of
the Infinite. This quadruple power of the
Supreme Existence, consciousness and delight
constitutes an upper hemisphere of manifestation
based on the Spirit's eternal self-knowledge.
If we enter into these principles or into any
plane of being in which there is the pure pre-
sence of the Reality, we find in them a com-
plete freedom and knowledge. The other three
powers and planes of being, of which we are even
at present aware, form a lower hemisphere of the
manifestation, a hemisphere of Mind, Life and
Matter. These are in themselves powers of the
Superior sources, they undergo as a result a
phenomenal lapse into a divided, in place of the true undivided existence; this lapse, this separation creates a state of limited knowledge exclusively concentrated on its own limited world-order and oblivious of all that is behind it and of the underlying unity, a state therefore of cosmic and individual Ignorance.... (7)

With regard to the usage of the words 'Materialism' and 'Spiritualism' it would be helpful if I clarify their connotation as I see it. As has been said previously, I have used these philosophical terms in their general meaning. Materialism and Spiritualism are two rival theories which try to explain the world in opposite ways. Materialism holds that the laws of matter govern everything while Spiritualism maintains the supremacy of consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo has tried to reconcile the two opposite theories in a harmonious

(7) Sri Aurobindo, Life Divine, Cited, p.591
simplicity of statement, a real monism, the Monism of Matter or else of Force. But in this rigidity of statement it is possible for him to persist permanently. He too ends by possibly an unknowable as inert, as remote from the known universe as the passive Purusha or the Silent Atman. It serves no purpose but to put off by a vague concession the inexorable demands of Thought or to stand as an excuse for refusing to extend the limits of inquiry ....... (9)

And then he concludes, that if the Materialist is justified from his point of view in insisting on Matter as reality, the relative world as the sole thing of which we can in some sort be sure and the Beyond as wholly unknowable, if not indeed non-existent, a dream of the Mind, an abstraction of thought divorcing itself from reality, so also is the Sannyasin enarmoured of that Beyond, justified from his point of view in insisting on pure Spirit as the

reality, the one thing free from change, birth, death, and the relative as a creation of the mind, and the senses, a dream, an abstraction in the contrary sense of Mentality withdrawing from the pure and eternal knowledge. (10)

Sri Aurobindo was aware of the fact that Materialistic theories, though more convincing commonly, are founded on sense-experience, which has its own limits and cannot know that which falls beyond its purview. Even the intellect can only point to the Ultimate reality and can speculate about it but it cannot enter into and know it. Intellectual speculation, logical reasoning as to whether there is or is not such a greater consciousness cannot carry us very far. (11)

(10) Sri Aurobindo, Life Divine, Cited, p. 18.

blending. He gives due consideration to both of them - 'the affirmation of Divine Life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence can have no base unless we recognize not only eternal Spirit as the inhabitant of this bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept Matter of which it is made, as a fit and noble material out of which He weaves constantly His garbs, builds recurrently the unending series of this mansions ...' (8)

Then he considers the cases of both - 'if we assert only pure Spirit and a mechanical unintelligent substance or energy, calling one God or Soul and the other Nature, the inevitable end will be that we shall either deny God or else turn away from nature......

...... the materialist has an easier field, it is possible for him by denying Spirit to arrive at a mere readily convincing

This is how we come to call his philosophy 'a philosophy of Spiritualism', though he gives due consideration to its opposite 'Materialism'. The insufficiency of the materialistic attitude is well emphasized by him and the superiority or inevitability of Spiritualism, as well. Even when considering the attempt that Philosophy makes to explain, and attain Truth he observes that, philosophy, as intellectual expression of the Truth may remain, but mainly as a means of expressing this greater discovery and as much of its contents as can at all be expressed in mental terms to those who still live in the mental intelligence. (12)

That is why we find him reacting to the Western philosophers in the following way. While answering a letter, he says, 'European metaphysical thought - even in those thinkers who try to prove or explain the existence and nature of God or of the Absolute -

does not in its method and result go beyond the intellect. But the intellect is incapable of knowing the Supreme Truth, it can only range about seeking for Truth, and catching fragmentary representations of it, not the thing itself, and trying to piece them together. Mind cannot arrive at Truth, it can only make some constructed figure that tries to represent it as a combination of figures ....... It is not by thinking out the entire reality, but by a change of consciousness that one can pass from the ignorance to the Knowledge — the knowledge by which we become what we know ..........'

About Bradley he wrote, that it is still the intellect thinking about what is beyond itself and coming to an intellectual, a reasoned speculative conclusion about it. It is not dynamic for the change which it attempts to describe. If these writers were expressing in mental terms some realization, even mental, some intuitive experience of this 'Other Than Thought', then one ready for it might feel it through the veil of the language they use and himself draw
near to the same experience. Or if, having reached the intellectual conclusion, they had passed on to the spiritual realization, finding the way on following one already found, then in pursuing their thought, one might be preparing oneself for the same transition. But there is nothing of the kind in all this strenuous thinking. It remains in the domain of the intellect and in that domain it is no doubt admirable, but it does not become dynamic for spiritual experience. (13)

One more point needs consideration. It is his concept of degrees of reality. It has a different meaning from the one suggested by the expression when used in the Vedanta Philosophy. He does not reject the material world calling it illusion, but assigns a different kind of spirituality or reality to it at a different, though lower, plane.

This is how we can describe his philosophy as a philosophy of Spiritualism, the more detailed description of which I propose to give later. (4.3)

4.2 From his philosophy of Spiritualism we come to his biographical details from which he emerges as an introvert type of personality.

As regards his biography one encounters a major difficulty, namely that of non-availability of details. A very scanty material is available about the happenings in his early life, about his mental make-up and the development of his personality. This situation obviously is not favourable for our present purpose. One reason for this situation is that Sri Aurobindo like all ancient Indian thinkers is prone to self-effacement. He was absolutely averse to making his personal biography a matter of public interest. He once asked in his letter, 'But why write my biography at all ? Is it really necessary ? In my view,
man's value does not depend on what he learns, of his position or fame, or what he does, but on what he is and inwardly becomes .......'(14)

His attitude in this regard is clearer when he says, 'if I tolerate a little writing about myself, it is only to have a sufficient counter-weight in that amorphous chaos, the public mind, to balance the hostility that is always aroused on the presence of a dynamic Truth in this World of Ignorance....... so far as publicity serves the Truth, I am quite ready to tolerate it, but I do not find publicity for its own sake desirable .......' (15)

The second reason for the paucity of his biographical details is that the life of a Yogi is not on a par with that of an ordinary

(15) Ibid. p.247
man. What happens to a Yogi, happens from within. It requires a rare insight to watch and appreciate the inward development. Sri Aurobindo said, that, no one can write about his life because it has not been on the surface for men to see. Such life combines in itself the happenings, urges of ordinary life with the experience of a mystic kind which happen to have many facets and implications.

There is a third difficulty which pertains even to the external life. He was a very versatile personality. As one of his biographers says that, he has a professor, a scholar, a poet, a political leader, a journalist, a philosopher, a dramatist, an Indologist, a psychologist, a literary critic, a translator, an original interpreter of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita combined in him.

Despite these difficulties it is possible to get some authentic details of his life which show him to be of an introvert type of personality. On account of the difficulties
mentioned already I have to make do with whatever details are available concerning his early life.

His father Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghosh was a Civil Surgeon and was fascinated by the European way of living and thinking. He distrusted almost everything that was Indian and decided to keep his children aloof from any Indian influence. He put all the three sons including Aurobindo into Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling which was mainly intended for the European children. Thus at a very early age Sri Aurobindo was accustomed to staying away from the family. Then at the age of seven he was sent with his brothers to England for education where he lived for more than thirteen years (from 1879 to 1892).

Some important traits of introversion in him are these. Once during his childhood his mother was in a fit of anger, beating his elder brother Mono Mohan mercilessly. Sri Aurobindo was present but he did not make any protest. He was fear-stricken and under the
pretext of thirst went out of the room.

During his school days he was not interested in sports. Instead he was fond of reading. He read the Bible, Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats and several other authors and poets. He was writing verses at that early age. He did not mix much with his fellow-students.

His 'I.C.S.' episode is also notable. Though he was successful in the written test and was selected for that cadre, he had an aversion for the job. At the same time his father was very eager to see him become an ICS. Hence he could not avoid the examination. He was seeking some way to get himself disqualified without himself rejecting the service, which his family would not have allowed him to do. So he did not appear at the riding test, though several opportunities were given to him. He explicitly says in 'On Himself & the Mother', that nothing detained him in his room. He felt no call for the ICS and was seeking some way to escape from the bondage. By certain manoeuvres he managed
to get himself disqualified for riding without himself rejecting the service.

His growing revolutionary and patriotic spirit was also an outcome of his inward speculative tendencies, inward reflectiveness associated with introversion. He joined majlis, a union of students eager for India's freedom. His advocacy of Indian political freedom in the Majlis by fervent speeches had deep roots in his thoughts, much too advanced for an undergraduate.

A dream which he had at Darjeeling is suggestive. In his own words, 'I was lying down one day when I saw suddenly a great darkness rushing into me and enveloping me and whole universe. After that I had a great Tamas always hanging on to me all along my stay in England. I believe that darkness had something to do with Tamas that came upon me. It left me only when I was coming back to India.'

After his failure at the ICS
examination he came in contact with the Gaikwad of Baroda, who happened to be in England at that time. Sri Aurobindo left England for India, with a view to enter Baroda State Service.

The negotiations regarding his state service were left to James S. Cotton, a well-wisher of him. And the reason given for this by Sri Aurobindo was that he knew nothing of the worldly life.

One of his associates in Baroda Mr. Dinendra Kumar Roy writes of him,

I) Sri Aurobindo talked very little, because he believed it to be better to speak as little as possible about oneself.

II) Desireless, a man of few words, balanced in his diet, self-controlled, always given to study.

III) Sri Aurobindo did not speak
about himself, as if acquiring knowledge was his sole mission in life. (16)

Here are some more important details: though he was intended to take up some administrative work, being trained for the ICS examination, he did not show any liking for it. On the contrary he was satisfied to be a lecturer in French in Baroda College. Later he became a professor and held a permanent post.

Dinendra Kumar, who was also his tutor in Bengali, asked him one day, 'Why are you not well-known — i.e. why do you not come forward — in the life of Baroda? 'Sri Aurobindo said, 'there is no happiness or delight in it.' ..(17)


(17) Ibid. p.58
Dinendra Kumar writes about his economic condition - He was alone, he did not know what it was to run after pleasures, he never spent a pie in the wrong way, and yet at the end of the month he had not a farthing in his hand.

A part of his salary was spent in purchasing books and he used to spend much of his time in reading.

Dinendra Kumar observes, 'Sri Aurobindo is not a man of this earth, he is a God sent down by some curse.' (18)

His love of reading, which is a trait of introversion, is well illustrated by his cousin Basanti Devi. When he used to go to Devghar during his holidays, 'Auro Dada used to arrive with two or three trunks and we always thought it would contain costly suits and other articles of luxury like scents etc. When he

opened them I used to look at them and wonder! What is this? A few ordinary cloths and all the rest books and nothing but books? Does Auro Dada like to read all these, we all want to chat and enjoy in our vacations, does he want to spend even this time in reading these books?" (19)

In April 1901 he was married to Mrinalini Bose, but he got never involved in her and it was not a very successful relationship.

In the same year he was attracted to experimenting with Planchette, though his part in it was passive. It was performed by his brother Barin. That experience made him aware that there existed something beyond ordinary life and consciousness. This was an impetus to take him to the study and practice of Yoga.

From 1902-03 he developed interest in politics and political activities took much

(19) Purani A.B., Life of Sri Aurobindo. Cited. p.60
of his time. His political career led to his imprisonment. He was released from the Alipore Jail in 1910. During his period of imprisonment his spiritual interests grew enormously. He made a momentous decision and turned away from politics. Earlier during his political career he was one of the most respected leaders of Indian Freedom Movement. He belonged to the extremist group of freedom fighters. As a freedom fighter he never cared to achieve fame. He once said, '.... the second fact is that I do not care a button about having my name in any blessed place. I was never ardent about fame even in my political days. I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done. It was confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly know as leader'. (20)

During imprisonment his sadhana was intensified. He was now heading for a.

(20) Purani A.B., Life of Sri Aurobindo, Cited. p.IV.
decisive action. This brings out his introvert nature. Obviously he left politics not out of fear of consequences. He left it because he was 'convinced' that he was to play a different role. He has explained, 'I may also say that I did not cease politics because I felt I could do nothing more there: such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga and because I got a very distinct ADESH in the matter. I have cut connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence...

........' (21)

Then comes his decision to go to Pondicherry, which was to be his abode for the next forty years, his place of retreat, his cave

of Tapasya, not of the ascetic kind but of a brand of his own invention, as he referred to it in a letter to Baptista, in 1920.

With this account of this introverted type of personality I now turn to complete my discussion of his spiritualistic philosophy as said earlier (4.1).

4.3 Sri Aurobindo gives due place to Materialism in his theory. Moreover he does not countenance Asceticism. He states with sympathy what can be said on behalf of the Materialist standpoint. His spiritualism, therefore, is sobre. His is an integrated view. Let us see.

He does not deny the reality of the material world as, in a sense, Shankara does. Nor is it the case that he accepts the world of matter and leaves it there. Matter is invested with divinity in his theory of spiritual evolution. To get a clear idea of this we have to look into his concepts of 'Creation,' Spiritual
Evolution and Nature'.

As said previously, he conceives reality as spiritual, and also ensures a place for the material in it. He says, 'We admit both the claims of the pure Spirit to manifest in us its absolute freedom and the claim of Universal matter to be the mould and condition of our manifestation, we have to find a truth that can entirely reconcile these antagonists and can give to both their due portion in life and their due justification in Thought, amercing neither of its rights, denying in neither the sovereign truth from which even its errors, even the exclusiveness of its exaggerations draw so constant a strength....' (22)

He conceives of reality as 'Satchidananda'— being a triune principle of Existence, consciousness and bliss. Since this Reality is conceived as absolute and infinite,

(22) Sri Aurobindo, Life Divine, Cited. p.26
one is required to answer the question of why and how of Creation. He says that, Creation is through Ignorance. As the poet, artist or musician, when he creates, does really nothing but develops some potentiality in his unmanifested self into a form of manifestation, and as the thinker, statesman, mechanist only bring out into a shape of things that which lay hidden in themselves, was themselves, is still themselves, when it is cast into form, so is it with the world and the Eternal. (23)

And elsewhere he remarks, Infinite Consciousness in its infinite action can produce only infinite results, to settle upon a fixed Truth or order of Truths and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to change finite appearance out of the infinite Reality. (24)

(24) Ibid. p.108
And as regards the process he conceives a double-process of involution and evolution or of a descent and ascent.

The vital being with the Life force is one end and the Divine force is at the other end. He says that, there are two movements necessary for this connection to be established. One is upward; the vital rises to join with the higher consciousness and steeps itself in the light and in the impulsion of a higher force: the other downward: the vital remains silent, tranquilised, pure, empty of the ordinary movements, waiting till the dynamic power from above descends into it, changes it to its true self and informs its movements with knowledge as well as power.

He adds that, that is why the Sadhak feels sometimes that he is rising up into a happier and nobler consciousness, entering into a brighter domain and purer experience, but sometimes, on the contrary, feels the necessity of going back into the vital, doing Sadhana there
and bringing down into it the true consciousness. There is no real contradiction between these two movements, they are complementary and necessary to each other, the ascension enabling the divine descent, the descent fulfilling that for which the ascension aspires and which it makes inevitable. (25)

The individual is the eternal constituent of the Supreme Reality and, 'this true nature of individual', as Dr. Chincholkar states, 'is hidden from man who lives in a superficial consciousness which forbids any attempt of inner enquiry into and about our true nature. It is only when man comes out of and goes beyond the limitations of the desire-stricken surface consciousness that knowledge of our true nature becomes possible......' (26)

His philosophical thinking includes his theory of Maya, problem of Life, problem

of Evil, question of Rebirth etc. His writings are voluminous.

He was not a philosopher in the sense of one trying to attain intellectual clarity. He had a spiritual realization and he wanted to put it across the table. His philosophy, therefore, was mystical and, one might say, spiritual.

About Indian philosophers he writes, 'In the East, especially in India, the metaphysical thinkers have tried, as in the West, to determine the nature of the highest Truth by the intellect. But, in the first place, they have not given mental thinking the supreme rank as an instrument in the discovery of Truth, but only a secondary status. The first rank has always been given to Spiritual intuition and illumination and Spiritual experience, an intellectual conclusion that contradicts this supreme authority is held invalid......... Each philosophical founder (as also those who continued
his work or school) has been a metaphysical thinker doubled with Yogi... ...!' (27)

The same can be said of this Spiritualist philosopher.

(27) Sri Aurobindo, The Riddle of This World, Cited, p.28.