Chapter 3

The General Philosophical Viewpoint:

Bertrand Russell and Sri Aurobindo

3. A. Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell considered philosophy in two different senses. The first is defined as the ‘science of the possible’, namely logic, and the philosophy of mathematics. The second is included with empirical and conceptual questions, arising in epistemology and philosophical psychology and normative questions those arise in ethics, social, political and educational theory. Russell was recognized as a citizen of the whole world. His thinking was not within or only for a group or class or a nation, but for the good and happy life of an individual in a happy society. He thinks of all the individual and social problems liberally.

Bertrand Arthur William Russell also called Earl Russell III, was born on May 18th, 1872 in England. Russell lost his parents and grandfather at a very young age, and was therefore brought up under the guidance of his grandmother. Until the age of sixteen
Russell was educated at home. He acquired mastery over German and English, started learning mathematics and then Euclid. He also read the entire works of Milton, Byron, Shakespeare and a large part of Tennyson and Shelley.

When Russell joined Cambridge in 1890, he got the opportunity to socialize with many learned people. Russell was especially interested in mathematics. In 1897 his first book "An Essay on Foundation of Geometry" was published. In the year 1900 his book on the "Philosophy of Leibniz" and in 1903 "The Principles of Mathematics" was published. Throughout the years of 1900 to 1910, he gave most of his time to "Principia Mathematica" with Whitehead. During the time of the First World War (1914-1918) he came to perceive the divergence between how the society and institutions were functioning and how they should function to ensure peace, happiness and freedom of every man and woman. Russell advocated the need of peace during war period. He gave many lectures (speeches), which were against the British rule and lost his job as lecturer in Trinity College for his sharp writings against government.
3. A. i. Philosophical Background

In his philosophy, there is no direct connection between Russell's general philosophy and social philosophy, but the method and attitude of his philosophical and logical thinking reflect on his thinking on social problems. In his philosophical thinking, Russell has been static and as such any 'ism' can hardly be associated with him. Therefore may be he is called a philosopher without a philosophy. His keen alert and sensitive mind is always prepared to revise its earlier views in the light of new knowledge and experiences. He was influenced by Bradley and started his philosophical career as an absolute idealist. But he saw the clay feet of Bradley and could not accept the internality of relations as advocated by both Leibniz and Bradley. He was influenced by the theory of monad, which grants complete independence to individual monads as real. The rejection of idealism steered him into dualism. With the phenomenal advance of physics and behavioural psychology, mind as an independent entity comes to be questioned by Russell. This leads him to adopt the theory of neutral monism as his ontology, according to which both mind and matter are more logical constructions.
At the time Russell entered the field of logic, Aristotelian logic which had dominated Western thought had finally been replaced by the symbolic logic as constructed by Boole, De Morgan, Peirce, Peano, Cantor, Frege and Schroder. The technical improvement which Russell has contributed is far reaching in importance. The concept of propositional function introduced by Russell extends the concept of predicates to that of relations, thereby enabling logic to free itself from the bondage of subject predicate form of propositions. Russell's contribution to logic overshadowed his contribution to other branches of philosophy because of its massiveness. But he has brilliantly and suggestively enriched every branch of philosophy. As it is not possible to discuss all the aspects in one chapter, we will try to introduce here his general philosophy only.

3. A. ii. Epistemology

The starting point of Russell's theory of knowledge is very similar to Locke. For Russell, all our knowledge of the world is derived from sense-perception. He also assumed that the things that are immediately known in sensation (ordinarily thinking as perception) are not straightaway identifiable with the physical objects. Russell
used the term ‘sense-data’ as G.E. Moore, through which we get the sensation. Locke meant the same as ‘simple ideas of sense’. Like Locke, Russell does not believe that the sensory elements are mind-dependent. In his ‘Problems of Philosophy’, Russell introduced the term ‘sense-data’ and gives the example of such things as colours, smells, hardness, roughness etc. These sense-data are different from sensations. Sensations are the experiences of being immediately aware of sense-data. In Russell’s words, “whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that of which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation.”  

While awareness is a state of mind, it does not follow that the things of which one is aware are mental, in any other but the trivial sense of being before the mind, which is just a way of saying that they are objects of awareness. Russell, therefore, concludes that there is no logical reason why sense-data should not exist independently of being sensed. However, if he thinks that they do not exist, it is on the ground that they are causally dependent on the bodily state of the perceiver. It is also on empirical grounds that he takes sense-data to the private entities. Again, he accepts that two different persons are simultaneously aware of numerically the same sense-data, only if
which sense-data they were respectively aware should emanate from the same physical objects.

Russell is basically concerned about the relation of the sense-data to the physical objects. Citing an example of someone's perceiving a table, he says that 'it is plain that if we are to know anything about the table it must be by means of the sense-data —brown colour, oblong shape, smoothness, etc. —which we associated with the table.'\textsuperscript{2} But he also claims that it does not mean that the table is the sense-data, or even that the sense-data are directly properties of the table. The reasons why he thinks that these things can not be said are drawn from what has come to be known as the argument from illusion. This argument is partly based upon the fact that an object -- like a table may present a different appearance to different observers, according as they look at it from different angles, or under different physical conditions, or according as they are themselves in different physical or psychological states. It is not a question of perspective. Russell says that, even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be
unchanged. But then what justification has we for believing that the table really is of any one particular colour? Russell’s answer is that we have none. “When, in ordinary life, we speak of the colour of the table we only mean the sort of colour which it will seem to have to a normal spectator from an ordinary point of view under usual conditions of light. But the other colours which appear under other conditions have just as good a right to be considered real; and therefore, to avoid favouritism, we are compelled to deny that, in itself, the table has any one particular colour.” Russell concluded that ‘the real table, if there is one, is not immediately known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known.’

3. A. iii. Metaphysics

In western tendencies metaphysics includes cosmology. Russell had done the same in his commentaries on science. He does not often use the term metaphysics or cosmology, but the broader term philosophy, which includes all other concepts of epistemology, logic, ethics etc. Originally, Russell and Frege began the ontology of the analytic tradition.
Russell's main contributions to metaphysics are divided into five parts. The first part collects the papers from his pre-analytic period, when he was working within the received tradition of British Hegelianism. This work illustrates his attempt at a Hegelian synthesis of all sciences. The attempt was abandoned as Russell discovered the new philosophy of realism. In part two, Russell's main accounts of the new realist pictures are presented. Parts three and four gather papers on specific problems in philosophy that remain contemporary. His main papers on the problems of universals are presented in his part three. Part four collects papers on causation and laws of nature and leads in to a discussion of object verses event ontology. In the final part there are thoughts on diverse qualities of metaphysics that occupied Russell later in life.

In his concepts of logical atomism Russell summarized the view that the world consists of simple particulars which have only simple qualities and stand only in simple relations to one another. This does not preclude their being credited with complex properties, but these must then be analyzable into simple ones. It is left open whether the number of these particulars is finite or infinite. Both qualities and relations are external to their subjects in the sense that neither
simply nor the combinations are they essential to the subjects' identity: in theory, it could have a wholly different set of properties and still be the same particular. This is not inconsistent with its being identifiable only through its properties, since an object can be identified by any feature which in fact distinguishes it from other objects, for example its spatio-temporal position, without its possession of this feature being necessary for it to be the object that it is.

Logical atomism is the view that the world consists in a plurality of independent and discrete entities, which by coming together form facts. According to Russell, a fact is a kind of complex, and depends for its existence on the simpler entities making it up. The simplest sort of complex, an atomic fact, was thought to consist either of a single individual exhibiting a simple quality, or of multiple individuals standing in a simple relation.

Russell also used "logically ideal language" to represent the constituents of atomic facts. In such a language, the simplest sort of complete sentence would be what Russell called an "atomic proposition", containing a single predicate or verb representing a
quality or relation along with the appropriate number of proper names, each representing an individual. The truth or falsity of an atomic proposition would depend entirely on a corresponding atomic fact. The other sentences of such a language would be derived either by combining atomic propositions using truth-functional connectives, yielding *molecular propositions*, or by replacing constituents of a simpler proposition by variables, and prefixing a universal or existential quantifier, resulting in *general* and *existential propositions*. According to the stronger form of logical atomism true propositions can theoretically be deduced by logical methods. This puts the truth or falsity of atomic propositions at the core of Russell's theory of truth, and hence, puts atomic facts at the center of Russell's metaphysics.

Russell's atomism is the view that the world consists of many independent entities that exhibit qualities and stand in relations to one another. On this picture, the simplest sort of fact or complex consists either of a single individual or particular bearing a quality, or a number of individuals, bearing a relation to one another. Russell's use of the phrase "atomic fact", and indeed the very title of "logical
atomism" suggest that the constituents of atomic facts, the "logical atoms", must be regarded as utterly simple and devoid of complexity. In that case, the particulars, qualities and relations making up atomic facts constitute the fundamental level of reality to which all other aspects of reality can ultimately be reduced. This attitude is confirmed especially in Russell's early logical atomist writings.

For Russell, the genuineness of an object is measured by the simplicity of its qualities. But Russell gives no criterion for the simplicity of qualities. It becomes more difficult in his later work when he admits objects which are not given in experience. What can be the simple qualities of such objects be? The only answer which seems available to Russell is that they are qualities which have some structural similarity to the qualities of percepts.

Russell has shown that metaphysics differs from mathematics or the mathematicizing philosophers, who confuse logic with metaphysics. It is because mathematics is a fascinating game of logic, and it can be made an instrument of research, but only by selection. It does not dictate to reality.
Space and time are relational for Russell. He carefully pointed out that space and time may be taken in different senses. He distinguishes between subjective and private space and time and physical and public space and time. In either type a good case can be made for the relational theory of space and time, though it would still remain to distinguish the quale of special or temporal relations. This quale is not itself relational, and it is this quale with which the metaphysician is concerned what distinguishes special from temporal relations and these from other relations? Unless we can find the distinguishing difference, we have mere tautology. We keep repeating that special relations are special relations and temporal relations are temporal relations. We must find the metaphysical basis of special relations or of temporal relations.5

The mathematical analysis of special and temporal relations in nature, can not be determined a-priori, Russell believes. Mathematics furnishes us possibilities; it does not decide facts. Whether relations are discrete or continuous, finite or infinite, etc. must be settled by evidence. Mathematics is not concerned with the empirical world; it is entitled to its own world. There is nothing to
admire about the factual world. Mathematics is not to be blamed if
metaphysicians confuse the types.

In his metaphysical analysis Russell believes that everything in the
world is composed of "events". By an "event" Russell understands as
something having a small finite extension in space; or rather, in view
of the theory of relativity, it is something occupying a small finite
amount of space-time. If it has parts, these parts are again events,
ever occupying a mere point or instant, whether in space or in time,
or in space –time. He recognized particular colours and sounds and
so on are events; their causal antecedents in the inanimate world
are also events.6 But John Elof Boodin criticized Russell's view of
event as follows, "One entity, even though it be conceived as a
space-time entity, can not be an event. In his illustrations, Russell
gives examples of events. A flash of lightning is certainly an event,
but it involves interactions of several entities. On the other hand,
"particular colours and sounds are not events from my point of view,
but are functional aspects of rather complex events with their space-
time relations. Entities are really abstractions. Nothing concerns us
except transactions, or encounters, which we call events. We
analyze these transactions into entities and relations, but these only exist in transactions.  

3. A. iv. Ethics

Russell was a man of scientific temperament and rationalistic outlook. Alan Wood states, "Bertrand Russell is a philosopher without a philosophy. The same point might be made by saying that he is a philosopher of all the philosophies." But he was such a philosopher of the twentieth century that he, throughout his life, cherished a profound longing for a scientifically dynamic a morally honest human society for all people.

Russell was, no doubt, a great apostle of humanity as he was always ready to oppose religious bigotry, superstitions, irrational ideas, dogmas, socio-political prejudices, economic exploitations, wars and many other beliefs and actions that were, in no way, conducive, to the moral growth and peaceful leaving of men on this planet. Till today, no one who has the slightest sense of universal brotherhood has come forward to oppose the humanitarian views of Russell which are nurtured scientifically and rationally. He cited his
feelings for the good of the universal human society as follows: “The serious part of my life ever since boyhood has been devoted to two different objects which for a long time remained separate and have only in recent years united into a single whole. I wanted, on the other hand, to do whatever might be possible towards creating a happier world.”

Thus Russell stands as a true friend of mankind whose main concern in life is to put an end to the misery, fear and unhappiness of the human race. He suggests that people should cherish hope for a better world; and the means to overcome the miseries will no longer remain unknown to them. Wars, oppressions and tortures are the creations of men to their fellowmen. Russell thinks, all such problems may be solved if the people learn to behave rationally and intelligently.

Russell’s rationalistic view shows that no one can arrive at truth through impulses and emotions. If men fail to expose the real causes of ethnic superiority, male domination over female, hatred of one nation for the other, religious conflicts, economic inequalities and any other anti-social and anti-moral behaviour and actions in the
light of rationality, social crises and disasters are a must for them. The judgement of good and bad is to be made, according to Russell, through rational power.

So far as religion is concerned, Russell called himself an agnostic. He did not believe in any dogma of traditionally organized religions, and was firmly opposed to any kind of religious orthodoxy. In his essay "Why I am not a Christian", he has very elaborately analyzed the extent dogmas of Christianity which he was not ready to accept at all. So he is a free thinker in religion. He believes that religion can never solve the problems created by a group of people who want to enjoy advantages over the ordinary masses. On the contrary, he is of course; ready to accept Christian ideals like love, sympathy, benevolence etc.

3. B. Sri Aurobindo

The third son of Krishnadhan Ghosh and Swarnalata Devi, Aravinda Ackroyd Ghosh was born in Calcutta on 15th August, 1872, who was later known as Sri Aurobindo. He started his first schooling in a wholly European school. Dr. Krishnadhan, Sri Aurobindo's father
wanted to give his children a training that would make them products of the best kind of English education, without giving the least insight into Indian life and culture. Therefore along with his two elder brothers, Sri Aurobindo was sent to England for education. Under the guidance of Mr. and Mrs. William Drewett, Sri Aurobindo started his education. As all tuitions were given at home, the young scholar found time to read the Bible along with Shakespeare, Shelley and Keats among other authors. In 1885 he was entered at St. Paul's school in London. After four years of school, in 1889 at the tender age of seventeen, he was successful in securing a senior classical scholarship for entry to King's College, Cambridge. He also appeared for the Indian Civil Service, but failed to take the riding test. It is also presumed that he deliberately evaded the riding test so that he might avoid the obligation of pursuing the official career. He left England and joined the Baroda State College as a professor of English and French. In 1906, he resigned from the Baroda service to accept the presidency of the new Bengal National College, Calcutta. But political activities of that time soon intervened in his teaching and he became an under-trial prisoner in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case. In 1910, Sri Aurobindo shifted to Pondicherry where another phase of his life started.
3. B. i. Philosophical Background

Sri Aurobindo’s interests were in history, literature, languages—all that dealt with the life of the people of all ages, all races. His writings touch Politics, Social Sciences, Dramas and Plays, Lyrics and Narratives, Sonnets and Short Stories, Literary Criticism, Creative Surveys of Culture, and so on. All that he wrote is essentially creative, opening new horizons.

Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is a vision and an approach to the future evolution of life. He is a revolutionary idealistic philosopher among the contemporary philosophers. He started a strong movement to introduce a national education based upon psychological perceptions. “Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education” is based on his principles where the whole system of education is on aesthetic and soul values. Sri Aurobindo accepted life with a view to change it and make it perfect, instead of running away from it. Therefore he built his philosophy of ‘The Life Divine’, bridging the gulf between Spirit and Matter, God and the world. He tried to integrate the best of the West, i.e., the material achievement, and the best of the East, the spiritual achievement.
3. B. ii. Epistemology

Sri Aurobindo's epistemology is generally based on the Vedāntic theory of knowledge and conception of reality. But he rebuilds the same old Vedāntic concept of knowledge with a new language and mentality. 'What should be the method of acquiring knowledge?' is the fundamental question of epistemology. In the west many philosophical movements are marked by an attempt at finding a suitable method for the acquisition of knowledge. For Sri Aurobindo also, "Our ways of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known." In the west empiricism, rationalism and intuitionism accept sense-experience, reason and intuition respectively as the valid sources of knowledge. Upanishad and Gitā describe the same three kinds of sources of human knowledge as-- the five outer indriyas (senses), manas (lower mind) and buddhi (intellect or higher mind). The same division is made by Sri Aurobindo with little difference. He accepts the same three instruments of knowledge, namely, the five outer senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste, the sense mind and the reason. Here other Indian philosophers hold that the sense mind is the sixth sense. But for Sri Aurobindo, this sense mind is actually the only sense and five outer
senses of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell are merely specialization of the sense mind. He believes that though sense mind normally used the sense organs as the basis of its experience, yet it exceeds them and is capable of the direct experience.

Knowledge according to Sri Aurobindo is the same as Brāhmaṇa, the one, the eternal, the finite and harmonious. The integral knowledge is already there in the integral Reality. It is not a new or still non-existent thing that has to be created or acquired by the mind. It is only to be discovered or uncovered. It is the truth, which is veiled there, in our deeper and greater self. It is self revealed to a spiritual endeavour. It is the very stuff of our spiritual consciousness, and it is by waking to it even in our surface self that have to possess it. He writes, "...the real knowledge is that which is a secret to the mind, of which the mind only yet reflections, but which lives in the spirit."¹¹

Reason is the instrument to know the Divine existence. Reason is the first and highest instrument to realize Divinity. It is highest instrument, because, by the use of reason we can correct the errors of the sense mind. Only due to the reasoning capacity is man superior among the terrestrial beings. Reason has two functions,
mixed and pure. In its mixed activity, from sense experience, it takes
the data about the phenomenal world and then interprets them,
interrelate them, draws different kinds of inferences from them. This
is how reason works in the sciences dealing with the phenomenal
world. In its purest aspect, taking sense experiences as the starting
point, it goes behind and strives to arrive at general and unalterable
concepts which attach themselves to that which stands behind the
appearances of things. For Sri Aurobindo the pure reason is
therefore metaphysical knowledge. For him knowledge is the
foundation of a constant living in the Divine. Only through knowledge
we can meet Divine, we enter into and possess the infinite and
Divine.

The third source of knowledge is the intuition. The ultimate reality is
known only through intuition which is beyond sense-mind and
reason. Describing intuition Sri Aurobindo says that the "foundation
of intuitional knowledge is conscious or affective identity between
that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common
self existence in which the knower and the known are one through
knowledge." Sri Aurobindo is not prepared to draw any strict line
of demarcation between the intuition and reason. He brings the
intuition closer to everyday experience. He affirms that the knowledge of our own selves is furnished to us by this method. But reason is more a mental character, exhibits itself more in effective activity than in pure knowledge and hence is only a lower grade of knowledge. The intuition proper is the extension of this kind of knowledge by identity which furnishes us with the awareness of our own existence. The intuition grasps the object being known as a whole without breaking its organic unity into small parts. It sees things as the whole, in the large and details. Its tendency is towards the unity of knowledge. The spiritual knowledge is furnished in a more direct and complete way only through intuition.

Knowledge for Sri Aurobindo is not only a mental process but a matter of whole being. An integral spiritual consciousness carries knowledge of all the terms of being—such as, the physical, the vital, the mental and finally the psychical. All these equally take part in the achievement of knowledge. In integral knowledge there are three steps of self achievement.\(^{13}\) The first step is the discovery of the secret psychic entity. The next is to realize the eternal step in all beings. The third step is to know the Divine Being, who is our
supreme transcendent self, the cosmic being, foundation of our universality and the Divine within.

There are four methods of cognition in nature. These methods are used to show how intuition changes gradually to separate knowledge by indirect contact. Firstly, we get the knowledge of essential existence by direct awareness or knowledge by identity. Secondly, knowledge by awareness of the subjective state of mind is obtained by intimate direct contact, when the surface mind partially steps back to the aware of a part of itself. Here the mind is not completely identified with the object of knowledge. Thirdly, we get the knowledge of our body and its movement by a separate direct contact. Mind is separate from our body, but still feels the body and its movements as parts of ourselves. Finally when we observe external objects through the senses, we have a wholly separate knowledge by direct contact. Here the surface mind gets the knowledge of the external world. This is the characteristic nature of ignorance.

Ignorance is also a part of Sri Aurobindo's theory of knowledge. Ignorance, according to Sri Aurobindo is valid in its own sphere, but
must be gradually eliminated by knowledge. Ignorance is the power of knowledge and behind ignorance, knowledge is involved. Concentration of the mind on a particular subject or action exclusive of all the other subjects or action results in ignorance. This consciousness is the power of the mind of consciousness. Thus ignorance is the power of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo shows that if we look upon knowledge and ignorance as fundamentally opposed to each other, then these would result no unitary conception of Reality, but rather Reality would be divided hopelessly of its source, and we should have to admit that the ultimate nature of ignorance is immeasurable mystery. In order to escape from this position, ignorance is to be taken as knowledge and, it is to be viewed as capable of evolving into knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo says that man, by nature is not ignorant. He has the power and potency of complete knowledge in him. It is only because of pragmatic reason of the present moment, that there is erected a wall which shut him out completely from all knowledge of the future and also from all knowledge of the past. Therefore ignorance does not create any dualism. It is not something opposed to knowledge,
not something which contradicts knowledge. It is simply a power of knowledge itself.

For Sri Aurobindo, the reality of both the individual and the cosmos is *Brāhman*, the Absolute. The individual is a phenomenon, a temporal appearance in the cosmos. The cosmos too, is a phenomenon, a larger and more complex temporal appearance. Now knowledge and ignorance does not belong to the Absolute reality but to the appearance. In order to reach the Absolute, these two phenomena will have to be transcended.

According to Sri Aurobindo, ignorance is seven fold. We are ignorant of the Absolute, which is the source of all being and becoming. We take the partial facts of being and temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence. This is the original and the first ignorance. The next is the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable self. We take the constant mobility and mutation for the whole truth of existence. Again, we are ignorant of our universal self; our infinite unity with all being and becoming. We take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self. This is the third, the egoistic ignorance.
We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in time. We take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space for the beginning of our middle and end. That is the fourth — the temporal ignorance. We are ignorant about our large and complex being, which is super-conscience, intra-conscience, and circum-conscience to our surface, which are becoming and also in us. This is the fifth — the psychological ignorance. The sixth ignorance is constitutional ignorance. We are ignorant of the constitution of our becoming. We take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle, losing right of them which constitutes them. So this is the constitutional ignorance. As a result of this ignorance, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world. This ignorance is responsible for our entire error, evil, falsehood and pain in this world. It leads to all types of friction between individual and society. This is the seventh — the practical ignorance.

In order to obtain integral knowledge we must get rid of this sevenfold ignorance, by the discovery of a seven fold self revelation within our consciousness. This sevenfold knowledge includes the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things; the knowledge
of the Self, the Being and the Cosmos as the Self's becoming; the knowledge of the world as one with us; the knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth existence; the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface; the knowledge of our mind, life and body in its true relation to the self within and the super conscient spiritual and supra-mental being above them; and finally the knowledge of the true harmony and the true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the spirit, the integral, the spiritual Reality.

3. B. iii. Metaphysics

In his metaphysical investigation Sri Aurobindo attempts the reconciliation of matter and spirit through his integral system. The very nature of the West is that it rejects the spirit through its dominant tendencies of materialism and rationalism. On the other hand matter and life have been neglected in the East through its dominant tendencies of asceticism and spiritualism. But Sri Aurobindo empathized to synthesise the two— the West and the East. He believes that through the unification of the spirit and matter
it will be possible to arrive at some strong foundation for a reconciling practice in the inner life of the individual and his outer existence. So through his integral system he tries to communicate the East and the West. His system may be said to be integral because it holds that reality can be apprehended in some spiritual suprā-rational insight.

Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics is mainly based on the *Vedānta*. He interprets the *Vedās* and the *Upanishads* in a spirit which he imbibes from the *Ishavasya Upanishads* and the *Bhāgavad-Gītā*. He acknowledges the *Vedās* and the *Upanishads* as the sources of numerous profound philosophies and religions that followed from ancient India. For him, "*The Vedas and the Upanishads are not only the sufficient fountain head of Indian philosophy and religion, but of all Indian poetry and literature.*"14

*Sankara* and *Rāmānuja* were very careful not to pollute the pure and spotless nature of *Brāhmaṇ* by admitting in it changes or mutations. But Sri Aurobindo asserts that many are in the very essence of *Brāhmaṇ*. They are as substantial entities or as essential co-principles of the integral Absolute *Brāhmaṇ*. Consequently, *Brāhmaṇ*
Sri Aurobindo rejected dualism as a valid philosophical theory. He mentioned two essential conditions for the elimination of dualism. First, if Brahmā is independent, then it must be free from all external determination by anything not itself. In other words, matter can not be an independent principle existing along side with Brahmā. It can only exist in Brahmā and supported by Brahmā. Secondly, Brahmā is not only free from external limitations but also from limitations other than itself, for the presence of this something brings back dualism in another form. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo, not only should matter be supported by Brahmā but it should something not other than Brahmā. The fulfilment of these conditions alone leads to a total elimination of dualism.

Sri Aurobindo’s total elimination of dualism accords well with the teachings of the Upanishads. The Vedās and the Upanishads contain helpful clues to the solution of the problem of dualism as well
as to the creation of the world. The integral system of Sri Aurobindo is based on them. According to Sri Aurobindo, *Brähman*, the Supreme Reality, is one, indefinable, pure existence, without quality, quantity and form. But this pure existence without quality, quantity and form not in the sense that it cancels them but in the sense that it exceeds them so that they can pass into it to get transmuted and again come out of it in the cosmic movement. This supreme reality is beyond stability and movement, unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in that one and the stable to whirl around itself infinitely and inconceivably in the moving and the multitudinous.

According to Sri Aurobindo, all realities and all aspects and all are *Brähman*. *Brähman* is the Absolute, the transcendent and the incommunicable. It is the super cosmic Existence that sustains the cosmos. It is the cosmic self that upholds all beings. "It is all these, and yet much more then these. It is immanent as well as transcendent."[^16]

As Sri Aurobindo says all Being as *Sachchidananda*. The question arises— why so much pain and misery, so much sorrow and suffering, distorting the face of the universe? Sri Aurobindo replies
that as in the apparent in conscience of matter, our soul discovers the infinite conscious force, so in the apparent non-sensation of matter, it comes to discover and attune itself to an infinite conscious delight; this self is its own self in all. But to our ordinary view of self and things it remains hidden, profound and subconscious; and as it is within all forms, so it is within all experience, whether pleasant, painful or neutral. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo, pain, pleasure and indifference in our sensational and emotional existence is a distorted reflection on a lower plane of the self-delight of the Real. They are related to the divided consciousness of the ignorant mind and are capable of being transmuted into elements of a harmonized bliss.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the universe is not unreal; it is not an illusion as Sankara says. He refutes the analogy of dream applied to explain the unreality of the world. For him within dream life is not unreal. But he rejects Sankara’s notion that the world is unreal in the sense that it has not kind of eternal existence; for although particular worlds and particular forms may or do dissolve physically and return mentally from the consciousness of manifestation into the non-manifestation, yet form in itself, world in itself are eternal.
3. B. iii. a. Absolute and God

The infinite diversity of man's knowledge can be summed up in three principal categories; self, world and God. To know either of these the knowledge of the other is equally imperative. Thus, consciously or unconsciously, man seeks for a unity of this trinity. The self, of whom the man is most immediately conscious, always strives for self-sufficiency and yet this is not possible without his unity with world and God. For Sri Aurobindo, the theories of Reality as change have truth in the fact of Becoming but even to know this truth completely, the knowledge of Being is equally necessary. The Absolute is a supra-cosmic Reality, it is the Being, Existence, Consciousness, Delight, and Sachchidānanda, but at the same time it is also the cosmic Reality, the Becoming. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The Being is One but this oneness is infinite and contains in itself an infinite plurality or multiplicity of itself; the One is the All; it is not only an essential existence but an All-existence."19

In Sri Aurobindo, Brāhman is the Absolute which embraces all relativities. Brāhman is the inner self of all. He is the One in the many, the conscious in unconscious. He is the cause as well as
effect and the all of causality. He is space and all that is in space. He is the subject as well as the object, the thinker and the thought. All realities and all aspects and all semblances are the Brāhmaṇ; Brāhmaṇ is the Absolute, the transcendent and incommunicable, the Supra-cosmic Existence that sustains the cosmos, the cosmic self that upholds all beings, but it is too the self of each individual; the soul or psychic entity is an eternal portion of the Isvāra; it is His supreme nature or Consciousness-Force that has become the living beings.

Therefore the Divine of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy has three aspects—

1. It is the Cosmic Self and Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings, from which and in which all is manifested in the universe although at present in Ignorance.

2. It is the spirit and master of our own being within us.

3. It is the transcendent Being and Spirit, all Bliss, Light, Knowledge and Power.

Para Brāhmaṇ is indescribable and inconceivable. As Sri Aurobindo says “It is not Being or non-Being but something of which Being and
Non-Being are primary symbols no Atman or un-Atman or Maya; not personality or impersonality; not quality or non quality; not consciousness or non consciousness; not bliss or non bliss; not purusa or prakṛti; not God nor man nor animal, not release nor bondage; but something of which all these are primary or derivative, general or particular symbols. But for Sri Aurobindo when we say Para Brāhmaṇ is not this or that we mean that it can not in its essentiality be limited to this or that symbol or any sum of symbols; in a sense Para Brāhmaṇ is all this and all this is Para Brāhmaṇ.

The ultimate of philosophy and the sumnum bonum of religion are merely two aspects of the same one Reality. Thus God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. "Omnipresent, for all forms are forms of His conscious being created by its force of movement in its own extension as Space and Time; Omniscient, for all things exist in His Conscious Being, are formed by it and possessed by it; omnipotent, for this all possessing consciousness is also an all possessing Force and all informing will." God is immanent and transcendent, individual and universal, the creator, the preserver, the destroyer of everything. He is the helper, the guide, the beloved and the all lover. He is separate and yet one with all beings. Outside
of him exist nothing. God is determinate, free, perfect, eternal and the elf of all. He is Being as well as Becoming. The evolution of the world is the manifestation of his multiple aspects. He is the efficient and the material, the first and the final cause of the world. He is the last in the chain of perfection and yet all inclusive. He is endowed with such qualities as veracity, grace, knowledge and bliss. He is free from pain, evil, suffering, ignorance, limitation etc. He is self-conscious supreme person. He is the matrix, the nisus as well as the goal of evolution. As creator, God is Supermind.

3. B. iii. b. Evolution

The concept of evolution is the central problem in Sri Aurobindo's Metaphysics. Sri Aurobindo's Evolution is fully spiritual. Sri Aurobindo's theory of Evolution falls under the category of Brahma-parinama of Indian Philosophy, because according to him, Brähman is the source and summit of evolution. For him, all creation or becoming is nothing but self manifestation of the eternal. In order to succeed in his objective he considered the Supreme Reality, Brähman, under two aspects, the Static and the Dynamic. Brähman, considered under His static aspect, is Sachchidānanda while
considering him under Him under His dynamic aspect, is 'Supermind'. This Supermind is the Infinite creative mind representing the inner \textit{Brāhma} and all his outward manifestations. Supermind is the link between \textit{Sachchidānanda} and the Finite world. Sri Aurobindo prefers to call the Supermind as "Real-Idea", which, according to him, is a power of Conscious-Force expressive of the Real Being and partaking of its nature. Mind, life and matter are an inferior expression of it, which serves as a goal towards which these are trying to move. Thus, God as a creator is the foundation of our present natural and evolutionary existence from which nature in us is trying to arrive at self-knowledge and world knowledge and the right consciousness and the right use of our existence in the universe.

The whole course of creation is a movement between two involutions. Spirit, in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of matter. In Matter also all is involved, and out of which all evolves, upwards to the other pole of spirit. The whole of creation is a \textit{līlā} or a Divine play of self-concealment and self-revelation. The infinite has gradually descended step by step, covering itself veil upon veil till it disappears completely under the mask of inconscient matter. Then it traverses back step by step by
removing veil after veil and proceeds towards self-revelation. Thus each step in the descent is necessarily a step in the ascent.

In his concept of evolution Sri Aurobindo states that we have double soul — a desire soul which works in our vital cravings and emotions, and our inner soul, our true psychic being or Sachchidananda or purusa, which is the central core of our being. Sri Aurobindo has laid the greatest stress upon the awakening of this psychic being or our true soul. For him the malady of the world lies in the inability of the individual to find his real soul. Through this saitya purusa, the divine principle of bliss acts in us, as the divine principle of Superman operates through mind and the divine principle of Pure Existence manifests through matter. He arranged the eight poises of reality in the following way—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existence</th>
<th>Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness-Force</td>
<td>Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bliss</td>
<td>Psyche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermind</td>
<td>Mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the first column represents God’s descent to the world and the second the individual’s ascent towards God.
The infinite, for Sri Aurobindo, has infinite possibilities. It is capable of manifestation in infinite variations. The Consciousness-Force of the Divine concentrates upon and selects a particular truth or a fixed order of truths and creates a world in conformity with that truth. *Brāhman* expresses himself in many forms of consciousness, instead of giving up the previous form; the form is taken up in the next step and transformed. Thus life emerged from Matter and Mind and Intelligence in the human beings from life.

Evolution first takes place in Matter. Life and Mind evolve in matter. They modify the substance of Matter, first into the substance of life and then into conscious substance. But they do not succeed in transforming it altogether. Neither Mind nor Life is the original creative energy. Like matter they are intermediaries. They cannot effect a total transformation of material substance. It can be affected only by the full emergence of the spirit. And this is the culminating stage of evolution.
3.B. iv. Ethics

The aim of ethics according to Sri Aurobindo is to grow into harmony with its eternal nature of light, love and strength and purity. Ethics is one of the means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the working of God through nature and through life. For Sri Aurobindo, "Ethics must eventually perceive that the law of God which it seeks is the law of God and depends on the being and the nature of the master of the law." Ethics deals only with the desire soul and the active and dynamic part of a being. It confines the character and action of the being. It prohibits and exhibits certain actions, desires and impulses. It also inculcates certain qualities in the act, such as truthfulness, love charity etc.

Different theories of ethics such as hedonism, sociological theory etc. suffered from the defect of abstraction. These theories have been built upon the truths of some one aspect of man's being, but Sri Aurobindo pointed out: "The ethical being escapes from all these formulas; it is a law to itself and finds principle in its own eternal nature which is not in its essential character a growth of evolving
mind, even though it may seem to be that in its earthly history, but a light from the ideal, a reflection in man of the Divine."²³

Sri Aurobindo says that our ethical impulses begin in the infra-rational and take their rise from the subconscient. They arise as an instinct of obedience to an understood law. At first man obeys the law without any question. He believes that these are the laws created by higher powers than himself and his race, which are to be endured and can not be violated. Later on, reason labours to use the ethical impulses intelligently and turns the instincts to ethical ideas. It currents the crude and erring misprisions of man's ethical instincts, shows the relations of his classing moral ideas, tries to compromise between their conflicting claims and arranges a system of ethical action. And all these, says Sri Aurobindo, is a necessary stage of our advance.

The high fulfilment of ethics comes when the being of man attains the level of divine nature. At this level, it is not his actions that standardize his nature, but his nature that gives value to his actions. He is no longer laboriously virtuous or artificially moral, but naturally divine. That is why Sri Aurobindo believes that rising from the infra-
rational beginnings through its intermediate dependence on the reason to a supra rational consummation, the ethical is like the aesthetic and religious being of man a seeking the eternal. This view takes into account the whole man, as a progressing developing being seeks the fulfilment of his tendencies.

Sri Aurobindo puts emphasis on the necessity of spiritual transformation. He says that the supreme thing in us is the spirit, the wide ground, upon which a divine life of the human being can be founded with security. This spirit is not the intellect or will. It is higher then reason. It is concealed behind the coatings of our nature. It is the secret seed of divinity. The spiritual seed must be accomplished first in the individual and in a greater number of individuals before it can lay any effective hold upon the community. Therefore Sri Aurobindo considered two conditions to be satisfied, in order that the spiritual change may be effected. First, there must be the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to recreate themselves in the image of the spirit, and to communicate both their ideas and powers to the mass. Secondly, there must be at the same time a mass, a society which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and arrive at an image of the spirit. According to Sri
Aurobindo, a spiritual human society would try to realize three essential truths of existence, viz. God, freedom and unity. When man is able to see the God and possess him, then he will know the real freedom and arrive at the real unity.

Sri Aurobindo thinks that the different political organizations such as nation, states, empires etc fail to fulfil the dream of liberty, equality and fraternity. So there is needed a true religion of humanity which is different from orthodox religions. The fundamental idea of this religion of humanity is that mankind is the Godhead to be worshipped. The respect to the mankind, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the state, the family nor anything else ought to take this place; they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid, its self manifestation. To him, the aim of religion of humanity must be love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood; a living sense of human oneness in thought, feeling and life. Till this is brought about, the religion of humanity remains unaccomplished. Thus Sri Aurobindo is a spiritual humanist since he
holds that the spirit of God in man in the basic truth and goal of evolution and human effort.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the value of karma in life. But he does not admit karma as an end in itself. He accepts duty for the sake of God. Karma for the sake of God, to the world and the greater self and the fulfilment of the universal will is the first step towards liberation and perfection. In his moral philosophy duty for duty is the highest principle so long as the ethical being remains in mental level. But as he transcends mental level, his performance of works becomes an outgrowing from the soul.

The superman of Sri Aurobindo's transcends customary morality according to the law of his nature. Supermen are conscious selfless divine instruments, who devote their lives to the service of humanity without any selfish motive, even without the motive of attaining their liberation. They consciously work for the spiritual uplift of humanity. They are divine men who consciously feel the pulse of divine energy within them, and try to elevate corporate human consciousness to the cosmic divine plane. They are devoid of love and hatred and suffused with psychic good will for all. Sri Aurobindo says that in the
spiritual progress of man, there could begin a heightening of our face of conscious being so as to create a new principle of consciousness, a new range of activities, new values for all things, and widening consciousness and life, a taking up and transformation of the lower grades of our existence, in brief, the whole evolutionary process by which the spirit in nature creates a higher type of being.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there are four main standards of human conduct that make an ascending scale. The first is personal need, presence and desire; the second is the law and good of the collectivity; the third is an ideal ethic; the last is the highest divine law of nature. He says that the satisfaction of one’s physical and vital desires and mental cravings must be the first natural rule of his conduct. Then the personal satisfaction has to be constantly subordinated by the satisfaction of the society as a whole. Thirdly, above the natural individual law and the law of collection there has to arise the notion of an ideal moral law which is not the satisfaction of need and desire. On the other hand, it controls them in the interest of an ideal order that is neither animal, nor vital or physical but mental. It is a creation of the mind’s seeking for light and knowledge. Finally there is above society’s external law and man’s
moral law – a law divine towards which both these laws are progressive steps that try to escape from the natural law of the animal to a universal rule. This law discovers the perfect movement and harmony of a great spiritual collective life.

Sri Aurobindo upholds an ethics of self realization. He thinks that to discover the spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the same evolution in his real service to the race. The spiritual self is not only individual and social but above all transcendental. The self is more than truth, beauty and goodness since it is consciousness, existence and bliss. It is neither social nor individual; neither rational nor infra-rational but integrated, transformed and spiritualized.

Sri Aurobindo asserts that evil and falsehood are the results of ignorance. So they can not have their being in Divine personality. When limited and dividing knowledge discards its separation and limitation, or when ignorance gradually vanishes into knowledge, evil and falsehood lose their status. In that case integral consciousness replaces the partial consciousness of which falsehood and evils are the fruits. Therefore evil and falsehood can not be the absolute. God
and evil as of truth and error are uncertain and relative. What is held as truth in one place or time is held as error in another place or time. What is regarded as good in one place or time is regarded as evil in another place or time. This relativity is a circumstance in human mentality and the working of the Cosmic Force in human life. It is not the fundamental truth of good and evil. All types of evil and error arise out of the disharmony of life. Nature accepts them because they are necessary steps of the evolutionary process. The evolutionary intention acts through the evil as through the good. By getting out of these good and evil, human beings can emerge into Supreme Being which is eternal.

Sri Aurobindo stresses on the observance of self-sacrifice for the development of man's moral nature. Self-sacrifice is the flowering of mankind's ethical growth, the evidence of our gradual rise from the self, regarding animal to the selfless divinity. This evolution is a gradual process. First the egoistic individual self widens to include the welfare of the family as one's own welfare. Secondly, it is realized that the community has a larger claim on man than his family. This communal self is again enlarged to include the self in nature. Then the progressive ethical being realizes that even this self should be enlarged to include the whole humanity. Finally, Sri
Aurobindo points out the need of a still wider and deeper enlargement of self, i.e., the realization of the divine self. All lower selves should be sacrificed for this highest one.

**General Estimate**

Following from the above discussion, the general observation shows that the philosophical interpretations of both the philosophers are not the same. Russell has experienced the world and the essence of his philosophy is to interpret the realistic and pragmatic view of philosophy. Though Sri Aurobindo is a modern philosopher he is influenced by the *Vedāntic* concept like the other Indian modern philosophers of that time. But it is also true that Sri Aurobindo was also influenced by the western philosophy as he was brought up in England.

Sri Aurobindo tried to rebuild the *Vedāntic* Theory in the light of the modern world. He tried to synthesize the tradition of both the east and the west. His Epistemology and Metaphysics are mutually dependent. For him, *Brāhman* is the ultimate reality and the achievement of the knowledge of *Brāhman* is the aim of human
beings. The system of his philosophy is based on the integration within the self and integration of the self with the Universal Self. When the other Indian philosophers opined that the path of knowledge aims at the realization of the supreme self in all beings, Sri Aurobindo goes a step further and holds that this aim of knowledge should be not only the realization of the Supreme Self in All beings, but also the realization of the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the Divine Consciousness. In his theory of knowledge Russell talks about 'sense-data' and sensation as the sources of knowledge. When we see the sense-data of a being we have the sensation about it and able to get knowledge. Sri Aurobindo describes different sources of knowledge, levels of consciousness, seven-fold ignorance and the ways of getting rid of this seven-fold ignorance. They are not same in the methods of approach, even the aims of these two philosophers are not the same. While the aim of the agnostic one is to search for the actual sources of knowledge, the other one is to arrive at the knowledge of the Supreme Reality.

In his metaphysics Russell deals with temporary and permanent relations, relations of space time and logical atomism as the fact of
the world. He also tried to bring mathematics to find the reality. Sri Aurobindo’s Metaphysics is regarded as Integral Non-Dualism or Supramental Idealism. For him, Supreme Reality is One, Sat (Existence), Cit (Consciousness-Force) and Ānanda (Bliss). Brāhmaṇ manifests to us as Atman, Purusha and Ishwara. For him, all things in the universe are in the very essence of Brāhmaṇ, the form, the substantiality of the Integral Absolute Brāhmaṇ. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo, Brāhmaṇ is both Eternal Being and Eternal Becoming. In his Metaphysics, an assimilation of materialism and spiritualism is clearly found. He is against the mechanical view of the Universe introduced by the Western philosophers. He has offered a comprehensive theory of Evolution by combining both the eastern and western theories of evolution. His theory of evolution has two series—ascending and descending. It is through evolution that man can comprehend the Absolute and again it is through involution that the Absolute can come down to the earth-consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo states that ethical conduct is a means for spiritual life when Russell took help of ethics for social life. But Sri Aurobindo was also a spiritual humanist; as he holds the spirit or God in man as the basic truth and goal of human effort. After analyzing the
philosophical standpoints of these two philosophers, it may be concluded that both have their own perspectives. But the similarity is that they both tried to find the reality of the world. Russell tried to end the misery, fear and unhappiness of the human race as Sri Aurobindo's gradual process of evolution widens the welfare of the whole humanity.

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