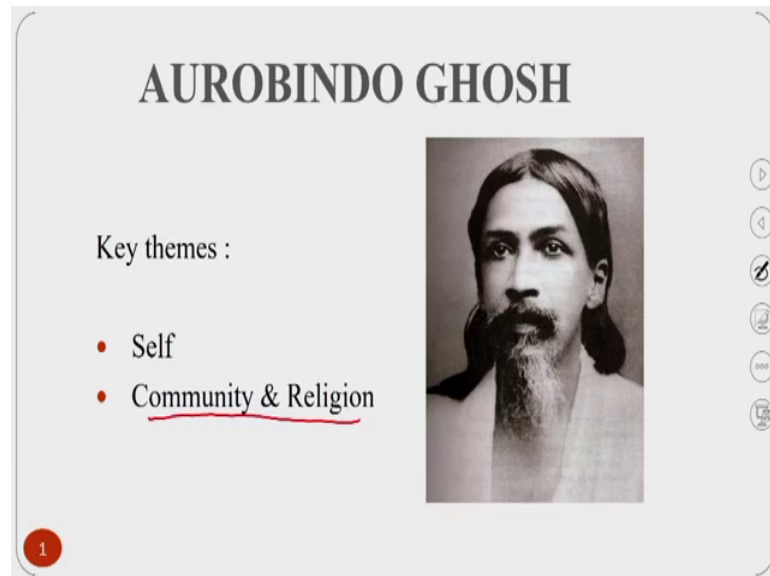


**Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought**  
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**Lecture - 09**  
**Aurobindo Ghosh: Community and Religion**

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A slide titled "AUROBINDO GHOSH" featuring a portrait of Aurobindo Ghosh on the right. On the left, under the heading "Key themes :", there is a bulleted list: "Self" and "Community & Religion". The text "Community & Religion" is underlined in red. The slide includes navigation icons on the right and a red circle with the number "1" in the bottom left corner.

Hello and I welcome you all for this second and concluding lecture on Aurobindo Ghosh and in this lecture, we are going to discuss his thought on Community and Religion. So, today, we are going to discuss his thought on community and religion. We already had a lecture on Aurobindo and we have discussed his thought on self and notion of the self and we see how it is related and connected to the other thinkers certainly like Rabindranath Tagore and his views on self.

So, we have discussed that in our previous lecture. Today, we will focus more on Aurobindo's views on community and religion. And I will begin with his views on community and then we will also discuss his views on nationalism and how that is connected with religion and his views on Gita. And finally, we will conclude this lecture by critically assessing some of them key ideas in Aurobindo Ghosh and what are they scholarly criticism to Aurobindo Ghosh and his thought.

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**Aurobindo's views on Community and Religion**

- Aurobindo used the rhetoric of religion in his political writings as a means of communication to those who were otherwise non participative in the political domain. It was a distinct way of engaging people in the non-violent struggle against colonialism.
- Andrew Sartori regards his appeal to religious discourse not as a direct traditional attachment to Hinduism but an act of traditionalism seeking to use it as a means of appealing to the 'national-popular' who were subject to the appeal and authority of religion.

So, on Aurobindo Ghosh this rhetoric of religion and here, the religion is not something which is kind of organized form of worship for Aurobindo Ghosh religion is something which is broader which is something that enables the man to realize the existence of something, which is supreme which is something universal and therefore, in all his political and spiritual articulation and thought, the rhetorics of religion is very much very much central.

So, Aurobindo used this rhetoric of religion in his political writings as a means of communication to those who were otherwise non participative in the political domain, it was a distinct way of engaging people in a non violent struggle against the colonialism or colonial rule.

So, besides that a speculative or intellectual urge to understand the significance of religion for realizing of self and relationship of self with the others Aurobindo also has the practical use of this rhetoric of religion to mobilize those who were those here means his native countrymen in Bengal or in the rest of India and they used the rhetoric of religion. The vocabulary of religion to mobilize them, to enable them, to participate in the political arena and to fight against the British rule

Now, this; we can understand in the historical context in which Aurobindo Ghosh and many others were writing or articulating their ideas. So, starting from Bram Bankim Chandra Chatterjee Anandamath and the invocation of symbols and vocabulary which is

deeply embedded in one particular form of religious tradition this remains; there in many other thinkers including Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh as well and this, we also have to understand in a theoretical sense when they were they were confronting in our powering or our dominating foreign rule or British dominance the resource on which they can rely and then confront this our dominating power was more in the domain of religion more in the domain of spirituality and therefore, they invoke this terms because through them they can connect with the masses and mobilize them enable them to participate in the political struggle against the British rule.

So, theory is there in Partha Chatterjee distinction between inner and outer domain, if some of you are interested you can look at some of his writings where he discuss this inner and outer domain certainly nation and its fragments and also some other articles.

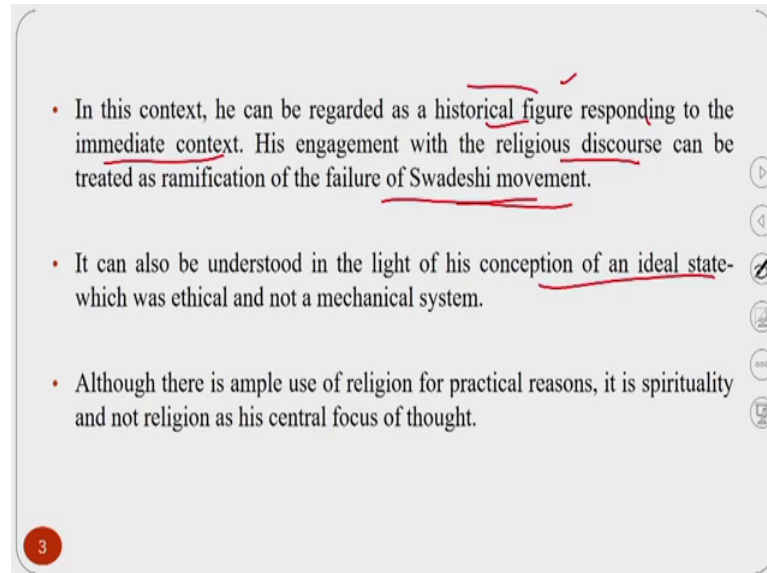
Now, what par Partha Chatterjee decides between this inner and outer domain is that in inner domain that is the domain of religion and spirituality Indians are far superior than the British and that becomes their source of confidence source of strength to confront this foreign rule, but in the outer domain that is the domain of material political economy, they may learned from the British and then they can they can beat them they can learned from them and gradually, they can surpass them also. So, this vocabulary or invocation of religious term and terminology in a Arobindo's thought also has a practical necessity to mobilize the net, it is for political struggle.

Now, one of the scholar Andrew Sartori regards his appeal to religious discourse not as a direct traditional attachment to Hinduism, but an act of traditionalism seeking to use it as a means of appealing to the national popular who were subject to the appeal and authority of religion. So, the religiosity of Indians requires him or many other thinkers like him wanted to mobilize their support for anti colonial struggle they had to resort to this vocabulary because the masses the most of Indians where more familiar with these terms and it was easier for them to mobilize them using or invoking this term.

So, the authority of religion and appeal of religion was. So, intense among the citizens or Indians or the fellow countrymen that that Aurobindo Ghosh and many other modern Indian thinkers at least in the first phase of anti colonial struggle thought of using these rhetoric's; this tool to mobilize public opinion and this is not to do with a kind of

religious attachment to one particular religion, but you said politically to mobilize the masses for anti colonial struggle.

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- In this context, he can be regarded as a historical figure responding to the immediate context. His engagement with the religious discourse can be treated as ramification of the failure of Swadeshi movement.
- It can also be understood in the light of his conception of an ideal state- which was ethical and not a mechanical system.
- Although there is ample use of religion for practical reasons, it is spirituality and not religion as his central focus of thought.

In this context, he can be regarded as a historical figure responding to the immediate context. So, the partition and another oppressive policy of the government force him to use these rhetoric's, these vocabulary and respond to the immediate context using such vocabulary and that makes him a kind of historical figure and his engagement with the religious discourse can be treated as a ramification of the failure of the Swadeshi movement.

Now, many scholars have argued that the Swadeshi movement fail and it lead to some kind of acrimonious relationship between two larger community Hindu and Muslims and that lead to its a failure and there is the validity in such criticism also like Sumit Sarkar have argued and many others like him, but really strength of such discourse was it was easily accessible and comprehensible for the masses and Gandhi certainly when there was a mass character of Indian national movement use and continued to use such rhetoric's of religion to mobilize the masses.

So, the strength of these vocabulary or rhetoric's of religion remains very significant during the anti colonial struggle and Aurobindo was very significant historical figure in terms of using such vocabulary or defining the nation as motherhood or as a nationalism

as a religion or having organic existence like an individual. So, So, Aurobindo Ghosh in that sense was responding to the immediate context while using this vocabulary.

Now, this use of religious rhetorics can also be understood in the light of his conception of an ideal state. Now Aurobindo was not just a political radical activist, but also a visionary and in his vision the conception of nation or state was very different from the many other pragmatic political thinkers of his time and in his conception of ideal state which is more ethical and not a kind of mechanical system, which fulfills the material or physical needs of the individual, he was conceptualizing a state or ideal state which will make individual ethical or moral and that ethical and moral is to enable the individual to connect with the larger self or the supreme self, which we have discussed in the previous lecture.

So, this invocation of religious doctrine or religious terminology to can be also understood when we understand his ethical, ethical view of life and also the notion of ideal state in his thought.

Now, as I was saying there is ample use of religion for practical reason it is spirituality and not religion as his central focus of thought. So, here the religion is not a kind of organized system of worship for him religion and religious vocabulary is something which enables the individual to realize himself connect with the others and connect with the larger humanity.

So, this three layer movement of individual self from the physical biological being to the community his or her community and then the community to the larger humanity that can be connected and that is the spiritual evolution in his thought and therefore, this religious vocabulary in his thought also has some practical reasons besides his vision on ideal state.

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**Spiritual religion of humanity**

- As the means for universal human unity, Aurobindo talks of a spiritual religion of humanity. For him, spiritual foundation can lead to the psychological unification of people which will equally respect the socio-cultural diversity among them.
- Spiritual religion of humanity does not imply a universal religion. He writes:  
“ Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in self-expression and means of development.”
- He further writes:  
“ A religion of humanity means the growing realization that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here.”

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Now, what is this a spiritual religion of humanity that is this spiritual religion for Aurobindo is something very different from anyone creed or anyone organized form of religion because it Christianity or Islam or Buddhism or any other religion. So, for him the source of human unity or unity in human unity or human unity is possible through this spiritual religion and this spiritual religion is very uniquely interpreted in his works. So, this spiritual religion is the means for universal human unity Aurobindo talks of a spiritual religion of humanity for him a spiritual foundation can lead to the psychological unification of people which will equally respect the socio cultural diversity among them.

Now, this a spiritual religion is very specific which can also be connected to integral pluralism as we are Mehta puts it, now what is this integral pluralism; that means, the all self is connected with one or same form of energy or same form of supreme being and yet it can be manifested in different ways in different culture in different ethos and yet they can all fulfilled or connect with each other through mutual love or empathy or solidarity. So, that form of empathy solidarity mutual love can lead to the psychological unification, and not the organized form of religion or community or nation and state or this atomistic or rational conception of individual.

So, for him, the spiritual religion will come to discuss what this a spiritual religion is, but he it is significant to know that, for him this is spiritual religion is the basis for psychological unity among the different socio cultural groups and community and it can

form a kind of integral humanity unity among different socio cultural groups here to be more specific what this a spiritual religion is for Aurobindo a spiritual religion of humanity does not imply a universal religion that is to say one form of religion followed by everyone in the world.

So, for him the spiritual religion do not mean does not equal to universal religion and he writes mankind has tried such unity by; that means, that means here the universal religion. So, there should be one religion one world and that one religion in one world will create true unity among the people for Aurobindo Ghosh that cannot be possible that cannot lead to desired ends or desired objective.

So, he writes that mankind has tried unity by; that means, that means universal religion it has failed and deserved to fail because there can be no universal religious system one in mental creed and vital form. So, why it has failed and deserved to fail because for Aurobindo, there cannot be universal religious system which is one in mental creed or vital form then constitute a spiritual religion for Aurobindo Ghosh, the inner a spirit in all of us which is indeed one, but more than any other spiritual life insists on the freedom and variation in self expression and means of development.

Now, this realization of inner spirit which is one and same in all, but it can manifest itself in various ways or it can develop itself in so many ways, yet, it can attain the same result of universal solidarity or unity which is impossible to achieve or attain through a organized form of universal religious system.

So, the spiritual religion is a kind of realization of your inner self which manifest the one and same as spirit, but it can express itself in. So, many social cultural ways and attain such realization in different ways. So, there is a plurality in such a realization or self expression and yet there is a kind of integralism where you realize the inner self in one or inner a spirit in one and all is same and he further writes that a religion of humanity means the growing realization that there is a sacred spirit a divine reality in which we are all one that humanity is the highest present vehicle on earth and that the human race and human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself.

Now, he further explain his a spiritual religion which enables that realization that, there is a secret spirit or divine reality and this divine reality enables us to recognize to acknowledge that we are all one and this humanity is something which is highest on

earth and this humanity is manifested or expressed through the human being individual or collective on this earth. So, the higher spiritual divine self on earth which is the ultimate or the supreme being for Aurobindo Ghosh manifest itself through the individual and therefore, that individual becomes the vehicle of universal a spirit or the higher a spirit to manifest itself in the physical world.

So, there is a kind of continuous movement or evolution in Aurobindo's thought about religion or certainly spiritual religion which is growing realization about the existence of the supreme being and also then the process or the practices of manifesting or developing solidarity or interconnection between individual and the community on the one hand and different communities and humanity at large, which is the highest manifestation or ultimate manifestation of universal spirit on the other. So, there is a kind of integral interconnections between these three which is very different from the universal religion.

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**Spiritual Society and State**

- He envisioned a spiritual society in contrast to a bourgeoisie and socialist society/state. *Freedom*
- Concern of the spiritual society is not to solve the material problems of humanity. But its emphasis lies on creating a new basis of our being, life and knowledge. *Equality*
- He also talked about the “economics of a spiritualized society”. It is to provide all men the joy of work in accordance to their nature and leisure to their inner development. Its aim is not to create a machinery of production but to offer all a prosperous and beautiful life. ✓

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Now, what a spiritual society and state for Aurobindo Ghosh, he envisioned a spiritual society in contrast to a bourgeoisie or socialist society. So, in a bourgeoisie society the emphasis is more on individual as a self defining rational agent and this self defining rational agent is atomic itself and given the condition of freedom this self can attain or realize itself on the other hand the socialist society emphasis is more on equality.

Now, Aurobindo Ghosh and his vision of societies very different from these two conceptualization of society or state which is more a kind of mechanical instrumental viz



and also look at individual in a very narrow or limited sense of his or her being for Aurobindo; there society and the role of society is to enable the individual to realize his superior self or manifestation of supreme self in his life and then accordingly pursue his or her on goals in the life.

So, for Aurobindo, then the concern of the spiritual society is not to solve the material problems whether it is the question of freedom or the question of material redistribution or attaining economic equality, but its emphases lies on creating a new basis of our being life and knowledge.

So, what is knowledge what is life what is the basis of our on being that is radically articulated by Aurobindo and for him the role of state and society is to create the condition or enable the individual to think about his life not in isolation a kind of autonomous atomistic self as in bourgeoisie society or state or in a socialist society which is the collective is over dominating on the individual.

So, individual submerge in a kind of collective self of society or community and its focus on equality for him them ideal society or spiritual society will enable the individual to understand the basis true basis of his life and also what is the meaning of life, it is not the material physical problem and challenges which needs to be solved, but also the spiritual attainment the spiritual side of human life and what consuetude than the knowledge. Knowledge is not then just to maximize ones interest, but also to understand the larger objective of life and then following the practices which help in attaining such objectives.

So, he talks about economics of a spiritualized society; here it is necessary to point out as Aurobindo is a synchronic thinker, who was synthesizing different a strands of thought different cultural traditions and did recognize the rule of science and technology and materials side of existence, but he did not limit the individual or his consumption of individual or spiritual life to merely a material economic side of life only as you find in some of the socialist society.

So, for him this economics of a spiritualize society is to provide all men the joy of work in accordance to their nature and leisure to their inner development, its aim is not to create a machinery of production, but to offer all a prosperous and beautiful life. So, for him economics of spiritualize life is not to solve the material problem of men, but to give them all the joy of work.

So, work is necessary work is essential, but work is not an end in itself. So, for him the work should be provided. So, that everyone can realize the joy of work according to their nature and leisure to their inner development. So, as significant is job similarly the leisure to develop ones inner self or inner search or inner urge in the self is equally significant.

So, he was conceptualizing a society, which will enable the individual to enjoy his work according to his or her nature, but also a leisure to develop himself or herself according to the inner urge or inner development of his or her character.

So, therefore, the aim of this kind of society is not to create a machinery of production. So, what we find in the free capitalist society or liberal Bourges society. So, the profit maximization of profit new or more technical or advance technical mode of and the focus on more and more production and giving more and more employment. So,.

So, Aurobindo in a sense synthesize all these things where the significance of work is there, but equally important is the leisure to develop ones inner self or the inner development. So, its aim is therefore, is not to create a machinery of production, but to offer all a prosperous and beautiful life. So, the meaning of life is not just to do the work, but also to realize the inner self the life which is more meaningful or prosperous when it gets the leisure to lead one's life according to ones on inner nature or inner self.

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- In a spiritual state, people would be regarded as group souls endowed with divinity. It would allow them to develop collectively for the common purpose of humanity.

**Science, religion and society**

- For Aurobindo, both science and religion hold equal importance as both are necessary for human development.
- He tried to accommodate both science and religion in his thinking to get a synthesized knowledge.
- But, dominance of science and technology can result in isolating the individual which create a sense of insignificance and powerlessness in him.

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So, in a spiritual state, people would be regarded as a group souls endowed with divinity. So, again the question of religion religious vocabulary is. So, central in his thought it would allow them to develop collectively for the common purpose of humanity.

So, these understanding of we are all part of same family or same community will develop gradually ones individual get the condition or chance to work and also leisure to introspect to examine many inner urge within his or her personality and then on the basis of such understanding or realization he or she can better connect with the other self or communities and that ultimately lead to a kind of psychological emotional unity among the people and that is the common purpose of humanity and his ashram in Orvilli is based on such principle of universal humanity and not divided on either caste religion creed or nation.

So, in his thought, then what we find about science religion and society for him both science and religion hold equal importance as both are necessary for human development. So, for the progress of humanity or human development the role of science technology along with religion is equally important, and he tried accommodate both science and religion in his thinking to get a kind of synthesizing knowledge about the role of technology of science in human progress and how it can enables the realization of self or realization of true self.

But dominance of science and technology can result in isolating the individual which create a sense of insignificance and powerlessness in him. So, many bourgeoisie society liberal bourgeoisie society, what you also have despite of all kind of progress in material economic life the gradual or more and more realization of helplessness or aloofness or isolation which becomes a kind of challenge in many contemporary society, you will find individual despite of material economic prosperity gradual realization or increasing realization of their isolation their helplessness to challenge many social political issues of the time.

So, Aurobindo Ghosh while acknowledging the role of science and technology also understood the limit of the domination of the or increasing reliance on science and technology at it may lead to a situation where individual may feel more and more isolated or power powerless.

So, the goal of society then is to help in achieving the ideal of life which is basically understanding the reality of human existence, what is the reality of reality of existence and individual should realize that their true being is not in science and technology.

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- The goal of society is to help in achieving the ideal of life which is basically understanding the reality of human existence. Individuals should realize that their true being is not in science and technology but rests in "living in the Spirit".
- By allowing individuals to develop their spirituality, the ideal society will lead to their overall transformation. And then, in Aurobindo's words:  
"..a self aware spiritual unity of being and a spiritual conscious community and interchange of nature would be the deep and ample root of understanding."

**Subjectivist society as the ideal society**

- Applying the categories of Karl Lamprecht, Aurobindo considered his current age as the age of subjectivism. Growing out of the individualist age, the man in the subjective age is the spiritual individual.

But rests in living with the spirit and this living with the spirit is the supreme spirit or the universal spirit which manifest or existing all of individual self.

So, that true ideal true objective of individual life is to realize the this truth and live in connection with the larger universal spirit and not excessive reliance on science and technology which we very often see in contemporary society. So, for him this role of science and technology is there, but individual must not disconnect or ignore the religious side or the spiritual side of his or her existence.

So, what Aurobindo? Aurobindo believes is that by allowing individual to develop their spirituality the society will lead to their overall transformation and then in Aurobindo's words a self aware spiritual unity of being and a spiritual conscious community and interchange of nature would be the deep and ample root of understanding.

So, the whole understanding between different cultural different society different community is possible on the basis of this realization which transform the individual from a kind of self seeking egoistic atomistic individual to someone who emerge himself

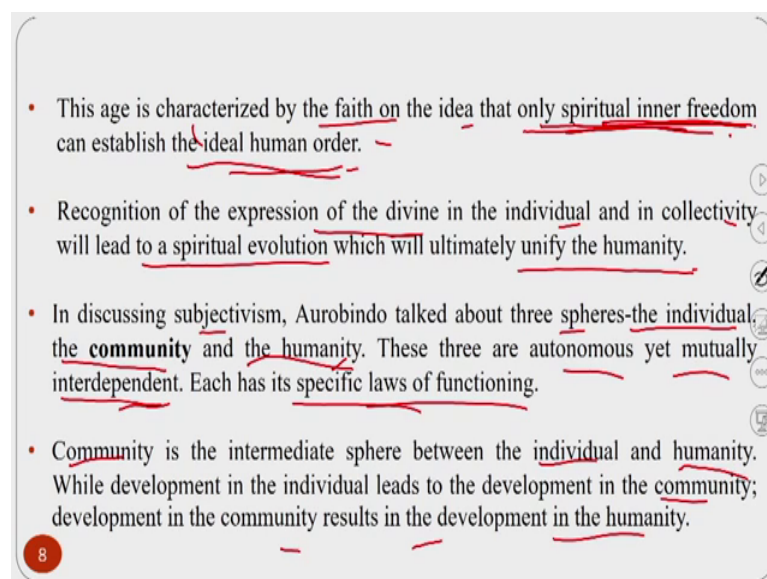
or herself in the larger community and realizing the unity the inevitable connection with the committee on the one hand and the larger humanity on the other.

So, this will be the true basis of understanding and deep solidarity deep connection with the larger self with the self of the community or the collective self and that is necessary to realize the true meaning of self and also to understand the role of individual in the larger society. So, as we were discussing for him the individual self is the manifestation. So, through the individual universal self manifest itself in our physical world. So, there the connection between individual and the Supreme Being is also very much very much there.

So, what kind of society is ideal society it is also a subjectivist society here we have briefly discussed it in our previous lecture that this is a kind of evolutionary understanding of human society which he takes from many western thinkers including Kant Herder and also Karl Lamprecht.

So, the contemporary is stage of society in which Aurobindo was leaving he considered that society as the age of subjectivism this age of subjectivism is going as we have discussed in previous lecture. Out of the individualist age and here the man or the individual spiritual individual not self seeking self aggrandizing individual of atomistic individualist age.

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- This age is characterized by the faith on the idea that only spiritual inner freedom can establish the ideal human order.
  - Recognition of the expression of the divine in the individual and in collectivity will lead to a spiritual evolution which will ultimately unify the humanity.
  - In discussing subjectivism, Aurobindo talked about three spheres—the individual, the community and the humanity. These three are autonomous yet mutually interdependent. Each has its specific laws of functioning.
  - Community is the intermediate sphere between the individual and humanity. While development in the individual leads to the development in the community; development in the community results in the development in the humanity.

This age is characterized by the faith on the idea that only a spiritual inner freedom can establish the ideal human order.

So, that is the connection with self with the larger humanity are they human order as such. So, that human order in true sense of the term is possible when this age which Aurobindo thought an envisioned as a age of subjectivism which believes in this spiritual inner freedom. So, when he was responding to political challenges for India and he was actively involved in political liberation, he did believe that political independence of freedom is required, but true freedom will be possible when individual realize that the true freedom lies in the inner spiritual life and not just in political and economic life.

So, this is also then recognition of the expression of divine in the individual and in the collectivity will lead to a spiritual evolution which will ultimately unify the humanity that is again the true unity of humanity is possible when one realizes, this expression of divine in the individual self and in the collective self and that realization will gradually lead to a kind of spiritual transformation or evolution and which will then develop a solidarity which is not based on selfish interest or egoistic self.

So, in discussing subjectivism Aurobindo talked about three spheres, the individual the community and the humanity and these three are interconnected, we will discuss it through one of his quotation about this interconnection, but he see this evolution in this realization at the level of individual and then how it percolates at the level of community and then finally, how he transformed the humanity as a whole and bring about unity among different groups and community.

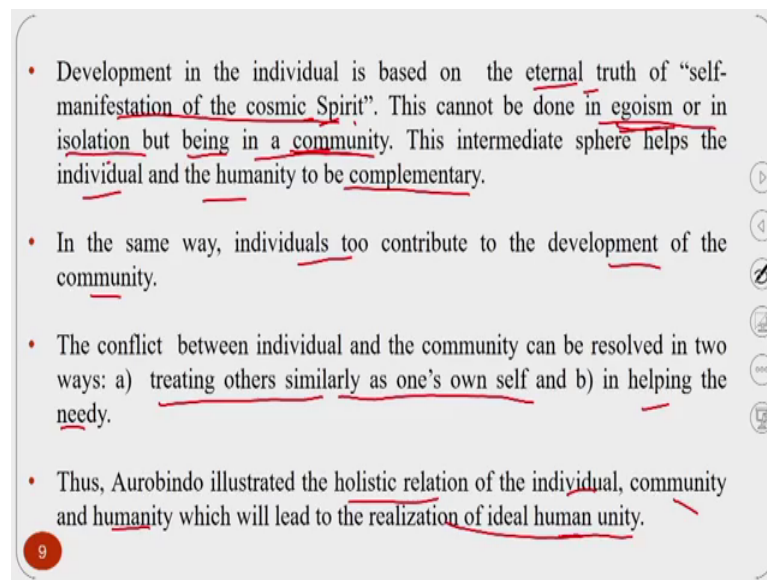
So, these three are autonomous and yet mutually interdependent and that is something which is unique in Aurobindos thought and in many other many other thinkers. So, individual is not defined as a self defining atomistic individual as in liberal bourgeois society and state or also individual is not sacrifice at the altar of collectivity as in many communist or socialist society here the autonomy of individual is realized and also the autonomy of other two community like his or her community immediate community and also the humanity as such.

So, these three are autonomous from each other, but yet they are mutually interdependent and each has its specific laws of functioning and what are these specific laws of functioning we will discuss it in a minute for Aurobindo then community is the

intermediate sphere between individual and the humanity; it is the sphere which connects with is a kind of spate in between individual and the humanity.

So, while development in the individual leads to the development in the community development in the community results in the development of the community. So, there is a kind of integral continuum between individual community and humanity as a whole and these three are somewhat autonomous from each other yet deeply intertwine or interconnected.

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- Development in the individual is based on the eternal truth of “self-manifestation of the cosmic Spirit”. This cannot be done in egoism or in isolation but being in a community. This intermediate sphere helps the individual and the humanity to be complementary.
- In the same way, individuals too contribute to the development of the community.
- The conflict between individual and the community can be resolved in two ways: a) treating others similarly as one’s own self and b) in helping the needy.
- Thus, Aurobindo illustrated the holistic relation of the individual, community and humanity which will lead to the realization of ideal human unity.

So, development in the individual is based on the eternal truth of self manifestation of the cosmic spirit that we have discussed. So, this development in the individual cannot be done in egoism or in isolation cut off from the larger society bit only when this being or self is in a community.

So, the kind of organic understanding of self where everything is interconnected and interdependent in a way; so, this realization of eternal truth about self manifestation of cosmic truth cannot be done when the self is egoistic self or in isolation , but only when the self is in the community exist in the community. So, this intermediate sphere helps the individual and the humanity to be complementary in the same way individuals to contribute to the development of the community.

So, the relationship between individual and community is in a sense very interconnected and one does not use its identity while connecting or relating with others. So, Aurobindo in a sense maintains the uniqueness of individual autonomy of individual yet regards the individual in connection with the community and the role of individual in creation of that community especially the spiritual society or community which he is talking about.

So, that community can be built when individual which is part of that community realizes the manifestation of this cosmic spirit within his self. So, yet there is a conflict which can be resolved according to Aurobindo by treating others similarly as own self. So, you treat other the way you treat yourself and then be in helping the needy this is the way through which one can develop a kind of amicable relationship with the community.

So, thus Aurobindo illustrated the holistic relation of the individual community and humanity which will lead to the realization of ideal human unity. So, ideal unity is possible when there is a kind of integral or holistic understanding of the place of individual community and humanity in this continuum and that is the evolutionary kind of understanding.

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**In Aurobindo's political vision the 'law' of the individual, the community and humanity, and the integral relationships between them are thus summarized:**

"Thus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonize his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within, aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonize its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates."

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So, more on this understanding of individual community and humanity we can perhaps understand with this quotation from Aurobindo where is clearly established the interrelations between these three individual community and humanity as such. So, in the first sentence, he talks about the law of individual. Now the law of individual is too



perfect the individually perfect his or her individuality by free development from within. Now these two free development and from within is as important, right.

So, the law of individual says that everyone should develop himself or herself his or her individuality perfectly and this should be free from any outside intervention or interference and again that is not something kind of material or political, but this development of individuality should come from within. So, the free development from within, but that is not the end of individual rule, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others.

So, that is the mutual recognition of similar right to develop himself or herself in others his law is to harmonize his life with the life of the social aggregate, that is the community and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. So, that is the law one that law of individuality.

Now, the law of community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence the existence of itself its identity or its character by a free development from within aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and aided by the same free development of other communities and nations its law is to harmonize its life with that of the human aggregate and pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. So, again the law of community when developing its own character taking shows from the character of the individual or transformation of the individual.

Similarly, respect such rights and rights in other communities or nations, but then harmonize itself with such other communities and nations and then think about the larger humanity or perfecting that humanity.

Now, then the third is the law of humanity this law is to pursue its upward evolution towards finding and expression of the divine in the type of mankind taking all advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men to works toward the day when mankind maybe really and not only ideally one divine family , but even then when it has succeeded in unifying itself to respect aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individual and constituent aggregates. So, that is the ideal of humanity in Aurobindo Ghosh and these three law are in a continuum and integral to each other's each other's goal growth.

Now, very briefly on his views on religion and nationalism he resemble nationalism to a religion gifted by god, god is immortal and so is nationalism.

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**Religion and Nationalism**

- He resembled nationalism to a religion gifted by God. God is immortal; so is nationalism. On 19 January in 1908, while speaking in the Bombay National Union, Aurobindo remarked, “nationalism is not a mere political programme. Nationalism is a religion that has come from God...Nationalism is immortal...God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail.”
- During his stay in Alipore jail, he experienced a drastic transformation in his thought. He read the Gita and envisioned Krishna as his guide and protector. He said that initially he did not have a living faith in God. But after he realized that he had to work for Him without demanding fruitful results.
- In his Uttarpara speech which was just after his release from jail, he spoke-  
“ I spoke once before with this force in me...and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, faith; I say that it is the *Sanatana Dharma* which for us is nationalism.”

So, that is the idea. So, in his thought from a revolutionary nationalist to a spiritual leader his understanding of nationalism is very different from many of his contemporary where he considered religion God religion as a gift of God and so, he defines the nationalism and its contribution in the larger human unity on 19 January 1908, while speaking on Bombay National Union, Aurobindo remarked nationalism is not a mere political programme, but is a religion that has come from god nationalism is therefore, immortal and then the god cannot be killed and cannot be sent to jail.

So, his understanding of nationalism is religious organic understanding of nationalism which he equities with his understanding of religion and god. So, this point we have discuss during the Alief incarnation he realize the spiritual urge in himself and his focus on the freedom should be given to individual to grow from within he realize he himself and then he went to Pondicherry and for 40 years involved himself in the spiritual discipline is spiritual practices yogic practices and writings and that he is put through this Uttarpara speech.

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• Sumit Sarkar regarded this speech an indication of an inversion from treating religion as “a means to the end of mass contact and stimulation of morale” to religion as “an end in itself”. To this, Sugata Bose responded that it was a limitation of Sarkar which resulted from his lack of engagement with Aurobindo’s conception of *Sanatana Dharma*.

**Sanatana Dharma** ✓

• ✓ *Sanatana Dharma* hold a much broader image for Aurobindo. It was not a narrow and partisan creed but was as great as life itself. It was for the salvation of humanity.

• Why India should be free is not for her mere self but for all. It was not to dominate over the weak but to shed the eternal light over the world.

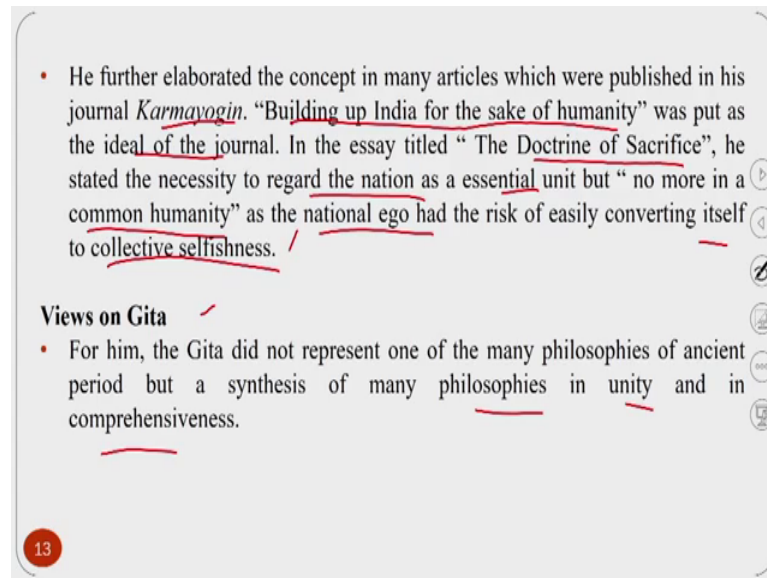
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This realization from within and then pursuit of such urge not that a speech for many thinkers was a like Sumit Sarkar regarded this speech and indication of an inversion from treating religion as a means to the end of the mass contact and stimulation of morale to religion as an end in itself.

Now, this point of Sumit Sarkar and his critique to Aurobindo and his decision Sugata Bose and responds to that is of the view that the Sanatan Dharam that Aurobindo was talking about was not narrowly defined as Sarkar and many other scholar used to take. So, what is Sanatana dharma for Aurobindo for Aurobindo; Sanatan dharma hold a much broader image and it was not a narrow and partisan creed, but was as great as life itself it was for the salvation of humanity.

So, for him the understanding of Sanatan dharma is not particularistic or Nehru, but something which is as great as broad perhaps as life itself and life in the sense of evolution towards more and more progressive stages of existence. So, for Aurobindo then India should be free not for her on self, but for her role in illuminating the humanity as such or for all. So, it was not to dominate over the week, but to shed the eternal light over the world. So, he saw the role of India is India freedom is not merely for herself, but for the illumination of the world as such.

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- He further elaborated the concept in many articles which were published in his journal *Karmayogin*. "Building up India for the sake of humanity" was put as the ideal of the journal. In the essay titled "The Doctrine of Sacrifice", he stated the necessity to regard the nation as an essential unit but "no more in a common humanity" as the national ego had the risk of easily converting itself to collective selfishness.

**Views on Gita**

- For him, the Gita did not represent one of the many philosophies of ancient period but a synthesis of many philosophies in unity and in comprehensiveness.

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He further elaborated the concept in many articles which were published in his journal *Karmayogin* where the building of India for the sake of humanity was put as the ideal of the journal. So, many of his activities were towards this kind of spiritual unification or contribution of India in the larger human life. So, in the essay titled the doctrine of sacrifice he stated the necessity to regard the nation as an essential unit, but no more in a common humanity.

So, the recognition or acknowledgement of humanity is perhaps as significant as the national independence or national liberation because as we have discussed certainly in Tagore nationalism as an organized form of form for the pursuit of selfish interest Aurobindo perhaps also realize we without the picture of the common humanity nationalism may turn in to a kind of national ego, which can convert itself as a collective selfishness at the cost of larger humanity or the unity among the humanity

So, in a sense in Aurobindo's thought this connection of individual with nation or community with the larger humanity is integral or interrelated where he did not see each as separate or in isolation or in autonomous from the other as many national leaders thought about or think about for him the Gita did not represent one of the many philosophies of ancient period, but a synthesis of many philosophies in unity and in comprehensiveness.

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- In his *Essays on the Gita*, Aurobindo portrayed the text not to be understood in its metaphysical connotations of the ancient time but in renewed relevance of the living truths that it contained.
- Gita was viewed not as a means to unraveling the past but a way forward to the future horizon.
- He writes: “We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future...But just as the past syntheses have taken those which preceded them for their starting point, so also must that of the future...proceed from what the great bodies of realized spiritual thought and experience have given.”

In his essays on Gita, Aurobindo portrayed the text not to be understood in its metaphysical connotation of the ancient time, but in renewed relevance of the living truths that it contained.

So, his interpretation or a essay on Gita was more towards future oriented rather than reverting or reviving the past. So, Gita was viewed not as a means to unraveling the past, but a way forward to the future horizon. So, creation of something new something that is there in future something which is more progressive from the present and he writes we do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noon's of the future , but just as the past synthesis have taken those preceded them for their starting point.

So, all so much that of the future proceed from what the great bodies of realized spiritual thought and experience have given. So, for him Gita and such text or the understanding of Sanatan dharma is that starting point to create something in the future, which is more broader much bigger more progressive then in the present.

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- His assertion of the future is related to the Hegelian theme of subjective freedom through an ongoing transformation. Here he employed the qualities of prakriti : *tamas, rajas* and *sattva*; and *karma, jnan* and *bhakti yoga* to understand this transformation.
- *Tamas* represents a state of ignorance, *rajas* the will to action and *sattva* is the will to discover the truth of oneself and the world . Combination of *rajas* and *sattva* drives man to the path of yoga. In *karma yoga*, man seeks to arrive at truth through his desireless action; in *jnan yoga* he doesn't only refuse the results of his action but also disregard himself as the actor; and in *bhakti yoga* he has pure devotion to the Supreme self regarding it as the self of all other selves.
- So one can conclude that for Aurobindo realization of true self of the being is possible when enabling or conducive environment for such realization is provided by community or religion.

So, his assertion of the future is related to the Hegelian theme of subjective freedom through an ongoing transformation here he employed the qualities of Prakriti's which is related to the Indian tripartite understanding of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva and Karma Jnan and Bhakti Yoga to understand this transformation. So, for Aurobindo Tamas represent state of ignorance rajas the will of action and Sattva is the will to discover the truth of oneself and the and the world combination of rajas and Sattva drives man to the path of yoga and in karma yoga man seeks to arrive at truth through his desireless action in Jnan yoga he does not only refuse the result of his action , but also disregard himself as the actor and in Bhakti yoga, he has pure devotion to the supreme self regarding it as the self of all other self.

So, though this method in Aurobindo what one find and one can conclude is the generalization of true self of the being is possible when enabling or conducive environment for such realization is provided by community and religion. So, this method which he takes from Gita is merely to be a starting point and it should not be narrowly interpreted and defined as it is done by many other many other many other scholar. So, for him these methods the teaching are the basis or the starting point for creating something which is towards unity among the human of different communities or different nations.

So, by way that we come to conclude this lecture on Aurobindo Ghosh where one thing that is very very significant in Aurobindo thought is his holistic vision of human evolution.

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**Critical Assessment of Aurobindo's Thought**

- His holistic vision of human evolution is considered a great contribution to political theory. V.R. Mehta was greatly influenced by his idea of 'integral pluralism' which he viewed as alternative to liberalism and Marxism in India.
- But, Aurobindo is not free from criticism. It is argued that his ideas remained limited to an esoteric circle partly due to the use of obscure language and also for the lack a concrete plan to relate it to the human needs of present.
- Moreover, he did not take into consideration the socio-economic and historical processes of his period thus maintaining a gulf of theory and action.

So, he see the human as a progressive evolutionary being from one state to the next state and this is considered as a great contribution to political theory and we are Mehta was greatly influenced by is idea of integral pluralism which we have discussed that different community can achieve its own character and yet realize the unity or truth of sameness or truth as manifestation of once; one supreme self and that be the basis of human unity is something which is very relevant and alternative to the liberal or the Marxist conception.

But there are some confusion some complexities and mysticism in his thought as well and that becomes the basis for his criticism one of such criticism is that his ideas remained limited to an esoteric circle partly due to the use of obscure language perhaps as we have discussed is views on Gita Sanatan Dharmas may or may not be as familiar or as accessible to someone coming from other different intellectual or religious social tradition.

So, because of such use of obscure language and also for the lack of a concrete plant to relate to the human needs of the present; so, what is the immediate need political social economic need is excessive or obsessive focus with spiritual divine or religious aspect of

human life or individual life somewhat compromise with the necessity or requirement of the president.

So, self political and economic life and that make his thought perhaps significant yet limited to an esoteric circle which is in pursuit of such a religious and a spiritual life and mass remain somewhat indifferent to some of his great teachings moreover, he did not take into consideration the socio economic and the historical processes of his period thus maintaining a gulf of theory and action.

So, many of his teachings remain in the confine of theory or contemplative in nature because he kept himself aloof from the political activity as it was unfolding in India. So, Jawaharlal Nehru writes about many attempts to invite Aurobindo to respond or participate in the political activities was ineffectual because of his isolation or obsession or involvement in the spiritual work or spiritual discipline and yogic exercise.

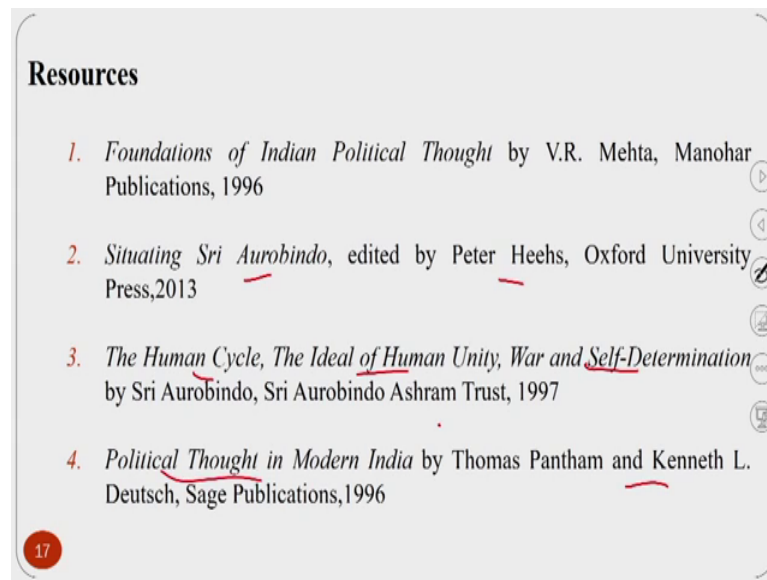
So, so that was some of the some of the criticism and this is also because of the time in which Aurobindo was writing because of the our dominating nature of the British or foreign rule and also lack of a clear possible future horizon of his he generation and therefore, the recost to religious tradition religious vocabulary leads to some kind of confusion which is perhaps express it in many of his writings.

And he remained somewhat of secure also and yet Aurobindos thought is perhaps very significant in terms of thinking about global order unity among the among the different communities or global order which is possible even without and that global order is a kind of decolonized understanding of self community and the global order which remains perhaps is greatest contribution in 20th century, which needs to be further explode and examine.

Now, on this lecture you can look at some of the writings foundation of Indian political thought and also Peter Heeh's situating Sri Aurobindo and from some of his own writings like human cycle the ideal of Human Unity War and self determination.



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**Resources**

1. *Foundations of Indian Political Thought* by V.R. Mehta, Manohar Publications, 1996
2. *Situating Sri Aurobindo*, edited by Peter Heehs, Oxford University Press, 2013
3. *The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination* by Sri Aurobindo, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1997
4. *Political Thought in Modern India* by Thomas Pantham and Kenneth L. Deutsch, Sage Publications, 1996

And finally, from Thomas Pantham and Kenneth Deutsch's political thought in modern India, there is a chapter on Aurobindo Ghosh. So, you can refer to these resources for understanding Aurobindo Ghosh his views on self religion and community.

So, thank you.