

**PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS:
JOURNAL OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

ISSN: - 0976 - 4496

Volume - XIII

March - 2017



ENLIGHTENMENT TO PERFECTION

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SAP, (DRS-III) OF UGC
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
(ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE BY NAAC)
P.O.-NBU, (SILIGURI), DIST.-DARJEELING
WEST BENGAL - 734013, INDI

Series Editors

Dr. Nirmal Kumar Roy, Head and Associate Professor, Dept. of Philosophy,
University of North Bengal (Editor-in-Chief)
Dr. Laxmikanta Padhi, Associate Professor, Dept. of Philosophy,
University of North Bengal (Co-editor)

Editorial board

Prof. Amitabha Dasgupta, (Retd.) Dept. of Philosophy,
Central University of Hyderabad
Prof. D. N. Tewari, Dept. of Philosophy and Religion,
Banaras Hindu University
Prof. Indrani Sanyal, (Retd.) Dept. of Philosophy, Jadavpur University
Prof. Subirranjan Bhattacharya, (Retd.) Dept. of Philosophy,
University of Calcutta
Prof. P.R. Bhatt, School of Humanities, IIT, Mumbai.
Prof. Kalyan Kumar Bagchi, (Retd.) Dept. of Philosophy and Religion,
Vishwabharati University
Prof. Nirmalya Narayan Chakrabarty, Dept. of Philosophy,
Rabindra Bharati University
Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, (Retd.) Dept. of Philosophy, University of North
Bengal
Dr. Soumitra Basu, Dept. of Philosophy, Jadavpur University
Prof. Kantilal Das, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Prof. Jyotish C. Basak Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Prof. Debika Saha, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Dr. Koushik Joardar, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Dr. Anirban Mukherjee, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Dr. N. Ramthing, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal
Smt. Swagata Ghosh, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------|
| Ranjana Mukherjee : | Ethical Theory and Ordinary Moral Practice | ...1 |
| Kalyan Kumar Bagchi: | On Interpreting Radhakrishnan, the Interpreter Today | ...6 |
| Ashok Madak: | Rajiv Malhotra: A Unique Exponent of the Hindu Worldview... | 11 |
| Rakesh Chandra: | Some Reflections on Tenability of Pluralism, Transformation and Trivialization of Religions | ...26 |
| Raghunath Ghosh: | The Concept of Matter: a Physics-Philosophy Interphase | ...36 |
| Kantilal Das : | Wittgenstein on Philosophy of Silence | ... 45 |
| Jyotsna Saha: | Some Reflections on the Meaning of Life: | ...58 |
| Balaganapathi Devarakonda: | Role of <i>Guru</i> as an Interpreter of <i>Dharma</i> | ... 65 |
| Nirmal Kumar Roy: | Value Education as a Means to Resolve Social Crisis | ...74 |
| Amal Kumar Harh: | The Concept of Woman in Indian and Western Tradition | ...81 |
| Samar Kumar Mondal: | Aristotle and Kautilya on the Concept of Good Governance and Welfare State | ...90 |
| Anirban Mukherjee: | Aspect Perception as a Case of Interpretation | ...99 |
| Laxmikanta Padhi: | Bipinchandra's Thought on Hinduism, Tradition and Modernity | ...108 |
| Varbi Roy: | Gandhian Perspective of Conflict Resolution | ...118 |
| Mamata Kundu : | Sister Nivedita: a Dedicated Soul of Creative Culture | ...123 |
| Mukul S. K.: | Anita Desai's Voices in the City: a Discourse of the Postcolonial Modernity | ...132 |
| Alok Kumar Khatua: | Śāntaraksita and Kamalāśīla on the Problem of Universals | ...143 |
| Reshme Sarkar: | Fregean Reflection on Thought | ...155 |
| Sandipa Ghosh: | Ethical Philosophy of the <i>Gītā</i> | ...164 |
| Priyanka Basak and: Debika Saha | Transcending the Concept of Morality from Human to the Post-human | ...174 |
| Purnima Das: | Indian Perspective of the Philosophy of Voluntary Service | ...187 |
| Gambhir D. Subbba and: Debika Saha | Kant's Moral Philosophy: Aims, Methods and Some Core Concepts | ...192 |
| Anup Deka: | Wittgenstein on Religion and Meaning of Life | ...199 |
| Rakhi Debnath and: Debika Saha | Ambedkar's Postmodern Vision | ...209 |
| Our Contributors | | |
| Notes to the Contributors | | |
| Our Publications | | |

EDITORIAL NOTE

Philosophy is a method of distinguishing fact from fallacies, sifting truth as sacrosanct... it is a method of securitizing our otherwise unexamined beliefs and practices in order to purge them of falsehood and error.

When philosophy is defined as *Love of Wisdom* we have a phrase that may be used as incorporating all of the branches. In the *Love of Wisdom* we may say that there is the Vision of truth which we see and that gives us the impulse and the impetus to pursue it; that there is the power of this Vision to dissolve those problems which give us concern; and that there is the method or methodology by which we can convey this Vision so as to make it convincing and persuasive.

In every original philosopher there is a barbaric and primitive conceit, a basic self-assurance, a faith in him. He is in the right and the world is wrong. He has this attitude not only as regards the philosophers of the past but equally as much in regards to his contemporaries. This quality is what makes of every philosopher a critic and a fighter. This quality is what gives to every philosopher his own style. Hence, every original philosophy is a critique and a challenge and unique and a mystique. In other words, every original philosophy is an autobiography or a critique. The philosophy is the man and the man is his philosophy. Who is Plato? The answer is, his *Book*.

To philosophize is to express one's discontent with what is; to show that what was, or what is, was and is in error; to seek to persuade or to prove that what one thinks and believes is right and correct; and to show that if the world does not accept one's thought and belief it will perish by some form of death, physical or intellectual. Therefore, when Marx said that hitherto philosophers had sought to interpret the world, but that now was the time to change the world, he was wrong in thinking that he was the first philosopher whose wish it was to change the world. He was wrong in the notion that philosophers merely wanted to interpret the world. All philosophers want to change the world. Marx as an original philosopher believed that he was the first to put philosophy straight. He was not the first, and, of course, he is not the last. Philosophical interpretation is inherently a fighting stance for change. This is why the

intellectual life in its true self can be nothing but revolutionary. It is tragic to the intellectual life when 'intellectuals' forget this. Philosophy, therefore, is a revolutionary enterprise

An authentic philosophy is a means by which the philosopher communicates to the world that he is not empty of use and purpose and justification. The philosopher does not use his philosophy as a means. The philosophizing is the 'means'. Philosophy is essential for an integral human development. It always recommends for at least a little dosage of philosophical training for all, especially in all levels of our educational sector. Philosophy trains the human mind to reason correctly and rationally. And the proper training of human mind translates to human and societal development. Hence Philosophy is a great impact to the hard reality of policy making in the national constitution of India, which is within the ambits of law, the preservation of life of individual in the State, the preservation of individual autonomy, and the fair treatment of citizens.

We express our deep sense of gratitude and happiness to present the 13th issue of our journal "Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy" before the philosophical community. The Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal is proud to express that it provides the philosophical fraternity with a space for contributing papers. However, we regret the delay in publishing the present volume. Besides regular academic activities, the Department is also engaged in performing SAP (DRS-III) programmes under the guidance of Prof. Kantilal Das, Coordinator of SAP in Philosophy. We thank all colleagues and esteemed members of the Editorial Board for helping us to publish this volume. We are grateful to all the contributors, our Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Registrar (Officiating) Finance Officer (Officiating), University Grants Commission and the University Press, without whose cooperation, this endeavour would not have seen the light of the day.

Moral theory deals with moral insight, and moral insight is the recognition of the relationships available. This is a very disciplined and mundane conception. It makes moral insight, and therefore moral theory, consists simply in the everyday workings of the same ordinary. There is no more aura about the insight that determines what we should do in this catastrophic life when the foundations are up-heaving and our

twisted for eternity lies waiting to be fixed, than in that which determines whether commercial conditions favor heavy or light purchases. There is nothing more divine or transcendental in resolving how to save our degraded neighbour than in the resolving of a problem in Mathematics, or in the mastery of Mill's theory of induction. Ranjana Mukherjee in *Ethical Theory and Ordinary Moral Practice* emphasizes that moral theory is the analytic perception of the conditions and relations in hand in a given act; it is the action in idea. It is the construction of the act in thought against its outward construction. It is, therefore, the doing, the act itself, in its emerging. So far are we from any divorce of moral theory and practice that theory is the ideal act, and conduct is the executed insight.

If we take any philosopher as a guru and we treat his works as gospel. If we make of his teaching a religion complete with dogma and exegesis, we may become members of the congregation of the faithful, but will not possess the openness of mind essential for a critical understanding of the master's views. The true teachers help us to think for ourselves in the new situations which arise. We would be unworthy disciples, if we do not question and criticize them. They try to widen our knowledge and help us to see clearly. The true teacher is like Krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā* who advises Arjuna to think for himself and do as he chooses: *yathā icchasi tathā kuru*. Kalyan Kumar Bagchi in *On Interpreting Radhakrishnan, the Interpreter Today* claims that there is a longing in the human mind for eternal truths embodied in fixed formulas which we need not discuss, modify or correct. We do crave for a constant rule of life, a sure guide to heaven. Devotion to a master who lays down the law gives us rest, confidence and security. We cannot, however, expect rational criticism from those who have too much reverence for authority.

Rajiv Malhotra has worked vigorously for decades to counter the tsunami of misconceptions about India and Hinduism propounded by Western academia. This misinformation suffuses the media, fills our textbooks, is echoed by Western-influenced intellectuals in India and confounds the minds of Hindu youths in different universities worldwide. What is the source of these ideas? Malhotra's books *Indra's Net* and *Being Different* is about the ongoing battle over Hinduism's positioning on par with the world's major religions. It rebuts an increasingly powerful academic

school which posits that Hinduism, as such, has never existed. Hinduism today is dismissed as a potent myth concocted by Swami Vivekananda. This idea brands Vivekananda's movement as neo-Hinduism, where 'neo' implies something not genuine. Ashok Modak elaborates the contents of two books written by Rajiv Malhotra as both the books highlight with apt evidences the distinctiveness of the Hindu worldview. Both the books are one of the first attempts by an Indian intellectual to challenge seriously the assumptions and presuppositions of the field of India and South Asian studies, not only European and American scholarship on India and South Asia, but also the neo-colonialist, postmodernist, and subaltern *ressentiment* so typical of contemporary Indian intellectuals. His books are thought-provoking and well researched, representing decades of studying and defending against the anti-Hindu assault. It provides a background that can be marshaled to counter the tenacious misconceptions about India and Hinduism influencing global media and public education from middle school to the University.

There is an abounding plurality and rich diversity of religions in the contemporary world both in terms of religious beliefs and practices. And globalization is creating a widespread awareness of this fact. Perhaps not surprisingly, along with the plethora of religious diversity, conflict in the name of religion is also pervasive and multifarious. From religious wars to individual acts of violence to verbal assault, discord among religions is an unfortunate reality of the past and present. In response, Tenzin Gyatso, the current Dalai Lama, has recently suggested that inter-religious harmony can be achieved by developing understanding of other traditions and appreciating the value inherent within each of them. In fact, it would behoove every educated person to have at least a basic understanding of the major religions, for ignorance in this domain tends to lead to suspicion, bigotry, and sometimes even violence, whereas understanding can lead to respect, empathy, and perhaps even trust. Rakesh Chandra in *Some Reflections on Tenability of Pluralism, Transformation and Trivialization of Religions* tries to establish that one of the most popular views on religious pluralism and coping with it is a view which differentiates non-public and public culture of public practice advocating secularism in the realm and learning the inward private domain of conviction for religion.

The Concept of Matter as found in the Cārvāka, Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya systems of Indian Philosophy has got much affinities with that of Physics. Both the traditions firmly believe that the matter has got some in-built power through which it can create something without the help of any conscious principle. The Cārvākas believe that there four material elements in this world called earth, water, light and air due the combination of which a new entity called consciousness comes into being just as red colour out of lime, nut etc. in a betel. Hence consciousness has no separate existence rather than the four elements. Both the Vaiśeṣikas and Quantum Physicists are of the opinion that the initial origin of the world is possible due to the combination of two atoms giving rise to a binary one (*dvyaṅka*). The in-built power within atoms helps them for their auto-combination without the help of any conscious principle or God-particle. Raghunath Ghosh in *the Concept of Matter: A Physics-Philosophy Interphase* claims that when a hot metal, the Physicists observed, is found, it is visible due to its visibility of the thermal radiation emitted by high temperature. Everything else is also glowing with thermal radiation as well, but less brightly and at larger wave-lengths than human eye can detect. Such phenomenon is called *Black Body Radiation*. The Sāṃkhya believes in such type of in-built power in each and every object. The Samkhya described *sattva* as mass, *rajas* as energy and *tamas* as a balancing factor, which is also endorsed by the Physicists. In case of leadership an individual can be a leader *per excellence* if he believes in such in-built power on himself and can lead (not mislead) others in the true sense of the term to be conscious about such power in them so that they do not feel any negative states of mind like inferiority complex, self-negating attitudes etc. If such in-built power is admitted, an individual becomes a true leader by arousing their power already within them as Naciketa was aroused by the Mantra- *uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varānnivodhata* (Arise, awake, stop not until the goal is reached). The human body has got such in-built power by virtue of being matter (*Prakṛti*) but not as a part of Spirit (*Ātman*).

What is the meaning of silence? As defined by Foucault, this question is ill-posed, for there are many silences and they can have many meanings. Depending on the specifics of the case, the significance of a silence may range from an obvious meaning to utter nonsensicality. Foucault urges us to think of silences as situated speech acts that can only be understood in their particularity, that is, as they function

in particular socio-historical contexts and within particular discursive practices. This insight, it is argued, is elaborated in an interesting way in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. One of Wittgenstein's life-long philosophical preoccupations was to elucidate the limits of intelligibility, to provide an account of language that could shed light on the boundaries between what can and cannot be said. Kantilal Das in *Wittgenstein on Philosophy of Silence* tries to establish this point.

The very subject matter of 'meaning of life' is philosophically interesting in its own right. Questions about meaning of life lead to puzzles about how we know things, i.e. the existence of an afterlife and the nature of *nirvāṇa*. Important questions are also raised about the nature of reality - whether God exists and whether there is a spiritual realm beyond the physical world. Perhaps, it is impossible to generalize intelligently about human life, because in order to do so we would have to step outside it. And this would be like trying to leap out of our skins, surely only someone outside human existence altogether, like God, would be able to survey it as a whole and see whether it added up? The case is akin to Nietzsche's argument in *The Twilight of the Idols* that life cannot be judged either valuable or valueless in itself, since the criteria we would have to appeal to in order to establish this would themselves be part of life. But this is surely questionable. We do not need to stand outside human existence in order to make meaningful comments about it. It is true that nobody has ever actually seen any society as a whole, but we can make reasonable inferences from the bits of reality that we are familiar with to the bits that we aren't. It is not a matter of seeing it all, just a matter of seeing enough to sort out what seems typical from what does not. Jyotsna Saha in *Some Reflections the Meaning of Life* claims that creativity, love, authenticity may enable people to live meaningful lives in the face of discontent and suffering.

Bala Ganapathi in his contribution analyzes the place of *guru* in bridging the idea and the praxis in the Hindu tradition. After analyzing various conceptions of *gurus* in Hindu tradition such as - the one who imparts knowledge of *Vedas*, *Nyāyaśāstras*, *Arṇya* etc; the one who guides rulers; the one who lives in forests and clarifies perceived conflicts of *dharma* by the common people; and the one who has established *dhārmic* traditions to be followed by future generations. He argues that the *guru*'s role as interpreter of *dharma* is crucial for the sustenance and development

of both moral and social order of the human beings especially in the present time. He makes an attempt to look at the tradition to analyze the role played by various kinds of *gurus* in interpreting the *dharma* to the context and guiding the people, in the course of discussion of his submission.

The modern society is facing tremendous values crisis today and so many unsatisfactory incidences have arisen due to crisis of value and character. Question may be raised what is the remedy of all these ills? There is a great need to equip the present education, being imparted to children, with values of life in order to make them good human beings. Values bring quality and meaning to life and give a person his identity and character. The most valuable human possessions are health, harmony, happiness, wisdom and above all character reflecting ethical and human values. When these values are manifested in one's thoughts, speech and actions, he could be called an enlightened person. Vivekananda observed, "Education is not the amount of information that is put in your brain and run riot there, we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded by which one can stand on one's own feet". Nirmal Kumar Roy in *Value Education as a Means to Resolve Social Crisis* tries to prove that value education helps in resolving the problems which are available in our *Śāstras*.

Indian society is rather a complex one, because of its construction of a hierarchical social order on the basis of class, caste and gender. If one wants to know the conflicts which women face today in Indian civilization then one has to investigate the traditional position of women in early Indian society. Historian Romilla Thapar contends that "events concerning the more remote periods often take the form of a myth. Myth is in a sense prototype history since it is a selection of ideas composed in narrative form for the purpose of giving significance to an important past". Amal Kumar Harh in *The Concept of Woman in Indian and Western Tradition* finds that this is a contentious debate on the historical background of women and it is very difficult to come up with any specific or clear conclusion.

Due to their natural sociability, men have eventually gathered in a politically organized community. Once realized, this association is required to demonstrate its superiority and this thing can be established by means of its ability to perform the

functions for which it was “invented.” Aristotle lays the basis for both the theory of good governance and the ways to achieve it. The purpose of a regime that is undertaken by good governance should be the happiness of the members of the political community. Kautilya’s *Arthasāstra* in 4th century B.C. is one of the most influential treatises in Political Science in the Indian Civilization. He deals with all aspects of governance in a monarchical state. Kautilya’s goal was to turn Magadha and his Mauryan masters into the supreme power in the kingdom. The relative attention paid to different subjects by Kautilya also sheds light on his appreciation of the relationship between governance and the power of the state in relation to other states. Samar Kumar Mondal in *Aristotle and Kautilya on the Concept of Good Governance and Welfare State* has made an attempt to compare good governance and welfare state as propounded by Aristotle with Kautilya.

It can be suggested that Wittgenstein’s discussion about aspect-perception can shed light on philosophical methods. Aspect-perception is a way Wittgenstein has of calling attention to what interests us, to our voicing of what we take to be important. One may assert that we may use aspect-perception to reevaluate our interest in things; specifically, our ways of conceptualizing them. Aspect-seeing is essentially reflecting on how we make sense of things - capture them in thought and language. It thus, enables a special kind of philosophical investigation. Anirban Mukherjee in *Aspect Perception as a Case of Interpretation* intends to give a reading of Wittgenstein’s discussions on aspect perception that understands interpretation as being central to it and to show that perception is always aspect perception.

There is a new trend of explaining the relation between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of body and soul, universal and particular which was actually began with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Anand Math* in 1882 and *Krishna Charita* in 1886. Later on, this trend was taken to its idealistic heights by Aurobindo Ghosh in the early twentieth century. Aurobindo considered patriotism as pure *Shakti* and suggested that the perfect sense of self-abandonment which Chaitanya felt for *Hari* must be felt by Bengal for the mother India. Bipinchandra called anti-colonial struggle a spiritual movement. This spiritualism was considered essential by Aurobindo Ghosh as people in Indian were forming themselves into a nation and it

was essential to keep this nation forming from the gross taint of Western materialism. Laxmikanta Padhi in *Bipinchandra's thought on Hinduism, Tradition and Modernity* tries to emphasize that while discussing Hinduism's superiority and its rationality, Bipinchandra undertakes a rehabilitation of those aspects of Hinduism which he had previously condemned. According to Bipinchandra, the elaborate and stringent rituals and disciplines of traditional Hinduism had 'a distinct ethical value'.

When conflict arises "people seek security in increasingly smaller and narrower identity groups. This is why the lines of contemporary armed conflict are increasingly drawn along ethnic, religious, or regional affiliations rather than along ideological or class lines." After the gradual loss of significance as the result of modernization and individualization, the West has experienced a growing influence of religions on the public sphere. Not only Christianity, but also Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism play a role in the public debates in general and in political decisions in particular. The turning point on the global scene was, of course, 11th September, 2001, which marked the entrance of religious fundamentalism in both politics and rhetoric. Conflict is a normal, natural part of human relationships. In and of itself, conflict is not necessarily a negative idea. When handled constructively it can help people to stand up for themselves and others, and work together to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. But if conflict is handled poorly it can cause anger, hurt, divisiveness and more serious problems. Varbi Roy in *Gandhian Perspective of Conflict Resolution* discusses how to deal with conflict from Gandhiji's view keeping in mind that the very objective of *Satyagraha* is to convert the opponent.

Nivedita's life was short, but full and busy one. She lived in the great time of the National Revival in India. India was the theme of her writings and for that she made a deep study of Indian literature, philosophy, mythology and history. Her mind was therefore amply furnished with rich facts. Combined with her comprehensive mind was a remarkable largeness of heart and deep insight of love. This helped her to interpret in an extraordinary and inexplicable manner Indian religion and thought, art and literature, custom and tradition. Her interpretations nourished the imagination and exalted the spirit of the people of this land, generally and lastingly, then, as they do now. Mamata Kundu in *Sister Nivedita: a Dedicative Soul of Creative Culture*

attempts to establish Nivedita's comprehensive mind with her remarkable largeness of heart and deep insight of love.

The beginning of a new century is a good time to look back on past constructions of canons, traditions and critical practices in order to anticipate some of their future developments. To some thinkers Post-colonialism, with its emancipatory conceptual overtones, only obscures analysis of globalization". Post-colonialism - which was first nurtured in literary studies, which was so important a feature of the 1980s and 1990s - intellectual landscape seems to be less able to deal at least on its own terms with the increasingly urgent issues surrounding globalization. The most trenchant criticism of postcolonial thought came from Neo-Marxist critics, who accused postcolonial criticism of being no more than ideological reflection of capitalism. Mukul S. K. in *Anita Desai's Voices in the City: a Discourse of the Postcolonial Modernity* tries to claim that Desai's tries to measure the epochal changes the postmodern brought over the human race and its habitats. According to him she captures the real colors of human psyche that get distorted and vandalized in the postmodern era and observes the human hearts very neatly at a very close distance.

Philosophers claim that a universal involves three notions i.e. a) by definition, "universal" must apply to multiple things, b) they are abstract rather than concrete, and c) they are general truths rather than specific. Alok Kumar Khatua *Śāntaraḡṡita and Kamalaśīla on the Problem of Universals* tries to claim that the universal (*sāmānya*) is the fourth category which is also known as class, genus, etc. It is by nature eternal and inherence in all its particulars. The general cognition of things as 'cow', 'jar', 'red', etc. necessarily proves the existence of universals as real as the common or general properties of particulars. According to Khatua, the realist argues that the universal must be regarded as the common characteristic of the particulars in which it inheres.

Thoughts are essentially structured and this is agreed by almost everybody who finds it useful to talk about thoughts. Consequently, any account of the nature of thoughts must incorporate an account of their structure. Frege's is the most comprehensive and worked-out account of the nature of thoughts, but recent work has cast doubt on whether he can be credited with a coherent conception of how they are structured. In

an extremely interesting series of exchanges David Bell and Michael Dummett have investigated Frege's views on the relation between thoughts and the concepts of which they are composed. Both authors have identified tensions in Frege's views in this important area and proposed emendations to smooth out the apparent inconsistencies. Reshmee Sarkar in *Fregean Reflection on Thought* claims that the difficulties stem from Frege's simultaneously holding both that the structure of a thought is isomorphic to the structure of a sentence and that two structurally different sentences can express the same thought.

The *Gītā* is a Dharmic scripture contains a conversation between Arjuna and his Krishna on a variety of philosophical issues. The *Gītā* upholds the essence and the philosophical tradition of the *Upaniṣadas*. However, unlike the rigorous monism of the *Upaniṣadas*, the *Gītā* also integrates dualism and theism. The *Gītā's* call for selfless action inspired many leaders of the Indian independence movement including Gandhi, who referred to the *Gītā* as his 'spiritual dictionary'. Sandipa Ghosh in *Ethical Philosophy of the Gītā* claims that the message of *Gītā* is that either you can perform your actions with attachment thinking that you are the doer or you can perform the same without attachment by thinking that God/ Nature is performing the actions. This unattached performance of actions has been called *yogya* or *karmayoga* in the *Gītā* which not only fulfills all desires but also transforms us and make us one with God which was never before in the modern society.

The world is now reduced to a 'Global Village' and all kinds of objects of desires cater human beings with their varieties of attraction. As scientific and technological advancements are growing and form a strong position, more signs of progress are gradually visible in the area of human life. With the help of advanced technologies, like, biotechnology, medical science, genetic engineering, Nano-science and so on, enhanced human beings are progressing in a random speed by changing the biological nature of humans. This enhancement of technology eventually takes humans to a new sphere of trans-humanism and post-humanism. Becoming a trans-human and a post-human, is nothing but a technological up gradation of a human body by means of inputting technological systems within the biological structure. Human beings after attaining the trans-human and post-human personality can overcome all kinds of human limitations. But this changed body brings a huge moral controversy against

enhancement project. Human enhancement technology faces continuous criticisms from bio-liberalism and many other moral theories. Priyanka Basak and Debika Saha in *Transcending the Concept of Morality from Human to the Post-human* claims that most importantly enhancement of technology does not dehumanize human natures and values; rather it opens a wide range of surviving strategy with an extensive use of advanced science and technology along with human natural values.

Voluntary service is a distinct human characteristic. It is a socio-psychological bridge connecting the self and the individual consciousness to the collective consciousness of the community. On the one hand, it is an expression of free will of an individual, while on the other; it is an expression of a certain set of values imbibed from society values that enable an individual to locate her or himself in relation to others. According to Vivekananda, “ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you - but do not think of that now, it will come back multiplied a thousand fold - but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give; so give willingly. If you wish to help a man, never think what that man’s attitude should be towards you”. Purnima Das in *Indian Perspective on the Philosophy of Voluntary Service* tries to establish that for an inclusive society, it is important to channel energies of all sections of the society to contribute to community building and argues for equality in terms of voluntary service and stresses the need to develop co-partnership by facilitating persons with disabilities to volunteer in the community.

Immanuel Kant, being a critical philosopher, treats his moral philosophy too critically. According to him, moral standards should be rational in nature. His aim was to establish a fundamental principle for human life, so that people can act or judge their actions by means of that principle. This moral standard should be dependent fully on internal sanctions, i.e. on our will, and this will should be necessarily autonomous. Kant holds that moral philosophy should not only be autonomous and rational in nature, it should be a priori, through which the aims of moral philosophy can be achieved. This a priori method leads Kant’s moral philosophy to an enlightened path of ‘good will’. He argues, good will is good in itself. It is an unconditional good. If a person acts his actions on the basis of good will, it definitely leads him to become a morally good person and his actions will be

considered as morally worthy. Kant's good will positively traces the concept of 'duty for duty sake'. This thought signifies, an action would be morally worthy, if and only if, one's action is confirmed by the good will and good will in return is motivated by the duty. Gambhir D. Subbba and Debika Saha in *Kant's Moral Philosophy: Aims, Methods and some Core Concepts* opine that according to Kant, an action will be judged as morally good, not depending on its results, but purely on the motive of leading an action by good will and duty for duty's sake. Duty for duty's sake leads Kantian moral philosophy to the categorical imperative, which is a maxim, unconditional and uncaused, guided by autonomy of will. This categorical imperative has achieved the height of being a universal principle of his moral philosophy.

It is said that Ludwig Wittgenstein admired St. Augustine. And indeed, references to this Church father can be found in his work frequently. If we are right, this is quite remarkable for a philosopher who can be considered as the founder of the analytic philosophical tradition. Since the question that arises is whether Wittgenstein would in the end believe Augustine's theology makes sense. It may be doubted whether Wittgenstein conceived such language as meaningful. After all, his best-known statement is undoubtedly 'what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence' and agnostics and atheists have used it to stress that we cannot and should not speak about God. Anup Deka in *Wittgenstein on Religion and Meaning of Life* stresses the view that religious allegories are not instances of nonsense, but as pictures that have a particular use, and hence a sense, within a believer's life.

Many people think that Ambedkar was the maker of Indian Constitution or was a Dalit Icon. But it escapes the attention of many that Ambedkar was a visionary, who was ahead of his times. Today's India is built up, on the contributions of this great Statesman and his foresighted approach. India's journey since independence has seen many successes. The greatest challenge for our founding fathers was to come up with a viable system of governance of the vast country with its peculiarities, languages, religious, geographical and cultural diversity. The biggest and the most complex issue of exclusion of significant segment of population of the nation, in political, social and economic sectors, were a single most complex and daunting challenge. It was done through a unique and comprehensive policy of affirmative action, through the Constitution, to empower members of the communities which were socially excluded

and bring them, into the national mainstream, through the relentless efforts of Ambedkar as suggested by Rakhi Debnath and Debika Saha in *Ambedkar's Postmodern Vision*.

NIRMAL KUMAR ROY

AND

LAXMIKANTA PADHI

ETHICAL THEORY AND ORDINARY MORAL PRACTICE

RANJANA MUKHERJEE

In our daily life, we face some typical questions which are determined by non-moral compulsive facts. Such questions are often related to our daily course of action, problems of health, in regard to child's admission in a school etc. Should I take this bus to go to Howrah? Should I buy health drink Horlicks for my child? Which doctor should I consult for my eye surgery? How to prepare my son for his admission in a school? These questions do not always involve any kind of moral consideration. Our decisions are influenced by factors like economic condition, experience, advice and various forms of checks and counter balances leading to a certain conclusion. Moral questions, on the other hand, expressed in such forms as what should or should not be done at a particular moment, in a certain situation of life in relation to other individuals with whom we are socially related. Thus different moral problems arise from our different situations of life. Many of our actions affect others either by being beneficial to them or by being harmful. We have feelings for others, we enjoy our friendship, sometimes we keep promises, and sometimes we break them. We are inclined to help people when they are in distress. Sometimes we regret for our doing wrong and sorry for breaking a promise. Again, on the other hand, sometimes we support caste discrimination, neglect the girl child and try to deprive those who are in great distress and support the wide gap between rich and poor and unfair distribution of the wealth of nations. All these are subject of moral considerations. How far can moral theories or principles address these moral issues that arise from the above moral consideration? Different theories have been put forward in the west in order to tackle these moral questions. According to deontological theories morality is based on universal, impartial rules or principles of rationality. In a deontological theory actions are held to be virtuous because they are intrinsically obligatory or admirable. Actions and characters may have a merit of their own not wholly derived from what they bring about. Teleological theory, on the other hand, is of consequentialist structure. It rests on the consequences that are produced by any particular act. The right act is that which will produce the most happiness, not just for the agent himself but for all who are in any way affected. Again in some other theories the prime point is to see how much justice is done for every section of

people. These theories do not pay any attention to the character of the individual. Virtue ethics is concerned with the virtuousness of an individual by reference to his motives, dispositions or will. Virtue ethics is not so much concerned with framing moral laws, rules or principles, its primary concern is the character of an agent. For Aristotle, a virtuous individual is a measure of virtuousness of an action.

Each moral theory used to entertain its criterion in the form of a deductive argument. The major premise would be the moral criterion which the theory entertains. The minor premise would be the description of the act whose moral worth is under consideration. And the conclusion would consist of the evaluation of the act in accordance with the moral criterion stated in the major premise. Moral philosophers believe that any moral problem can be settled by reducing it to a deductive model stated above. In this way the moral theories can guide us in ordinary or normal circumstances. But with changing times and changing complexities new problems arise and they cannot straight away be governed by a particular theory. Various instances of moral situations show that even if we are equipped with different moral theories, we can hardly be able to resolve the moral problems. Facing moral dilemma is intrinsic to our social livings. It creates a kind of interphase between individual and the collective. Now I am referring to some situations with which I have first hand association. The examples I have cited are mainly the moral dilemma arising from medical complication and some professional dilemma that a woman has to face. A young man Shibu seriously injured in a motor cycle accident and is lying in coma in an intensive care unit of a Nursing Home. The doctors find that Shibu will never regain consciousness but will linger indefinitely in a purely vegetative state. All his vital functions have been taken over by ventilator and other sophisticated machines. If any of these are removed, Shibu would die. Two of his relatives are discussing about what to do with the patient. One says that it would be utterly immoral to pull out the plug. The other disagrees. The reasons which he offers are that if the doctors pull out the plug, Shibu will die peacefully. He will feel no pain- after all he is completely unconscious. Life in this state is utterly without any meaning. Again the cost of keeping the artificial system is beyond the financial capacity of the parents. Here utility criterion leads to accept the withdrawal of life support machine. But, still miracles do happen or when I am saying miracles am I not predisposing myself towards a more utilitarian form of position?

Let us deal with another similar case where the application of moral theory would lead to some new problems rather than resolving the older ones. A woman gives birth to a child who has Down's syndrome. Here the dilemma is faced by the parents and doctors like whether to keep the baby in an incubator or not. If the doctors do not keep the baby in an incubator, the baby will die. If, on the other hand, they keep the baby in an incubator, it will survive. But in such a case the parents will have to face a heavy financial strain. They are not economically solvent. They will always be in a great distress. Keeping in mind all these utilitarian considerations the doctors decided not to keep the baby in an incubator. Now what will be the moral answer in this type of decisions? Kantian principle would acknowledge such actions as immoral. For Kant each and every human being is intrinsically valuable. The doctors ignored this fact and they have turned human life into a commodity. It will violate all principles of human right and dignities.

The common people would have a mixed feeling. Somebody will support the course of action adopted by the doctors; other will say that to do nothing for the survival of the baby, i.e. 'letting the baby die' is a sort of killing. So the doctors' decision is immoral. Can we really satisfy ourselves by taking any one of the alternatives? We cannot, for whichever alternative we take; there will be a sense of guilt.

We find other conflicting situations faced by working women of our society. A small family consists of four members - father, mother and two children. The parents are working in a Govt. office. Mother is always in a heavy pressure, she tries to look after her children properly and also she is very particular about her official work. Every time she is facing some moral questions - whether she will attend the office for an emergent meetings or she will stay at home preparing her child for the next day exam. Similar questions haunt her every time. Am I doing justice to my family by devoting so much time to my profession? Or is it better to leave the job? Again if she resigns from her job and stays at home she will be able to look after the children more attentively, but the family will face some economic strain. The children will be deprived of some better facilities. The woman is suffering from family obligations and also from professional obligations.

It is evident that every moral situation creates unique problems and it seems that it cannot be described by method of derivation from one or number of moral

theories. Some more serious moral questions we face in our present society. The questions are: Does abortion mean killing the fetus? Is the problem of euthanasia a problem against humanity? To what extent would surrogate motherhood be considered as a real motherhood? Abortion means killing the fetus. Killing cannot be supported morally. Someone may suggest that abortion is not immoral, because fetus is only a piece of flesh and is not a human being at all. Others will suggest that fetus is not a full grown human being, but it has that capacity. So abortion is immoral.

Euthanasia is also such a problem where even the doctor and family member of the patient are at a loss to take the decision. Should the family members allow the doctors to stop the treatment and as a result the patient will die or should they continue the fruitless treatment? Again if the patient expresses her desire to end her life, then also the doctors are in a dilemma - if they give importance to patients' autonomy, they will go against humanity and if they ignore patients' autonomy, the patient will suffer.

Another burning problem of the medical science is surrogate mother. In such a case a woman bears a child on behalf of another woman, either for her own egg or from the implantation in her womb of a fertilized egg from another woman. Now the philosophical question which arises in the question of motherhood, who will be called a mother? - the woman who is carrying in her own womb the baby of another person or the lady whose fetus is actually growing in another's womb?

Moral philosophers attempted to make their theories as universally acceptable but it seems to me that this attempt has not been successful, neither is it generally acceptable. It is more or less evident that there is a gap between moral theories and ordinary moral practices. All events of our life do not always fit in moral theories. There is no difference between the sense of morality that a philosopher has and the sense of morality that an ordinary person would have. It seems simply wrong to think that philosophers alone are able to solve the moral problems. The objects of moral evaluation are objects of utmost moral concern. It is the characteristic of every human being that they are the moral agent. Moral problems are part of our daily life we try to negotiate them through our own justification that are governed by cultural, social as well as depending upon the circumstances in hand. In determining our rights and duties we are guided by our 'moral sense'. On observing a particular action at a glance we can first have a sense of approval or disapproval towards it. Then we

reflect on the peculiarities of the different circumstances in which the action is done and then we justify our attitude. This 'moral sense' that seems to determine the rightness or wrongness of an action is not a distinct faculty as it was supposed to be by the eighteenth century British moralists.¹ This 'moral sense' is a social habit which we acquire from our family background and from our social cultural, institutional, professional, economical and also by help of various comparative case-analysis. This 'moral sense' makes us aware of some moral values which we cultivate and experience through our various life situations and through interaction. Various moral ethos are basically mirroring of certain cultural belief. These values make us conscious about our rights and duties in a society. Damaging public property is bad, one should be kind to one's neighbour when the latter is in need of a help; cheating is always bad, we should not torture other unnecessarily. All these moral values make us conscious about our rights and duties in a society. Human welfare is considered as basically relevant to a moral decision. Generally all our moral questions for their solutions appeal to our moral sense. From these we should not suppose that all people will address the same moral situation in the same way. Due to the difference of social, cultural and family background no two persons can assess the moral situation in the same way. Even two persons brought up in the same socio-cultural and family background may have different attitudes towards the same moral situation; many times we are not able to draw an uncontroversial moral conclusion. This is our real life we are always confronted with moral dilemmas and these are varieties of answers (and not one single answer) and herein lies the multiplicity of our moral decision.

¹ The eighteenth century British moralists who accepted this notion of 'moral sense', but they believe that this moral sense is a separate faculty distinct from other faculties. The British moralists with their doctrine of 'moral sentiments' and Rousseau with his doctrine of 'the natural man' tried to establish the emotions in their 'rightful place' in human life and built practically their entire moral philosophies around this aim. Although the British moralists Hutcheson, Shaftesbury and Hume did not agree among themselves, but they did agree upon the idea of a substantive 'moral sense' as a separate and additional faculty in the same way in which 'sight' and 'hearing' are 'sense' or 'faculties'. They are more or less alike in that they take this 'moral sense' or 'sentiment' largely as a separate and distinct 'feeling' or 'emotion'.

ON INTERPRETING RADHAKRISHNAN, THE INTERPRETER TODAY

KALYAN KUMAR BAGCHI

Radhakrishnan's two volumes on *Indian Philosophy* published in 1923 and in 1927 were generally regarded as his interpretation of the different system of Indian philosophy and they have ever since been regarded as so. Interpretative works, indifferent to the question of their loyalty to the text (s) interpreted, have a context. The text itself may and often does, provide the context which an interpreter interprets. The text, in fact is written within a milieu. The interpreter is regarded as faithful if he too can share the milieu. The Question arises immediately 'Is such sharing possible on the part of the interpreter who is within a different milieu' from the point of his of the context of his space and time, his history, his reading of his history his geographical locale (with its urban rural- cultural continuum) and so on and on? These are all woven into the psyche of the interpreter. How then would he speak to the text-writers psyche? If he cannot he would not ever share the text-writer's point of view,- his interpretation would not share the text- writer's view(s) what, then would one, as a student of philosophy do with interpretations which appear to be at variance with the point of view of the text?

A Question such as this is of a piece with is solipsism which renders communication to a nullity. It self presupposes which is a communication to a nullity. It itself presupposes a view of the text; it is conceived as outside the arena of interpretation which is a communitarian enterprise. Right or wrong, an interpretation is open to debate and is to that extent, sharable. Even if it appears to be wrong to one who sits in judgment on it, it can be impugned only within the spectrum of communicative language. Again, the question is self-stultifying. Is the text solipsistic? Supposedly mired in the unsharable milieu (which is no milieu at all!) of its writer, it cannot be communicated. But if it is communicable, then it is not solipsistic. Interpretation –theory, worth the name, turns its back at any (supposedly) solipsistic text, solipsistic text writer, and solipsistic interpretation.

This and this is the reason why an interpretation is sought to be understood as situated in a milieu. A Supposedly unsharable milieu is not worth the name. Or in other words, a text is not a text but a text which is amenable to interpretation. In so

far as it is a text, it is interpretable and so, communicable. And it is communicable within the entire spectrum of thought and mores and customs and initial and behaviour and so on and on. A word of caution is needed before distinctively philosophical interpretation is understood just because Radhakrishnan claims to have 'interpreted' the doctrines of particular system of philosophy in India.

While the concept of milieu admittedly guards against any solipsist understanding of the text which is the subject of interpretation, it cannot be accorded any place in philosophical interpretation. For milieu is predominantly a sociological – political concept, a glut - so to speak of a people's (a people's) social and political ideas and mores and customs and behavioural patterns-and so on and on. Any interpretation of, a sociological or / political text may have to attend to peoples social and political beliefs, customs practices-and-things of that sort. But a philosophical interpretation attends to the concepts which constitute a philosophical thought – system. The philosophic interpreter seeks to unravel for himself the logic of the philosophical theory he seeks to interpret. This is a philosophical exercise. He may see, i.e., envision in his philosophic imagination the unfolding of the logic of philosophical system, ask himself whether the logic of the system develops immanently, whether or not the system introduces extra concepts or ideas as presupposition not guaranteed by its logic. Thus a philosophical interpretation has distinctively conceptual overtones. The interpreter sits in judgment on the thought-systems to be interpreted. And what gives warrant to him to judge the thought system is the philosophical point of view he has to be credited with. His is not the task of chronologically situating the system in time but of seeing for himself, i.e., immanently developing the logic of the system he interprets. As Erdmann observed long ago 'The history of philosophy can be represented rightly.....only with the help of philosophy....'Erdmann of course thought, like the Hegelian that he was, that philosophy, in representing history of philosophy, would unfold the dialectic development of system into Absolute India. But then, minus his Angelian predictions, his point that philosophic interpretation is philosophic exercise, whatever the predictions of the interpreter may be accepted.

Be it noted here that Radhakrishnan wrote *Indian Philosophy*, not *History of Indian Philosophy*. Interpretative as Radhakrishnan study of Indian philosophy was it

has to be situated in the context of theirs of interpretation *vis-a-vis* the text (s) for interpretation. For one thing, such attempt may stave off consideration of fidelity of interaction to text; for another, it helps the student of Indian philosophy histories philosophy. The philosophy histories what he interprets a philosophic thought - System within a spectrum of viewing things; the spectrum is the transform (2) But for from being a traditionalist, he creative response to the tradition the makes the tradition amenable to creative response. The gets the tradition speaks to him. In so for as a thought system having its moving in a traction - can be creatively responded to, it becomes universal. Of necessity, a philosophic thought develops; it develops thought interpretation, thought - what student of India philosophy is familiar with *Bhāsyas*. The *Bhāsyas*-s enlarge the tradition within which a thought system can be historically Situated; enlargement is a creative philosophical task. Introducing his interpretative work on Indian philosophical system, Radhakrishnan makes a cluster of observations are philosophical interpretation. These are significant.

- In interpretation the doctrines of the particular System, I have tried to estimate their indebtedness to the past as well their contribution to the progress of thought.
- The task of the historian is hard, especially in philosophy. However much he may try to assume the attitude of a mere chronicler ... Still the judgments and sympathies of the writer cannot long be hidden.
- Effective exposition means criticism and evolution.
- The historian of philosophy must approach his task, not as a mere philologist or even as a scholar but as a philosopher who uses his scholarship as an instrument to wrest from words the thoughts that underline them.
- It is the task of creative logier to interpret for us the life they (i.e. the texts) harpoons.
- The philosopher must pay alteration to the logier of ideas if the trial of philosophy is to be more than a bare catalogue of facts. The historian should be a critic and an interpreter but not a mere mechanical 'ragpicker'.

Radhakrishnan claims to have formulated a creative interpretation of Indian philosophical systems, one has to understand how interpretation they has come to be formed. Here we have no better guide than I tans - Georg gardener. Gardener sets his

face against an all-to-text based interpretation which makes the text frozen in time (as though) and ignores the possibility of moving the text both forward in time and backward in time as he unites. It may be that the creator of a work intends a particular public to say and that stretches fundamentally out beyond every historical of the historicity of the text to be interpreted. As he unites in truth, the horizon of the present is conceived in constant formation insofar as we must all constantly test our prejudices understanding is always a process of the fusing of horizons. Merleau Paunty has the same view of the possibility of stretching the text in time as he writes ‘Husserl has used the fine word *stiffing* - foundation an establishment - to designate the unlimited fecundity of each present. It is thus that the world as soon as he has seen it, his first attempts at painting, and the whole past of painting all deliver of a tradition to the painter that is Husserl nuances, the power to forget origins.

The foregoing account of the view of gardener, Marleau Paunty and Husserl point to one thing viz. the different between philosophical interpretation and historical interpretation. History of philosophy is, at bottom, philosophy. Wideband wrote his history of philosophy not by dating though - systems unit by arranging than problem wise. A philosophical interpretation, worth the name, can embrace in its sweep through whose dating is important to it and thereby it forever re- antes and reviews the tradition fun which it springs up. In such continuous re-creating and renewing the tradition of a though - system, philosophical interpretation cannoned the though – system to universal disperse within the pantheon of philosophy.

It is in this pantheon that Radhakrishnan tried to situate and envision India philosophical though. The task that he took upon himself during 1923 - 1927 has not lost its importance today; indeed. It cannot be because it resaved India philosophy from the oblivion of the past and accords it temporality and historicity. Radhakrishnan view Indian philosophy creatively - in his own way though. Instead of seeing India philosophy chronologically as a fossil, he view it creatively within the ever - expanding horizon of Philosophy. His was a latent at writing exegesis on India philosophy in conformity with spirit of the *Bhasya*-s. He was in line with his illustrious predecessor Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya who has observed, for back in 1905, that ‘exegetical interpretation inevitably shades off into philosophic construction. Radhakrishnan’s interpretation work was at once centrifugal and

centripetal, centrifugal as outliving the dead past in which orthodox scholars had view India philosophy and centripetal as conforming to the spirit of traction and incorporating novelty of expanding interpretation into it.

RAJIV MALHOTRA: A UNIQUE EXPONENT OF THE HINDU WORLDVIEW

ASHOK MODAK

We Indians must, according to me, find some time not only to read but also to contemplate over writings of Rajiv Malhotra because they inform us of the uniqueness of Hinduism. I intend to elaborate through the present paper contents of two books penned by Rajiv Malhotra as both of them highlight with apt evidences the distinctiveness of the Hindu worldview. First half of this paper is devoted to elucidate *Being Different* and the second half is meant to present analytical appreciation of another book *Indra's Net*.

Significance of 'Being Different':

As for the book *Being Different*, the title itself catches the attention of readers. The present worlds' trend is in favour of globalization; no wonder, Friedman's book *The Flat World* has earned good popularity. Demolition of walls based on social, economic, cultural and national differences has thus received a hearty welcome from the people at large. It is against this setting that Rajiv Malhotra's advocacy of Indian civilization as distinct or different particularly from the European and American paradigm leaves us astonished! Rajiv Malhotra has, of course taken cognizance of this impression and offered a very logical defense or a rationale behind writing this book. He thus accepts in the first chapter of his book that at present elites and masses as well are deeply fascinated by phrases such as 'universal point of view', 'global identities, etc. The fact that 'the sameness' impacts young people is accepted by Rajiv Malhotra, who, however points out in the same vein that under the garb of 'sameness' dominant Euro-Americans opt for isolating and inculturating Asians and Africans. Rajiv Malhotra, in short wants us to note that those who dominated the world for the past 500 years continue to consolidate their own identities in the shadows of globalization. He therefore finds it indispensable for Indians to preserve their distinct differences. Malhotra informs us that at several interfaith dialogues, protagonists of Christianity bluntly refused to replace the term 'tolerance' with the phrase 'mutual respect'. He rightly mentions that 'tolerance' mirrors patronizing or condescending attitude on the part of dominant partners towards followers of other religions, whereas 'mutual respect' indicates the operation of parity principle. "No Abrahamic religion", Malhotra informs us "respects any other

religion, whether Abrahamic or non-Abrahamic”, because it considers itself as the only authority for all matters of faith or doctrine. How does it, in other words, acknowledge any other religion as legitimate and equally valid path to God?

Rajiv Malhotra has realized that Abrahamic religions like Christianity pay only lip service to the notion of ‘sameness’, that they refuse to worship Krishna or Shiva as the same universal God described in the *Bible*. He has also noted that under the mask of ‘sameness’, Christianity super imposes its concepts, aesthetics, language, paradigms, historical template and philosophy from above and presents them as the universal worldview.¹ What is shocking for Rajiv Malhotra is the indifference on the part of several Indians over European positioning at the centre of the world. The resultant dilution of Indian identities is moreover justified by the Indian themselves on the ground that the Vedanta philosophy underscores only One reality as absolute and the world as only relative. Such sort of misinterpretation of the Vedanta-philosophy, from the perspective of Rajiv, is totally wrong. The fact that Shrikrishna himself has taught us to take the worldly affairs seriously and to reach the absolute ‘One Reality’ through unattached transactions is underscored by Rajiv in this connection. It is indeed quite funny that the Christian tolerance and inculturation are treated as signs of respect for Hinduism! Hindu elites and masses wrongly believe that Christian missionaries have sanctioned a level playing field. This is why they questions: “Why to oppose the notion of sameness? “Why to take pride in being different?”

He brings to our notice that Christian missionaries have become sponsors of ‘sameness’, because the cover of this notion enables them to convert non-Christians into their faith. He similarly points out that Hindus favour ‘sameness’ on the basis of wrong interpretation of the tenets of Vedanta-philosophy. Readers come across very neat elaboration of Rajiv Malhotra’s rationale of his pride in being different at the end of the first chapter of his book. This chapter, in short, informs us that our insistence on preserving our distinctness does not connote any type of exclusivism as our accommodativeness respects pluralism and welcomes all religions. Nor our distinctness is built on unity is diversity; it does not generate pains and strains. We must indeed guard our distinctness, as otherwise the implicit advocacy of Euro-Centric paradigm through the admiration of sameness will place Indian civilization in museums.

Four areas of differences:

Hindu worldview differs from the worldview of Abrahamic religions in four respects. Thus, one comes across the following four areas of difference between Hinduism and Abrahamic religions.

- Embodied knowing vs. History-centrism
- Integral unity vs. Synthetic unity
- Comfort with complexity vs. Anxiety over Chaos,
- Sanskrit untranslatables vs. Cultural digestion.

It is essential to elaborate in detail such areas of difference in the following manner.

Embodied Knowing vs. History-centrism

There has emerged in India the epistemology of *Adhyātmavidyā* thanks to Hinduism, in fact thanks to *Dharma* family comprising Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. The development of several inner sciences as well as experiential technologies for achieving divinity and the higher states of consciousness - has accordingly become a U.S.P. of India. This *Adhyātmavidyā* enables anybody to fine tune or to calibrate his or her mind, essential for achieving divinity. India has thus observed a legacy of *Ṛṣis* and *Munis*; the legacy which has transmitted this *vidyā* from one generation to another - through *Guru-Śiṣyaparamparā*. India can therefore make a legitimate claim that it is a repository of embodied knowing. Human faculties such as the mind, senses, memory, etc. are called internal instruments of investigation, and these very instruments are refined by *Adhyātmavidyā*. Those human beings who succeed in this venture finally actualize higher knowledge in their bodies their disciples further enrich such legacies and transform their own bodies into instruments of knowledge. As Hinduism considers everything including human beings as sparks of divinity, it can witness specimens of embodied knowing. Western culture, however considers human body as intrinsically sinful, as an innate evil, and senses as the source of temptation. No wonder, there is no sanction to the embodied knowing.

Christian religion is of the firm opinion that no human is able to achieve union with the divine. It recommends salvation as the spiritual goal for human society. It mentions in the similar vein that only those human beings who obey the divine will through full faith in the prophetic tradition as well as in historical events will achieve the salvation. From the perspective of Christians, certain events in the

life of Jesus Christ are historically crucial. Christians are accordingly expected to have full faith in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are also supposed to believe in the prophetic tradition. Most of the disputes in Christianity have arisen due to the differences over the details regarding above mentioned historical specifics. It is a conviction on the part of Christians that the God resides somewhere above the cosmos and from there he sends messages to humanity through the chosen prophets. That is why, the historical details of scripture and of prophecy is immensely important in Christianity. History-centrism of Christianity and embodied knowing of Hinduism are thus totally different from each other!

Integral Unity vs. Synthetic Unity:

Indian *Dharma* Family believes in *Purṇastotra*, which contains the following lines:-

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

(*Purṇamadha*, *purṇamidam*, *purṇatpuraṇamudachyate*, *purṇasyapurṇamādāya*, *purṇamevavaśiṣyate*—That is *purṇa*. This is *purṇa*. *Purṇa* comes from *purṇa*. Take out *purṇa* from *purṇa*, still *purṇa* remains.)

According to Sri Aurobindo, *purṇa* means integral. *Purṇastotra* informs us that just as ‘that’ transcendent divine and the cosmic macrocosm are *purṇa*, ‘this’ microcosm is also *purṇa*. We can therefore rightly claim that from the perspective of Hindu worldview there is integral unity between this microcosm and that macrocosm. Swami Vivekananda has elaborated very nicely how microcosm evolves itself into macrocosm! He quotes a line from *Patanjali Sutra*: -“*Jātyāntara parināmaḥ prakṛtyapurat!*” *Jāti*, that is, one species transforms or changes into another species, by *prakṛtyapurat* - by the infilling of nature. Vivekananda thus informs us that the body or *Prkṛti* inhales energy from the unfathomable stock of energy in cosmos and evolves into another species. Such an evolution reminds us of a spider’s web. As the God is immanent as well as transcendent, an individual, the cosmic macrocosm and the divinity are interlinked. According to Hinduism, God does not reside somewhere above the cosmos. He resides within the cosmos. He is not however comprehensible through five senses and the mind. The story of six blind men and elephant is quite apt in this connection. Each of the blind fellows touches this or that part of the body of elephant and comes out with the wrong conclusion. Blindness of each man comes in

the way of reaching the whole truth; it allows him to know the partial truth only. Similarly, though God is immanent, though it exists in every atom, through and through, 'He' does not come within the reach of six senses. 'He' is transcendent in that sense. The God or the divinity or the energy gets manifested in the universe, in the amoeba as well as in the Buddha. Of course, if the little bit of the energy is manifested in the former, relatively a big amount of energy gets unfolded in the elephant. But amoeba is involved Buddha and Buddha is evolved amoeba. Such sort of integral unity is conspicuously absent in the Christian worldview.

The Indian worldview assumes that the cosmos is a unified whole sheltering interconnectedness between absolute reality and relative manifestations. Absolute reality is, of course, basic; it has its own independent existence. Just as face is independent and the smile or any expression is dependent on the face, similarly every entity is dependent on the cosmic whole.

Western worldview occupies the opposite pole. It considers that the cosmos is intrinsically an agglomeration of parts. From its perspective basic and how they can be joined together is a cause of worry. Indian worldview ponders over the emergence of multiplicity out of unity. The Western worldview however is worried over creation of unity out of multiplicity. Naturally conscious external efforts are required to create such unity. This is why, the unity attempted in the West is synthetic. Christianity considers that each individual is a born sinner and that Jesus Christ came to redeem him from sin. No individual is therefore capable of achieving divinity on his own. Least wonder, no attention has been paid in Christianity to fine tune or to calibrate human mind. History-centrism came in the way of the development of inner sciences; it has also placed obstacles in developing strong intellectual tradition. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance Movement did give a call to Christians to be free from the Catholic priesthood and Roman hegemony and also to be friendly with scientists. They however never pursued the goal to be free from history centrism. Mind-body dichotomy by Rene Descartes worsened the situation, as such a dualism entrusted body to the jurisdiction of the laws of physics and mind to the God's *Commandment*.

Descartes has thus added a new binary between body and mind to the old binaries such as God and Creation, God and humanity, spirit and matter etc. Western worldview has been trying its best to unite these inherently separate entities. Rajiv

Malhotra has given us the example of the United Nations Organization for elaborating the concept of synthetic unity. As all of us know the U.N. means a gathering of several sovereign nations, which show full interest in maximizing their own separate interests and not the common good.

Comfort with Complexity vs. Anxiety over Chaos:

I have already stated that from the perspective of Indian worldview, each individual is capable of accessing divinity and higher states of consciousness. This is why; it welcomes differences and the resultant chaos. The Indian worldview feels that as everyone is able and free to walk on his or her trajectory to access divinity, differences in precepts and practices are bound to prevail and one must not be restless over such disorder! This worldview, of course carries conviction that each and everybody is linked with each other and similarly with the cosmos and with the transcendental divinity. As a result, an Indian feels confident about the emergence of order in due course. He can therefore afford to be patient and comfortable in chaos. He can face complexities in a detached manner.

The Western worldview, on the other hand believes in history-centrism. It gives exclusive significance to unique historical interventions, to God-dispatched prophets and to the contents of scriptures. The Western worldview holds firm opinion that only such historical interventions would bridge the gap between human beings and ultimate reality. There is moreover conviction on the part of this worldview that an individual being inborn sinner is incapable of accessing divinity. No wonder therefore that articulation of different individual precepts and practices and the consequential chaos cause incalculable irritation to the protagonists of the Western worldview. Such protagonists, in fact find chaos as a threat to the order. They naturally rush to put an immediate end to the chaotic scenario either through eradication or through assimilation. Roots of Western anxiety over chaos are traceable in the Western Fascination for certainty. Insistence on either or polarities is also one of the salient features of Western religions. Advocates of these religions are convinced that a human being faces after the end of the present life either salvation or damnation. Such attraction for either/or polarities makes Western religions dogmatic and prompts them to launch a war against 'evil' with a view to annihilating it completely. The Indian worldview opts on the other hand for 'as well as' line of

thinking, due to its conviction that the truth can be articulated and the divinity can be accessed through several different paths.

The Hindu worldview regarding the scenario after the end of present human life also deserves to be elucidated now because such elucidation will enable me to highlight why and how Indians are least perturbed over chaos, whereas followers of Western religions are restless during chaos. From the angle of the Indian worldview, a human being enters *Swarga* or *Naraka* after the end of his life. But neither *Swarga*, nor *Naraka* is a permanent place of residence. That is why, after the exhaustion of good karma, the resident of *Swarga* comes back to his world. And similarly, the resident of *Naraka*, after undergoing torment comes back to the earth. Both types of human beings engage themselves after their return to the earth in new efforts for achieving self-realization. The idea of rebirth is thus quite crucial and distinct for the Hindu worldview. There is, of course, no doubt regarding commonality to some extent between both worldviews. Thus, Hinduism as well as Christianity shares the same perception that enjoyment in Heaven (*Swarga*) or the punishment in Hell (*Naraka*) is the consequence respectively of good or bad deeds in the present world. But whereas from the angle of Christianity, the assumption of original sin restricts the freedom of human deed, from the Hindu worldview, the human attachments or *vāsanās* shape their deeds. Secondly, Christian worldview considers that celestial stays either in Heaven or in Hell are permanent or eternal. From the angle of the Hindu worldview, however, such stays are temporary, as they commensurate with their accumulated deeds! Everybody is thus given to understand in the Hindu worldview that he or she alone is responsible for his or her deeds and for the consequences of such deeds.

There are indeed two differences in this connection between the Christian worldview and the Hindu worldview. The Christianity considers every human as a born sinner and accordingly incapable of accessing divinity. One and the same rationale prompts Christianity to compromise human freedom and to argue that every human being must wait the day of Judgement when the account of everybody's work will be finally settled! The Hindu worldview on the other hand discards the so-called Day of Judgement and argues that there is a separate account for each individual for recording the effects of his or her work. Secondly, if from the perspective of the Christian worldview, the outcomes of human actions are confined to a single life-

It is fact that Christian missionaries do refer to *Vedas* or the *Gītā* as the Hindu *Bible* and present Jesus as a ‘*Rṣi*’ or ‘*guru*’. They thus carry forward the typical legacy of Euro-Americans initiated in the late Eighteenth an early nineteenth centuries; the legacy of appropriation or digestion by the West, of the intellectual and cultural property of various non-western civilizations. We, Indians can’t afford to ignore such appropriation or digestion of our civilizational ethos, because it finally culminates in the dismantling of our peculiar views regarding self and its relationship to a transcendent principle. We should therefore protect Sanskrit language and refuse to bear wrong translations of Sanskrit words and *Mantras*.

Peculiarities of *Indra’s Net*:

Having elaborated the content of the book *Being Different*, so far in the lines above, it is essential to undertake now the analytical education of Malhotra’s another book entitled: *Indra’s Net*. If ‘Being Different’ counters the Euro-American conspiracy to appropriate or digest non-Western civilizations under the grab of the ‘Sameness’, *Indra’s Net* provides befitting replies to the Euro-American projection of neo-Hinduism as a fake, fictitious and phony religion. Rajiv Malhotra thus informs us through the former half of *Indra’s Net* how during 1950’s, European indologist Paul Hacker began to prove through his writings and speeches that in the pre-colonial years of India, Hinduism was a conglomerate of various religions; how it was more or less a hotchpotch and during colonial years how 19th century-Indian reforms in general and Swami Vivekananda, in particular gave a new shape to Hinduism, of course with a view to implementing the political agenda of building a nation in India. As the former half of *Indra’s Net* is devoted by Malhotra for examining European indologists’ allegation against Vivekananda-sponsored (so called) ‘Neo-hinduism’, it contains certain myths propagated by very indologists regarding India and Hinduism. Malhotra brings to our notice here that according to colonial indologists during the pre-colonial era neither India was a nation, nor Hinduism was a unified entity. He mentions that same indologists have alleged that Vivekananda and other thinkers like Tilak and Gandhi picked up appreciable dimensions of Christianity and projected them as tenets of Hinduism. Malhotra informs us further that in the opinion of European indologists, ancient Hinduism lacked in social consciousness and that was why 19th century Indian reformers imported such consciousness into India from Europe and America. What is noteworthy is the fact that Malhotra retorts quite

logically all such myths and allegations in the latter half of *Indra's Net*. Thinkers like Paul Hacker, Agehananda Bharati, Wilhelm Halbfass, Ursula King, and Anantanand Rambachan constructed and disseminated perverted myths about India and Hinduism and Indian scholars like Romila Thapar, Meera Nanda, and Pankaj Mishra etc. also wrote essays on similar lines. What disturbs Malhotra most is the impact of such writings on Indian masses. Malhotra thus mentions that common Hindus have been led to believe that Hinduism lacks legitimacy.

Paul Hacker's Allegations against Vivekananda:

It was during the decade of 1950s that Paul Hacker, a German Indologist initiated his attacks on 19th century Indian reformers in general and on Vivekananda in particular. Hacker alleged that Swami Vivekananda's realization of the inferiority of Hinduism vis-à-vis Christianity's tradition of altruism; collectivity and philanthropy triggered the genesis and growth of 'neo Hinduism'. He stated that Vivekananda picked up all such pluses from Christianity and presented them as inherent features of Hinduism. In actuality, according to Paul Hacker ancient Hinduism is the most ill organized conglomerate of several religious principles. As Vivekananda was bent on building a nation on the basis of Hinduism, he opted for digging out Sanskrit mantras and quotations from the ancient texts with a view to strengthening his claim that he merely carried ahead the legacy of Hinduness. Paul Hacker was however determined enough to present that Vivekananda was the sponsor of inauthentic Hinduism. He therefore pointed out that Vivekananda deviated from original Hinduism in four respects.

- Vivekananda thus gave priority to the empirical verification of spiritual truth over obtaining *Brahmavidyā*; whereas Shankaracharya considered *Brahmavidyā* or *Śruti* as self-valid source of our knowledge of absolute reality.
- Secondly, Vivekananda's interpretation of the Upanishadic notion *Tat tvam asi* is at variance with Shankaracharya's explanation of the same notion. Vivekananda's interpretation of this notion teaches everybody of us to be altruistic because each and everyone is the manifestation of Tat (*Brahman*) and that is why one must spontaneously love and care for others. Hacker points out here that according to Shankaracharya however *Tat tvam asi* means complete merger of oneself into the ultimate Self (*Brahman*).

- Thirdly, Vivekananda utilize Shankaracharya's philosophy of *Advaita* for facilitating spiritual recovery of India and for India's national reconstruction.
- Fourthly, Vivekananda's advocacy of inclusivism is also least compatible with Shankaracharya's avoidance of the minuses of inclusivism!

It is essential to elaborate now how the European indologists make allegations against Vivekananda and how Rajiv Malhotra defends Vivekananda.

As for the first allegation that Vivekananda's advocacy of the priority in favour of *Yoga mār̥ga* is a deviation from Shankaracharya-sponsored original Hinduism, Malhotra points out that Shankaracharya does consider the *Yoga* of Patanjali as useful in advancing up to a point which is below *moḁṣa*. Rajiv thus points out that although Shankaracharya favoured metaphysical, abstract and unworldly path of *jñāna* for attaining *moḁṣa*, he did not declare *Yoga* as useless and contrary to *Advaita Vedānta*. Shankaracharya, in other words, averred that *jñāna mār̥ga* enables a person to attain *parāvidyā* (higher knowledge) and *Yoga mār̥ga* helps him in obtaining *aparā-vidyā* (lower knowledge). Malhotra substantiates his viewpoint by referring to Shankara's commentary on the Upanishads wherein *Yoga* is presented as a method of meditation leading to self-knowledge. He also invites our attention to Shankara's commentary on the 46th Śloka of the second chapter of the *Gītā*: The Śloka runs as follows:-

यावानर्थउद्पाने, सर्वतःसंप्लुतोदके।
तावान्सर्वेषुवेदेषुब्राह्मणस्यविजानतः॥

(Just as a well, or a water reservoir has no utility when there is water everywhere, similarly *Vedas* have no utility for an enlightened *Brahman*.)

Shankaracharya informs us through his interpretation of this Śloka that the person with Knowledge of the *Vedas* has no relevance in front of the person with direct experience. Vivekananda, in short least deviates from the path sponsored by Shankaracharya, as a Shankara himself pleads for the person with direct experience- thus asserts Rajiv.

Second allegation is pertaining to *Tat tvam asi* ethic. Paul Hacker and other European indologists convey to us that in the pre-colonial era of India, people used to interpret this Upanishadic notion as a message to everyone of us to merge one's individual self into the ultimate Self (*Brahman*). They further inform us that during colonial rule over India, however, sponsors of neo Hinduism taking cue from Arthur

Schopenhauer found the seeds of altruism in the just mentioned Upanishadic notion. The very 'advocates of neo-Hinduism' such as Vivekananda realized that according to Arthur Schopenhauer, the *Tat tvam asi* -notion' advises each person to recognize his self as that which is manifested in every other person and accordingly asks him or her to undertake altruistic acts. 'Neo-Hinduism', being interested in the mission of nation-building thus opted for picking European interpretation of the Upanishadic notion; thus, assert Paul Hacker and his colleagues. Malhotra rightly retorts here that such European indologists forget that *Bhagvat Gitā* itself uses the wording सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा in the fifth chapter. *Gitā-Grantha* thus places the lofty goal in front of us of attaining identity with all the selves of the world. The allegation that Vivekananda, Tilak and Gandhi copied convenient interpretation of the *Upanishadic Mantra* from a German thinker Schopenhauer is thus totally false.

Third allegation made by Hacker and company against Vivekananda alludes to Nationalist agenda of 'neo Hindus'. As per this allegation, 19th century Indian reformers like Vivekananda and others borrowed social activism from European Protestants and offered new interpretations to concepts like *Dharma* and *Jati* etc. Vivekananda thus pleaded that *Hindu Dharma* supports egalitarianism and social justice. He also asserted that the concept of caste is based on inner qualities and not on the birth of a person. Paul Hacker however asserts that original Hinduism relies on the boundaries of birth-based castes and stages of life. Vivekananda sponsored interpretation ids thus least in consonance with original Hinduism thus avers Paul Hacker! European indologists like Hacker further accuse that neo Hindus such as Vivekananda took inspiration from Protestant Christians and claimed that according to Hinduism it is the worth, rather than the birth which is significant! They have, in other words argued that it was the impact of Protestantism which shaped Vivekananda-sponsored neo Hinduism. Malhotra refutes this allegation and points out that it was Ramakrishna Paramahansa whose teaching shaped Vivekananda's thinking. Malhotra is absolutely right, because Ramakrishna, Vivekananda's Guru taught his disciple to interpret ancient *Mantra: Shivobhutva Shivamyajet*. The fact that according to Hinduism macro-cosm in the form of *Śiva* is manifested in microcosm in that of *Jiva* has been accordingly endorsed by Ramakrishna and enriched further by Vivekananda. Malhotra states equally emphatically that if other religions are entitled to come out with new interpretations suitable to changed times

and present their scriptures in new forms, why is Hinduism debarred from following similar course? It is indeed quite misleading to argue that that Vivekananda borrowed social activism from Euro-Americans, because since ancient times, Hinduism has witnessed harmonious coexistence between old and new precepts and practices. Vivekananda enriched this legacy.

Fourth allegation made by Euro-American indologists against Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tilak and Gandhi is unique, as it accuses such sponsors of the so called neo Hinduism that they have appropriated several heterogeneous, disparate religious viewpoints. Through opting for inclusiveness from the perspective of Hacker and company, these neo Hinduism-sponsors have abandoned traditional Hinduism of Shankaracharya. Rajiv Malhotra's retort to this allegation is also unique. As per this retort, Hinduism has been inclusive and accommodative since its inception. It has always adapted to the changed circumstances its own core principles and adjusted to the indigenous conditions principles and notions imported from other isms. Is it not a fact that Shankaracharya himself co-opted lofty notions of Buddhism? No wonder, Swami Vivekananda spelt out common bases of Hinduism with a view to incorporating disparate views and thoughts in the body of Hinduism. He simply harmonized various interpretations of *Vedānta* that had emanated from the Vedic source. He refused to conflate Hinduism with *Vedānta*, *Vedānta* with *Advaita Vedānta* and *Advaita Vedānta* with Shankara's philosophy, as his Hindu mind refused to be reductionist. His efforts, oriented towards harmonization, of course, did not compromise with basic tenets of original Hinduism. Vivekananda thus welcomed all those who had faith in basic principles such as divinity, integral unity, open architecture, karma-reincarnation, etc. Malhotra has indeed succeeded in proving that Vivekananda-sponsored Hinduism was fully authentic; that the tenets of this philosophy are completely compatible with those of traditional Hinduism.

Strategy for the Defense of Hinduism:

Last two chapters of the book *Indra's Net* are quite significant, as they contain guidance to all of us; they elaborate the strategy for the defense of Hinduism. If Chapter -12 diagnoses the European attacks on Hinduism, the concluding or the final chapter prescribes the strategy for the defense of Hinduism. Thus, in the chapter -12, Rajiv informs us about the Euro-American appropriation of Indian traditions and practices such as spiritualism, *Vedānta*, Transcendental Meditation, *Yoga*, Music,

Bhakti, etc. through dismantling, rearrangement and finally digestion into Western Framework. Such appropriation or digestion is justified by depicting Hinduism as most disorganized or incoherent paradigm. This type of depiction of Hinduism is a logical aftermath of Paul Hacker claim that Vivekananda-sponsored neo Hinduism deviates from original Hinduism and picks up core ideas from the Christian West! Resultant confusion and disorientation among Hindu masses causes worry to Rajiv triggering him to come out with the prescription of a strategy for the defense of Hinduism.

I have already stated how the open architecture of Hinduism enables Abrahamic religions like Christianity to digest lofty, sublime principles of our civilization. Rajiv Malhotra has therefore proposed that Hindus should classify participants in interfaith relations into *Āstikas* (affirmers) and *Nāstikas* (deniers). He thus further spelt out that *Āstikas* comprise such persons who possess qualities like faith in the freedom of belief and practice, the ability to achieve embodied knowing and the proneness to modify one's own unique path.² Rajiv's assertion that Vivekananda himself expressed categorical aspersions regarding Abrahamic religions in general and the so called *Nāstikas* in particular is evidenced in the following extract of Vivekananda's speech titled *My Master* - "I do not understand how people declare themselves to be believes in God, and at the same time think that they are the guardians of the rest of humanity. How can you call that religion? Religion is realization; but mere talk, mere trying to believe, mere groping in darkness, mere parroting the words of ancestors and thinking it is religion-is not religion at all... Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better; if you can, get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards; do so, but do not destroy what he has."³

Malhotra who has advised Hindus to welcome *Āstikas*, recommends in similar vein the course of action to reject *Nāstikas* as well. He has thus stated that Hindus should reject anybody who considers that (i) human beings are born-sinners and therefore incompetent to acquire spiritual insights, (ii) the universe is basically atomistic and fragmentary and therefore deserves to be united artificially; and (iii) followers of non-Abrahamic religion need to be tamed and conquered!

To me, it is quite appropriate to end the present essay by quoting the following statement of Rajiv Malhotra, as it highlights not only the purpose of writing

'Indra's Net', but also the success achieved by the writer in accomplishing this purpose: "My motive for using *Indra's Net* as the central metaphor of this book is to highlight the intricacy, the complexity and the delicate balances built into Hinduism, which becomes compromised the moment one dismantles its constituent parts and attempts to relocate them outside its framework".⁴

References:

- 1 Rajiv Malhotra, *Being Different*, (Noida-India, 2011), p.37
- 2 Rajiv Malhotra, *Indra's Net: Defending Hinduism's Philosophic Unity*, (Noida-India, 2016), p.283
- 3 See: *Selections from Swami Vivekananda*, (Calcutta, 1981), p.356
- 4 Rajiv Malhotra, *Indra's Net: Defending Hinduism's Philosophic Unity*, (Noida-India, 2016), p.313

RAKESH CHANDRA

Discussion on pluralism is often unclear. Common grammar tells us singular and plural are used to indicate numbers of the same kind dog-dogs, man-men, while dog-animal, man-animals are not instances of singular and plural. Sometimes it seems that the inclusivistic, mainly ethically directed characterization of religions try to subsume other religions as a subclass not a genuine instance of a separate entity. Curiously, many trace the roots of philosophic pluralism to the distinction drawn by Immanuel Kant between the data of our sense-experience and its organizing forms of intuition and categories of understanding. We cannot talk about the world without our conceptualization and this paves way for conceptual pluralism and ontological relativism. Donald Davidson rejects conceptual scheme pluralism on grounds that we can accept alternative conceptual schemes only if it is untranslatable into our language or conceptual scheme. We cannot compare or contrast schemes in this sense nor can we speak of a single scheme as we cannot tell what it would be like to be more. Conceptual pluralism is an error as it assumes the scheme content dualism which is the third dogma of empiricism. Maria Baghramian (*On the Plurality of Conceptual Schemes* in *Pluralism* edit. by Maria Baghramian and Attracta Ingram, Routledge, 2000) tries to reject this position and argues some innocent defensible versions of scheme/content dichotomy which may save some conceptual pluralism without committing us to the pernicious dualism of thought and inconceptualization world and leading to offensive cognitive relativism conceptual schemes or perspectives. In this version, conceptual schemes are embodied in languages and cultures but they are not free floating unrestricted by role that the world plays in shaping conceptualization. Direct access to world is not denied but it is pointed that our life experiences are from different standpoints offering different understandings and coping methods. So there is possibility of alternative ways of life. Can religion be seen as a conceptual scheme in this way? Will religious practitioners of different religions see themselves as being in grip of 'unvarnished truth' or 'a perspective'?

Ordinary believers who may not claim to know perfectly the 'truth' which their religion professes may still maintain that they have a relation with that truth through being a member of that community with its seers and books. Just as scientific truths are not known by nonscientists in their completeness yet the community feels

authorized to use the terms so also the religious person may claim his use of terms to be authorized by her or his group faith. The claim still is of truth not perspective. It is often imagined that Liberal theory can address potential conflicts of pluralism, of individual life plans by creating a neutral political space and locating difference in private realms. But can religion understood as world views and more be thus stated? There are strong differences and such pluralism of incommensurable goods is hard for liberalism to accommodate. John Gray from L.S.E also points out that liberalism is not neutral and has an idea of good. Gray concludes in 'Where Pluralists and Liberals part company' (*Ibid*, P. 85-102) that settlements of conflicts are settled by compromises of interests and power.

It is interesting that most liberal thinkers seem to suggest that there is actually no objective value pluralism in terms of a real difference of anchorage as the world is disenchanted and therefore there is only a question of adjustment of power, *modus vivendi*. Liberal explanations of the fact of pluralism refer to the characteristic features of reason in terms of uncertainty, fallibilism and diversity. John Rawls in his account of *Political Liberalism* (1993) speaks how 'many conceptions of the world can plausibly be constructed from different standpoints. Diversity naturally arises from our limited powers and different standpoints'. This would encourage and justify a certain kind of epistemological restraint which may also lead to religious restraint. We are now asked to view our views as provisional and forbidden to impose our truth on others who may disagree with us. Here is a case of reasonable disagreement not objective plurality. Many scholars believe that in the present consciousness of the world, equal rights for all belong to the moral horizon of human beings as they have grown in history. They ground the liberal doctrine of tolerance and accepting plurality on this. However, there will be a problem of adjusting and accommodating conflicting values of the so-called rainbow spectrum in a pluralized public sphere. The other big issue especially with reference to religion is that many religions may not accept the idea of human equality and fallibilism. How are these to be accommodated?

Liberal accommodation may appear as condescension and an advice to cheat to the true believer who is seen as the illiberal. It is a curious liberal theory which allows for groups to exist on equal footing but then put internal restriction into question with reference to human dignity and rights. It is strange why liberals are

squeamish in accepting that their scheme of things is individual rights based and cannot accept groups. Liberal protests of group based, caste and gender based violence and isolations can well be understood in the individual human rights perspective.

Many scholars believe that liberal paternalism does not justify in position of liberal values except in the case of egregious human right violations. But who decides this egregious human rights violation and why human rights to be given precedence over religious duty are is a fairly popular argument of cultural relativist. Curiously, this may also be an argument of a monocultural religious fundamentalist. Where I use the term in an absolutely non-perogative philosophic sense of a believer who considers truth of a religion to be revealed and given. The civic concept of liberalism in Rawls enjoys that citizens view themselves not as inevitably tied to the pursuit of particular concept of the good that they affirm at a given time. Rather as citizens, they are seen as capable of revising and changing this conception on reasonable and rational grounds and they may do so if they so deserve, conversion does not change persons. This however may seem strange to religious practitioners.

There is much debate and argument within the human history but certainly a certain group of Hindus may claim that bound by karma, man is not entirely autonomous, *svadharma*, *sādhāraṇadharmā*, *yugadharmā* have scaffolding. Islam enjoins submission to God as the maker and dispenser of justice. The ideas of fairness, cooperation, rational self-interest may have also found some place in religion but do not seem to determine its authoritativeness. Most religious societies in their vision will be seen as hierarchical and held together by a divine law. Are we demanding a certain double life of a private religion and public civility which requires cheating on either or both?

Advocates of pluralism often take John Hick's understanding of Religious pluralism where it is taken as a view that "the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to realitycenteredness is taking place within religious traditions. There is not one way but a plurality of ways of salvation or liberation... there is a plurality of divine revelation making possible plurality of saving human response" (*Problem of Religious Pluralism*, Macmillan, 1985, P.34). A fairly realistic criticism of Hick's view is given in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* by Philip L. Quinn (1988, P.260) examining the two aspects of plurality hypothesis.

Reality being differently experienced and reality itself being plural. Quinn states ‘It should be noted that on either interpretation, Hick’s pluralistic hypothesis purchases such parity at a high price. It is rival to the main lines of self-understanding within the major religious traditions.

Most members of such traditions would reject the claim that their beliefs are true only of ways in which ultimate reality appears to them, or of the phenomenon objects it contributes to producing, and are not true of that reality as it is in itself. If they employed the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal, Muslims would be likely to insist that internal reality is personal and *Advaitic* Hindus would be likely to insist that it is impersonal. Hick can attribute only mythological truth to be nothing more than literal falsity plus a tendency to evoke appropriate dispositional attitude. So Hicks vision of pluralism attributes massive literal error to both Muslims and *Advaitic* Hindus. This is not surprising because their traditions remain, for the most part, stoutly pre-Kantian in their self-understanding. Of course, Hick’s pluralism attributes equally large literal error to all other major religious traditions. Hence it will be unacceptable to most people who at this time participate in any of the major religions; such people will prefer to hang onto their doctrinal exclusivism’. I would consider this account to be cogent as a description of such revisionary proposal and its rejection. Many scholars have used the idea of forms of life and language games to understand religion and religious pluralism. I am inclined to believe that most religious practitioners would not accept the line of argument for the same reason, as Quinn rejecting Hick’s proposal. The relativism and contingency of the outlook go against the spirit of religion and its attitude.

Curiously, one of the most popular views on religious pluralism and coping with it is a view which differentiates non-public and public culture of public practice advocating secularism in the realm and learning the inward private domain of conviction for religion. This, again, is a view of scope of religion which would not capture the beliefs of most religious persons. Religion as understood by many religious believers consists of metaphysics, epistemology, a theory of virtue and appropriate individual and social action. The rights and rituals of most rituals are also symbolically connected to their deep metaphysical beliefs (e.g. the process of ‘*Āhuti*’ and chanting ‘*Idam na mama*’ is a practical ritual assertion of non-attachment to

deeds as the ultimate reality is not this ephermal world. Similarly, in other religions). Different religions do not put forward same spiritual goals which are lacked by their fundamental beliefs. For a Muslim, Shirk is blasphemy. No one can participate in the class of God. For an *Advaita* minded Hindu, this is the real nature of man, the identity with the absolute. Hick's assumption that they are all paths to the same goal is a fond hope, and there is perhaps no religion which believes that scriptural statements are human interpretations subject to modifications. This is well understood by the term 'Gospel Truths'. To suggest that religious standpoints are like an aesthetic worldview having no cognitive claim is also a revision not accepted by followers of religion. Most modern day discussions on society and politics emphasize that like Rawls we must understand society and public sphere as cooperation of equal members who for mutual advantage accept rule-governance which is flexible. This is obviously not what is "a fixed natural order or an institutional hierarchy justified by religious or aristocratic society" (*Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, 1993, P. 15) I have obviously been trying to argue that a non-cognitivist reading of religion to accommodate pluralism seems to completely disregard what actual religions and their practitioners say. The often quoted remarks of Wittgenstein that religion is not a body of statements or a doctrine is a peculiarly false description. I now wish to consider briefly the question of presence or absence of reason in religion and possibility of conversation in and on religion.

Let me begin with the Indian philosophic discussion on proofs and disproof of the existence of God which are even with considerable rigour and not treated as just issues of adjustment of power, consensus or convenience. That there is a God as the role agent who creates the world out of pre-existent material and also sustains as well as destroys the world at regular intervals is accepted and argued for in Prasastapada's *Padārthasaṃgraha*, Udyotkar's *Nyāyavartikā* and *Nyāya Kusumāñjali* of Udayana as well as by *Nyāya Bhāṣaṇam* of *Bhāsarvagya* and many others. Properties of God in terms of eternity, immediate knowledge, desire, volition, unconditional mercy, impartiality are also mentioned and problematized. The views about God given by *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* are also vigorously opposed on many counts by many from the fellow *Veda-sammat* schools as well as outsiders like Buddhists and Jainas. While some argued for the non-necessity of accepting God as

author of *Vedas* or creator of the world, others argued for God's incompatibility with suffering and *Karma*. Also, there is much discussion on possibility of a disembodied God having desire, cognition and volition. Udyotkara discussed at length the satisfactory or dissatisfactory nature of God's creation as *lilā* or natural expression of *svabhava*. The discussion went on for generations. It is charming to see how *Purvamimāmsakas* are responded to by *Naiyāyikas* on the question of Vedic Authorship.

Jayanta Bhatta claims that if we admit absurd view that words without author or speaker combine to form sentences may admit that threads weave themselves to form cloth without a weaver. Sridhar Bhatta the author of *Nyāya Kandali* argues that since God has immediate apprehension without error; he has no *rāga*, *dveṣa* or *pravṛtti* due to attachment and so no merit or demerit occurs to him. The Udyotkar-Dharmakīrti reengagement and proving God of *Nyāya* is scrupulous, analytic and enriching. I mention these not to argue on the merits of the reasons but only to illustrate the admission of reason in matters pertaining to central beliefs of religion including God. The epics abound in debates about what is dharma and also whether heroes including Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Yudhisthira have followed the path of *Dharma*- the enjoined moral path of righteousness. Here too, I am not arguing for the correctness of arguments or acceptability of the conclusions drawn. I am only suggesting that reason is not restricted from entry in both the ontological as well as the normative discussions of religion. I mention this especially with the reference to some notable philosophers' plea that religion is completely an area of unreason especially Hilary Putnam's last work 'Jewish Philosophy as a way of life'. From scientific realism of 1957 to 1975 to internal realism of 1976 to 1988 to pragmatic realism in later years, Putnam seems to hold on to reason but as the Jewish apologist, he gives it up completely. It is true that from early engagement with verificationism, Putnam's later works argue against representationalism. Influenced by Classical pragmatists like William James and also by John McDowell, he is inclined to disengage from quest of definitive answers to canonical philosophical problems. However, in his 1981 classic *Reason, Truth and History*, he argued that though as subjectivists' claim there is no fixed a-historical organon which defines what it is to be rational, from this we cannot argue that reasons can be anything and end up in

what he called some fancy mixture of cultural relativism and structuralism, like some French philosophers. Putnam in his last work takes Martin Buber, Rosensweig, Levinas and Wittgenstein as part of Jewish way of life. He argues “Like Kierkegaard, I am sure that Wittgenstein would have regarded the idea of proving the Jewish, Christian or Muslim religion by ‘historical evidence’ as a profound confusion of realms, a confusion of inner transformation in one’s life which he saw as the true function of religion with the goals and activities of scientific explanations and predictions” (*Ibid*, p.6).

One may wonder what gives Putnam and his ideals the exclusive right to declare the purpose and nature of ‘true religion’. How do they declare religious motives of hundreds of believers as pseudo-historical, pseudo-juristic, pseudo-logical and pseudo-ethical declaring miracles do not constitute history, martyrdom is not a fact without taking an old positivistic verificationist stance. The understanding may appeal to may but is hugely revisionary where thousands have laid their lives for homeland and faith including Jews. Jewish mysticism sometimes speaks of concealment and four levels of reading the *Bible* Pshat- literal, Remez- Hint based on the literal, Drash-allegorical interpretation and God-hidden secret mystical. But is this account to give up reason completely? Putnam announces “Religious beliefs could only be like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it is a belief, it is a way of luring or a way of assessing life” (*Ibid*, p.21). Since Jewish religion is a way of life, therefore it is exempt from reason- debate and law has a familiar resonance in some of our local apologists. Religions are often offered as loving alternatives of mutual availability in needness as Levinas’ notion of Nineni suggests.

But in times where local and global conflicts of identity have taken threatening proportions, the space for rational dialogue needs expansion rather than reduction. As mentioned earlier, Indian epics present huge critical argumentation and Bimal Krishna Matilal wittily remarks, “The point however is that tradition did not have to wait until something like the age of enlightenment came in order to question basis of moral and religious beliefs”. (*Ethics and Epics*, OUP, 2002, p.52). So whether is God characters or others, there is discussion not acquiescence in ways of life. Five authorities of *Dharma* are alluded to by Manu:

- *Vedas*
- *Dharmaśāstras*
- Virtues of Vedic scholars
- Good conduct of the honest
- Satisfaction of the mind.

This bespeaks of rational debate in the light of *tarka*. In case of dispute, a jury is suggested with interesting detail. Three scholars of three *Vedas*, one logician Haituka, one dialectician - *Tarka*, one expert of semantics and etymology, one *Dharmaśāstri*, one celibate student, one householder and one retired person. Subjecting revision to reason and analysis seems still welcome to some seeking cosmopolitanism. We are well reminded that several analytic thinkers like R.M.Hare, Bertrand Russell, Isaiah Berlin and others believed that German behavior in Second World War was due to philosophic errors. In combination of the structure of the ethical language was well understood and empirical facts well and clearly stated. This would be a powerful weapon against totalitarianism. Philosophical debates on religion seem to be a little timid in their approach. As I argue, it seems most discussions on religion and religious pluralism create space for religion by changing its character- keep its factual cognitive claims out, convert it into some private attitudinal commitment without publicity. Outside the technical realms of academic philosophy, sometimes we find bold comparisons of religion and suggestions. Rajiv Malhotra considers certain anxieties based on postures of difference and response with his arguments. He believes that those who claim that there is the only true religion and all must convert to it have an attitude stemming from Judeo-Christian religions, while Indian spirituality not only allows for religious pluralism but is built on it. He argues that enculturation also does not show respect for natures, cultures and is a deception to gain easy entry to retain a strategy of subverting the native faith. Interestingly, he responds to *Hindutva* ideology as being too political and reactionary, which adapts the western approach of difference and excessive emphasis on unique history. Malhotra refers to the tradition of considering *purvapakṣa* thoroughly by the Indian philosophical tradition which needs to be reconsidered for “an understanding of the need to reform and correct the self aggrandizing and self referential institutional network- that produce cultural analysis including academic institutions, foundations, the media and publishers” (*Being Different*, Harper Collins, 2011, p.50). Malhotra refers to Fanon, Sartre and said as instances of gaze reversal to the west. Never

seriously considered by philosophic community, Malhotra has some interesting proposals in the critical part of his work. The constructive part however borders on soft romanticism where it is carelessly assumed that since philosophic tradition had the *Purvapakṣa* representation and response, the lived reality also had the same responsiveness. However, he has the boldness to ask such questions. Can the person whose religion prohibits idol worship respect the idol worshipper in a non patronizing way? Malhotra presents an Indian challenge to western universalism which is apparently curious. Sunil Khilnani while writing on the *'Idea of India'* (Penguin, 1998) thought that Nehru quarantine national politics from religious demands. Some others timidly advocate secularism as a cross-cutting constitutional obligation in intercommunity issues, while liberalism in each community persuading their co-religionists to abandon absolute and reactionary practices. This response of patronizing look at religious and other communities is based on a crew which disenfranchises the very claim of religion as 'truthbearer'.

Several philosophers like Clifford had spoken of epistemic responsibility not to accept anything without evidence. James responded to it by claiming that religion is a 'live' momentous choice forced on us and cannot wait for evidence. Kierkegaard declares objectivity to be only suggestive of postponement and argues that in religion, it is subjectivity and personal relation to believe that matters. A robust philosophical analysis would be an invitation to clarify what it is to be religious? What is the scope of fallibilism within religion? How do we debate with others including other religions? What is to count as evidence? How do absolute truths of religion function in the so-called post-truth worlds? How do we carry on conversations? Is religion truly a conversation stopper? As Richard Rorty titled one of his provocative essays? Rorty gives up the epistemic notion of rationality as a virtue as it presupposes that human subject can surmount appearance and reach reality. But in giving this up, he has given up on the principle beliefs of most religion. The moral notion of rationality that he advocates is only a preference of persuasion over force. ('The Ambiguity of Rationality' in *Pluralism and the Pragmatic Turn*, ed. William Reha and James Bahman, MIT Press, 2001).

To some like Stephen L. Carter, privatization of religion is trivializing it. Rorty argues that love, family and poetic joy are not trivial but private (Feminists would

worry). Search for private perfection in a pluralistic democracy is allowed but not relevant to Public Policy. Pluralistic democracy will beat voice of God, reason, science etc. all at par. For Richard Rorty, the spiritual depth of a democratic participant in public debate is as relevant to public debate as is her hobby or hair color (*Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin, 1999, P. 174). This I believe is not a conversation stopper.

However, in the new discussions of democracy in the so-called West, people imagine that discussions on Religion and Political authority have shifted. Entries in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* on ‘Religion and Political Theory’ (2015) begin by saying “In the first place divine authorization account of political authority has lost the day to consent based approaches” with the reality of Islamic state and its influential presence this is an ostrich like assertion. The whole discussion on religious restraint in public discussion presupposes an assent to pragmatic view of not only politics but also of philosophy. There also is a suggestion of new traditionalists that they need to distance themselves from the liberal state and live in small communities which our allegiance to the Church or some larger religious traditions.

It is however interesting that some religious scholars trace back liberal ideas of human rights to Buddhism, *Quoran*, *Avesta* and the *Vedas*. This is contested by MacIntyre and many others. However, how is it that we continue conversation maintaining tenability of pluralism without transforming or trivializing religion? Also, how do non-foundationalists and foundationalist philosophers keep the conversation going? This is a question for us to ponder in times where it is almost assumed that all discussions of plurality, unity, interpretation and truth will be discussed within the paradigm of impure reason, practical significance and American neopragmatism.

THE CONCEPT OF MATTER: A PHYSICS-PHILOSOPHY INTERPHASE

RAGHUNATH GHOSH

I

The Concept of Matter as found in the Cārvāka, Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya systems of Indian Philosophy has got much affinities with that of Physics. Both the traditions firmly believe that the matter has got some inbuilt power through which it can create something without the help of any conscious principle. There is an eternal dispute between the spiritualists and materialists regarding supremacy of matter or spirit. The spiritualists emphasize that spirit is real while matter is unreal. The materialists demand that matter is real and spirit is unreal. Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that both are correct. In fact, what is called matter is nothing but non-manifested *sat* - element of the spirit called *Saccidānanda*.¹ Before this amalgamated theory some of the Indian thinkers believed and propagated the dynamic character of matter which can create, destroy and sustain the whole universe. Among these thinkers Cārvākas are the fore-runners who are of the opinion that matter (*bhūta*) is of four types- earth (*kṣiti*), water (*āp*), fire (*tejas*). Apart from the amalgamation of the four just as red colour is manifested out of the amalgamation of lime, nut etc., there is no separate consciousness.² That is why a dead body is dissolved in the elements. From this it is proved that elements or *bhūta*-s have in-built power to create something.

In the Vaiśeṣika Philosophy it has been accepted just like Quantum Physics that the world is originated through the combination of atoms which is called *Paramāṇukāraṇatāvāda* as opposed to *Brahmakāraṇatāvāda* admitted by the Advaita Vedāntins. At the initial stage two atoms are conjoined resulting in formation of dyadic compound (*dvyāṇuka*). Three dyadic compounds give rise to a triadic one called *trasareṇu* and in this way a gross object is originated. A question arises how two atoms that are matters or unconscious become conjoined without any conscious force.³ To Sāṃkhya the atoms have got energy of their own leading to their combination. Conjunction in case of creation and disjunction in case of dissolution occurs spontaneously due to having in-built power in an atom. Both are taken to be the sports of Nature possible through its auto-generated nature. Hence there is no need of admitting any other force or God-particle in the phenomenon of conjunction and disjunction of atoms.⁴ Hence, no tension can be entertained among the physicists, specially in Quantum Physics, regarding the acceptance of some conscious principle. That a metallic object has got in-built power is evidenced from the following

experiment. When a hot metal work from a blacksmith is found having yellow colour or orange colour, it is visible due to the visibility of the thermal radiation emitted by high temperature. Everything else is glowing with thermal radiation as well, but less brightly and at larger wave-lengths than the human eye can detect. When it is cold, such object looks perfectly black, because it absorbs all the lights that fall on it and emits none. Consequently, an ideal thermal emitter is known as a *black body* and the radiation it emits is called *black body radiation*.⁵

When three constituents of Prakṛti are in the state of equilibrium, there is creation. If this equilibrium is disturbed due to overpowering of one constituent, creation starts. Change is the mark of existence as envisaged by the Buddhists - *Yat sat tat kṣaṇikam and arthakriyākāritvalakṣaṇam sat*.⁶ If *Pradhāna* is not transformed (*vikāri*), there is no change or creation. Change occurs automatically in *Prakṛti* due to its dynamic character (*svayamhū*). Creation needs activity and motion among the *guṇa*-s. Without opposition which is possible through the creation of disturbance in equilibrium no activity is possible. That is why, thesis, anti-thesis and syntheses are taken as methods of creativity. (cp. '*sakal dvanda-birodha-mājhe jāgrata je bhālo*').

A.B.N. Seal has explained the three constituents -*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* as essence, energy and mass. The first is the cause of self-illumination and others' illumination, second is the cause of action and the third is the cause of obstruction (*bādhakasvarūpa*). The illuminating character is transparent and useful in any disinterested pleasure. The third is a balancing factor capable of controlling others. These three cannot remain in a separate manner and hence they are called *guṇa*-s or literally binding factors. In case of immovable matter *tamas* is patent, *rajas* is latent and *sattva* is sub-latent. In case of movable matter *rajas* is patent, *tamas* is latent and *sattva* is sub-latent. An object may seem to be the cause of happiness, misery and infatuation to someone due to having three elements in *Prakṛti*.⁷ It is just like a girl who creates happiness to someone whom she loves, becomes the cause of misery to some whom she left and becomes indifferent to someone whom she does not know. Nature becomes balanced due to harmonization of three constituents of it just as our body becomes balanced due to having three constituents- wind (*vāyu*), bile (*pitta*) and cough (*kapha*) in a proportionate way. The Sāṃkhya philosophers have taken another metaphor to point out this truth. Just as a lamp keeps burning due to having mutual

cooperation among three factors- light (*agni*), wick (*vartti*) and oil (*taila*), *Prakṛti* can work with mutual cooperation of three constituents. A girl becomes such due to different situation and different person. It is the nature of sandal to provide happiness, but it may not seem to be so if other factors are not favourable to it. It may become the cause of unhappiness if it is applied in the winter. A camel can enjoy thrones and hence it is the cause of happiness to it. But to other animal's thorn becomes the cause of unhappiness due to having different type of skin etc. Natural qualities are not manifested due to having some impediment (*pratibandhakatā*).⁸

According to another section of scholars like Abhinavagupta etc, among the three constituents (*guṇa*) *sattva* also acts as a balancing factor in a different way. One who is overpowered with *sattva* quality is called *sāttvika*. According to the Sāṃkhya system, *rajagūṇa* makes an individual fickle-minded and lunatic while *tamagūṇa* makes us infatuated leading him the world of inertia and frustration. Both *sattva* and *rajas* are the factors which make an individual imbalanced. That is why; *sattvagūṇa* alone makes a man tranquilized and calm. Under this stage a man can have artistic creativity, aesthetic enjoyment and exercise his creative (*kārayitrī*) and appreciative (*bhāvayitrī*) genius (*pratibhā*). The glory of such *sattvagūṇa* is found in the emotional mood involved in grief which gives rise to the realization of joy. How is joy realized from the painful situations? In this situation our mind is absorbed in the performances and this absorption depends on the equilibrium of mind. When our mind is disturbed due to the non-equilibrium of three attributes like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the pain follows. If our mind remains in the state of aesthetic experience, there is something which forcibly snatches our mind and keeps it in a state of complete rest (*viśrānti*) (“...*rajastamovaicitryānuviddha-sattvamaya-nija-cit-svabhāva-nivṛtirviśrānti lakṣaṇah...*”).⁹ At this stage an individual's mind attains real rest, which is characterized by the taste of its own blissful consciousness dominated by the *sattva* quality along with the association of *rajas* and *tamas*. In other words, one can enjoy the taste of his own blissful consciousness or self due to the prominence of *sattva*-quality. When there is prominence of *sattva*, it may provide a real mental relief (*viśrānti*). From this it does not follow that other qualities, i.e., *rajas* and *tamas* are not there. The prominence of *sattva* quality along with the association of others in a non-prominence stage gives rise to the taste of own self as blissful generating

aesthetic pleasure. It is the aesthetic pleasure which only can do this thing. This joy is endowed with such type of mystic power by which audience can enjoy this bliss even out of painful situation, but in our practical life human nature is found averse to experience of pain (“*Evam hi sati tadduhkhena so’pi duhkhita iti kṛtvā rasasyātmateṭi niravakāśam bhavet.*”)¹⁰ This pain is an impersonal one, but not personal. Had it been personal, the experience of pain would have arisen in the sage himself. Personal pain makes a man crippled while impersonal pain empowers him in creativity (*nirmāṇa-kṣamatva*). This empowerment through impersonal pain leads Vālmīki to create a poetry- “*Mā niśāda pratiṣṭhām tvamagamah śāśvatīh samāh/ Yat krauñcamithunādekamavadhīh kāmamohitam//*” (That is, O Fowler, you will never receive establishment in your life, as you have killed one of the pain of crane who were engaged in sexual pleasure). Hence, Viśvanātha, the celebrated rhetorician, has said that poetry is a peculiarly unworldly phenomenon, an extraordinary creation of supernatural supernormal genius and hence it cannot be governed by the rules of ordinary human intellect. In ordinary life sorrow arises from sorrow, fear follows fear, but in the world of poetry we find pleasure deriving from the painful, horrible and terrible situations. (“*Hetutvam śokaharṣādergatebhyo lokasamśrayāt śokaharṣādayo loke jāyantam nāma laukikah. Alaukikavibhāvatvam prāptebhyah kāvya-samśrayāt sukham sañjāyate tebhyah sarvebhyo’ piti’ kā kṣatih.– Sāhityadarpaṇa, 3/6-7*).

Optics is the branch of Physics which involves the behaviour and properties of light including its interactions with matter. Optics usually describes the behaviour of visible, ultra-violet and infrared light. For, light is an electromagnetic wave, other forms of electromagnetic radiation such as X-ray, micro-waves, and radio-waves exhibit similar properties.¹¹ In fact the glory of light is always admitted both in Physics and Philosophy. Optical Physics is the study of matter-matter and light-matter interactions on the scale of single atom and molecules. Optical Physics tends to focus on the fundamental properties of optical fields and their interactions with matter to the microscopic realm. The main source of light on earth is the Sun. Sunlight provides us energy that green plants use to create sugar mostly in the form of starches, which release energy in the living things that digest them. This process of photosynthesis provides virtually all the energy used by living things.

The Indian Philosophers also believe that optics or light or energy remains in matter. When energy is found in water, trees, even garbage, it is called *vāravānala* (hydel power), *dābānala* (energy received from forest trees) and power from garbage respectively. The power remaining in different material object has to be extracted from them. In modern Physics it is admitted that the Sunlight gives energy to the green plants. Plants give more sugar which again releases energy in the living beings. Energy in human body can help our body to associate it with the power of digesting. In Indian Philosophy four types of energy is admitted- divine energy (*divya teja*), worldly energy (*bhauma teja*), energy remaining in our stomach (*udaraja teja*) and energy of the matters remaining in mine (*ākaraja teja*).¹² The energy remaining in stomach is responsible for our digestion. The place where this energy remains for digestion of food is called *pākasthālī* i.e. the place where something is being cooked or digested. If there is less energy which is not sufficient for appropriate digestion, it is called *agnimāndya* i.e., weakened digestive fire in the stomach (*jaṭharāgni*) due to the less flow of digestive juice. The disease is medically called dyspepsia. In the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and *Manusamhitā* the science of optics is also eulogized. It is said that light of the Sun gives rise to the accumulation of rain through evaporation and rain in return provides us eatable crops through which human beings can survive in this world (*‘ādityajjāyate vṛṣṭih vṛṣṭerannam tatah prajāh.’*).¹³ The rains again come down in this earth through downpour producing bumper crops (*‘annādbhavati bhūtāni parjanyaḍannasambhavaḥ’*).¹⁴ It is known from the above that there is a chain system in nature which starts with the science of light. This light is always taken as a metaphor signifying freedom or liberation or any form of relief while the state of bondage is symbolized as darkness as evidenced in the Upanishadic statement- *‘Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya’*.

From the above it is known to us that there is a chain system for protection of environment particularly the protection of plants and living things. Through the same light and energy *Prakṛti*'s *sattva* element overpowers the other constituents, *rajas* and *tamas*, and allows us to have good will to protect the whole environment after reducing anger and greed from us. Like Vaiśeṣikas the Physicists believe in five elements or matters like earth (*kṣiti*), water (*āp*), light (*tejas*), air (*marut*) and space (*ākāśa*). Vallabhācāryya, a great philosopher in Indian tradition, in his *Nyāyalīlāvātī*

has glorified earth (*kṣiti*) having weight (*gurutva*). As an earthly object has got some weight, it is natural that it will be drowned in water. But Vallabha is of the opinion that there is a tendency in certain object to float or to come to the surface of water without going inside water due to having some sort of impediment on the way of drowning (*'jalādhogamanam jalena dhāraṇam patanaprativandhonmajjanam, etacca jalasya yogasya kasyacideva patanaprativandhasāmarthyāt'*).¹⁴ Vallabha talks of a particular resistance to sinking or gravity exercised by water, which explains the tendency in certain objects to float or to come up to the surface of water. Vallabha was perhaps not aware of the formula of Archimedes at that time which tells that body loses its weight if immersed in water and the weight it loses is equivalent to weight of the volume of water displaced by it.

The five essential elements for the protection of our body are also mentioned in the *Ācarakasmhitā*. The roughness, liquidity, moving force, vital force and vacuum of the body are gathered from the physical elements like *kṣiti*, *āp* etc.¹⁵ It is also mentioned that all the above-mentioned characters of human body are easily be understood with the help of tactual sense organ (*'lakṣaṇam sarvamaitat sparśanendriyagocarāh'*).¹⁶

II

First, let us suppose that space and time are continuous. Zeno presents two paradoxes to show that, on this supposition, motion is impossible. The Racetrack Imagine that we are trying to move from point A to point B. Suppose C is the midpoint of the distance from A to B. It seems that we have to first get from A to C, before we can get from A to B. Now suppose that D is the midpoint between A and C; just as above, it seems that we have to first get from A to D before we can get from A to C. Since space is infinitely divisible, this process can be continued indefinitely. So it seems that we need to complete an infinite series of journeys before we can travel any distance - even a very short one! A flying arrow, according to Zeno, is at rest i.e., occupying equal space.¹⁷

In the like manner the Naiyāyikas have shown a paradox in the concept of time (*kāla*). It is defined as the cause of verbal usage of the past etc is called time or *kāla*. It is said in the *Bhāṣāpariccheda* by Viśvanātha that Time has to be accepted as

a producer of the effects and as the substratum of the universe (*janyānām jahakah kālo jagarāmāśrayo matah*).¹⁸ In a word, the auxiliary cause of any type of effect (*kāryamātram*) is called Time. Because, the usages like ‘Today a jar will be produced’ (*adya ghaṭo bhaviṣyati*). ‘Yesterday a jar was produced’ (*śvah ghaṭo bhavitā*) etc. are possible due to the acceptance of time as the cause of the origination of such effects, and also as the cause of the origination of such awareness expressed in language.¹⁹

In the foregoing discussion some paradoxes and defects may be shown in their arguments given by the Naiyāyikas.

- First, if time were defined in terms of the cause of the usages like past, present etc., there would arise the defect of circularity or fallacy of mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*). For, time is understood in terms of the usages like past etc. while the usages like past etc. are understood in terms of time.
- Secondly, it is very difficult to define past, present and future on account of the fact that there is ‘no cut off time’ in comparison to which an object is said to be existing in past or present. An incident occurred a moment before, may be taken as past and that occurred one hundred years back is also called past. What is the exact time that we can call ‘present’ and in terms of which past and future may be determined? It is very difficult to determine a span of time, which we call ‘present’. The Buddhist would say that an incident occurring in a particular moment is present, but it is beyond conceptualization. It would take more than one moment to conceptualize ‘present’, and hence the question of past and future does not arise at all. Hence, time defined as above is paradoxical.

If the ‘present’ (*vartamāna*) is not determined, the ‘past’ (*atīta*) remains undetermined. Because, the absentee existing in an absentee of the destruction occurred at in the ‘present’ is called ‘pastness’ (*ātītatva*) (*vartamānakālavṛttidhvamsa-pratīyogitvam atītatvam*). In other words, the absentee of destruction existing in the present (*vartamāna*) is called ‘past’. In the same way the absentee existing in an absentee of the prior-absence occurred in the ‘present’ time is the futureness (*anāgatatva*). (*vartamānakālavṛtti-prāgabhāva-pratīyogitvam*

anāgatatvam). In other words, something whose prior absence remains in the 'present' is called future (*anāgata*)²⁰ as Zeno has shown paradoxes in space and time, the Naiyāyikas have shown paradoxes in conceptualizing time.

In case of leadership an individual can be a leader *per excellence* if he believes in such in-built power on himself and can lead (not mislead) others in the true sense of the term to be conscious about such power in them so that they do not feel any negative states of mind like inferiority complex, self-negating attitudes etc. If such in-built power is admitted, an individual becomes a true leader by arousing their power already within them as Naciketa was aroused by the Mantra- *uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varānnivodhta* (Arise, awake, stop not until the goal is reached). The human body has got such in-built power by virtue of being matter (*Prakṛti*) but not as a part of Spirit (*Ātman*).

References:

1. *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol.21 *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 2005, pp.8-29.
2. Sāyana Mādhava: *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, Cārvākadarśana, trs. Satyajyoti Chakraborty, Sahityashri, Kolkata, 1996, p.1 (Text portion only). “*Tatra pṛthivyādīni bhūtāni catvāri tattvāni. Tebhya eva dehākārapariṇatebhyah kiṇvādibhyo madaśaktivat caitanyamupajāyate.*”
3. *Vedāntadarśanam (Brahmasūtra with Sankarabhāṣya)*, *Tarkapāda adhyāya*, trs. Swami Viśvarūpānanda, Vol. II, Udbodhan Kolkata, 1996, pp.272-300.
4. *Ibid*, pp.215-240.
5. Mondel & Wolf: *Optical Coherence and Quantum Optics*, Chapter-13, Cambridge University Press, 1995. Kondepudi & Prigogine: *Modern Thermodynamics from Heat Engines to Dissipative Structures*, John Wiley and Sons Publisher, Chapter-11, 1998.
6. Sāyana Mādhava: *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, Bauddhadarśana, trs. Satyajyoti Chakraborty, Sahityashri, Kolkata, 1996, p.6 (Text portion only).
7. Brajendranath Seal: *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, Sahitya-Samsad, Kolkata, 2001, p.2. Henceforth: *Positive Sciences*.
8. *Sāmkhyakārikā with Tattvakaumudī*, Karika no.11 trs. Nararyan Chandra Goswami, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, p.146-150, Kolkata, 1982.
9. *Dhvanyāloka with Locana*, translation in Hindi by Acarya Jagannath Pathak, Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, Varanasi, 1965, p.193. Henceforth *Dhvanyāloka with Locana*.
10. *Dhvanyāloka with Locana*, p.88.
11. *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill. 1993.
12. “*Viṣayaścaturvidhau bhauma-divya-udarya-ākaraja-bhedāt. Bhaumam vahnyādikam. Avibandhanam divyam bidyudādi. Bhuktasya pariṇāmahetuh udaryam. Ākarajam suvarṇādi.*” *Tarkasamgraha with Dīpikā*, trs. Aurobindo Basu, Mitram. Kolkata, 2010, p.58.
13. *Manusamhitā* 3/76
14. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, 3/14
15. *Positive Sciences*, p.185.

16. *Ācarakasmhitā, XXVI*
17. *Ibid, ch-I*
18. Abraham, W. E., 1972, 'The Nature of Zeno's Argument Against Plurality in DK 29 B 1', *Phronesis*, 17: 40–52
19. *Bhāṣāpariccheda*, Verse No. 45.
20. "Adya ghato bhaviṣyati, śvah pato bhavitā ityādipratītestattatkāryotpattyadhikaraṇatvena vyavahāraṣayasya tasya kālasya tattadutpattihetuvāt ..." *Muktāvalīsamgraha* on Verse 45, by Panchanan Bhattacharya, P. 201. Calcutta, 1374 (B.S.). *Atītatvam vartamānakālavṛttidhvamsapratiyogitvam. anāgatatvam vartamānakālavṛttiprāgabhāvapratiyogitvam.* Nirukti on *Tarkasamgraha* (edit. Satkari Sharma Bangiya, p. 19, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1976.

WITTGENSTEIN ON PHILOSOPHY OF SILENCE

KANTILAL DAS

Wittgenstein in the last line of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (henceforth TLP) gives us an insight of *philosophy of silence*. The relevance of philosophy of silence makes prominence in Wittgenstein's TLP simply because he has attempted here to make the relationship between language and reality from a limited whole what he eventually termed as 'my language and my world'. It is his manufactured language and manufactured world where he finds everything within the language. As it is a limited whole, limited language, it cannot cover the whole world. Therefore, the validity is being questioned if one has attempted to grasp the whole world from the limited whole.

Wittgenstein in his TLP 5.6: says. "The *limits of my language* mean the limits of my world".¹ By drawing the limits of world, Wittgenstein admits two sides of the world, such as, inside (my language and my world) and outside or other side of the world. By the term 'my language', Wittgenstein means *propositional language* and by the term 'my world', Wittgenstein means *totality of facts*. Within the world (i.e., my world) everything is expressed either in the form of 'to be the case' or 'not to be the case' (two senses of proposition). What then can we say about the other side (outside the limits of my world) of the world? The other side of his world is *inexpressible* because we do not have legitimate language to express *what lies outside of the world*. As language is the only medium of communication and there is no language to communicate the other side of the world, it would be prudent for us *to remain silence about the other side of the world*. In this regard, Wittgenstein remarked in the last proposition of his TLP: 7, "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."²

For Wittgenstein, all propositions of his world are of equal value, they cannot express anything in the world other than *what is to be the case or not to be the case*. They cannot determine *the sense of the world*. The *sense of the world* must lie outside the world. For Wittgenstein, in the world everything as it is. Here everything happens as it does happen. In it no value exists and if it did exist, it would have no value. By the term 'value' Wittgenstein actually means 'higher value' or 'absolute value' that

¹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, Routledge, London and New York, 1921, p.56.

²*Ibid.*, p.74.

does not fall within *the limits of language* and hence it cannot be comprehended by propositional language. Here we can distinguish between two types of value, such as, *cognitive value* and *non-cognitive value*. The language of ‘my world’ determines cognitive value. Non-cognitive value is higher than cognitive value. It lies outside the world. In this regard Wittgenstein in his TLP: 6.41 remarked, “If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.”³ Accordingly, what lies outside the world would be *non-accidental*. What is accidental cannot be mystical and what is non-accidental would be mystical according to Wittgenstein. Thus, Wittgenstein took *mystical position* about the value that would lie outside the world. In this regard, Wittgenstein held in his TLP: 6.44, “It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists.”⁴ When we feel the world as a limited whole, mysticism comes forth. In such a case neither the question, nor the answer can be put into words. There is no role of skepticism in mysticism because in the later there is no relevance of the former. Wittgenstein remarked in his TLP: 6.51, “For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists and an answer only where something can be said.”⁵ Nothing can be said what lies outside of the world. There are things which at times cannot be put into words, but still they make *themselves manifest*. They are what Wittgenstein called mystical. For Wittgenstein, ethical, aesthetic, and religious matters cannot be expressed, cannot be verbalized but still they are worthy, not of ridicule but of the *deepest respect*. The language of proposition can be put into words. Naturally, the content of proposition cannot be mystical according to Wittgenstein. This is where the insight of the seventh proposition actually hinges on.

Was Wittgenstein a positivist?

Many commentators would say that Wittgenstein actually holds positivists’ position by drawing the line between what we can speak about and what we must be silent. The only difference is that logical positivists have nothing to be silent about. Positivism holds that what we can speak about is all the matters in life. Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes *that all that really matters in human life is*

³*Ibid.*, p.71.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.73.

⁵*Ibid.*, p.73.

precisely what we must be silent about. To me the position of TLP of Wittgenstein is *contra positivism* because unlike the positivism, Wittgenstein attempted to demarcate what can be said from what cannot be said and secondly, unlike the positivism, Wittgenstein asserts that the unsayable alone is important. Unlike logical positivism, Wittgenstein's TLP attempts to a sure philosophical footing ideas about humanity's relation to the godhead evident within the great religious traditions. In fact, his remarks on the unknowability of God are reminiscent of what we find in the book : “ Be not rash your mouth, not let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few.”⁶ Thus, Wittgenstein is cutting off any human attempt to become familiar with holy things. While sharing his view with Drury, Wittgenstein remarked, “Now I wouldn't for the life of me dare to say ‘how like God’. I wouldn't claim to know how God should act.” For Wittgenstein, there is *a certain human tendency to extend beyond our limits*, and to talk of things about which we should rightfully be silent and respectful. Just as Kant famously found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith, likewise the TLP of Wittgenstein sets a limit to what can be spoken *in order to respect the awesome power of the mystical*. While delivering lectures on ethics in 1929 to a Cambridge society known as ‘The Heretics’, Wittgenstein describes ethics as the inquiry into the meaning of life⁷ just as he had associated God with the meaning of life.⁸ Our language [my language] is woefully inadequate to handle *the glorious ineffability of the mystical*, which is beyond the world, beyond the humdrum or monotonous realm of states of affairs.

A human thrust or tendency is created against the limits of language [my language]. While correlating his idea with Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein remarks that *it is a perennial human urge and that there is a definite worth in the occasional breaking of the Tractarian silence. Thus, one should not fear of talking nonsense.* St. Augustine said, “What, you swine, you want not to talk nonsense! Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter!”⁹ How can that which is nonsensical also be important?

⁶*Ecclesiastes* 5:2

⁷ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Lectures on Ethics*, 5.

⁸ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Notebooks*, 73, 74.

⁹*Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle: Conversations Recorded by Friedrich Waismann*, ed., Brian McGuinness, trans., Joachim Schulte and Brian McGuinness, New York, 1979, p.69.

The importance of nonsense can be justified from *anthropological and transcendental interpretations*. From anthropological perspective, Wittgenstein calls ‘the mystical’ as a *creation of the human mind rather* than a genuine transcendental reality. It would reflect how our existence seems so futile and empty; how the world of facts fails to satisfy *our deepest desires*. Wittgenstein said, “The urge towards the mystical comes of the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science. We feel that even if all possible scientific questions are answered our problem is still not touched at all.”¹⁰[NB 51; TLP; 6.52]The anthropological interpretation of the thrust against the limits of language highlights the *deep human desires and fragilities* that inform religion, yet it does not necessarily posit the presence of anything beyond the world. The *thrust is a purely human tendency*. While talking about transcendental interpretation, Wittgenstein is aware of a higher order of realities and is stressing human desire to gain communication with these realities. Here the image of language as ‘a cage’ is to be taken seriously. Our predicament is akin to that of people who have never left a prison in which they were born. Denied any experience of the outside world, *the only hint that there is something beyond the walls of their cage is a few cracks in the wall through which light occasionally glimmers*. On Engelmann’s analogy, we are marooned on an island, and spend our days obsessively babbling about what is beyond the horizon, something we have never known, nor can ever know- but is there none the less.

Wittgenstein this attempted to link God with the question of life’s meaning. For Wittgenstein, to believe in a God means to understand the questions about the meaning of life. To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter. To believe in God means to see that life has a meaning. [NB 74] Thus for Wittgenstein, religious belief is intimately connected with the feeling that *the facts are not enough*, that there is something beyond the factual which is of *greatest significance*. The meaning of life cannot be found in the world [my world], that like God, meaning is located outside the humdrum order of facts. In this sense, Meaning and God are virtually identical. To say that God was in the beginning is to say that Meaning was in the beginning. Life is the drive toward Meaning, and life has emerged into self-conscious humanity. Wittgenstein now contends that God is the

¹⁰ *Notebooks 51, TLP: 6.52.*

world. In his NB 79 Wittgenstein remarks, “How things stand, is God. God is how things stand.”¹¹ Wittgenstein usually kept his religious and spiritual cards close to his chest. He was very selective to discuss about religious issues. He shared his beliefs in such matters only with tiny numbers of close friends, namely, Paul Engelmann, Drury. For Wittgenstein, in the presence of what is sacred and ineffable, we usually do best by retaining *a pious silence*. God is so much above all that one can say nothing. You worship him better through silence. In his *Lectures*, Wittgenstein holds that there are certain experiences which would constitute absolute value rather than relative or instrumental value. Such value gives insight into ‘the meaning of life’ and it suggests ‘what makes life worth living’. One of these experiences Wittgenstein speaks of is the experience of being ‘absolutely safe’, of being ‘safe in the hands of God’. In this regard, Russell Neili (1987) classifies or reads mystic experience of Wittgenstein into two types, such as, *Ecstatic Mystic Experience* and *Creation Mystic Experience*.¹² The Ecstatic mystic experience, the experience of ‘standing outside’ the world is clearly the more radical, more mind-bending and rarer of the two experiences. According to Wittgenstein’s biographer Ray Monk [1990] the ecstatic mystic experience has been considered by Wittgenstein throughout his life as ‘*paradigmatic of religious experience*’.¹³ The experiential foundations of ethics and religion involve ‘what is intrinsically sublime and above all other subject matters’. Wittgenstein goes on to say, “...our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and out words will only express facts, as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water even if I were to pour out a gallon over it... I can only describe my feelings by the metaphor, that, if a man could write a book on ethics which really was a book on ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world.”¹⁴

For Wittgenstein, refuge or safe haven in the mystical provides for us a way to reflect upon our lives. He further suggests that ‘the mystical’ constitutes a

¹¹ *Notebooks*, 79.

¹² Neili, Russell, *Wittgenstein: From Mysticism in Ordinary Language*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York, 1987, p.7.

¹³ Monk, Ray, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, The Free Press, New York, 1990, p.51.

¹⁴ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Lectures on Ethics*, p.7.

particular way of looking at the world, a particular way of responding to the facts encountered there. He attempts to turn from too narrow to widen one's view so that the entirety of the world is perceived. Here Wittgenstein's account of mystical coincides with aesthetic experience. Just as the mystical viewpoint captures the world holistically, so a work of art is 'the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*', seen, not from the midst of things but from outside.¹⁵ [NB 83]. Here the connection between the aesthetic and the mystical is crucial. We think that the clash between belief and unbelief is not a disagreement over the facts of the world; it is more akin to *a disagreement over aesthetic taste*.

It thus seems to me that Wittgenstein in his TLP took and defended a radical version of language that would divide and demarcate the world into two distinct parts, such as, accidental and non-accidental. He then claimed that any attempt to express in words anything of or about religion unavoidably results in nonsense. Some nonsense is important nonsense in compare to other and it may be termed as non-sense instead of nonsense.¹⁶ There is no possibility of elucidating of religious expression. In his "A lecture on Ethics", Wittgenstein remarked that any attempt to write or to talk about religion is '*to run against the boundaries of language*'. In his words, "This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely, hopeless."¹⁷

Nonsense and Non-sense?

Wittgenstein makes it clear that as religion, metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics lie on the other side of the limit, they are nonsense. It is not just philosophy and metaphysics that are nonsensical, but religion, talk about the meaning of life, talk about making sense of life, talk about the meaning of the world, talk about God, ethics, and aesthetics. All such talks are nonsense having no cognitive force and hence they belong to 'the mystical' and are nonsensical. Wittgenstein has identified such talk with *the meaning of life*. Accordingly, they could not be just plain old nonsense, but must be deep nonsense 'hinting at unsayable ineffable truths'.¹⁸ He thus classifies truth or knowledge into two categories, such as, *ineffable truth and non-*

¹⁵ *Notebooks*, 83.

¹⁶ Lazenby, J. M. *The Early Wittgenstein on Religion*, Continuum Studies in British Philosophy, 2006, p.64.

¹⁷ *Lectures on Ethics*, 11-12.

¹⁸ Nielsen, Kai and D. Z. Phillips, *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* Scm press, 2005, p.229.

effable truth. An ineffable truth is unsayable and inexpressible, but a non-effable truth is sayable and expressible. One is comprehended through silence and the other is comprehended through putting it into words. Nonsense can be shown but cannot be said. All such talks are vital to our sense of life touches on matters of value. According to Hacker, just as Kant circumscribed the bounds of language in order to make room for faith, Wittgenstein circumscribed the bounds of language in order to make room for ineffable metaphysical truths.¹⁹

They (nonsense) had nothing to say because there was nothing to say in the real sense of the term. James Conant²⁰ in “Must We Show What We Cannot Say” [1989] and Cora Diamond²¹ in *The Pluralistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind* [1991] distinguish between nonsense (bad) and non-sense (good) to understand Wittgenstein’s claim that some propositions are *nonsensical but important*. I think Pears (1971) position is particularly relevant here. Pears remarks, “By refusing to locate the truth of religions and morality within factual discourse, Wittgenstein was not rejecting them, but trying to preserve them.²² They are non-sense because they lack factual sense. But to make this point about them is not to condemn them as unintelligible. Rather it is to take the first step towards *understanding them*. I think this position of Wittgenstein made him distinct from Hume and logical positivism. According to Hume, metaphysical and religious sentences are false and according to logical positivism they are meaningless. When Wittgenstein asserts that religious expressions are nonsense, he has a different interpretation of sense in his mind. They are non-sense because they lack factual sense. I think the distinction between *plain nonsense* and *non-sense* is equally important. There are some religious and moral utterances which are successful in *conveying insights* and there are other religious and moral utterances which cannot do that. Those religious and moral utterances which are successful *in conveying insights* have been termed as *non-sense* and the rest has been termed as *plain nonsense*. As philosophy is not a body of

¹⁹ See Hacker, ‘Wittgenstein’, in *A Companion to the Philosophers*, edited by Robert L. Arrington, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, p.344.

²⁰ Conant, James, ‘Must We Show What We Cannot Say?’ in *The Senses of Stanley Cavell*, ed., R. Fleming and M. Payne, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1989.

²¹ Diamond, Cora, *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind*, Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991.

²² Pears, David., *Wittgenstein*, 2ndedn, London: Fontana, 1971, p.57.

doctrine but an activity, as the type of philosophy is therapeutic in nature, one has to involve in talking nonsense for sense. For Wittgenstein, to say about nonsense is itself non-sense, an important non-sense. An important nonsense [illuminating nonsense, according to Hacker, 1986: p.18] which set out the limit of factual discourse is nonetheless nonsense, and like unimportant nonsense [unilluminating nonsense, according to Hacker] we must give it up. Wittgenstein of *TLP* aims at to uncover all nonsense, whether gibberish [unilluminating] or important [illuminating], as nonsense. There is a fundamental difference between gibberish, which detracts from living, and important nonsense, which helps us to live.

How can we say about religion, metaphysical issues if we do not have language? The language of *TLP* does not suit to express issues associated with higher value. Wittgenstein anticipated two different types of truth, such as, *necessary and a priori truth*. Tautologies are a priori necessary truth and hence they are devoid of *factual content*. All other truths are contingent, empirical and *a- posteriori* in nature. Accordingly, neither of these kinds of truth incorporates metaphysical, aesthetics, theological or religious truths. He then claims that all necessary truths are empty and all truths of substance are merely factual. Only empirical truths are significant. Traditional metaphysics and theology attempt to establish trans-empirical substantial truths. Such truth is almost impossible according to *TLP* view. Ethical and aesthetic truths were traditionally thought to hold no matter what the world is like. Thus, it seems clear that Wittgenstein's model that has been developed in his early work makes no room for traditional metaphysics, theology.

The pertinent question is: what do we actually try to express when we use words in religious and ethical expressions? In this regard Wittgenstein says, "I wonder at the existence of the world and I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens."²³ We feel safe in the hands of God, the creator of the world. Though the word 'absolute' as used in the sentence 'I feel absolutely safe' is nonsensical with regard to the tests of sense, but it makes sense to the speaker. How can Wittgenstein claim that they have any meaning at all? For Wittgenstein, to have the meaning of religious and ethical expressions we are to look *at the force of words* in the lives of those who use them.

²³Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein*, 1996, p.42

Was Wittgenstein serious enough about religion?

Many would suspect that Wittgenstein was not serious enough about religious matters. I do not think so. To me, Wittgenstein was extremely serious about religious matters. Otherwise, he did not say anything about religion in his *TLP* and in ‘Lectures on Ethics’. What he inclined to say was that the language of *TLP* did not incorporate issues about religious matters. Religious matters or language cannot be expressed in the form of ‘to be the case’ or ‘not to be the case’. This is his position in his *TLP*. This does not make sense to say that he was disinterested about religious language and religious matters in his *TLP*. The only biasness that he portrayed in his *TLP* was his *overwhelming inclination towards propositional language*.

In his *TLP*, Wittgenstein conceives two different types of values, such as, *higher and not-higher*. A value which is deeply associated with the deepest problems of human life, with the meaning of human life is called higher value. Metaphysics, religion, ethics, aesthetics are entwined with each other and they are deeply rooted with the problems of human life. In this regard, Wittgenstein in his *TLP*: 6.41 asserts, “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it no value exists – and if it did exist, it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world.”²⁴

Here I have to specify what Wittgenstein actually means by the term ‘value’. His understanding of the term ‘value’ is not at par with propositional or truth-functional value. Truth-functional value functions in the world ‘as it is’. It is not a priori. However, the ‘value’ that would determine the ‘sense of the world’ is a priori and it lies outside the world. In this regard, Wittgenstein made the distinction between *accidental and non-accidental value*. What happens within the world would be accidental and what lies outside the world or other side of the world would be non-accidental. What is non-accidental is higher. Propositions or propositional language cannot express anything higher. (*TLP*: 6.42). Therefore, it is impossible for there to

²⁴ *TLP*. 6.41.

be propositions of ethics. What is higher cannot be put into words. Accordingly, religion, ethics, metaphysics remain transcendental.

Concluding Remarks

Wittgenstein's life and work suggests the possibility of *a new spiritual attitude* based on 'wordless faith'. Intimation of the divine, rather than talk of the divine will be the heart of *wordless faith*. To me the religion of Wittgenstein's *TLP* is ascetic in the sense of denying oneself the rich tapestry of doctrinal expression. It encapsulates a stoic attitude and a particular way of looking at the world, seeing it as a miracle. In *TLP*, talk of God is denied for the pious reason that holiness is to be protected from linguistic distortion. Here I can remember Moore's concept of Naturalistic fallacy. For Moore, non-natural term cannot be defined with regard to naturalistic property. For example, the term *good* is non-natural. Accordingly, to define the term *good* with regard to natural term leads into Naturalistic fallacy. Very similar way, Wittgenstein asserts that what can be put into words is natural and what cannot be put into words is non-natural. Alternatively, it can be said that what is expressed within the limits of language and world has factual content and anything that has factual content has sense and would be treated as natural. What lies outside the world would be non-natural in the sense that it lacks factual content. Therefore, it cannot be put into words and any attempt to put it into words leads into mysticism. Wittgenstein conceives it as nonsense.

I think this position of Wittgenstein makes him distinct from those philosophical thinkers who were supposed to his close allies. In this regard Wittgenstein differs from Hume. Hume, being a radical empiricist, offers us a naturalistic account of philosophy. Hume claims that religious and metaphysical assertions are false because 'they contain nothing but sophistry and illusion'.²⁵ Wittgenstein does not think that religious and metaphysical assertions are false, rather he consider such statements as mystical and nonsense. To assert something as false is to put it into words. To assert something as false one has to put it into language. But for Wittgenstein, we cannot put religious and metaphysical assertions into words. They are inexpressible. What is inexpressible cannot be false, because to be a false, it

²⁵ Hume, *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. I quoted it from Brian R. Clack, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p.29.

has to be expressible beforehand. We think Wittgenstein equally differs from logical positivism. Logical positivists with the principle of verification assert that religious and metaphysical assertions are meaningless. They are meaningless in the sense that they cannot be asserted as either true or false. Hence they are devoid of cognitive significance. Wittgenstein asserts that religious and metaphysical assertions are nonsense. They are nonsense in the sense that they lack sense. Thus, they are nonsense in an important sense. They may have sense in other sense. They are nonsense, but they are important nonsense. The question is: whether the term nonsense is at par with meaningless as used by logical positivists. We think that logical positivists took more stringent view against religious and metaphysical assertions. Wittgenstein does not take rigorous view about religious and metaphysical assertions. While attributing such assertions meaningless, Wittgenstein has in mind that ethics, religion and aesthetic have different value which is particularly needed to determine the value of the world; to determine the meaning of life, to equate God with the meaning of life. Accordingly, Wittgenstein reveals that religious and metaphysical assertions are extremely needed for determining the value of the world as well as to determine the meaning of life. Hume and logical positivists are no longer god-extricated man. But Wittgenstein has been regarded like the god-extricated man. Like the god-intoxicated man, Wittgenstein's sense of an eternal reality both pervading and yet transcending the world left him deeply dissatisfied with the paltry realm of facts. His main contention was to summon up a sense of *profound reality* uncharacterized by science, was as nothing. Thus, following Brian R. Clack, it may be concluded that Wittgenstein's early philosophy of religion deserves the name of *Logical Romanticism* rather than anti-logical positivism. In order to live happily, Wittgenstein was doing the will of God. He really wanted to say that all talk of God should be consigned to the realm of silence and only artistic creation can mediate what is higher. One might gain a felt sense of the meaningfulness of life through his artistic creation and aesthetic taste.

Further we think that mysticism is an important part of Wittgenstein's view. In fact, mysticism becomes the last refuge for the most cherished things in life, in fact for all values, 'for all that cannot be said and yet is of utmost importance to us'. Following Conant, we can say that Wittgenstein views mysticism as some form of 'last refuge'. In fact, it seems to me that Wittgenstein has the greatest and deepest

respect for the impulse to seek such refuge without textual support. He simply asserted that ‘the feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling’ and it would be utterly ineffable.

Thus to remain silence is the best possible means to *do higher and authentic philosophy*. Wittgenstein’s philosophy of silence suggests this. If we carefully go through the history of literature, we find that silence is the best possible means to have the sense of higher order of knowledge. However, Wittgenstein in his *TLP* suggests us to remain silence because he does not find any *suitable language* within the limited whole to express religious matters. Since we cannot express religious matters by means of language, how can we express them? We cannot. Therefore, it would be better for us to keep in silence. The pertinent question then is: Is silence a way of doing philosophy? Here I have two proposals. First, silence is a means of doing philosophy, and secondly, silence is a means of suspension of doing philosophy. The term ‘suspension’ is particularly relevant here. Wittgenstein for the time being suspends to discuss about what is mystical and nonsense because he does not have suitable language to grasp religious matters. However, in his later writings he opens up the matter again and instead of remaining silence, he then talks about religious matters with his close friends and students, namely, Drury and others. Alternatively, we can say that being a linguistic philosopher; Wittgenstein takes language as a philosophical method. Therefore, his philosophy is primarily concerned with the analysis of language. In this regard Wittgenstein employs therapeutic method. In his *TLP*, he draws the limits of language as well as the limits of the world. Within the limited world everything can be put into language and hence everything has sense. He then says that to grasp religious matters from the perspective of limited whole would cause mysticism. What is higher cannot be comprehended by means of what is lower. Any attempt to conceive the higher by means of lower would lead us mysticism and in turn make everything nonsense. In such a case the best possible means is to remain in silence. This is how Wittgenstein in his *TLP* and *Notebooks* develops philosophy of silence. The essence of philosophy of silence of Wittgenstein is not to think, but to look and reveal form the core of the heart. It has no end, it does not require any justification, epistemic or logical, and it does not require intellectualism. It banks on showing just as *a means of remaining silence*.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MEANING OF LIFE

JYOTSNA SAHA

“Life has meaning, to find its meaning is my meat and drink.”-Robert Browning

The question of the meaning of life is most fundamental to human being as it touches the core of human existence. The most familiar form of the question about the meaning of life is “what is the meaning of life?” through this simple question; however, several different senses may be intended. There are many sense of the word ‘meaning’. If we ask what a word means, we want to know what it represents, what it stands for. But life does not represent anything. It does not seem that people are asking about what life gives evidence for when they ask about the meaning of life. In asking about the meaning of life one may ask about the essence, purpose, value, significance and host of other things for life. It means different things to different people and thus resulted in a wide range of competing answers from different ends – science, philosophy, religion, literature and popular culture. Although in the early nineteenth century writers in the West began to write precisely in the form “What is the meaning of life?” questions about life, world, existence and its purpose can be traced from the beginning of human thought.

Ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and many others had views about what sort of life is best and hence most meaningful. In Platonism, the meaning of life is to attain the highest form of knowledge, which is the *Idea* or *Form* of the Good. Aristotle believed that the pursuit of happiness is the highest Good. Epicurus saw the meaning of life in the search for the highest pleasure or happiness. His formula for attaining human happiness is: increase pleasure and decrease pain.

Medieval philosophy centered on the theistic concept of the Will of God as the determinant factor for the meaning of life. Modern philosophy attempts to develop prejudice free philosophy. In Philosophy of Kant the determinant factor for certainty regarding purpose and meaning of life were shifted from God to the conscience. This development concerning the meaning of life gradually leads to an existentialist view. Its central themes are the significance of the individual, the importance of passion, the irrational aspects of life and the importance of human freedom. According to existentialism each man creates the meaning of their life – life is not determined by supernatural God.

Kierkegaard is regarded as the father of modern existentialism. His insistence on the priority of individual existence, subjective reflection, choice, and

responsibility make him the earliest contribution to the philosophy of existentialism. According to Kierkegaard, life is a series of choices – and that these choices bring meaning to our life. Each individual is solely responsible for making their life meaningful and living it authentically. Every action we take is a choice, decided by us and no one else. He developed his thought on the meaning of life mostly in his pseudonymous works *either/or* (1843) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846). In his first major published work *either/or* we find the statements like “How empty and meaningless life is”, “My life is utterly meaningless.” According to Kierkegaard, one can give one’s life meaning, or that one can acquire the meaning in life by developing oneself to something. Being Christian Kierkegaard viewed meaning as ultimately grounded in religious faith, but paradoxically he said, it is possible to enjoy life and to give life meaning outside Christianity, as there are so many poets, artists and thinkers who do not belong to Christianity. (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*). To resolve the dilemma of human beings, that is, looking for meaning in a meaningless world Kierkegaard referred to a “leap of faith” – religious belief in a transcendent realm or being. For Kierkegaard faith is identified with passion and inwardness. For him ‘faith is the highest passion in the sphere of human subjectivity’ (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 118). Inwardness, subjectivity, despair, dreads, passions, individuality, commitment to God, surrender or resignation are all characteristics of faith. The man in his religiosity is an individual whose primordial mode of being is faith.

Albert Camus, another leading influential writer who felt that life is absurd, meaningless, and senseless. ‘What is the meaning of life?’ is the most urgent of questions, says Albert Camus, because “I see many people die because they judge that life is not worth living. I see others paradoxically getting killed for the ideas or illusions that gave them a reason for living.” [Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*] In absurdist philosophy, the absurdity of life arises out of the fundamental disharmony between needs and aspirations of human beings and the apparent meaninglessness of the universe.

According to Camus, our situation is like that of the old mythical Greek, Sisyphus. A perfect image of meaninglessness, of the kind we are seeking, is found in the myth of Sisyphus. Old Sisyphus betrayed divine secrets to mortals, for these gods

had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. Gods had thought that there is no more dreadful punishment than pointless labour. Pointless labour is Sisyphus' lot and ours too. As beings looking for meaning in a meaningless world, humans have three ways of resolving the dilemma. Camus describes the solutions in *The Myth of Sisyphus* i) The pointlessness and absurdity or escaped existence of life raise the question of suicide: a solution in which a person simply ends one's own life. Should one kill himself/herself? Camus' answer is we should not. Suicide is an escapist's solution. ii) Belief in a transcendent realm or being: a solution in which one believes in the existence of a reality which is beyond the absurd and thus has meaning. Camus regarded this solution as "philosophical suicide". iii) Acceptance of the absurd: Camus endorsed this solution. According to him, we should accept the absurd and continues to live - we should acknowledge that life is awful but "all is well." "The rock is still rolling... I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! ...He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile... the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."(*Myth of Sisyphus*)

Arthur Schopenhauer, the great pessimist, asked expressly "what is the meaning of life?" struggling with personal misery and a sense of loneliness and isolation, he tried to find some understanding of himself and the world around him that appeared to him as senseless. "He was absolutely alone, with not a single friend; and between one and none there lies infinity." (Nietzsche: *Schopenhauer as Educator*, P.122)

Schopenhauer's philosophy is shadowed by Kant. There is a difference between the thing in itself and the world of appearances. The thing in itself is the will to live or more simply, the will. It is the fundamental reality that underlies all things. But contra Kant, Schopenhauer says we can know the thing in itself. In knowing the thing in itself, according to Schopenhauer, we know the will. The world we live in is merely the phenomena of the will. The phenomenal world is an awful place. It is full of misery, pain and suffering. Almost everyone lives a life that is meaningless and insignificant. Schopenhauer answered: "What is the meaning of life?" by stating that one's life reflects one's will and the will as being aimless, irrational and painful drive. Salvation, deliverance or at least escape from suffering being found in aesthetic contemplation, sympathy for others and asceticism.

In *Book-1 and 2 of The World as Will and Representation* Schopenhauer contrasts the aesthetic, moral, and ascetic states of consciousness with the ordinary or empirical consciousness. Ordinary, everyday consciousness is consciousness of the world of objects. Empirical consciousness is a mode of “interested” engagement in the world. Aesthetic consciousness consists in the cessation of desire-driven suffering. One’s engagement with an object in aesthetic experience is disinterested and painless. According to Schopenhauer, the fundamental principle of morality is: “Hurt no one, rather help everyone as much as you can.” (*On the Basis of Morality*, 69) It indicates that compassion or virtue is the fundamental concept of ethics. It is the step on “the road to salvation.” But like those philosophic-religious traditions Schopenhauer did not identify virtue or compassion with salvation.

Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche revolves around the central concept of nihilism. The term “nihilism” itself comes from the Latin *nihil*, which means “nothing”. Nietzsche’s early philosophical thought was profoundly influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer, through his masterwork *The World as Will and Representation* and the composer Richard Wagner. This period of Nietzsche’s thought emphasizes feeling over reason. His primary concern is the meaning and value of life. The problem with the dominance of reason is that it demands that life be rational and good. It denies the reality of the irrational and of suffering and thus devalues life as it is. Nietzsche thus proposes a higher form of pessimism which accepts the suffering in life. For Nietzsche, nihilism is a tragic state of despair but it is only a transitory state – it can be overcome. The overcoming of nihilism, according to Nietzsche, requires the finding of a way to a new “affirmation of life.” He provides three broad ways for overcoming of nihilism i) the *Ubermensch* (over man) - it teaches self-creation, the creation of values, ii) eternal recurrence - it functions as a supreme test of one’s ability to affirm life and the world as they fundamentally are rather than as one might wish them to be, iii) the will to power - it is the will of life. The will to power is the desire for greater strength - not for mere existence and preservation. One thing Nietzsche wanted to do was to give an affirmative philosophy of life instead of Schopenhauer’s pessimistic, life - denying philosophy. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche speaks of “the creative strength to create meaning.” The meaning of life is to be created, not discovered. The mistake lies in thinking that our meaning and

values are present in “things- in-themselves.” It is created by us. All meaning is will to power.

Twentieth- century thinkers like Heidegger and Sartre are two representatives of a more extreme form of existentialism where the existential approach takes place within the framework of atheism. Throughout his long academic career, Heidegger was concerned with the meaning of being and he employed the term *Dasein* for referring the being of the particular kind of entity that is the human being. For Heidegger, the essence of human being consists in “openness”, i.e. being the “open place” (the *Da*) where the significance of things occur. Man alone has *Dasein*, and he cannot escape it. *Dasein* has no essence beyond what it can make itself be. For early Heidegger, that is, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* a meaningful life could not possible unless you were living authentically, directing your life on your own terms, rather than following others; the path we follow is always of our own choosing. In *Being and Time* Heidegger suggests that the meaning of our being must tie up with time. For Heidegger, the defining the defining structure of human openness is “temporality” or “time”. “Temporality” or “time” is a uniquely human condition that is not to be confused with chronological notions of time. It connotes becoming. We are temporal beings - born into a world that existed before us. Time is not an abstract entity, something in which we are borne passively, but an opportunity to do something. To live a life of authenticity, one must have a plan, something that unifies one’s life into an organic whole. Beyond realising our own potential there is no purpose to life. But there is a limit to our life, a point at which everything comes to an end and that limit is our death - “being towards death.” But we simply forget the limit and as a result live an inauthentic life. One’s whole life is nothing more than the execution of possibilities authentically or inauthentically to constitute his/her existence. Heidegger’s fundamental analysis of *Dasein* from *Being and Time* points to temporality as the primordial meaning of *Dasein’s being*. As being temporal *Dasein* is thus historical too.

According to Sartre, we are nothing other than the sum of our actions. Human beings have no particular purpose. Man is nothing other than his own project. Sartre thinks people are dimly aware of their fundamental project. It is only through our projected actions that we begin to determine what our purpose in life is. We draw our own portrait of life. In his famous public lecture “Existentialism Is a Humanism”

Sartre set out the basic ideas of his existential philosophy and its relationship to the question of the meaning of life. It may be regarded as an endogenous theory of the meaning of human life. According to the endogenous theories of the human life meaning and purpose of life are posited or projected by the agent. Man according to Sartre has no essence or nature prior to his existence as there is no God to have a conception of it. So man has no purpose, any purpose an individual human being has he has given to himself. The first principle of existentialism is that existence precedes essence. We have to make ourselves, and so we alone are responsible for the essence we create. He also suggests that persons create themselves through their choices rather than possessing a predetermined essence. Authenticity is a central notion of the ethics of Sartre. According to him to be authentic involves acknowledging and embracing one's freedom and its implications. Thus our answers to the meaning of life have to come from the things we decide to do in life.

In our everyday life, we are mostly surrounded with discontent and suffering. Psychological problems are viewed as the result of inhibited ability to make authentic, meaningful, and self-directed choices about how to live. Existential approach can act as a therapy for solving the psychological problems too. This approach is based on client's responsibility and freedom. Existential approach believes that people have the capacity for self-awareness and choice. The existentialist tries to help the client finding meaning in discontent and suffering choosing to think and act authentically. According to the existentialist, creativity, love, authenticity may enable people to live meaningful lives in the face of discontent and suffering.

Selected Bibliography:

- Camus, Albert, *The Myth of Sisyphus in Ethics: History, theory and Contemporary Issues*, Cohn, Steven M. And Markie Peter (edited), Oxford University press, Oxford, New York, 2012
- Eagleton, Terry, *The Meaning of Life*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2007
- Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Rabinson. New York, Harper & Row, 1962
- Heidegger, M., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, D.F. Krell (Trans.), Routledge, London and New York, 2012
- Nagel, Thomas, "The Absurd", in *The Meaning of Life*, Klemke E.D and Cahn Steven (Edited), Oxford University press, Oxford, New York, 2008
- Nietzsche, F. *The Will to Power*, edit. Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books edition, 1968
- Nietzsche: *Schopenhauer as Educator*, London, 1910

- Sartre, J.P., *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes, Routledge, London and New York, 2012
- Schopenhauer, A. *The World as Will and Representation*, Trans. By E.F.J. Payne, Vol. I and 2, Dover: New York, 1969
- Singer, Irving, *Meaning of Life: the Creation of Value*, Free Press, New York, 1992
- Spinks, Lee, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, Routledge, London and New York, 2015
- Taylor, Richard, “The Meaning of Life” in *The Meaning of Life*, Klemke E.D and Cahn Steven (edited), Oxford University press, Oxford, New York, 2008
- Wolf, Susan, “Meaning in Life and Why it Matters?” Lecture delivered as the Tanner Lectures on Human values at Princeton University, November, 2007

ROLE OF GURU AS AN INTERPRETER OF DHARMA

BALAGANAPATHI DEVARAKONDA

Dharma, a concept untranslatable to any other language of Homo sapiens, a concept which doesn't have any parallels in any other culture, is a unique combination of an ideal and praxis. Its long prevalence and sustenance to the changes of spacio-temporal as well as socio-political conditions proves its inner strength and

the faith of the people in following it. This doesn't mean that it is a static set of conceptualization which continued as an archaic fossil. It was continuously debated, contested, negotiated and modified according to the requirements of spacio-temporal contexts.

The changed context of globalization where people from various languages and cultures traditions live together in the same space and similarly people from same language, culture and tradition live at varied places and yet connected through the available technological communication systems necessitates dharma to be understood, interpreted and contextualized to suit the contemporary lived experiences of not just Indians or Hindus but human beings in general. Since the concern is identified to be interpreting dharma according to the spacio-temporal context of lived experience, the question that pops up is - who can do that? Rather who can be considered to be capable of interpreting the dharma? This takes us to see who has done it in the tradition before. *Guru* is the one who bridged dharma with its practice; the code and the people; principles of living and people who follow it. The place of guru in interpreting dharma according to the context is invaluable.

Finding out a *guru*, who can interpret dharma and guide an individual in a right way - by linking ideal to the practical; theory to the action; cosmic to the mundane; metaphysical to the empirical; faith to the reason - is the problem that can resolve way of the social, moral, political being of the present world. Present generations are heterogeneous mixture of varied attitudes and aptitudes encompassed and controlled by the pace of technological developments. We have people who validate only reason, those who devote themselves to un-flickering faith, those who try to reason faith and others who trust reason faithfully - this heterogeneous mixture can be engaged only by a *guru* who is capable of interpreting the dharma to the context in an appropriate way.

I

Before mapping various patterns of the concept of *guru* within Hindu tradition, it would be worthwhile to analyze the very conception of *guru* itself as a part of the larger conceptions of knowledge creation/discovery and dissemination. The conception of *guru* cannot have an independent development from its culture. Though all cultures may have a conception of *guru* or teacher and seeker - its notion

varies from culture to culture and also within the culture on the basis of spacio-temporal distinctions. Seen in this way, conception of *guru* is a heterogeneous and culturally varied one.

As noted above any exploration in the conception of *guru* has to be located within the discourse of the conception of knowledge and its dissemination along with to which the knowledge is being imparted. Analytically, the conception of *guru* assumes the existence of knowledge (*jñāna*), and the presence of seeker (*śiṣya*), giver (*guru*) along with a methodology that the *guru* may follow to impart knowledge to the seeker. Primarily, the ‘conception of knowledge’, and ‘seeker of knowledge’ determine the conception of *guru*. Method that the *guru* follows would again be determined by both the conception of knowledge and seeker along with the competency of the *guru*.

Let us assume that the shifts in the conception of *guru* in the Hindu tradition are also largely dependent on the shifts in the conception of knowledge, seeker and method. There are at least six shifts that we can perceive within the Hindu tradition during *Vedic*, *Upaniṣadic*, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Epic*, *Purāṇic* and *tāntric* traditions. Literature of each of these traditions within Hinduism provides us required resources to explore the shifts in the conception of the *guru*. I am not assuming clear cut distinction between these traditions in terms of historicity of time, space and development of thought and life. Hinduism, interestingly, accommodated more than one of the above listed traditions in its fold in any given time of its history. For instance, in the present day India we may witness the practice of more than one tradition simultaneously. Further, it must be noted that the list of traditions mentioned is not exhaustive. There may be many more to add considering the vastness of the Hindu tradition which extends for almost 5000 years, if not more. In order to cope up with the limitations of space I am limiting myself to the above traditions only.

II

“The Pan-Indian Sanskrit term *guru* has a cluster of meanings with significance beyond that of English translation, rightly observes Joel Mlecko (2015:33). Etymologically, ‘*gu*’ means ignorance and ‘*ru*’ means dispeller; thus *guru* is a dispeller of all kinds of ignorance. There is no exact counterpart in Western

culture for *guru*, as observed by Mlecko, who in Indian tradition means ‘a teacher, Counsellor, father-image, mature ideal, hero, source of strength, even divinity integrated into one personality’ (2015:34). Mlecko, further adds, ‘Primarily the *guru* is the personal teacher of spirituality that is, of the basic, ultimate values perceived within the Hindu tradition - *values of which he possesses not only of intellectual knowledge but also of experiential knowledge*. That is how *guru* holds the knowledge not only of the ideal but also how to practice the ideal. ‘In early Hinduism, he was a vital factor in imparting *Vedic* knowledge, in later thought the *guru* became the visible embodiment of truth and in some cases worshipped as an incarnate deity” (2015:34). Such is the significance of *guru* in Hinduism.

The quest during *Vedic* tradition is of spiritual in nature. The process and outcome of the spiritual enquiry is transmitted orally from *guru* to *sisya*. As the knowledge during this period is spiritual, *guru* in *Rigveda* (IV, 5:6) is described as the source and inspiration of the knowledge of self; and in *Yajurveda* (VII, 27) as the one who blesses and enhances the seeker’s spiritual life. Since the knowledge is to be transmitted orally the *guru* is indispensable as the *Vedic* recitation involves using proper accent and pronunciation.

Unlike *Vedas*, which have scattered references, *Upaniṣads* are explicit with regard to the place of *guru* in knowledge acquisition. For *Upaniṣadic* tradition, education is not an end itself, but a means to the attainment of sacred knowledge or knowledge of ultimate reality. *Āchāndogya Upaniṣad* informs us that only by the knowledge received direct from the *guru* does one attains the most beneficent truth (IV, 4, 3). Since the ultimate reality is subtler than the subtle, *Katha Upaniṣad* states (I, 2 and 8) knowledge of it has to be taught by the “one who knows Him as himself”. In this way, during *Upaniṣadic* tradition ultimate reality is conceived to be subtler than subtle and its knowledge is possible only through a qualified and able *guru*.¹

¹ Interestingly, self-study was disapproved by *Upaniṣads*. The word *Upaniṣad* itself as noted by Joel Mlecko (1982:35) supplies an important clue, for it literally means ‘sitting down nearby (the teacher)’. *Āchāndogya Upaniṣad* informs us of *Satyakama* who after gaining knowledge from fire, bull, swan and bird came to his *guru*, who marvels at the knowledge of *Satyakama* and enquires about the *guru* of the presently possessed knowledge. *Satyakama* replies that ‘I was taught by others than a *guru*. But I am told by learned people that

As pointed out by Mlecko, *guru* and disciple relation is one of spiritual reciprocity and mutual furtherance, where *guru* provides guidance and knowledge on the spiritual path and the *sisya* reciprocates with obedience and devotion (1982;37). *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (IV 14,1) says “We can give you the knowledge, even the knowledge of Atman but only the teacher can show you the way” which informs us of the significance of the place of *guru* on equal pedestal with gods, if not above. From the above discussion one can conclude that during the *Upaniṣadic* tradition, as rightly observed by Mlecko, function of the *guru* is not only to ‘intellectually and verbally explain the scripture, its letter and spirit’ but also to teach ‘by his life, daily acts, causal words, silence’ and to ‘oversee the *śiṣya*’s health, sleep, diet, the company he keeps and the places he visits’. To be near the *guru*, to humbly and reverently serve and obey him is to find to know and to experience the ‘way’” (1982; 37).

Dharmaśāstras - Guru as God - Ethical perspective

The concept of *guru* in the tradition of *Dharmaśāstras* (Ethical path of *Guru*, *Guru* as teacher of *niti*) diverges from that of *Upaniṣadic* one as the concern of *Dharmaśāstras* was primarily to expound ethical conduct. Distinction was drawn between teacher who taught at free of cost and the one who was paid for his teaching. *Dharmaśāstras* while making this distinction names the former to be *Ācārya* and the later *Upādhyaya*. *Ācārya*, according to Manu, teaches the *Veda* with its *Kalpasutras* and *Upaniṣadas* for free; whereas *Upādhyaya* teaches only a portion of *Veda* for his livelihood by being paid. *Ācārya* was placed at a higher pedestal in this order, and ‘paid teacher’ and the ‘paying student’ were unqualified to participate in *Śrauta* rites. In this way qualities of sacrifice, devotion and disinterested approach to material wealth were considered to be essential elements of *guru* in *Dharmaśāstras*. Further, unlike *Upaniṣadic* tradition *Dharmaśāstras* place the *ācārya* along with mother and father on equal footing with god. (*Vishnu Dharmaśāstras* XXXII, 1-2; Manu *Dharmaśāstras* II, 227-37). For instance, *Āpastambha* treatise presents *guru* to be holding a similar position to that of a deity at a sacrifice and states that ‘the *śiṣya* shall approach his teacher with the same reverence as a deity by being attentive and

knowledge which has been learned from a teacher best helps one to attain his end.’ (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, IV, 9,2-3).

eagerly listening to his words' (*Āpastambhasutra* 1,2,6,13). *Dharmaśāstras* in this way elevate the position of *guru* to that of a god on the basis of his practices and ethical behavior.

In the *Epic tradition*, the conception of *guru* diverges further from that of Vedic, *Upaniṣadic* and *Dharmaśāstras* traditions. The divergence is based largely on the shifts in the conception of knowledge and the way of realizing it. As observed rightly by Mlecko, 'in the epic literature the human personality holds the center of interest and purely divine element is subsidiary. The *Vedic Samhitās* praise and propitiate the gods; major portions of the *Upaniṣadas* extol and delineate the all pervading formless *Brahman*. On the other hand, the epics are homocentric. They speak of men and their greatness and of Gods who have taken human form (*avatāra*) and who, in fact, are often servants of men. Though incarnations of the Lord Rāma and Krishna are portrayed as more human than divine' (1982, p.42-43). In a similar way we find a shift from religious knowledge to religious experience; knowledge of abstract reality to *bhakti* in the epic traditions which necessitates the divergence in the conception of *guru* from that of previous times. The shift is also from Vedic memorization and study to a more popular religiosity that has enhanced the significance of teacher while limiting the importance of priest, scripture and even gods. *Mahābhārata* (chapter-IV of the *Sanat sugatiya*) while stressing the role of *guru* states; But the birth obtained from the preceptor (*guru*) that verily is true, and likewise immortal. He perfects (one), giving (one) immortality. Recognizing what he has done (for one), one should not injure him. The disciple should always make obeisance to the preceptor; and, free from heedlessness, should always desire sacred instruction. On a similar note in the *Gītā* we find Lord Krishna who is extolled as *Jagadguru* points to the human teachers and states; 'Those who themselves have seen the Truth can be thy teachers of wisdom. Ask from them, bow unto them, be unto them a servant' (IV, 34).

Purāṇic Tradition - Guru as the preceptor of Truth

The humanizing tendency of epics extends its presence even into the *purāṇic* tradition and consequently enriches the conception of *guru*. Ultimate reality during the *purāṇic* age was understood in terms of possessing the personality of recognizable human attributes. The *purāṇic* 'Reality' is more of theistic in nature and homocentric

in conception which permeated Hindu consciousness as expressed in everyday religious and aesthetic life of the people. As observed by RC Hazra, the stature of guru grown immensely from that of previous times; The *Br̥hatnāradiya Purāṇa* says that there is no truth (*taṭṭva*) higher than the preceptor (the *guru*). This high idea about the preceptor is perhaps one of the reasons why he is found to play an important part in the *Purāṇic* religious rites. (1940:262)

The devotional attitude towards the personal deity is shared by the guru in some of the *purāṇas*. The *guru* as pointed out by Mlecko (1982; 44), “is often identified with the highest deity of the sect. In the *Varāha Purāṇa* (IC) a devotee willing to have *dikṣā* (initiation) is to identify his *guru* with *Vishnu* and honor the spiritual preceptor accordingly. Similarly, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* teaches that the *guru* is to be regarded as the deity (XI, 3) and worshipped (X, 86), for *moksa* (liberation) is attained only under the guidance of a *guru*. This *guru*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* counsels, must know the *Vedas* well, worship Krishna (XI, 3, 21), and be in control of all passions (XI, 10, 5)”.

***Tāntric* Tradition: *Guru* himself is the highest reality**

The indispensability of the place of *guru* becomes more prominent in the *tāntric* tradition. The conception of *guru* not only diverges from the earlier conceptions, but also extends itself widely in the *tāntric* tradition. Since *tantra* is understood to be as pointed out by Shashi Bhushan Dasgupta (1962; 88) as secret of secrets (*guhya-guhyam*) there is no other way of being initiated into it, save the practical help of the *guru*. *Guru* is at the center of the tantric tradition. Basing on the abilities of the teacher and the kind of qualities that are to be promoted in the student, *guru* in *tāntric* tradition is classified in a six-fold way (*Kulārṇavatantra*) as *preraka*, *sućaka*, *vāćaka*, *darśaka*, *śikṣaka* and *bodhaka*.² The *tāntric guru* is not just a teacher

² *Preraka*, who stimulates interest in *sādhana*, the method of spiritual practice, by drawing attention to its beneficent results; *sućaka*, who opens the eye of the seeker to the *sādhana* and its objective; *vāćaka*, who explains the method and the goal; *darśaka*, who shows them in convincing detail; *śikṣaka*, who teaches step by step the discipline and details of the ritual; and finally the *bodhaka*, who endows the aspirant with the necessary understanding of mind and illuminates his being with his own spiritual light.

or a learned man, but someone who has attained and himself is the highest reality. Dasgupta while explicating the place of *guru* observes, “in almost all the *tantras* the *guru* is always praised in superlative terms and is declared to be the highest reality itself” (1962,88). *Kulārṇavatantra* provides the best description of *guru* in one’s life by stating that *guru* is the father, mother and god himself (XII,49). Commentary available on this verse delineates the significance of *guru* in the best possible way. The *guru* is the mother who carries the seeker in the womb of his consciousness before he gives him birth into the life of the Spirit. The *guru* is the father who tends to the growth and welfare of the initiate in the difficult Path. The *guru* embodies the Lord for it is through the person of the *guru* that He manifests Himself to the discipline and reaches to him his saving Grace. (Pandit; 1969; p.21)

Cutting across the conceptions of *guru* available in various Hindu traditions explicated in terms of his relation with larger domain of knowledge conception and dissemination - there is another pattern of *guru* that can be mapped by looking at the ‘functions of *guru*’. The functions of *guru* changed according to the demands of the society, state, culture and often elated his role. I am not here trying to argue for contradiction or opposition between the two conceptions of *guru*; one as a part of larger paradigm of knowledge and other as understood in terms of his functions. These two conceptions are complimentary and addressed the needs of the community equally.

When we map the concept of *guru* in Hindu tradition in terms of his functions, we understand that teaching or imparting the knowledge is only one of the functions that gurus have performed. However, *guru* often had gone beyond imparting knowledge to a wider scope of counseling people on ethical, social, political, religious and spiritual matters. In this way, we had *gurus*, those who guided rulers (*rāja gurus*) on social, political, intellectual and ethical issues; those who lived in the forests (*vānaprastha*) but helped people by clarifying doubts regarding the *dhārmic* practices when approached (*Rāma* in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Pāṇḍavas* in *Mahābhārata* during their forest life met *ṛṣis* who were proficient in *dharma* and had discourses with them); and those who resurrected Hindu *dhārmic* tradition on the basis of their interpretations of *Vedas* and established *dhārmic* orders (three *Ācāryas* - Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva of *Vedāntic* tradition are the best examples of this).

In the above way, conception of guru transcended the role of mere knowledge dissemination and percolated into larger domains of political, social, spiritual and ethical guidance/counseling. This development is not a segregated one, rather an integrated and holistic one. The significant role of *guru* has grown in all the domains of life in an organic and integrated way. If we widen our understanding of the conception of *guru* beyond the paradigm of knowledge dissemination to the other functions that he is endowed with and examine the patterns of functions on a closer scrutiny one significant aspect that comes forth is *guru*'s role as an interpreter; interpreter of what is right or wrong - ethically, politically, socially and spiritually. This role as an interpreter of dharma (whether it be *rājadharma* or *nyāyadharmā* etc.) has deepened and widened the place of *guru* into every sphere of human life. This widening and deepening demanded varied versatility on the part of *guru*. *Guru* has to provide solutions to all kinds of conflicts of human life. For this *guru* need to be equipped with dharma; as dharma in its holistic perspective considered to be the 'way of life', *dhārmic* way of life was considered to be the appropriate way of leading life. To interpret and analyze every day conflicts of social, political, spiritual, ethical aspects of life in the light of dharma, the *guru* needed to be equipped with a proper holistic knowledge and understanding of dharma.

This wider conception of *guru* as the interpreter of dharma has continued its influence in the classical as well as in the modern Indian traditions. Even after the break in the traditional knowledge paradigm that was caused by colonial intervention, which has imposed Western system of education paralyzing the traditional Hindu system, the need for *guru* as the interpreter still proves its relevance.

Reference:

- Mlecko, Joel D. 1982. "The *Guru* in Hindu Tradition" in *Numen* Vol.29. 1, July, 33-61. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3269931>
- R. C. Hazra. 1940. *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*. Dacca: The University of Dacca.
- Shashibhusan Dasgupta, 1962. *Obscure Religious Cults*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay.
- Pandit, M.P. "Guru-Sishya Tradition," *Prabuddha Bharata* 68 (July 1963): 389-92.
- --- *Kularnava Tantra*, 1965. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publication Pvt. Ltd.
- --- 1969. *Gems from the Tantras*. Madras: Ganesh and Co.
- Marvin Henry Harper, 1972. *Gurus, Swamis, and Avatara*. Westminster Press.
- Swami Gnaneswaranda, 1949. "Masters, True and False," *Vedanta and the West*. September-October.

- P. V. Kane, 1962. *History of Dharmasastra*. Vol 1-5. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- *Rig Veda*, tr. by Ralph T.H. Griffith. 1896.
- *Chhandogya Upanishad*, trans. Max Muller, at hinduwebsite.com
- *Yajurveda*, trans. Arthur Berriedale Keith. 1914.
- *Katha Upanishad*, trans. Max Muller. 1879.
- J.A.B Van Buitenen. 1928 *The Mahabharata*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- J.A.B. Van Buitenen. 1981. *The Bhagavadgitā in the Mahābhārata* Chicago: Chicago University Press. Bhagavata-Purana, (2014) at holybooks.com
- *Āpastamba Sutra*, trans. Georg Bühler, at Hinduwebsite.com
- Julius Jolly. 1962. *Viṣṇusmṛti: Extracts from Vaijanti Nanda Pandit*, Delhi: Chaukhamba Printing Press.
- J. Duncan M.Derrett (ed.) 1975. *Bharuci's Commentary on the Manusmṛiti*. Vol. I. Wiesbaden.

VALUE EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE SOCIAL CRISIS

NIRMAL KUMAR ROY

Today the whole human generation in general and the young generation in particular are running through an acute crisis. Drug addiction, suicide, abortion, even murdering become a common phenomenon among the students. Some of the students are found to be successful in their academic fields. They are becoming either a great Doctor or a great Engineer, or an eminent Lawyer, or a well known Politician. They are becoming Giant but obviously the selfish Giant. Naturally the question arises:

What is missing in our present education system? In reply it is said that the missing element is nothing but the value education. If the answer is proper then the solution seems to be simple. If value education is incorporated to the present education system then the crisis prevailing in our society can easily be solved. But what is value education? Different definitions of value education have been given. But among them, I think, the definition offered by C. V. Good is worthy to note. He says- “Value- education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of the positive values in the society in which he lives.” Now let us see how value education helps in resolving the problems in question. I think the hint is available in our *Śāstras*. In our *Śāstras* it is said that *dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*.

It clearly implies that a man without *dharma* or morality or moral values is nothing but a beast. More or less the same sense has been reflected in the statement uttered by British philosopher John Stuart Mill. He said: “It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than to be a pig satisfied.” So far as the demand of food, sleep and sexuality are concerned man is not different from animal like pig, cow, dog etc. A pig takes food whenever it is hungry. Likewise a man also takes food whenever he is hungry. A pig goes to sleep at night. A man also does the same. A pig satisfies its sexual pleasure. Similarly a man also fulfills his sexual urge. In what sense a man is different from and superior to an animal like pig and dog? But we claim ourselves to be superior to animal. Candidāsa, a Vaiṣṇava poet, beautifully says- “*śunah mānuṣ bhāi sabār upare mānuṣ satya tāhār upare nāi*.” Our *Śāstra* says that the human beings are, “*amritasya putrā*,” the son of the Immortal. The Bible says, “The kingdom of God is within.” Vedānta states, “*jīvo brahmaiva nā paraḥ*.”

Swami Vivekananda categorically says- “*yatra jīva tatra śiva*,” “*nara rūpe nārāyaṇa*.” Rabindranath says, “*sīmār mājhe asīm tumi bājāo āpan sur āmār majhe tomār prakāś tāi eto madhur*.” All these clearly imply that man is superior to other animals. But where does its superiority abide in? Again, I think this answer is also available in our *Śāstra*. Our *Śāstra* talks of four *puruṣārthas*: *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*. Particularly in so far as the last two *puruṣārthas* are concerned man is different from animals. *Kāma* as a *puruṣārtha* is common both for man and animal. But *dharma* and *mokṣa* are the two specific *puruṣārthas* meant for the human beings

only. It is important to note that *dharma* and *mokṣa* are closely connected. *Mokṣa* is the ultimate goal of human life. But that *mokṣa* can be attained by means of *dharma*. So *dharma* is the means and *mokṣa* is the end. But *dharma* here stands for morality or moral values. An animal wants nothing more than the satisfaction of *kāma*. But man wants something more. Keeping this in view the Bible says- “Man cannot live by bread alone.”

Besides the *kāma*, the sensual pleasure, man wants bliss, pure *ānanda*. Unlike animal man gets pleasure from music, song, drawing etc. Considering all these Swamiji says- “Religion is as essential as our food and cloth.” Mobile is an optional item in our life. One may or may not use mobile. In fact a number of people of our country are found not to use mobile. But in this way food is not optional. If we are to live then we must take food. Similarly *dharma* or morality or moral value is not optional for human life. If we are to claim ourselves superior to beasts then we have no option other than following *dharma* or moral values. Moral codes i.e. *vidhi-niṣedhas* make our life meaningful. We all know that punctuation marks make a sentence meaningful. If one utters a sentence without giving proper pause as per the rules of punctuation marks the sentence becomes meaningless. In the like manner if one leads one’s life violating the *vidhi-niṣedhas* imposed by *Śāstras* his life is bound to be meaningless.

According to *Śrimad- Bhagvad- Gītā*, two types of properties (*sampad*)- *dvaiva* and *āsurī*, remain potentially hidden in a man. The same truth is reflected in the famous saying- “*ke bole svarga narak ācche bahu dūr mānuṣer mājhe svarga narak mānuṣete Surāsūra.*” A baby is something like a lump of clay. The statue of both the *sura* and *asura* remain potentially hidden in one and the same lump of clay. Consequently, at the time of *Durgapūjā* the dolls of both of *sūra* i.e. *Durgā* and *āsura* i.e. *Mahiṣāsura* are made out of the same lump of clay. Likewise, the potentiality of being a *sādhu* or a thief, the potentiality of being Buddha or Hitler is already hidden in a baby. But whether the baby will be *sādhu* or a thief, Buddha or Hitler it depends upon what type of property i.e. either *āsurī* or *daivī* be actualized or manifested. If the former one is manifested then the baby will turn into a thief or Hitler but if it is otherwise then he will turn into a *sādhu* or Buddha. But again what type of property of the baby will be manifested purely depends upon what type of education be

imparted to the baby, in what type of socio-cultural atmosphere the baby be brought up. If the baby is brought up among the *sādhus* then there is maximum possibility that the baby will turn into a *sādhu*. If, on the other hand, the same baby is brought up among the thieves then there is maximum possibility that the baby will turn into a thief. It is important to note that here the terms ‘maximum possibility’ instead of the terms ‘every possibility’ have been used keeping in view that there are exceptional cases. Prahallada, for example, was brought up in a *asura family* in spite of that he became a renounced *bhakta*. But there are some reasons behind it of course. Here we have no scope to discuss these reasons. Moral education is like a touchstone.

We know that whatever comes in contact with the touchstone it turns into gold. In the same way whoever comes in contact with the moral education and spiritual atmosphere he positively turns into a *sādhu*. In this context the definition of education offered by Swami Vivekananda is worthy to note. Swamiji says: “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.” Here Swamiji by education means the moral or value education. Now let us analyze the definition. We know that only God is perfect. So the implication of the definition is that man is a potential God. More clearly to say the infinite Divine property is already hidden in a man. Education proper makes that potentiality into an actuality. In another word, education i.e. moral or value education leads to turn a man, a potential God, into an actual God. So, according to Swamiji, if value education is properly imparted to all youths from the very childhood then all of them excluding the exceptional ones will turn into God and our society will become a heaven.

On the basis of the discussion so far it can be said that we are God in two different senses, in the implicit sense and in the explicit sense. In the implicit sense a man is God in the same sense in which a matchstick is fire. All the potentially of being fire is already there in the match-stick. But it does not mean that it will necessarily turn into fire. It will turn into fire when it comes in friction with the matches-box. Similarly, though man is potentially God, it does not mean that he will necessarily turn into actual God. He will turn into actual God when he will come in contact with moral or spiritual or value education. When the match-stick turns into fire then all its fiery properties reveal. In the same manner when a man turns into an actual God then all its godly properties i.e. infinite knowledge, infinite love, infinite

power will be manifested. But it is important to note that transforming a man, a potential God, into an actual God is not an easy task. It can be done only when moral or spiritual education will be strictly implemented. For this three steps, as it is suggested by our *Śāstra- śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana* are to be strictly followed.

Let us see how through moral or value education the present crisis prevailing in our society can be resolved. It is already pointed out that drug- addiction, suicide, psycho-problems etc., are nothing but the result of the lack of self confidence. One becomes the sufferer of all these problems when he does not see any light of hope in his life. He thinks that he is incapable of doing anything positive. So his life is meaningless. Now if one realizes that he himself is God, he is bound to regain his self-confidence. He discovers his hidden potential godly infinite properties. He comes to know that like God he himself is infinite in power, knowledge, in a word, in all respects. Consequently, he can do anything he likes.

Thus the problems mentioned above will easily be solved. Keeping this in mind Swamiji says- “First believe in yourself and then in God.” It is something like a man who knows that he is as good as a beggar. He has neither any bank balance nor any other property nor any service, nothing else. So it is meaningless to live any more. In this situation he takes the decision of committing suicide. Now suddenly someone informs him that his great father willed him one hundred acres of land the market value of which is several crores of rupees of which he was purely ignorant. Quite naturally, he regains his hope of living. More or less the same is true in this case also. Potentially we all are God. All godly properties are already there in us in the hidden form of which we are purely ignorant. So we consider ourselves to be bankrupt. We cannot find out any hope to live longer. In this situation our *Śāstra* informs us that we are not bankrupt at all, we are king, and we are God. And we regain our hope, our self-confidence and the problems are solved.

Murdering, rapping, cheating etc. are also some of the leading problems of our society today which can again be solved by moral or spiritual education. One murders or rapes or cheats others simply because he considers others as means instead of end. He ignores the dignity of others. But if he comes to know that each

and every one is God then the very question of his ignoring others and considering others as means does not arise at all. Thus these problems are also solved. Our *Śāstra* teaches us that God lives not only in the human beings but also in the whole world. Everything is pervaded by God. God lives everywhere and in everything. *Upaniṣad* says- “*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat.*”¹ The *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* says- “*Kṛṣṇa ek sarvāśray Kṛṣṇa ek dhām. Kṛṣṇer śarīre sav viśver biśrām.*” Vedānta says- “*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma.*” So if one is properly taught by our *Śāstra* then he will learn to respect not only the human beings but also the whole world, living as well as non- living. Thus moral or spiritual or value education leads to solve the social and the environmental problems as well.

Once Yakṣa asks Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira: Which one is the right path (*Kah Panthāh*)? In reply Yudhiṣṭhira says- “*Mahājano yena gatah sah panthāh.*”² The *pāth* followed by *Mahājana* is considered to be right path. Today our society is running through a great crisis simply because the people of our society do not bother to follow the *pāth* of *Mahājana* (the great man). In this context it is said,

“*Dvādaśaite vijānima dharmam bhāgvatambhatāh/
Guhyaṁ viśuddhyaṁ durvodhaṁ yaṁ jñatvāmṛtamaśnute.*”³
“*uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpyabarānnibadhata. Kṣurasya dhārā niśitāduratayayā.
Durgampathastat kavyo vadanti.*”⁴

Keep yourself away from worldly objects of all types; try to manifest your real nature leaving all harmful things. Try to know God, the ultimate reality being graced by the great men, the seers of truth. The world, the razors edge can be overcome through knowledge of God only. *Dvau bhūtasagau loke’smin dvaivāsura Viṣṇubhaktah daivāsuraṣṭadviparyayah.*⁵ In this world creation is of two types- *daiva* and *āsura*. The devotees of Viṣṇu are called *daiva* and those who are of opposite nature are known as *āsura*.

In our society selfishness is one of the most fatal diseases which create numerous problems. Today we are becoming so self-centered that we have no room for others. One neighbor does not know to stand by other neighbors in their ill days. Even it has become a common phenomenon that we keep aside our own brothers, sisters and even our parents from our family. Some parents become destitute to meet

the expense of the study of their sons/daughters. But when the sons get service even of high salary, they do not bother to carry out even the minimum expense for their old parents. It is moral or value education that teaches our society the lesson of disinterested action (*niṣkāma karma*). The present education system imparts lesson to our society to be self-centered where there is no room for others. But value education teaches us to sacrifice for others where there is no room for self, the agent, and the ego. For example, in the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna to perform *niṣkāma Karma* (selfless activity). In fact Arjuna in the *Śrīmad- Bhagvad- Gītā* is the representative of our whole society. So, through the teaching of *niṣkāma karma* to Arjuna Kṛṣṇa teaches the same to the whole society. The same lesson is taught to our society by *Upaniṣad* when it is said- “*tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhah kasyasviddhanam*”.⁶

The *Upaniṣad* teaches us to enjoy through sacrifices like a mother. A mother becomes happy and gets pleasure through sacrifice for her children. Swami Vivekananda was inspired by this teaching and he sacrificed his whole life for the wellbeing of the whole society. If proper moral and value education is implemented in our society then thousands of Vivekananda and Buddha can be made and thereby our society can be turned into heaven from hell. Some classic example of *niṣkāma karma* can be cited to make our point clear. Nārada once became egoistic and considered himself to be greatest devotee (*Bhakta*) in the universe. No devotee can be compared with him. He was always engaged with chanting the *nāma* of Nārāyaṇa, the God. The God, the *antaryāmin*, who can read the mind of others, came to know this. In order to give the proper lesson to Nārada one day God pretended to have His unbearable headache. On that day Nārada went to God like other days and saw that God was suffering from His headache. He asked God, what I can do for you. He said further-” I am your *dāsa* (servant), my whole life is meant for you, there is nothing that I cannot do for you, I can sacrifice even my life for you”. In reply God said, “You have to do a very simple thing, just touch the dust of your leg on my head and nothing else”. Listening to this Nārada immediately thought that if he does the same then as a necessary consequence he has to go to hell. Thinking this Nārada denied to do the same. He added that no devotee would agree to do it. Then God advised Nārada to go to Brindāvana. Nārada went to Brindavana and informed to the *gopies* about the headache of God and also about the remedy of the same. The *gopies* of

Brindavana immediately agreed to give the dust of their legs without any hesitation. Nārada became surprised. Initially he thought that *gopies* were fully ignorant about the consequence of the activity they want to do. So, he asked them whether they knew about the consequence of their activity and came to know that they were quite conscious about the consequence of their act. The *gopies* said- ‘we think nothing about ourselves, our lives are meant for God only.’ This clearly implies that in the spiritual world there is no room for self or ego which is at the root of all types of social problems.

References:

1. *Īsopaniṣad-1*
2. *Mahābhārata Banparva*
3. *Bhāgavata 6/3/20-21*
4. *Kathapaniṣad, 2/3/14*
5. *Padmapurāṇa*
6. *Īsopaniṣad-1*

THE CONCEPT OF WOMAN IN INDIAN AND WESTERN TRADITION

AMAL KUMAR HARH

The concept of the woman in the Vedic tradition could be traced back to the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*¹ where the ontological priority of the male generative organ is established in clear terms. And further it is stated² that the woman is but the womb that bears the discharged seed marking the first birth of a human being, while the

second birth is the delivery of the child from the mother's womb. The woman is the receptacle of the seed, and hence is of secondary importance. This is obviously an account of the patriarchal tradition as for the position of the woman. There had been, of course, another tradition, that of the *Tantra*, wherein the womb was raised to the status of the ontological primacy. The universal mother delivers the worlds in the capacity of the Primal Power, *ādiśakti*. This is theological matriarchy: the Absolute is female, and she has her manifestation in all the females of the world. As the *Durgāsaptasati* says, "Thou alone art the sole support and basis of the world"³, and "all women are thee in entirety"⁴. Now the *Vedic* and the *Tantric* are two competing traditions, claiming allegiance of the society, which could never make up its mind as to its theological archetype. The greater tradition has been patriarchal in the matter of structuring the social milieu, while the lesser tradition has been *Tantric*.

The roots of Tantric ideology lie in obscure antiquity. Parts of its ideological features are modelled on the Sāṃkhya with a strong accent on materialism. The *Durgāsaptasati* does not shy away from declaring that the mother principle is one with the earth: "thou standest in the form of the vast earth", *mahīśvarupeṇa* (xi.6). There have been attempts at showing the Tantric matriarchal ideology to have a Vedic ancestry on the basis of the two *suktas*, the *Devī* and the *Rātri*, of the *Ṛgveda*. But the ambiguity persists. Tantric icononic representation of the mother goddess reflects Sāṃkhya principle of an active *Prakṛti*, with the *puruṣa* lying as a corpse under her feet. The *Nāsadīya Sukta*⁵ confesses the ambiguity: The self, sustained as cause below, Projected, as Effect, above. Who then understood? Who then declared? How came into being this Projected? This passage is taken as the root idea of the icon of *Kali*.⁶

Philosophically speaking, under the aegis of Brahminical or Vedic patriarchal mode of looking at the world as linguistically conditioned, concept-structures are based overwhelmingly on the noun. We are told to identify the processes of our experience with a 'self' around which the apparently stationary structure of our world of concepts crystallizes. The *Tantra* represents an effort to overcome the semantic mode based on the noun without stepping outside it. All Indian languages favour the noun, with its variations and compounds, to an extreme degree. One of the goals of Indian mysticism can be described as the unselfing of objects, dissolving the

individual man and his world of separate things by a vision of the endlessly mobile tissue of change borne by currents of energy and kinetic principles of shape related to each other through time in different ways. To think and speak of this vision should demand the noun, which is a semantic parallel to the selved object, should be overcome somehow. But *Tantra*, because of its Indian linguistic heritage, was obliged to refine selved concepts, to push continually further its refinement of supernatural noun-objects in an endless pursuit of the unselved and hence non-objective 'absolute' which will never, in fact, submit to noun-shaped thoughts.

For *Tantra* the feminine aspect of Reality is responsible for the activity of creation, it is the feminine, the cosmic *Śakti* or power-energy that presides over the Tantrik *weltanschauung*. The *Tantra* concentrates on the images of the female. This should have had a message for matriarchy, but patriarchy hijacked the ideology, and the women came to be disallowed to worship the image of the Goddess in any official manner of ritual. This came about as a result of the Brahminical sophistry of linking *Tantra* to the Vedas.

The *Dharmaśāstras* are the male-oriented treatises, and have treated women as second-rate members of the patriarchal society. They, as Manu has famously asserted, as girls are to be in the guardianship of the father, as young women she is to be in the guardianship of her husband, and in old age she is to be taken care of by her sons. On no occasion whatever she is to have or enjoy a streak of freedom or to have her own social identity. A female is either a daughter, or a wife or a mother of a male member of society. This is the most current ideological mapping of a woman's existence in the greater tradition. *Tantra* admitted the existence of independent woman, through the backdoor in the form of the women from the *vrātya* class, the social outcasts, who could consort with the *tantric* practitioners. The patriarchal law books were emphatic on the periodic uncleanness of the women, and ruled their segregation on account of taboo infection of the menstrual blood. Curiously enough the patriarchal taboo is perpetuated by the women themselves, since it has been so internalized by them through thousands of years. The cosmic goddess is venerated when she menstruates during the onset of rains, *ambuvāci*, but the women at home are shunned as unclean when they undergo the physiological process. This is plainly a matter of bifocal vision, one attitude for the Goddess, and another for the women at

home. Patriarchy everywhere abhors the taboo concerning blood. In the *Old Testament*, the book of Leviticus lays down elaborate norms for the menstruating women. Hindus disallow such women to participate in the rituals and worship. *Tantra* accords a higher status to women, and disregards the taboo of blood. The message was betrayed by Brahminical patriarchal orthodox tradition.

Take the case of marriage as per the Hindu tradition. It is the man who weds; he is the subject of the sentence in Sanskrit giving the information. The woman, the bride is the object of the act of wedding. She is given in marriage, and she undergoes or even loses her paternal *gotra* in course of solemnization of the wedding ceremony. If the mother dies before the father, the son would not perform the *śrāddha* at Gaya. When the father's ceremonies are over, the mother would get her share of oblations only as the wife of the deceased. Ambiguity of identity follows the woman here as well as hereafter. Traditionally the woman has got to be *chāyāvānugatā*, the shadow of her husband; she is not to have an identity of her own, or a personhood on account of herself.

Cosmetic changes, though important and significant ones, have taken place, but underneath the surface glitter, there persists the internalized patriarchal values borne by women, and mothers indoctrinate their daughters in the lore. In this way patriarchy gets perpetrated by women themselves. There have been social reforms and programmes for the amelioration of the state of women, but they were all initiated by well-intentioned persons who were men, and hence the reforms were effective within the parameters of patriarchy. These were halfway houses as regards the dialectic of women and the tradition. In India religion has been conservatory of traditional patriarchal values. Even the *Gītā* classifies women and *śudras* as having been born in sin, *pāpayonaya*⁷ and it is hardly ever known that women have protested against the demeaning appellation. This is how tradition has come to look upon the lot of women.

There have been no dearth of high-flown rhetoric about women, and strings of pseudo-historical names like those of Gārgī and Maitreyī have been mentioned in order to show how high a status women enjoyed in the tradition. But no one cares to point to the case that Gārgī was snubbed by Yāgyavalkya for asking questions which

he could not answer. Again, whoever and whatever Gārgī and Maitreyī had been, granted that they were great in their metaphysical quests, yet how could they be models for the women of today? How tradition dealt with women in ancient India, it is not enough historically to go to Gārgī and Maitreyī all the time. Even a cursory glance at the *Theri Gāthā*, the collection of poems by Buddhist nuns would show that women were not a happy lot in the traditional society of ancient India. Hardly ever a mention of the *Theri Gāthā* is made by the protagonists of the women in Indian tradition. Many of the *theris* or Buddhist nuns were poets of considerable merit in Pali and that they were literate is a point in the face of the wide illiteracy that prevailed among the Hindu women of the times. Even the Jain nun Pingalakeśā was remarkable for her dialectical skill. Her name also is profaned by the Hindu traditionalists, who are more often than not bad historians.

When we look at the West, we notice that it is Kant who is taken as the target of feminist criticism. Feminist epistemology has asked whether different ways of knowing, for instance with different criteria of justification, and different emphases on logic and imagination, characterize male and female attempts to understand the world. Such concerns include awareness of the ‘masculine’ self-image, itself a socially variable and potentially distorted picture of what thought and action should be. A particular target of much feminist epistemology is a Kantian or Enlightenment conception of rationality, which is seen as a device for claiming mastery and control, and for refusing to acknowledge differing perspectives and different relations to life and nature. Although extreme claims have been made, such as that logic is a phallic and patriarchal device for coercing other people, it is still unclear whether differences between individual capacities and training count as much as gender in explaining how people acquire knowledge. Again there is a spectrum of concern, from the highly theoretical to the relatively practical. In this latter area particular attention is given to the institutional biases that stand in the way of equal opportunities in science and other academic pursuits or the ideologies that stand in the way of women seeing themselves as leading contributors to various disciplines. However, to more radical feminists such concerns merely exhibit women wanting for themselves the same power and rights over others that men have claimed, and failing to confront the real problem, which is how to live without such asymmetrical powers and rights.

Feminism is the approach to social life, philosophy and ethics that commits itself to correcting biases leading to the subordination of women or the disparagement of women's particular experience. Contemporary feminist ethics is sensitive to the gender bias that may be implicit in philosophical theories. For instance, philosophers' lists of virtues may be typically manly or culturally masculine, and in social structures, legal and political procedures, and the general culture. One controversial claim (influentially made in Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Routledge, London, 1982) is that women approach practical reasoning from a different perspective from that of men. The difference includes emphasis on community, caring, and bonding with particular individuals, in place of abstract impartiality. It is controversial whether or not this is a real difference in male and female psychology, or whether the different values reflect the way men and women have been taught to form different aspirations and ideals. While feminist ethics is often addressed to particular problems faced by women, the underlying idea may or may not be tied to specific practical problems, or to the adversarial relationships with men and pessimistic views about sex that popularly characterize the movement.

The difficulties the Western tradition has had with sexual desire are spectacularly voiced by Kant. "Taken by itself sexual love is a degradation of human nature, for as soon as a person becomes an object of appetite for another, all motives of moral relationship cease to function, because as an object of appetite for another a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by everyone"⁸. Kant seems to be describing a gang rape rather than sexual love, but he thought the only fragile, escape from the fate of being "cast aside as one casts away a lemon that has been sucked dry"⁹ was contractual relationship based on marriage, although he himself did not try it, not, probably, sex. In Plato, sexual desire is a good, although only the first step on a ladder of perfection, as in the dialogues, *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. The movements of thought, whereby Plato's view degenerated to the views of Kant include increasing disgust with merely material as opposed to spiritual existence. St. Paul and St. Augustine held that original sin is somehow associated with sexual desire. There is a strong note current in India from medieval times that women are the gateway of hell, *nārī narakasya dvāram*.

A more optimistic view of the matter than Kant was voiced by Hobbes. “The appetite which men call lust...is a sensual pleasure, but not only that: there is in it also a delight of the mind; for it consists of two appetites together, to please, and to be pleased, and the delight men take in delighting, is not sensual, but a pleasure or joy of the mind consisting in the imagination of the power they have so much to please”¹⁰. In this area, prophecies are apt to be self-fulfilling; it is predictable that if we side with Kant our sexual relationships will be a lot worse than if we understand Hobbes. The power of tradition of sin is still visible in the ratio of writings, often from a feminist perspective that pay serious attention to Kant’s view as opposed to ones that start with Plato, or Hobbes. Of course there has not been any concept of the original sin in the Indian tradition. But adulation of a life of sexual abstinence has vitiated the scale of values in such a degree that women have proved to be a soft target of vilification as temptresses incarnate. It is indeed very, very sad.

In recent years women studies have become fashionable academic enterprise in the campus. The inspiration comes from the West. Hardly does one come across researchers addressing specific issues concerning women *vis-a-vis* Indian cultural hegemony or tradition. To understand the problems of Indian women requires deeper study of the Indian ethos, norms and culture from a historical perspective. More often the studies suffer from a confusion of ideal culture for real culture. The two are different entities. Rama was monogamous, while his father Dasharatha was polygamous. We cannot take Rama, who is an ideal culture hero, to represent the real marital mode of the people at large, Arjuna the archer hero of the *Mahābhārata*, was the prince of polygamy. Time and again, the religiously inspired writers of modern India tire themselves out in quoting verses from Manu’s law book: “Where women are honoured, there gods are pleased; where they are dishonoured, religious acts become of no avail”¹¹. These lines are quoted to the point of boredom, and in order to show how the tradition held woman in high esteem. This is but the half of the story. Women are respected so long as they beget male children. By begetting a girl child the woman loses the right to be respected in the eyes of the tradition. The mother of daughters only lives a sort of accursed existence in social and family esteem, and the husband of such a fated wife is qualified to enter another marriage to try his luck to be the father of a son. This is also Manu, and equally the expression of the spirit of

the people. Tradition has spoken of women in two voices. In one manner of speaking tradition raised them to the status of goddesses, in another it pulled them down to the lot of secondary importance, with no identity of their own. As a device of hijacking the *Tantric* view they have been hailed as goddesses, and in consonance with the Vedic patriarchy they are segregated to the household with no social roles to play. We have earlier mentioned that patriarchal norms and values have become so internalized by women that oppression of the daughters who dare defy the patriarchal any role model is left to be carried out the women of the household. In case honour killing and decisions of bodies like the Khap Panchayet are often actively executed with support of women members of the household. This is a paradox of setting women against women, and it is how tradition of patriarchy works out its way through women. Whenever an event of rape or molestation takes place, it is the women victim who comes under the moral scanner, and it is she who is held responsible for the episode, she is accused of sporting a particular sort of dress, her daring, and so on and so forth. These accusations are part of the patriarchal moral judgments, which other women too share unawares and voice it. The victim is often held to be justly served for violating the norms respected in society.

There is a class of writings eulogizing the ideal of Indian womanhood. For example we may mention the essays by Sister Nivedita in her *The Web of Indian Life*¹². I would mention such essays as “The Eastern Mother”, “Of the Hindu Woman as Wife”, “The Place of Woman in the National Life”, and “The Immediate Problems of the Oriental Woman”. The essays are examples of what may be called paradigm case argument, seeking the pass the ideal for the real. Obviously, the paradigm of Indian womanhood should get upset in the face of anomalies and stresses of our times, and these cannot be resolved within the traditional framework. There is a ring of revivalism in such writings, and tradition capitalizes such ones in order to reinforce its values which are patriarchal in disguise. But Sister Nivedita herself admits that “women must be enabled to know, think, and judge freely on all questions”¹³. They must become of their own freedom. There has to be secular culture in all forms and grades, and once women seize the helm of the ship in solving the problems of her whole country, and afterwards redress her own grievances.

End Notes:

1. It remains to note that it were the novelists and the short-story writers who had focussed on the plight of women in a tradition-bound patriarchal society. But there has been an absence of such writings as J. S. Mill's *Subjection of Women*. The only exception in Bengali is the monograph by the novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya. His *Nārīr Mūlya* is a forceful argument defending the case for women's identity and dignity against male domination in patriarchal set up. It is a basic text, though hardly ever taken in account by the enthusiasts of women studies in West Bengal today.

The concept of empowerment of women requires a fresh took. Gandhi had revolutionised the concept when he called women to join the national movement for freedom. And his ideas about women's emancipation merit a close study. With a keen eye he observed women in Indian society and made important points. We shall have a few of them: (a) Somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. We have to recognize her equal status. (b) Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so shocking, so degrading or so brutal as his abuse of the female sex. (c) Women must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. The remedy is more in her hands than man's. (d) Why is there the morbid anxiety about female purity? Have women any say in the matter male purity? Why should arrogate to themselves the right to regulate female purity? It cannot be superimposed from without. It is a matter of evolution from within and therefore of individual self-effort. (e) Women are labouring under the hypnotic influence of man. If they realise their strength they would not consent to be called the weaker sex. To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably men's superior. (f) Gandhi did not believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with men. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man. (g) Women have the same right of freedom and liberty as men. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere as man is in his. By sheer force of vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.

There is of course a long discussion on the equality of the sexes in Bankimchandra Chatterjee's monograph *Sāmya*. It is based on Mill's *Subjection of Women*. Bankimchandra has argued at length for women's rights to education, to inherit property, even to marry if a widow so willed. Bankim's point at issue is that society and tradition treats women differentially, men are privileged at the expense of women's unprivileged status, and this is unjust, and should not be permitted to persist. Bankim's advocacy for women's cause had no takers in Bengali Society at large.

2. There is widely prevailing convention that no woman is allowed to pronounce the mystic word *Aum*, nor utter any Vedic sentence. Even the women of the Brahmin families are not exempted. They are not permitted to touch the holy *Śālagrām*, the women are looked upon as agents of spiritual pollution.

Notes:

1. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 1.1.4, "śiśnam nirbhidyata śiśnādreto retahsa āpa".
2. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.3, "tadyadā striyām siñcatyathainajjanayati/Tadasya prathamam janma"//
3. *Durgāsaptasati*, xi.4, "mahīsvarūpā".
4. *Durgāsaptasati*, xi.6, "sakalā striyā sakala jagatṣu".
5. *Nāsadiya Sūkta*, *Rgveda*, Verse-5, "tīrścīno vitatā raśmīreṣāmadhah Svidāsīdupari svidāsī".

6. Sister Nivedita, tr. (1996) p.155, *The Web of Indian Life*, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.
7. The *Gītā*, 9/32 “*mām hi partha vyapāśritya yehpi suyah pāpayonaya/ striyo vaiśyāsatahā sūdrāstehpi yānti parām gatim*”//
8. Lewis White Beck, tr. (1964), *Lectures on Ethics*, Meridan Books, New York.
9. *Ibid*, p. 14
10. *Human Nature*, ix, 10 from D. D. Raphael, ed. (1972) *British Moralists*, vol 1, Oxford.
11. *Manu Samhitā* (1957), *Ārya Śāstra* edition, Kolkata, Chap. IV “*Yatra nārīnām pujuryate tatra devatā prītah*”.
12. ‘Sister Nivedita (1996), *The Web of Indian Life*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta
13. *Op.cit*, p.101

References:

- *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, Udbodhan Edition, Kolkata.
- *Durgāsaptasāti*, Udbodhan Edition, Kolkata.
- *R̥gveda*, Penguin Classics, London.
- Sister Nivedita (1996), *The Web of Indian Life*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.
- Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* in different editions.
- Plato’s dialogues: *Phaedrus* and *Syposium*.
- Hobbes, *Human Nature* in different editions.
- Mill, J. S, *Subjection of Women*, different editions.
- Chattopadhyaya, Sarat Chandra (1987) *Nārīr Mūlya* in Sarat Sahitya Samgraha, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata.
- Gandhi, M. K (1972) *All Men are Brothers*, UNESCO, Paris.

**ARISTOTLE AND KAUTILYA ON THE CONCEPT OF GOOD
GOVERNANCE AND WELFARE STATE
SAMAR KUMAR MONDAL**

Why does philosopher say regarding any matter is more important than what he had said in this regard. That is why, ‘why’ question is more significant than ‘what’ question in Philosophy. If we want to enquire about anything, we have to search about its social, political and economical context. If we don’t understand the context, we are unable to give the right answer to this question. History reminds us the fact that the concept of state has started near about 2300 years ago in the West. Many

thinkers agreed with the view that the Western concept of state has started long back, may be from the writings of Plato and Aristotle, but question may be raised: why did the West investigate the idea of a state? To respond, we can say that any positive thinking usually starts from a crisis and positive thinkers always try to overcome from the crisis positively. They try to derive a particular conclusion to solve the crisis. Thus, we can say that there may be a crisis to some extent in the time of Plato and Aristotle.

What do we understand by 'crises? If we look into the history of the Greeks, we can find that there were countries like, Athens, Sparta etc. and they often involve in war. In some cases, the war continued for fifty years, and in some cases more, as for example, the war among the Empire of Persia and Greek city-states in 500 - 479 BC which is known as Greco-Persian War. Greek invited Athens and Sparta for conducting the war and consequently, Persia was defeated and Athens won more states. The war between Athens and Sparta in 431 BC which is known as Peloponnesian War, Persia had an alliance with Sparta. After thus war, the whole Greek society has gone into mismanagement, where people involved in fight, envy, and grudge. Thus, there was a crisis of a healthy environment. That is why, thinkers like, Plato, Aristotle tried to overcome the crisis in the form of their works *Republic* and *Politics*.

If we look into Indian civilization and culture, we will see the same situation like the Greeks. The concept of state was formulated in India much before Kautilya. It is a fact that there was no concrete form of state, but the analysis of state was started with Kautilya. There were disputes in provincial rule as well as invasions by kings like great Alexander for which it was necessary to protect the country and make it free from the tyrannical attitude of provincial rulers. Many rulers of the small states in north-western part of Indian continent have learned how to chase foreign attacks which was made possible for Kautilya. The intention was how to release all Indians from the foreign kingship and how to establish a superior rule, for which we can say that there was a crisis behind this and to overcome this crisis Kautilya had written *Arthaśāstra*. If there were no crisis, *Arthaśāstra* would not have been. It is hard to believe that the discussion about modern state starts only from Plato and Aristotle.

But there are many discussions about agriculture, economics, politics, foreign policy, the principle of war, modern law system, the social status of women etc. in *Arthaśāstra*.

Origin of the state and its aim

According to Aristotle, everything in the world is made out of the law of causation and every object has two parts or aspects, one is potential and the other is actual. He holds that in the state of potentiality is called matter and when it is actuated from the potential state it is called form. He also says that each and every object in the world has a definite aim. So without the aim nothing will be created in this world. In this way there is a particular aim for developing the state and that is, the welfare of the state. According to him family is the primal matter of the construction of a state or polis. That is why, we can say that there is a certain aim of a family and that is to fulfill the need of every member of a family.

One may ask that, is it necessary to form a state in human life? Aristotle holds that it is necessary, because human wants to leave in a family as she/he can fulfill his/her need and the ultimate aim of a family is to achieve a happy life. He also holds that a happy life depends upon three things; the quality of philosophic sense, moral quality and moderate wealth. A happy life can be maintained if she/he lives in a state. That is why he says; who is not associated in *polis* is either beast or a God.¹ The Āryans were involved with in-fighting against people for their secure place where they can leave without hazard and disruption. Those who possess highest power of the intellect they are the winners. Mythologically it is observed that the origin of a state or king is raised from the battle between Gods and demons. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* has described that the battle was started between God and demons and demons were the winners. Consequently, they start to ponder over the reasons for their defeat and found that they did not have a king for leading the battle. Thus, they feel that they need a king and from this reason they decided to elect someone who will be treated as king. According to *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa*...“The *Devas* said, it is on account of our having no king, that the *Asuras* defeated us. Let us elect a

¹ Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), p. 11

king. All consented. They elect *Soma* as their king. Headed by king *Soma*, they were victorious in all directions. He who brings the sacrifice is the king *Soma*.”²

Manusamhitā explains that absence of a king ends with in-fighting and the oppressed is protected by a king only. In *Mahābhārata*, Yudhishthira asked Bhishma that how a king or state formed. Bhishma responded that if there is no king, no kingdom, and no punishment, there is no justice. They protect themselves by a particular order. They all believe in this order which is called *Satya-yuga*. We can compare this concept with Rousseau who says, those people are good who did not face any kind of civilization. The meaning of civilization is an extreme portion of deception or disloyalty according to him. There is no selfishness in a natural kingdom. But when humans are able to plunder the property of others’, they are involved with in-fighting. Some people are involved in acquiring the wealth more and more, for which all orders are converted into disorder.

From the very beginning of civilization, there were no kings, no punishment but, for the creation of disorder, a person wants to rule the civilization, though he is not considered as a king. He is the ruler of the weak where physical strength is considered as the only source of power. This is called *Mātsyanyāya* in the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya. “When people were oppressed by the law of the fishes (*Mātsyanyāya*, according to which the giant fish swallow the smaller), they made Manu, the son of Vivasvat, the king.”³ That is, the person who is the physically powerful can do anything against the weak if not punished. Thus, there is every possibility to acquire the property of the weak by the stronger.

For Vishma, the sole duty of a king is to establish *dharma* (moral order) and *artha* (money). The king’s money is spent by the king only and the moral order is established with the help of his principle of punishment (*Dandaniti*). Aristotle holds that man are basically selfish, and it is natural that man tries to seek his own interest. But if his self-interest is more, it will be treated as selfishness. We can explain it in the framework of Indian ethics where it is said that, liberation is our ultimate

²Martin Haug, *Aitareya Brahmaṇa of the Rigveda*, vol.II, Govt. Central Book Depot, Bombay, 1863, p.33-34

³ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthasāstra*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, Vol-II, p.116.

puruṣārtha. But *dharma* is the necessary tool for the attainment of it. *Artha* is necessary for the accomplishment of *dharma* and there is no inconsistency for acquiring money according to the need. But if we acquire more money apart from our need, it is called *artha-duṣaṇa*, which is condemnable. Our *Ṛṣis* have given ethical directions for the protection of people from *artha-duṣaṇa*. Aristotle also said that the exchange or lending system is natural, but exchange or lending of currency is against of human nature. That is why *artha* is treated as weird property. He does not support rate of interest in lending money. Though he holds the view that, there is a sure necessity of moral education for the protection of human beings from selfishness which is the duty of a lawgiver of a state.⁴ They ought to create social feelings among the citizens and this feeling is implicitly contained in a king.

Who is a ruler and who is ruled?

We all agree with the view that the world is always moving or changing with some objectives. So in the origin of the state, there must be some aims and objectives i.e. the welfare of the state. In Aristotle's *Politics* there were many elements in formation of a state. Family is the primal element for the formation of a family and a family is constituted by the combination of males, females. According to Kautilya, there are six essential elements of a state. These are 'svāmin, the ruler, amātya, the minister, janapada, the territory with people settled on it, durga, the fortified capital, kosa, the treasury, daṇḍa, the army and mitra, the ally. The ally is the ruler of a different organized state and forms no part of the other state's internal organization."²⁶ But in *Politics*, family is the primal element of state and state is an extension of the family. According to Aristotle, there are basically three relations among them. The first one is the relation between master and slave, the next one is, and the relation between husband and wife and the third one is the relation between father and son. One may ask: who will be the ruler? And who is ruled? Aristotle says the ruler and the ruled must be decided by nature. He holds that master is the ruler. Husbands rules the wives and fathers rules the sons is not only scientific but also logical. Because there are some specific qualities for being a master and that is why, they constitute a family. The emotional factor must be ruled by reason which is not

⁴ Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998, p.48
 5.R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, Vol-II, p.127

only beneficial but also necessary.²⁷ For example, body is ruled by mind. The tame animal is better than the wild, and the reverse is fatal.

We can find some similarities between Greek and Indian civilization in the formation of a state. In Vedic period, there was an important role of a ruler like the head of a household. Village was the smallest unit in Vedic society and *Jana* was the highest unit and its ruler was called a king. *Rigveda* reveals that the name of *Bhārata* originated from the king *Bharata*. He was called the ruler of a particular area. A small household was called as *kula* (root). The head of a household has an important role in ruling a village and the use of the term “*kulapa*” and “*Brajapati*” in *Ṛigveda* which is called “*grāmakuta*” in *Arthaśāstra* justifies this position. There was also a reference to the term “*grāmasvāmin*” which means the owner of the village.⁷

In *Politics*, the ruler is determined by nature. There was no debate between Kautilya and Aristotle regarding the above proposition as Aristotle says that a person who is superior in intellect or reason is treated as the ruler. On the other hand, a person who is superior in physical strength but lack of proper knowledge or reason is ruled. The ruler must have some extraordinary qualities. Kautilya supports the hereditary rule, though he often says if the king can establish himself as a good ruler and his son is completely acquired his father’s qualities then he may be considered as a ruler. For Kautilya, “a ruler is born with some rare and extraordinary qualities. Training (*vinaya*) of the ruler is, therefore regarded as essential. The most important aspect of training is the study of *Anvikṣiki* or the philosophical disciplines, *trayi* or the Vedic lore.”⁸

There are a number of conditions in acquiring property for next generation. If the ruler’s son is blind, deaf or dumb then he is not able to acquire the property of king thus no right to acquire. There are examples in *Mahābhārata*, where Dhritarastra was not allowed to be the king as he was blind. According to Kautilya, the ideal ruler is a person who is always engaged in the welfare of his progeny and tries to engage them in moral perspective. We have seen the same tone in Aristotle’s writings. He holds that there must be a heartiest (friendship) relationship among the master and

⁶Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.15

⁷ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 2000, Vol-II, p. 197

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 129

slave.⁹ The master may engage his slave for his own purpose and the slave can achieve those qualities by obeying their masters.

Ownership

Another similarity between Kautilya and Aristotle regarding the ownership of property may be mentioned here. According to Aristotle, the ownership of property is beneficial if it is in private, instead of common ownership. He says any one can be a beneficiary in common though ownership is in private. Other people can use a property if it necessitates. It is necessary for the transfer or donation to other people, because there is no scope to donate or transfer a property to any person if the ownership is in common.

In *Vedic* scriptures, there were many discussions on the ownership of lands. The king has no right to acquire a land from any one if he cares or nurtures land for many years even though the king is the owner of kingdom. According to the *Arthaśāstra*, “a question that has exercised the minds of scholars for long is whether all land belongs to the state or there is private ownership in land. Opinions are diverse on this issue. So far as *Arthaśāstra* is concerned, there is little doubt that it recognizes private ownership of land, although it presupposes the existence of state-owned or crown lands. According to *Arthaśāstra*, all unoccupied lands belong to the state.”¹⁰ The king can not impose any kind of tax on these lands. There was no option for imposing tax on people but there is a direction in scriptures that how much tax is imposed. It is also said that in case of emergency, war and drought, a king can impose more tax burden on the citizens by requesting the people for the safety and security of the state. But there is no possibility of imposing tax burden on the non-fertile land. If there is no agreement within the citizens, the king can not impose tax on the landowners. *Arthaśāstra* gives us a proof that ownership must be in private which is similar to Aristotle’s view. For Kautilya, people own private property but the king is the owner of that property in a moral sense. So, Kautilya’s thought is very much clear regarding the ownership of property and his ideas in this regard seems stronger than the Greek.

Sovereignty:

⁹ Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* New York: Oxford University. Press, 1998, p.19

¹⁰ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 2000, Vol-II, p. 169

One may ask: who is sovereign? There was a debate between Kautilya and Aristotle on this issue and Aristotle proposes in his *Politics* that there were several possibilities for being a sovereign. Who are the sovereign people? Are the rich, the middle class and the tyrant sovereign? According to Aristotle, these alternatives appear to involve unpleasant result. If the poor are sovereign as they are the majority in a state, proceed in possession of the wealth of the rich. And if the rich are sovereign who is less in majority but rich in wealth, plunder the wealth of the poor. Again, if the middle class are the sovereign then the other people are not being treated as a part of the constitution. There is a possibility of risk of corruption and illegal activity if majority of the people are sovereign as majority of the people are poor. That is why, some thinkers are of the opinion that no person is treated as sovereign and only law is sovereign, though ruling system may differ. Law may be good to some and may be bad for some others. So, we have to be more careful in abiding constitution of the state. For the prevention of corruption, Kautilya says, "Secter agents are careful for detecting corruption among state servants. It is recognized that despite of all due care exercised in the appointment of officers, cases of embezzlement of state funds often occur. In a few remarkable verses, it is pointed out that it is impossible for an officer who take cares of state funds or goods to resist the temptation to misappropriate and it is as difficult as to detect an officer while he is misappropriating funds just like to detect a fish while it is drinking water. To detect the officers involved in misappropriation of funds are more difficult to predict just like to detect the movement of birds in the sky." ¹¹

Question remains, how many ruling system exist in a state? There are three types of ruling system in Aristotle's framework. The first one is kingship rule of government where only one person is the sovereign though the aim of this system is the welfare of the all. The second one is aristocracy rule of government, where only rich are sovereign. And the third one is the constitutional government where most of the people are sovereign. But these three systems have their perverted forms. The first one kingship government may be perverted into the tyrannical government and turns into a single person's interest. The second one is an oligarchy system where the

¹¹ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 2000, Vol-II, p. 207.

government runs for the interest of rich. The constitutional government may be perverted into a democratic system where the poor are the sovereign and runs for the interest of poor. But no government is able to fulfill the actual aim of the states, as the aim of a state is to provide welfare to all but this motto cannot serve all these possibility.

Which government is better?

Aristotle emphasizes upon sovereignty on democratic rule instead of others. He holds that in this system a citizen may not possess good qualities but when they all come together there is a possibility of surplus quality. There is a risk in this kind of ruling as occupying the highest position in offices may lead to injustice and wrongdoing. Plato proposes to construct a board after the retirement of a Magistrate. According to him, the state is to be founded upon reason,¹² and laws must be rational and rational laws can only be made by rational men i.e. the philosophers. The rulers must be the Philosophers. *Republic* is an ideal of a perfect state, the dream of a kingdom of God on earth. While explaining the nature of justice in *Republic* Plato opines that a society is just only when each of these three types of human character performs. An unjustified interference of a particular class of people with the others causes political injustice.

Plato formed the ideal state in *Republic*, but the point is that actual democracy may not be possible only by rules and regulations. That is why Plato raises the question in the *Statesman*¹³, who conducts the Government? The answer is a government is run by one, some or many people. Plato did not believe that government is conducted by many. Because a lawful government is best when a government is run by one, the worst when conducted by many. Aristotle is not in a position to accept Plato's view. According to him, the sovereignty of a state should be by the people at large though there is a possibility of injustice, wrongdoing, thoughtlessness and error. "That is why Solon and some of the other legislatures,

¹² Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, SBW Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, p.73.

¹³ J.B. Skemp, *Plato's Statesman*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961, p.117

allow people to elect officials in the government and to make them accountable at the end of their tenure, but not to hold office by their individual capacity”.¹⁴

Question may be raised: which is more important in a state? Is it ruled by one, by the best man or by the best laws? Some thinkers who support the kingship government opines that law can only lay down general rules, as law is not imposing different commands to deal with different situations. They also think that there is no element of passion in law which is innate in every citizen. According to Aristotle, “in those matters on which law is unable to perform, owing to the difficult of framing general rules for all contingencies, to make an exact pronouncement.”¹⁵ If law is unable to solve a problem, this power retains not only for one but also for the common, because a state is constituted by common people, so it can be assured that people’s view or mandate is superior to a particular person’s rule. It is less probable that the citizens may involve with corruptions. For this reason, Aristotle says that there are three perverted forms of constitutions, like tyranny, oligarchy and democracy from kingship, Aristocracy and constitutional government. Aristotle’s opines: “These three perverted forms may be graded in an ascending order - tyranny the worst; oligarchy the next worst, and democracy the least.”¹⁶ He also opines that there are several forms of democracy rather than a single form and the same law cannot possibly be beneficial to all forms of democracy.

ASPECT PERCEPTION AS A CASE OF INTERPRETATION

ANIRBAN MUKHERJEE

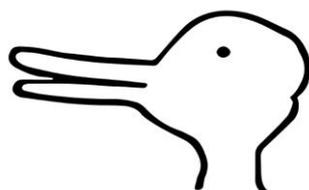
Philosophy of Psychology was an area of major concern and interest for Wittgenstein in the final years of his life. The phenomenon of aspect-perception found repeated mention in his writings and lectures during this period. Wittgenstein

¹⁴ Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.109

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.112

¹⁶ Ernest Barker, *Aristotle Politics* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998,p.135

discusses aspect perception extensively in the second half of the *Philosophical Investigations*¹ as well as in his volumes entitled *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*², *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*³ and *Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946-47*⁴. In this paper I aim to present the arguments for accepting that aspect perception involves interpretation. Some of the Wittgenstein scholars such as Stephen Mulhall or Ray Monk are hesitant in admitting this. I will follow Wittgenstein in exploring his understanding of the notion of interpretation as well as the involvement of interpretation in aspect perception. In doing so I will refer to the way some of his writing is interpreted as vouching for a non-interpretationist position and comment accordingly.



A duck-rabbit figure has two aspects: a duck aspect and a rabbit aspect. When someone suddenly notices the duck aspect in the figure after seeing it as a picture of a rabbit, there is a change of aspect. When there is a change of aspect and the picture seems altered. Where is that alteration grounded? What has changed to reveal this new aspect? Ludwig Wittgenstein investigates whether the change is in my impression or my point of view (PI, p. 195). In his effort to understand the

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, 1953. PI, henceforth.

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 1*. Eds. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. Wright, Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe; *Volume II*. Eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, Tr. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A. E. Aue, Blackwell, 1980. RPP I and RPP II, henceforth.

³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writing on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume I*. Eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, Tr. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A. E. Aue, Blackwell, 1982; *Volume II*. Eds. Eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, Tr. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A. E. Aue, Blackwell, 1992. LW I and LW II, henceforth.

⁴ P. T. Geach (ed.), Wittgenstein's *Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946-47*, Harvester Wheatsheaf. 1988. LPP henceforth.

phenomenon Wittgenstein considers two explanations, both of which he finds unacceptable.

Explanation 1

One may attempt to understand the phenomenon of aspect perception physiologically by linking the aspects to certain movements of the eyeball. The change of aspect may be ascribed to a jump from one pattern of eyeball movement to another. However, Wittgenstein says that the very fact that such an explanation needs to be imagined proves that that's not the way we understand the phenomenon. For we have a concept regarding such seeing without such an explanation. To tag on such a physiological explanation to the phenomenon would amount to re-definition of that concept, 'a new physiological criterion for seeing. And this can screen the old problem from view, but not solve it.' (PI, p. 212)

Explanation 2

The second explanation that he considers is along the Gestalt School line. It tries to resolve the paradox by grounding the change in what we see, the visual impression. The figure/object acquires an organization which it didn't appear to have previously (PI, 196b). This explanation assumes visual impressions to be inner entities of some sort, a position that Wittgenstein identifies as his general target in this portion of the PI. The somewhat queer phenomenon of seeing this way or that surely makes its first appearance when someone recognizes that the optical picture in one sense remains the same, while something else, which one might call "conception", may change. (RPP I 27)

My suggestion is that the line that Wittgenstein is sympathetic to in general is the interpretationist one which understands the change of aspect in terms of change in interpretation of the given. His method does not allow for a fully formulated explanation of the phenomenon. However, he makes extensive comments in this regard, some positively pointing towards the characters of the phenomenon that he considers to be significant, and some negative, revealing the incongruities in particular ways of thinking about them. From such comments, a certain Wittgensteinian position can be constructed. That position I believe would be pro-interpretationist. Hence I argue that aspect perception according to Wittgenstein

involves interpretation. ...we can also *see* the illustration now as one thing now as another. - So we interpret it and *see* it as we *interpret* it. (PI p.193) This is the first time he mentions interpretation in the context of aspect perception in *Philosophical Investigations*. Using an illustrative figure, he points out that it could be imagined that in a textbook, for instance, the relevant caption tells us how to see one. The embedding information guides seeing 'the illustration now as one thing now as another'. The different aspects are stumbled upon when the figure is *interpreted* differently. Then he goes on to add the description of what is got immediately, i.e. of the visual experience, by means of an interpretation – is an indirect description. "I see the figure as a box" means: I have a particular visual experience which I have found that I always have when I interpret the figure as a box or when I look at a box. But if it meant this I ought to know. I ought to be able to refer to the experience directly, and not only indirectly. (As I can speak of red without calling it the colour of blood.) (PI p.194e)

Here, Wittgenstein seems to question the interpretationist stand by raising the issue that only if we can give a direct description does it make sense to talk about there being an indirect one. Mulhall picks up the line and argues that aspect-perception does not involve interpretation because in it there is a direct perception of the aspect, and hence that there is no scope for interpretation (2001 p. 249). In aspect perception, it would make sense to say that it is an interpretation, i.e. indirect perception, only if one could also give a direct description of it. A case of aspect perception is not like seeing something red and then interpreting it as the colour of blood (PI, 194). I do not see an object X as a cat, *I just see the cat*. I see the cube just as I see a red circle. But do we really need to be aware of the X independently of Y for Y to be an interpretation? I discuss this in the next section.

Moreover, Mulhall points out that '...it is definitive of such experiences that the mode of representing the perceived change is not one of a number of possible ways of describing it, but is rather felt to be the only possible expression of our visual perception...' (2001 p.249) There is no experience of the activity of interpreting involved in my perception of the duck. When there is an aspect change, I see a rabbit in the place of a duck. I just find myself in the state of seeing a rabbit. However, I will argue later, that the activity of interpretation may not always be experienced and

the state of seeing may presuppose such an activity logically, not just temporarily. The fulcrum of this discussion is the notion of interpretation which I look at in the next section.

Interpretation: The Narrow and the Wide Sense

‘To interpret is to think, to do something; seeing is a state’. (PI p.212e)

‘When we interpret we form hypotheses, which may prove false’. (PI p.212e)

According to Wittgenstein, interpretation is an activity, it is to think, to do something. It is an activity which involves making a hypothesis that may turn out to be false. My claim is that these two parameters are satisfied in every case of seeing. Seeing is a state, as Wittgenstein mentions. But it also involves an act; an act of interpreting that is internal to the seeing. We do report using such phrases as ‘I *saw* the rabbit’, which stress more on the act aspect rather than on being in a certain state. We are often praised for seeing something first as ‘She was the first one to see the tiger in the woods’. Here she must have done something in seeing the tiger to be praised. Yet her description of her experience may be proved false later on. It might be found out that the thing she saw was not actually a tiger. These cases display that seeing involves a certain interpretation of the given object which is not just the result of attending for there might have been lots of people attending to the happenings in the woods. But again it seems to be a case of directly seeing the tiger not involving seeing something and then so as to interpret it as the tiger. This calls for understanding interpretation in a wider sense than the one ascribed to Wittgenstein.

It is but common to point out that interpretation as the term has been used by Wittgenstein to refer to a conscious activity, an active engagement with that purpose in mind. Interpretation as an activity may be taken as analogous to breathing, which happens most of the time below the level of conscious participation but which may be brought up to that level if required. When asked by the Doctor, we may control and pay attention to our breathing process, but that does not mean that we do not breathe in and out rest of the time. In fact, if we were always aware of the act of breathing then that would be a source of useless distraction. Similarly, the interpretational process involved in perception does rise up to the level of the consciousness in exceptional cases

It is significant to note that interpretation may be understood in a narrow and a wide sense following Wittgenstein. In the narrow sense, it stands for the conscious **act** of coming to grips with the given, for instance interpreting a film according to a new theory. In the wide sense, it means the **unconscious processes of** conceptualisation and categorisation involved in any perception. Budd points out that ‘there are ways in which thoughts can be active in the mind in looking at a figure that do not amount to interpreting the figure (in Wittgenstein’s sense)’ (1989 p.178) i.e. in the narrow sense specified above. My contention is that, understood in the wider sense, it is constitutive of perception in general, while in the narrower sense it may be involved in perception, at times.

The case against aspect perception as involving interpretation

The problem with the objections is the failure to notice the wider sense of interpretation present in Wittgenstein. It has been argued by Mulhall (2001) that

(P1) Wittgenstein understands ‘interpretation’ in the narrow sense, as a conscious deliberate act .

(P2) aspect perception does not involve any such act;

Therefore, **(C)** aspect perception does not involve interpretation.

In this argument, P1 and P2 are both false. Wittgenstein does not understand ‘interpretation’ only in the narrow sense and aspect perception does involve interpretation not just always in the wide sense but also in the narrow sense. Hence, **(C)** is not true, and aspect perception does involve interpretation.

Against P1:

Here I explain the reason for thinking that Wittgenstein understands interpretation in a wider sense as well. Wittgenstein clearly states that ‘interpreting is a kind of thinking; and often it brings about a sudden change of aspect’. (LW I 179) He states further that the thinking is essential to ‘dawning of the aspect’. Several passages in LW I and RPP II speak about the connection between aspect perception and thought. Wittgenstein questions ‘Now when the aspect dawns, can I separate a visual experience from a thought – experience? – If you separate them the dawning of the aspect seems to vanish’. (LWI §564) Also, he says that ‘...Seeing a figure with this interpretation is a kind of thinking of the interpretation. ...I see an interpretation

and an interpretation is a thought'. (RPP II 360) But how is it possible to *see* an object according to an *interpretation*? – The question represents it as a queer fact; as if something were being forced into a form it did not really fit. But no squeezing, no forcing took place here. (PI p.200e)

What we need to note is that the interpretation is not external to the seeing. It is internal to it. The interpretation is not forced on to a seen. That's why we do not have an X available which can then be externally interpreted as Y. Seeing itself is constituted conceptually. The interpretation is not indirect, but actually the primary expression of the experience. The question whether what is involved is a seeing or an act of interpreting arises because an interpretation becomes an expression of experience. And the interpretation is not an indirect description; no, it is the primary expression of the experience. (RPP I 20) In fact, the interpretation/thought is not separate from the experience of seeing. The experience of seeing is clothed in interpretation. 'Can I say that seeing aspects is *related* to interpreting? – My inclination was indeed to say "It is as if I *saw* an *interpretation*". Well, the expression of this seeing is related to the expression of interpreting'. (LW I 179) And what about the double cross? Again, it is seeing according to an interpretation. Seeing *as*. (LW II p.15e) A concept forces itself on one. (PI p.204e)

Mulhall does not concern himself with the possibility of interpretation in the wider sense being involved in aspect perception. When I say that interpretation is ubiquitous what I mean is that in the cases of *seeing*, as well as seeing-as, perception depends logically, not just temporally on our memory, and our other cognitive abilities. "You only 'see the duck and rabbit aspects' if you are already conversant with the shapes of those two animals" (PI, 207). Seeing presupposes mastery of the concepts. The interpretation that I claim to be part of the perception is not a volitional conscious activity. However, it is an activity in which we engage necessarily in perceiving.

There seem to be certain incongruities in the non-interpretative picture of aspect perception, for instance, in the phenomenon of aspect-blindness. How is it that among two persons, one is able to perceive a likeness between two figures while the other is not? The fact that someone is aspect-blind while someone else is able to

perceive a new aspect reveals the importance of the subjective element in the perceptual process. Just standing passively in front of a figure is not sufficient to see it as a duck. There needs to be an input from the perceiver, an active engagement with the picture. Hence an interpretative subjective element is necessarily linked to aspect perception. One wants to ask of seeing an aspect: “Is it seeing? Is it thinking?” The aspect is subject to the will: this by itself relates it to thinking. (RPP II 544)

Let’s consider, for instance, that if someone had told me that there was the shape of Homer’s face hiding in a certain mesh of lines, would I have been able to decipher it? No one would have succeeded perhaps without a previous idea of how Homer looked like. Hence, to grasp a particular object in a figure one needs to have a concept of the object which provides the perspective on the mesh of lines. The given is interpreted in terms of the available concepts. Hence though it seems that the experience is direct, actually it is mediated. The interpretation is so fundamentally constitutive of the perception that its seepage, as a rule, goes unnoticed. We do not get to know the complex neuropsychological processes that interact with our conceptual framework to produce the visual perception of the rabbit in the lines. This is similar to the case of our language usage, which we are all able to do without always being able to explain the rules or the grammar behind it. However, later reflection reveals an activity of interpretation of the given in terms of our conceptual repertoire as conceptually necessary though at times experientially unavailable for any perception. ‘...it (interpretation) also incorporates itself straight away in what is seen...One might also say “I do not merely *interpret* the figure, but I clothe it with the interpretation”’. (RPP I 33)

Wittgenstein, I would argue, accepts the role of interpretation, understood in this transcendental sense⁵, as the very condition of any perception for he recognises the importance of thought in the flashing of an aspect. According to him, it is half visual experience and half thought (*PI*, 197). As quoted above Wittgenstein thinks that our seeing is clothed in interpretation. He clearly points out that dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other

⁵ In a sense analogous to that of Kant who credited understanding and sensibility with equal importance.

objects. The seeing or noticing of an aspect as well as imagining are dependent on the will of the spectator. Looking may not always involve seeing. One may be physiologically supplied with data without really interpreting it and be unaware about some of the aspects of the thing.

Against P2:

Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will. There is such an order as “Imagine *this*”, and also: “Now see the figure like *this*”; but not: “Now see this leaf green”. (PI p.213e) In the cases of aspect perception, we do *experience* moments of confusion, of mere blankness, a desperate need to organise the lines into a *known* shape, *trying to read the picture in a specific way* especially after being informed that there is a definite shape hiding there in those lines. And then all of a sudden we *see* the shape of the duck. The perception seems miraculous and one’s ability to perceive the duck inexplicable. Yet I have somehow interacted with the picture to make it meaningful.

Seeing an aspect is a voluntary act. We can tell someone: Now look at it like *this*. Try again to see the similarity. Listen to the theme *this way*, etc. But does that make seeing a voluntary act? Isn’t it rather the way you look at something that causes this seeing? For example, I can see the model of the cube in *this way* if I direct my glance right at *these* edges. When I do this the aspect suddenly changes. Here I *know* how to *bring this about*. Yes, it is true that at times we move straight on to the object. But aspect perception is not always without effort or direct. Wittgenstein does point out the similarity between the concept of an aspect and that of an image and goes on to say that “Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will. There is such an order as “Imagine this”, and also: “Now see the figure like this” (PI, 213). On being informed about another aspect of a figure, one may try to *see*, but that seeing may not always be easy and at times unsuccessful for a particular person. The observer may have to really put in some effort. Some clues like ‘see those marks at the top as the ear of the rabbit’ may be helpful at this time. That may get one on the right track to the face in the puzzle picture. So in cases of aspect perception one does need to put in some effort at times. There is an experience of interpreting. One does see the mesh of lines, which become meaningful as the face. The fact that the switch is dependent upon the will is one of the reasons why Budd thinks that in aspect perception, what is

seen is merely interpreted differently (p.94). What adds to his contention is the significant non-difference of the 'optical picture' or the 'visual picture' which is aspect invariant. The seen doesn't change the *seeing* changes because of the seen being interpreted differently. We can produce a change of aspect, and it can also occur against our will. Like our gaze, it can follow our will. (LW 612)

One may ask, what about the ordinary cases of perception? If we consider the case when I see the knife on the table, there is no confusion, no inner struggle to recognise the thing as a knife. I see the knife or once I have recognised the duck in the duck-rabbit picture, I straight away see the duck. The argument against the interpretational nature of aspect perception relies on the directness of the experience. Though a differentiation is made between *seeing* and *seeing-as/interpretation* in terms of one being a state and the other being an activity, the realisation of the state presupposes the activity. *Seeing* is always *seeing as*. The lack of experience of seeing-as does not nullify the fact that *there is an X* which one *sees as* a cat because one has learnt to identify such things in that way.

BIPINCHANDRA'S THOUGHT ON HINDUISM, TRADITION AND MODERNITY

LAXMIKANTA PADHI

While discussing Bipinchandra's views on tradition and modernity, it is appropriate to make some general observations about the complex relationship

between the two. It must be understood that in the West there was no unequivocal, uniform adoption of a modern view of life. The age that produced Marx, Darwin, and Freud also produced Cardinal Newman, Carl Jung. In the middle of this century, there are also reformist theologians who accepted spiritualism, who combined an outward pragmatic approach to the world problems with an inward mystical unworldliness. Also, there are people who have shown that modernity and tradition are by no means contradictory. One can even find that the so called outdated view of yesterday can become the 'modern' view of today. Given the complexity of interaction between modernity and tradition in the West, it is not surprising to assess Bipinchandra's views, since in his case one additional factor compounds the problem: ambivalence towards the West in an era of rising nationalism.

He was born on 7th November, 1858 in the District of Sylhet in the Eastern part of Bengal to a Vaisnava family of Kayastha caste, and did not receive a formal religious education. In *Memories of My Life and Times*, he relates that he was absorbed by the religious attitudes and practices of his family. Especially, respect for austerities was firmly implanted in him. Bipinchandra began to question the efficacy of rituals whose meaning no one had explained to him. He also developed resentment against the frequent occurrence of *pujās* and the elaborate rules meant to ensure ritual cleanliness. He continued to adhere to all caste strictures until he was approximately fifteen, when, under the influence of an unorthodox *Vaishnava* teacher and a visiting relative from Calcutta, he set aside dietary rules, especially those prohibiting the taking of food from Muslims.

After the death of his mother in June 1875, Bipinchandra reluctantly performed the required stringent funeral rites. By that time he had lost all faith in the value of ceremonies and discarded fear of possible retribution at the hands of the deities. In January 1875, he had entered Presidency College in Calcutta. With his removal from direct family supervision and in the free atmosphere of the metropolis, he soon shook off the last remnant of formal religious worship. Bipinchandra's abandonment of formal religion can be partly explained by the fact that he was a born rebel. It must be kept in mind that his father, Ramachandra, was not a complete orthodox. Bipinchandra repeatedly refers to his father's Islamic education and to his rationalistic tendency.

While adhering to caste rules, Ramachandra displayed a strong sense of independence that must have left an impression on his son. When Ramachandra concluded that a Brahmin had been unjustly expelled from his caste, he employed him as his family priest and willingly suffered sixteen years of social exclusion for defying society. Bipinchandra comments upon his father's determination to uphold what he considered justice. However, independence of mind, did not lead Ramachandra to question the intrinsic soundness of the caste system, and he did not sanction his son's violation of caste strictures, thus, eventually he disowned him.

Bipinchandra's opposition to external religious practices in no way implied that he had become totally irreligious. Whenever he had to face a crisis, he would offer prayers to *Durgā* or *Kālī*. At the same time, he retained a sense of wonderment and intuitive awareness of a realm beyond sense perception, distinctly separate from the material universe significantly, he continued, at least in theory, to have high regard for the ideal of attaining mastery over the senses. The college period for him was intellectually, although not academically, fruitful and he failed twice to pass the first examination in Arts, and in 1878, he withdrew from college without attaining a degree. By attending regular formal lectures, he read widely but unsystematically in a bookstore on College Street. It must have been at that time that he became acquainted with the works of Spencer, Hegel, Hume, and Parker to whom he refers frequently in his writings.

It is important to note that the writers in Bengal helped to shape Bipinchandra's views on religion and nationalism rather than the Western authors. It must be remembered that the marriage of religion and nationalism was just taking place in India. As a reaction to the racist attitude of the British, criticism of Hinduism by missionaries, and the reluctance of the British to grant political concessions, modern Western educated Indians were assuming a more critical view towards the West and turning to Hinduism as a source of political as well as religious inspiration. Bipinchandra relates that even before coming to Calcutta his patriotism had been aroused by Bankimchandra's *Durgeshnandini*. His nationalistic feelings were given an impetus by the writings of Hemchandra Bannerjee, Anandamohan Bose, and Surendranath Bannerjee. Another major influence on Bipinchandra was Rajanarayana Bose, whose *Hindu Dharmar Sresthata* proclaimed the superiority of Hinduism over

Christianity and Western civilization in general and claimed that the very things Indians admired in the West could be found in ancient Indian civilization.

In 1877, Bipinchandra entered into the Brahmo Samaj and he had become acquainted with the Brahmo movement long before his arrival in Calcutta but had refused to join it. His strong sense of independence and unwillingness to conform to the rules of any organization had stood in his way. Moreover, he was repelled by the Brahmos' emphasis on sin and their puritanical condemnation of theater performances. Bipinchandra was a passionate lover of the Bengali stage. At first he was attracted to the Brahmo Samaj through his literary interests. He was deeply impressed by the oratorical skill of Kesabchandra Sen. Long ago; he was drawn to the radical wing in the Brahmo movement, represented by Shivanath Shastri and Anandamohan Bose, who championed a more vigorous social reform programme. Consequently, when in 1878 the split in the *Brahmo Samaj* occurred, Bipinchandra joined the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*. While Bipinchandra's unorthodox behavior had earlier estranged him from his father, a complete break in their relations ensued upon his joining the Brahmo Samaj and lasted until his father's death in 1886.

While in association with the Brahmo Samaj during 1877-1886, Bipinchandra was primarily concerned with reforms. Deprived of financial support by his father, he has to face with difficulty, shifting between teaching, librarianship, and journalism. Eventually journalism became his chief means of gaining livelihood. A major portion of his energy was reserved for Brahmo work. He served as a preacher for the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* and in this capacity participated in the struggle against caste restrictions, idolatry, and *pardah*. He gave shelter to widows and promoted their remarriage. In 1881, he himself married a widow during a visit to Bombay. It was the first *Brahmo* marriage in Bombay. While championing social reforms, Bipinchandra became aware of the dangers of Hindu revivalism, and he warned against an indiscriminate rejection of all things foreign and backsliding into medievalism. Even the progressive Shivanath Shastri was retreating from rationalism. But Bipinchandra's opposition to the revivalist movement was not unqualified. In part, he welcomed it as a spiritualizing force restoring meaningfulness to traditional Hinduism. Considering the fact that he had abandoned traditional rituals chiefly because of their apparent meaninglessness, it is not surprising to find a gradual shift

in Bipinchandra's attitude towards rituals. The death of his father in 1886 served as a catalyst for his religious transformation. It reminded him painfully of the insecurity of human existence and made him seek safety in the religion of his childhood.

There are two events that accelerated Bipinchandra's partial return to his ancestral religion. A) In 1887 he accepted a subeditorship with the *Tribune of Lahore* with the hope of securing his future financially. His unwillingness to share editorial duties evenly with his colleagues led to clashes with his coeditors, and in 1888 he resigned his position. He continued to live in Lahore, using up a substantial portion of the inheritance bequeathed by his father. B) In 1890, shortly after he moved from Lahore to Calcutta, his wife died in childbed. These two happenings for Bipinchandra are the convincing proof of man's utter inability to control his destiny." It did not occur to him that the two events were different in nature and that he, himself, had brought about the first. Searching for meaningfulness in the face of his personal loss, he found solace in the writings of Emerson and in the *Gītā*. He abandoned his previous dualistic view: "Matter is the Thought of God concretized; Man is the Spirit of God incarnated."¹ "God was the only doer in the universe and all events were divinely inspired and for man's ultimate good." He states that his spiritual realization compensated him for the loss of his wife. But apparently spiritual comfort by itself was insufficient, for the following year he remarried.

At the time of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, he wrote an essay in which he delineated the reasons for his partial return to a traditional Hindu view of life. The sinking of the Titanic symbolized the precariousness and limitations of Western science. There was no foundation for modern Western human's arrogant trust in his intellect and in material achievements. Even the best minds of the Western world could not have prevented this calamity. It proved to him unequivocally that human could not manipulate nature with impunity. In the same essay, he attacked the modern West for its permissiveness towards sense indulgence. As long as human considered it legitimate to give free restraint to his senses, he could not hope to victory over death. Life eternal could only be attained by following the ancient and timeless path

¹ Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of my Life and Times* Calcutta, 1932, p. 103-5

of yogic renunciation. Once he had concluded that *Yoga* could provide the security modern science was unable to give, it was only logical that Bipinchandra would look for a *guru* to guide him in his *sādhanā*. In 1895, he received *dikṣā* from Vijayakrisna Goswami. Basically, he was a contemplative and a *bhakta* with a social reformist tendency. Through his social activism he had been drawn into Sen's *Brahmo Samaj*. Vijayakrisna emphasized *bhakti* to a degree that was unacceptable to the majority of the Samajists. When he accepted image worship, his resignation from the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* became inevitable.

The present age, according to Bipinchandra, calls for a synthesis of material science and the supernatural. There is, in reality, only one eternal religion manifests itself diversely in accordance with time and place. In the present age, the place factor has become irrelevant, since technical advances have annihilated distances, and the precepts of science have been disseminated over the whole globe. Consequently, Bipinchandra wanted modern human to realize that material achievements could not give lasting satisfaction, and that material science, operating within the world of sense perception, was incapable of answering ultimate questions. Modern human should combine a scientific and socially progressive outlook with the practice of *Bhakti Yoga*, as exemplified by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Obviously, Vijayakrisna as well as Surendranath Bannerjee held an exaggerated view of Caitanya's role as a reformer.

After practicing *dikṣā mantra* he stopped eating meat and eggs and began to practice *ahimsā*, and he refused to compete with other potential passengers for rides on Calcutta's crowded streetcars. Bipinchandra denies that he became a mystic and alleges that he remained a "stern rationalist". He refers to several personal mystical experiences and reports psychic feats of his *guru* without discounting their validity. Above all, Vijayakrisna was able to convince him once and for all of man's inherent divinity and consequent immortality. Thus, the problem of death that had troubled him was solved to his satisfaction.

In 1898, Bipinchandra had an opportunity to see the Western world, which he had so far known from books only. Through the British and Foreign Unitarian Association he received a scholarship to study theology at New Manchester College

at Oxford. During his stay in England he acquainted himself with the writings of contemporary European theologians. In England, as well as in the United States, he lectured on Indian culture and religion. In his talks on religion, he emphasized the fact that traditional Hindu teachings contained solutions to the problems of modern man. This was permanently impressed upon him by an American who told him, "You come from a great country, Sir. You are destined to be the teachers of the world. But you cannot fulfil this destiny until you are able to look the world horizontally into the face".

His overall impression of the West was decidedly negative and reinforced his shift towards traditionalism. He noticed the class distinctions existing in England and even in the United States. And he became acutely aware of the American prejudice towards the Negroes. This in turn made him take a more favorable view of the Indian caste system. Most important, in England and especially in the United States, Bipinchandra encountered religious prejudice. Insulting remarks about Hinduism prompted him to declare, "I am prouder that I am not a Christian." He left the West disenchanted, and more than ever questioned the modern value system so intimately associated with the West. In numerous speeches on occasions such as *Durgā Pujā* and the *Vijayā* festivals, he combined a defense of Hindu tradition with appeal for social and educational reform. He argued that *pujā* binds social, ethical, artistic, and spiritual elements. Theoretically he opposed the slaughter of innocent animals during *Durgā Pujā*, but in practice he condoned it as conducive to a martial spirit.

As a result of his part in the anti-partition agitation, Bipinchandra was imprisoned, first in Presidency Jail and then in Buxar, for period of six months (September, 1907 to March, 1908). Aurobinda Ghose later alleged that Buxar meant for Bipinchandra what Alipore prison had meant for him. Since Bipinchandra's stay in Buxar marks the completion of his religious evolution, a summary of his religious views during the last phase of his life is appropriate. Bipinchandra consistently opposed medievalism, which he identified to a great extent with the Vedantic teaching of Shankara and which he contrasted with "modern" Vaisnavism of Mahaprabhu Caitanya. In Bipinchandra's opinion medievalism was characterized by as follows:

- extreme monism, which amounted to a denial of the reality of the material world
- monasticism, in particular celibacy
- over-ritualization of religion
- priestly domination of religion and
- religious inequality (application of caste distinctions to religious worship).

On the other hand, he alleges that Vaisnavism through Caitanya had rid itself of medievalism and that it embodied the highest concepts of Hinduism. It was consequently suited as a universal creed for all mankind in this modern age. To prove the superiority of Hinduism over Christianity and over the modern Western world view in general, Bipinchandra contends that modernity was a relative term and not dependent upon a particular time. Hinduism long ago had resolved problems plaguing modern Western man. Not only does he find it necessary to claim that ancient Hinduism contains answers for modern Western problems, but it for him to ‘demonstrate’ that traditional Hindu values are more scientific and rational than those of the West.

While discussing the Bhṛgu and Varuṇa episode² in the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* Bipinchandra interprets that Bhṛgu followed the process of rational, scientific inquiry and advanced from strict materialism to the awareness of an ultimate, spiritual reality. Bhṛgu’s initial materialistic explanation of the universe was comparable to the so called modern rationalistic, empirical view of the universe held in the West. In fact, modern scientific materialism was a regression in human's development. Since science has been used to conquer nature with a view to provide more comfort, modern Western human has fallen more deeply into the trap of sensual pleasure. In contrast, Hinduism always recognized that true control of nature is dependent on controlling human's inner nature, in particular, attainment of sense control. And the Hindu has devised the only technique leading to body and mind control: *Yoga*.

² Bhṛgu approached his *Guru* Varuṇa, who was the master of wisdom, and requested, “Instruct me in *Brahman*”: *Adhīhi bhagāvo brahmeti, eva varuṇam pitaram upasasāra (Taittiriya Upaniṣad, Chap-3). “Tapasā brahma vijijñāsva: Know Brahman through tapas.”* He did not go into descriptions, narrations, quotations, or citations of scriptures. “Know *Brahman* by yourself through *tapas*.” *Mano brahmeti vyajānāt. Ānando brahmeti vyajānāt.*

Bipinchandra's reference to the science of *Yoga* is similar to the statements by Kesabachandra Sen and Swami Vivekananda.

To show Hinduism's superiority over Christianity, Bipinchandra tries to compare Krishna with Christ, with the help of the arguments in Bankimchandra's *Krishnacharitra*. While Christ is only the Son of God, Krishna is self God the Father. Krishna possesses the highest attributes of Christ: "His is a message of Love, interpreted in its highest and divine sense; Love conquers the world and makes sacrifices sacramental." Krishna did not turn the other cheek and preach nonresistance to evil. Nor did Lord Krishna preach: "My kingdom is not of this world." He vigorously and efficiently ruled this world.

While discussing Hinduism's superiority and its rationality, Bipinchandra undertakes a rehabilitation of those aspects of Hinduism which he had previously condemned. He argues that the elaborate and stringent rituals and disciplines of traditional Hinduism had "a distinct ethical value." And he contrasts superior 'constructive' Hindu ethics with inferior 'instructive' Christian ethics. In the West, he contends, man is instructed to be good, to act ethically, and personally responsible for his acts. In Hinduism, on the other hand, human is aware of the fact that human frequently acts on impulse and that lack of mind and sense control keeps him from acting rightly even when he wishes to do so. For this reason, Hindus are more understanding of human defenselessness. With the help of Yogic techniques, control over mind, senses, and feelings is attainable and ethical behavior enforceable. Mastery over the senses ought to include sexual restraint and control over the palate. While Bipinchandra labels celibacy 'medieval,' he advocates a restrained sex life for married couples and condemns the more liberal Western attitude toward marital sex as 'prostitution in marriage.' Similarly, he opposes unrestricted indulgence in food and agrees with the traditional Hindu classification of food into *sātvic*, *rājasic*, and *tāmasic*. On hygienic grounds he even sees some justification for restricting inter-dining. After all, the lower castes disregarded the fact that some foods were more spiritual than others. He argues that modern medical findings regarding communicable diseases bear out ancient Hindu wisdom and he lashes out against that most unhygienic modern custom.

By supporting inter-dining restrictions to some extent, Bipinchandra also modifies his view regarding caste restrictions in general. He insists that he still believes in human brotherhood, but that brotherhood is utopian as it presupposes a level of spirituality attained by only a few. And he claims that elimination of caste restrictions leads to indiscriminate indulgence in sex as initially held by Mahatma Gandhi. Caste was being replaced by the Western class system, which catered to individualism, competitiveness, and arrogance. Pride had not been a feature of the Hindu caste system. He refers to the supreme equalizer, the *Chaturashrama pratha* a happy solution of this universal social problem. According to Bipinchandra, all are equal in the *bramacharya* stage. Inequality exists only in the *grāhastha* stage, and only because of the fulfillment of different social functions. In the last two stages equality was restored. He thus conveniently ignores the fact that by no means all Hindus followed the *āśrama* path and that the untouchables were excluded from it altogether.

Bipinchandra clearly differentiates between the totemism and animism of primitive peoples, contending that there was no image veneration during the Vedic civilization but that it came into being during the subsequent, higher, Purāṇic stage. Statues of the deities serve as a means of bridging the gulf between the *draṣṭa* and the *adrāṣṭa*, the finite and the infinite, leading the worshiper from the world of sense experience to the super-sensuous realm. Images constitute a material approximation of the spiritual vision attained by a *Yogi* in the state of *samādhi*. It was not a question of idolatry but, rather, of 'idealatry,' comparable with image veneration among the Catholics. His reference to Catholicism is significant. Earlier Hindu reformers had chiefly looked to Protestantism for inspiration. Raja Rammohun Roy in particular had condemned Catholic image veneration. Also, while Rammohun had opposed the trinitarian doctrine, Bipinchandra defends it and compares it to the *Vaiṣṇava* trinity of *Brahman*, *Paramātman* and *Bhagavāna*.

Under the influence of nationalism, his personal experiences in the West, and the religious renaissance and as a result of his inclination towards a mystic view of life Bipinchandra reaffirmed his faith in traditional Hinduism. According to him, 'there cannot be anything that changes unless there is back of it something that changes not'. Once one accepts the notion of an ultimate unchanging reality, the

dichotomy of modernity and tradition recedes into the background. At the same time Bipinchandra tried to defend his identification with tradition by labeling it rational and scientific. In his eagerness to prove the superiority of Hinduism over modern Western values, he employed arguments which were illogical, inconsistent, and even specious. His commitment to tradition, however, was not unqualified. He continued to favor political, social, and educational reforms. He obviously wanted to find a balance between tradition and modernity. That he leaned more towards tradition is understandable, considering his conclusion that science, the idol of modern man, had definite limitations, and his aversion for skepticism and materialism, which he associated with modern civilization.

References:

1. Bipinchandra Pal, *Memories of my Life and Times* Calcutta, 1932
2. Keshab Chundra Sen, 'We Apostles of the New Dispensation,' *Lectures in India*, Calcutta, 1954
3. Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* Chicago, 1967
4. Pal, 'Asvinikumar Datta,' in *Caritacitra* Calcutta, 1958
5. Pal, *An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*, 2d ed. Calcutta, 1951
6. Pal, *Bengal Vaishnavism*, 2nd edition. Calcutta, 1962
7. Pal, *Saint Bijayakrishna Goswami*. Calcutta, 1964
8. Pal, *Shree Krishna* Calcutta, 1964
9. Pal, *Yuger Manus Vijayakrishna* Calcutta, 1936
10. S. K. De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* Calcutta, 1961
11. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* Calcutta, 1959

GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

VARBI ROY

Though presently conflict resolution and peace building is a complex phenomenon especially when it comes to the issues of international crisis or social conflicts. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution, which is based on non-violent *Satyagraha*, is more relevant than any other approach in the area of peace research.

Johan Galtung clarifies that peace research is based on the assumption that peace is as consensual a value as health. He further states that interdisciplinary and multilevel approaches are needed for peace research besides adoption of symmetry. Peace research needs to draw from all corners of the world and in order to understand an issue researcher needs to see it from either side but the solution should not be based on the assumptions of one party alone. No party should be allowed to prevail over the other. Solutions should be found from which both parties might benefit. Findings should be symmetrically available. Peace research should be open in all its phases, never clandestine, never classified. Galtung also opines that for peace research most modern techniques of empirical study should be used. Data should be collected, processed, analyzed and systematized into theories so as to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of conflict and that of peace. Last but not the least is the relevance of the research. Research should help in realization of peace. A researcher should not stop by ending a research project with policy implication but should get involved into concrete action by making propaganda among intellectuals and public; persuading establishment into action and challenging the monopoly of decision makers.¹

Conflict Resolution is a social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a voluntary agreement resolve to peacefully live with- and/ or dissolve their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against one another. Thus conflict is transformed from violent to non- violent behaviour by parties. In theory there are seven distinct ways in which the parties can live with or dissolve their incompatibility. First, a party may change its goal i.e. its priorities. Second way is when parties stick to their goals but find a point at which resources can be divided.

¹ J. Galtung, 'Peace Research: Past Experiences and Future Perspectives' in Radhakrishna (edit.), *Peace Research for Peace Action*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Indian Council of Peace Research, Sahitya Kendra, New Delhi, 1972, p.13-31.

Third way is horse trading in which one side has all of its demands met on one issue while the other has all of its goals met on another issue. Forth way is shared control. Fifth way is to leave control to somebody else and sixth way is resorting to arbitration or other legal procedure that the parties can accept. Seventh way is that the issue can be left to later or even to oblivion.²

In west, peace studies have taken a very different path to that of Gandhi. Probably the reason was that Gandhian peace demands a great deal of sacrifice from the practitioner. He calls it *Satyagraha* i.e. ‘adherence to truth’ and truth and non violence are the main planks of *Satyagraha*. A person who resolves to adhere to truth cannot remain silent at the sight of violence which is negative of truth. Truth functions in form of non violence or love. While the lover of truth ought to oppose violence such an opposition would mean ‘fight the evil’ while ‘love the evil doer’. It is a dynamic soul force based on the concept of self- suffering. As there are many forms of injustices there are many forms of *Satyagraha* too such as- non cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, *hartal*, picketing, boycott, and renunciation of titles, honours and positions.

Gandhian *Satyagraha* is the effective weapon for preventing violence and tackling the conflict. *Satyagraha* is Gandhi’s technique of nonviolent action. The ultimate aim of Gandhian *Satyagraha* is to reach the higher level of truth in a nonviolent manner. *Satyagraha* does not encourage any violence. Violence leads to the destruction or injuring the opponent but it does not convert or reform him/her. The *Satyagrahi* should try to avoid all intentional injury to the opponent in thought, word and deed. Thus he/she should not harbour anger, hatred, ill-will, suspicion, vindictiveness or other similar feelings. As regards speech, he/she should avoid all abusive, insulting, or needless offensive language. In his/her actions he/she should not rely on brute force, for to do so is to cooperate with the evil doer and lend him/her support. In spite of all provocation the *Satyagrahi* should not be vindictive, and should not frighten the opponent. If assaulted, he/she should not prosecute his/her

² Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, Sage Publication, London, 2007, p. 3- 51.

assailant, and should not call in outsiders to assist him/her, for either course would mean that he/she is depending on physical force.

The aim of Gandhian concept of conflict resolution is to convert the opponent, to change his/her understanding and the sense of values so that he/she will join whole heartedly with the nonviolent resister in seeking a settlement truly amicable and truly satisfying to both the parties. The nonviolent resister seeks a solution under which both sides can have complete self-respect and mutual respect, a settlement that will implement the new desires and full energies of both parties. Misunderstandings, coercive tactics, poor communication, suspicion, perception of basic difference in values, increasing the power differences are the main reasons in behind the conflict. Conflict is resolved in a constructive or destructive way. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution is based in constructive way of problem solving. Gandhian *Satyagraha* is considered the weapon of the strongest person's and it excludes in every form of violence and hatred behaviour. A *Satyagrahi* exhausts all other means before he resorts to *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* implies that the opponent realizes his/her mistakes, repents and there takes place a peaceful adjustment of differences. A *Satyagrahi* will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, *himsā* by *ahimsā*. Thomas Weber³ elaborated some conflict resolution norms. First norm is that party identifies real issue of the conflict. Party states his/her goal and tries to understand opponent's intention and his/her own position. It is the positive approaches of conflict resolution.

The next step is party seeks negotiation and not resort to use any type of violence. Opponents should see conflict positively, as an opportunity for personal and social transformation and act in a nonviolent manner. The purpose of conflict resolution should not be coercion but conversion. In this section party should define their conflict well and not to cooperate evil. Not to polarize the situation and should distinguish between antagonism and antagonists. If the opponent gives any indication of changing his position and altering his behaviour in any direction, this indication

³ Thomas Weber., Gandhian Philosophy: Conflict Resolution Theory and Practical Approaches to Negotiation, *Journal of Peace Research*, Sage Publication, London, 2001, p.494

must be given full recognition. In this stage, party moves towards the position of conflict resolution.

Weber states the third norm as the resolution of the conflict. In this stage opponent must understand his/her mistakes and should be open to admit their errors. Finally both parties agree to conflict resolution. Conflicts cannot be resolved through mere decision making process and that, being an essential element for bringing change in society. We should not attempt to suppress the conflict. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution aims to build conflict free society. He simply claimed that we should target the roots of conflict and aim at solving its underlying causes. Conflict resolution aims at the elimination of the source of conflict.

Gandhian *Satyagraha* is similar to the win-win approach of conflict resolution. There are various techniques of conflict resolution namely Forcing, Collaborating (win-win approach), Compromising, Withdrawing, Smoothing or Accommodating. Regarding the first technique, namely Forcing also known as *competing*, an individual firmly pursues his or her own concerns despite the resistance of the other person. This may involve pushing one viewpoint at the expense of another or maintaining firm resistance to another person's actions. *Compromising* looks for an expedient and mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties. Withdrawing also known as *avoiding* means- when a person does not pursue her/his own concerns or those of the opponent. He/she does not address the conflict, sidesteps, postpones or simply withdraws. Smoothing is accommodating the concerns of other people first of all, rather than one's own concerns. In a win-win approach of conflict resolution neither party wins nor loose. Also known as *problem confronting* or *problem solving*, Collaboration involves an attempt to work with the other person to find a win-win solution to the problem in hand - the one that most satisfies the concerns of both parties. The win-win approach sees conflict resolution as an opportunity to come to a mutually beneficial result. It includes identifying the underlying concerns of the opponents and finding an alternative which meets each party's concerns. *Satyagraha* is the vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self. The ultimate goal of *Satyagrahi* is not victory over the adversary, but the victory of each side.

Thus, it may be said that among the various techniques of conflict resolution, the win-win approach is the most viable one and Gandhian *Satyagraha* can be said to

have similarities with the approach. There are some basic factors of *Satyagraha* like Truth, nonviolence, ends and means, faith in God, ethics or moral force, brotherhood of man. Gandhi used the method of *Satyagraha* to resolve all conflicts such as personal as well as international conflict. The main objective of Gandhian *Satyagraha* is to convert the opponent. He did not consider any one as his enemy. The *Satyagrahi's* main intention is not to annihilate or humiliate the opponent, but to convert through love. Gandhi's real objective is the disharming the opponent through love. Misunderstandings, coercive tactics, poor communication, suspicion, perception of basic difference in values, increasing the power differences are the main reasons in behind the conflict. Conflict can be resolved in a constructive or destructive way. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution is based in constructive way of problem solving.

Gandhian *Satyagraha* is considered the weapon of the strongest and it excludes every form of violence and hatred behaviour. A *Satyagrahi* exhausts all other means before he resorts to *Satyagraha*. The *Satyagrahi* loves the opponent as human beings and aims at rousing him to a sense of equity by an appeal to the best in him. *Satyagraha* implies that the opponent realizes his mistakes, repents and there takes place a peaceful adjustment of differences.

References

1. Galtung, J. 'Peace Research: Past Experiences and Future Perspectives' in Radhakrishna (ed.), *Peace Research for Peace Action*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Indian Council of Peace Research, Sahitya Kendra Printers, New Delhi, 1972
2. Kumar, Mahendra, *Current Peace Research and India*, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, 1968.
3. Wallensteen, Peter. *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, Sage Publication, London, 2007.
4. Weber, Thomas. "Gandhian philosophy: Conflict Resolution theory and Practical Approaches to Negotiation", *Journal of Peace Research*, Sage Publication, London, 2001.
5. Cortright, David. *Gandhi and Beyond: Non-violence for an Age of Terrorism*, Viva books Private Ltd, New Delhi, 2007.

SISTER NIVEDITA: A DEDICATED SOUL OF CREATIVE CULTURE

MAMATA KUNDU

I

The period of glorious contributions of Sister Nivedita for the welfare of the people in India with sacrifice and love introduced a new chapter in the history of renaissance in 19th century. Coming from the Western world, a dedicated service of Margaret Elizabeth Noble in India and her absorption into the main stream of Indian life and thought proves her extraordinarily genius and intense love for her adopted country. Two powerful words 'Love India' as delivered by Vivekananda are the sources of spirit for Nivedita who transform the life of a sister to become a great *Karmayogi* to serve India in all respect. The clarion call of Swami Vivekananda and his extraordinary personality with a burning path of religious passion inspired Nivedita to contribute a lot to Indian society. A great change came in her life when she realized the works of Swami Vivekananda, "This world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word like thunder bolt.... Awake, awake, great one! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Instead of good, happy life of ease and comfort with her wealth, fame, home and family, she chooses the path of hardship in an unknown country. "Being inspired by Swami Vivekananda's transcendent renunciation and strength of character, sister Nivedita has chosen to follow his path of total sacrifice for one's own liberation and for the good of the world and to dedicate her life for the welfare of India which was stricken by poverty and distress. In the words of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, "She came to us because she felt the call of India. She came to us because she felt the fascination of India. She came to give India the worship of her heart on one side and to take her place among India's sons and daughters in the great work that lies before us." In 1899, Sister Nivedita went to London from Calcutta with Swami Vivekananda on a ship. During the six weeks journey, she had an experience of enlightenment that changed her life forever; she dived deep into her master's powerful thoughts and achieved gems of insights. The power of truth and purity and the light changed her line of thinking which was expressed in her master piece, *The Master as I Saw Him*. Sanjeeb Chattopadhaya rightly says that Margaret is not an ordinary lady. From the beginning of her child hood she was in search of Truth which she found not in the church. She met Vivekananda whom she addressed as her Master. His words became a guideline for all her life that pacified her restless spirit. She desired to make herself

the servant of his love for his own people. On 29th July, 1897, Swamiji wrote: “Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What is desired is not in a man, but in a woman, a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially.” Swamiji realized that her education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood made her just the woman India wanted.

In India, Nivedita was trained to mould herself in tune with Indian culture. She was taught Bengali for good communication with others in Bengal. She learned glorious history of India and observed the status, education, condition and culture of the people of India. During their journey to England, Swamiji fully expressed his ideal, “You must give up all visiting, and live in strict seclusion. You have to be a Hindu in your thoughts, needs, conceptions and habits. Your life, internal and external, has to be all that of an orthodox Hindu Brahmin and *Brahmachari*. The method will come to you, only you desire it sufficiently. But you have to forget your own past, and be the cause to be forgotten.”¹ Nivedita accepted the proposal with a deep sense of reverence. The problem that occupied the thought of Vivekananda was how to reconcile the old and the new, how to nationalize the modern and modernized. He had complete faith on Nivedita’s capacity for working out a solution for this problem. Vivekananda emphasized on woman’s education in India, their place and right in society. In spite of latent qualities in them they are exploited for many years due to foreign invasion and darkness of Hinduism that belonged in the society. The progress of India would never be possible if women are not educated.

II

For Vivekananda, all the great qualities present within the Indian women need to be transmuted through education and example into a new set of values in tune with modernity. With this noble view, Nivedita gave all she had for the establishment of her school. Though her scope was limited, she knew that to ignite fire, a large amount of fire wood is not needed. One can very well ignite fire with limited firewood and by careful attention it would spread out in all directions. On 13th November, 1898, Nivedita Girls’ School was founded in Bosepara Lane, Kolkata with the presence of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and Swami Sharadananda along with the blessings of Sarada Devi. Nivedita had a strong

conviction that from this school the great and learned women like Gargi and Maitreyi will come out.³

It was not an easy task to continue a girls' school in an orthodox situation where Hindus were against women's education and Nivedita could hardly accept girl students for her school. Those who attended the school included small girls, young married women, house wives and widows. Languages, mathematics, hand work, sewing, drawing, and painting were taught there. The junior students were taught by their seniors. Among the senior students were three or four girls who were child widows and who have devoted their whole life to the school. ⁴ In spite of great financial stringency and hardships, Nivedita's spirit was continued to run the school. Rabindranath wrote: "She did not maintain the school on the funds received from public or from excess money. It was run completely on her sacrificing her own means of existence."⁵

One may wonder: how was Nivedita succeeded in pioneering the first and only national school for woman in the country through self sacrifice to starvation. She taught mathematics, art and English. Her method of teaching was so good that even weak students easily understand the subjects with earnest interest. Through her novel method of teaching arithmetic, the young girls not only improved their memory and power of thinking but also develop a deeper understanding of the science of mathematics. She encouraged the students and say 'Never keep any mistake. As soon as you know it is a mistake, scratch it out'. Swami Vivekananda wanted that there must be a harmony between the plan for reformation of India and her religion. Education must be given to the students for developing patriotic consciousness along with religious temperament. India wants a good work culture. But Swamiji said that Nivedita should not give up the old heritage of spiritual treasure of India. Nivedita expressed Swamiji's thoughts, "He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future, entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science, women must learn, but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality."⁶ Swamiji says, "True woman-hood, like true-manhood, was not a matter of mere externals. And unless it was held and developed the spirit of true woman-hood, there would be no education of woman worthy of the name."⁷ Like Vivekananda, Nivedita also had a great faith on the spirit of Indian woman. In her words, "Her (India's) sanctuary today is full of shadows. But

when the woman hood of India can perform the great Arati of Nationality, that temple shall be all light, may the dawn verily is near at hand.”⁸ Nivedita introduced the model of education among girls that would help them in national awakening.

Nivedita’s interest was to teach the students Indian art like thousand petalled white lotuses in the *ālpanā* and how to chisel designs on stone and make molds of clay. Being deeply meditative she used to say to the girls to chant the name ‘*Bharatvarsha* - the Mother- repeatedly. Swamiji believed that real education is needed for national development. To awaken the religious consciousness through the manifestation of the divinity within would select the way to go towards Universal Good. During that period, Hindu society did not allow any unmarried girl to lead her life as an educationist. So Nivedita planned that widows from early age and orphan girls would be taught and trained up in such way that they would bear the responsibility to spread education among others in future. To them field of service will be their own house, only bond will be their religion and their love will be for their master, nation and people of the country. In this plan education of woman and liberation of them are equally significant. Nivedita thus paid her sacred offerings to Vivekananda, her Acharya, a life full of sacrifice through her mighty work to build up national basis of women’s education. Everything was going on smoothly but sudden incident of Vivekananda’s passing into eternity had a mighty blow in Nivedita’s life. She started to go ahead for nation making alone. .

Nivedita’s mission was to create an idea, in tune with Swamiji’s. She only changed from Swamiji’s ‘man-making’ task to ‘nation-making’. Vivekananda’s idealism was vast and unfathomable, but Nivedita realized that something more concrete was necessary. In the words of Nivedita, “Swami is the only person I know, who goes to the root of the matter- national man-making and I do not know if Swamiji never formulates all this other.”⁹ Though Vivekananda never used the word nation or nation-making or nationality, these words become the key notes of all his thinking, writing and speaking. ‘Nationality is the inherent qualities of a nation’ - this concept of Nivedita was developed from her master. She listened about India in detail, her heritage, her spiritual strength from Vivekananda and she was astonished with the great horizontal and deep thoughts of Swamiji about India. Nivedita had also the living experience of the people of India. Vivekananda used to say that

religion is the life of India and national integration is possible only through integration of spiritual power of India. Patriotism should reach to the level of worship. Inner strength of India lies in her spirituality. Swamiji said, “Man making is my mission” and Nivedita said, “It is national man-making”. Nivedita was optimistic like her master who had many times expressed his conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed, but young, ripe with potentiality and standing, at beginning of the 20th century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she had known in the past.

Nivedita could not accept any of the interpretations of social reform, political agitation, religious movements or economic grievances. She knew these to be each a part behind which lay a greater reality dominating and coordinating the whole idea of the Indian nationhood. Explaining it she said, “It begins to be thought that there is a religious idea that may be called Indian, but it is of no single sect; that there is a social idea, which is the property of no cast or group; that there is a historic evolution, in which all are united; that it is a thing within all these which alone is to be called India.”¹⁰ Nivedita realized that India contained sufficient forces of recovery within her and took interest in national awakening in all its aspects. She was a great intellectual and moral force that had come down to us in a time of great national need. The renowned economist Benay Sarkar said that she was “The philosopher of Romantic nationalism and aggressive Indianism.” In the words of Rashbihari Ghose who presided over the memorial meeting held at the Town Hall after Nivedita’s death, “If the dry bones are beginning to stir, it is because Sister Nivedita breathed the breath of life into them.”¹¹

Indian culture is based on oneness of Truth. The world is the manifestation of one infinite all pervading divine spirit. Our aim is to realize that one divine spirit both in our personal life and in the life of community and make a peaceful environment. We need a good assimilation of various cultures in different parts of the country. Nationality, according to Nivedita, is a great sacred idea and she wanted the revival of civic ideal among people. She wrote in *The Civic Ideal*, “... the elements of nationality are civic and to these civic components it is that the individual stands most directly and most permanently related.”¹² We may do our duties to our nation if we can come out of our narrow selfishness. We will be fit for our national responsibility

through our examination of civic duties. In her words, “The man will suffer some slight risk and discomfort for national good, is not the man to whom to entrust the banner of an army. By civic duty we are tested for national responsibilities.”¹³ Nivedita preferred the word ‘Self-organization’ more than ‘Regeneration,’ because India has all sorts of qualities like self sacrifice, high ideals of reverence and love. What India needs today is the actualization of these ideals and national integration. Religion should not be the matter of conflict because harmony of religions has already been established by Ramakrishna- Vivekananda as a great ideal.

Indian art was yet another field in which Nivedita’s contribution was no less remarkable. It would not be an exaggeration to say that her name will ever shine in the history of the revival of the ancient Indian Art of the Ajanta, Rajput and Mogul styles. She was not an artist, but her inspiration, encouragement and guidance helped many young artists to tread the obliterated tracks of ancient Indian Art. She believed that the re-birth of art was essential to the remaking of the nation. Her appreciation of the ideals of Indian art and her passion for its revival were derived from Swami Vivekananda. In the Paris conference of 1900 the Swami gave a brilliant exposition of Indian art and dilated on the controversial subjects of Greek influence on Indian art, science, literature and culture. He proved that the views of the Western orientalist on these subjects were shallow and biased. Nivedita was convinced of the Swami’s views and latter became one of the chief critics of the theory of the Hellenic influence on Indian art. Nivedita first made Mr. Havell in 1902 and was glad to know that Mr. Havel’s view about Indian Art was very similar with her own. After all she made him understand the view points of Indian aesthetics and philosophy of art. Mr. Havell was the first foreigner to point out that Indian art was original and was not derived from Greece. He declared in his book, ‘Indian Sculpture and Painting’, “The Greeks no more created Indian Sculpture and painting than they created Indian philosophy and religion.”¹⁴

The other important contribution of Nivedita was to define the function of the Art schools in India. Besides Calcutta, there were Art schools in Madras, Travancore, Lahore and Bombay where the teachers were from abroad. The function of the Art school in India was not to introduce European methods and ideals but to gather and revitalize the Indian traditions which were rapidly approaching towards extinction

and to relate the work of Indian craftsman to the life and thought of the Indians. When Nivedita came in contact with Mr. Abanindranath Tagore, the Vice-Principal of the Calcutta Art School, she saw that he too was imbued with foreign ideals. Due to Nivedita's influence he later turned to the Indian style. He acknowledged that she had opened the eyes of Indians to the beautiful aspects of their own country, their own art and their own institutions. Her strong and clear visions of Renaissance in art always appeal to him. ¹⁵Nivedita was full of praise for Abanindranath when he adopted the Indian style. When he painted *Bharat Mata* she was in ecstasy and wrote "We see in this drawing something for which Indian Art has long been waiting, the birth of the idea of those new combinations which are to make the modern age in India."¹⁶ Nivedita made a wonderful synthesis between Western art and Indian art. In order to demonstrate the true ideals of western art she got reprints of good paintings, mostly religious ones and got them printed in the *Modern Review* with critical notes. These were also translated into Bengali and published in the *Prabasi*. Thus she made Indians familiar with great Western masters like Raphael, Michel Angelo, Millet Rossetti, Titian, Morris and Burne Jones etc. ¹⁷

Another glorious contribution of Nivedita we find is in the field of science. In 1900, Jagadish Ch. Bose was invited to the International Congress of Physics arranged at Paris Exhibition. Bose made a presentation on 'Response of Inorganic and living matter'. Both Swami Vivekananda and Nivedita attended the Congress and were happy and proud of Bose's achievements. From that time the great scientist Bose was known to Nivedita. It is well known that a section of British Scientist went against Bose and played foul with him that his papers were not published but 'shelved' and stolen. Nivedita was a witness to the regular tussle with the British and she stood by him in all his struggles because she understood clearly that Indians were not incapable of doing great things but their obstacle to proceed caused from the British. Between 1902 and 1907 she helped Bose in writing the books: *Living and Non-Living, Plant Response and Comparative Electro Physiology and Irritability of Plants*.

Nivedita was greatly interested in the revival of all intellectual advances made by India especially in the advance of modern science. Her desire was to see a Research Institute opened in India which would give the Indian scientist the

necessary help to continue their scientific investigations. Nivedita was also a great thinker on Sociology and Economics which was known from many of her articles on India Political Economy from a point of view different from that of the West. Some prominent figures of the age like Gurudas Banerjee, Rashbihari Ghose, Brajendranath Seal, P.C. Ray, Aswini Kumar Dutta, NilRatan sarkar, Ananda Mohan Bose, Bhupendra Nath Bose, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee, and Sarojini Naidu came to know about her and appreciate her love for the country.

III

Nivedita was a versatile genius. Her talented works in the field of science, literature, journalism, philosophy, history, economics, politics, sociology and others pleased all of. Her active participation in freedom movement, her mission to revive Indian culture along with modern science and her intense love and respect for India made Nivedita an excellent and dynamic spirit. This helped her to begin intercultural movement to establish an example of synthesis between the East and the West on the basis of Universal love and sacrifice. She moulded herself into Indian culture with a strong conviction of Western attitude of accepting Truth with scientific reasoning. Her *The Web of Indian Life* describes India from inside and she was inspired by *Gītā* and *The Lectures of Swami Vivekananda*. The awakening of illumination in India was actively affected by her massive work in the field of womens' education and to build up the nation on the revival of culture and values.

It is our great tension today that human civilization all over the world undergoes with a crisis of peace and erosion of value. A materialistic approach of life is going to be over-flowed and that will perish all our inner wealth of respect, love and harmony. The great continent in the world is ambitious for more power with atomic energy for destruction of human civilizations for their own self-interest. But desire, demand, craving, sensation, passion selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy are our enemies as they are hostile to truth. Constant longing towards the Divine, aspiration to awake, intense will to develop work culture, desire for intercultural communication throughout the world may transform the present situation of extreme crisis to a peaceful society today. Sister Nivedita's life of sacrifice, dedication, extraordinary courage to do the needful and her spirit to fight against injustice may be the lamp to the whole human race of the world.

References:-

1. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* , Vol. 1, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1967, p. 208
2. Saralabala Sarkar (trans.Prabhati Mukherjee) *Nivedita as I Saw Her*. Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 5 Nivedita Lane, Calcutta 2013, p.17-18
3. *Ibid*. p.,9
4. *Ibid* p.22
5. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* , Vol. 1, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1975. P. 195
6. *Ibid* p.194-195
7. *Ibid* Vol. 4, P.362
8. *Letters of Sister Nivedita* , Nibabharat Publishers, Calcutta , 1982, 1, 436
9. *Ibid* , p.467
10. *The Modern Review*, 1912, April P.450.
11. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* , Vol. 4, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1967, P. 209
12. *Ibid*. P.209
13. *Pravrajika Atmaprana* Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna -Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 5 Nivedita Lane, Calcutta 3, 2014, p.275
14. *Ibid* P.276
15. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* , Vol. 3, Ramakrishna-Sarada Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1967, P. 59
16. *Pravrajika Atmaprana*. Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 2014, p.277

**ANITA DESAI'S VOICES IN THE CITY: A DISCOURSE OF THE
POSTCOLONIAL MODERNITY**

MUKUL SK

The writing of Anita Desai begins to take birth at a time when the earth is in its fully-matured postmodern shape. Desai could neither shut her eyes to the aura of the multi-faced and multi-dimensional postmodern waves and write back about the traditional beauty of nature and generosity and magnanimity of human race, nor could she go unaffected by the sharp whack and bang of postmodernity. Desai tries to measure the epochal changes the postmodern brought over the human race and its habitats. She captures the real colors of human psyche that get distorted and vandalized in the postmodern era and observes the human hearts very neatly at a very close distance. She survives the poison of the postmodern because she struggles to maintain all the tunes of its dances merging into the darkness of the postmodern with her own distinguishable luminosity of identity.

The postmodern begins to engulf the earth during the mid-twentieth century, and it is the West that experiences its first drops. It reaches the East later and Anita Desai is among the first from this part to sense its impact. After surviving the two Great World Wars, The west sees the human approaching towards loneliness and alienation, depression and hopelessness, doubt and unfaithfulness, and that leads to challenge the legacy of traditional values and beliefs. It changes the way people look at everything offering new meaning and significance to it. It changes the direction of human journey to something that is marked with quest for identity, search for meaning of life but only ending with emptiness, nothingness, meaninglessness. People see everything vague, impure, and untrustworthy. The whole habitat of human race turns into a dystopia that contaminates all the beings in it. Philosophers come up with new ideas and creeds to re-define the earth and its beings; writers repudiate the traditional way of looking and emerge with new artistries and approaches to paint the distorted human psyche.

Apart from the burden of the postmodern traumas, Desai experiences the laceration of the postcolonial legacy that infected a lasting wound on the civilization of Indian subcontinent from which India hardly recovered till date. The postmodern cry for freedom for the marginalized sections of the society is another fact that shapes Desai's writing, which emerged in the form of different movements—feminism, Human Rights movements, and so on. Like Margaret Atwood, Desai feels the need of voices for the hitherto un-noticed feelings of female hearts; like Virginia Woolf, she

unbinds the flows of human conscious; like Toni Morrison she dissects different family relations and makes them aware of their status in that family and society. In the present chapter we discuss Desai's novel *Voices in the City* (1965) and show how the novel projects a dystopia of the discorded family relationship, a dystopia of torn marriage life, a dystopia of unsuitable waste land.

The novel tells the story of middle-class intellectuals in Calcutta and paints a picture of 'the cross-currents of changing social values' that came after the uprooting of the British colonial legacy and the arrival of the postmodern upheavals. It is a family drama of four members and narrates their sweet and sour feelings for one another. Nirode is the brother of two sisters Amla and Monisha who are each living separately from their mother. The novel divides into four parts that are named after the three siblings and their mother. The first part 'Nirode' portrays the struggles of some educated adults in the fast-changing modernity and delineates the failure of Nirode to ensure a mental and social sustainability. He loses belief in the traditional inheritance of ancestral property and tries to see his surrounding on his own. He does not like others to pose their ideas upon him. He works as an editor in a magazine but finds it impossible for him to continue this. He thinks this job quite impersonal bereft of any personal involvement. In the end he runs into delusion and disappointment. The second part 'Monisha' unravels the failure of the modern society to arrange and sustain a compatible marriage life. Monisha is married to Jiban and continues to live in Calcutta with her husband and in-laws. She finds no one in this city compatible for her company and tears contacts with the world and lives in her own world of loneliness and alienation. She finds no one in her husband's house who can hear the inner voice of her heart. Her marriage was a failure which was arranged on the terms of money and property. And at last she ends her life in suicide. The third part 'Amla' details the character of Amla, the youngest sister, who is, in the beginning, presented as a positive girl, but, in the end, is dejected and disillusioned with her personal relationships. The fourth part 'Mother' presents her vain attempt to unite with her son and daughters.

The very opening of the novel echoes a tone marked with a touch of postmodern anxiety - people hopelessly rushing here and there in search for something they do not really know. The story opens with an account of a railway

platform, where Nirode came to give farewell to his friend Arun who was leaving for London and where he noticed people rushing here and there with nervousness and anxiety on their faces. “On the platform people loitered in various attitudes of nervousness, impatience and regret...and latecomers pounding along with baggage wobbling and disintegrating in the seemingly hopeless search for the right carriage”(VC 7). The journey of these men in train symbolically turns a journey of life that has no visible and concrete destination. Nirode thinks people are in their search for something that cannot be really achieved on this meaningless earth. He does not find any hope in their journey. Nirode possesses some awareness of the hopelessness of people’s vain journey and struggle. He thinks “that this is no actual journey but a nightmare one in which one is unable to start”. There is nothing actuality in this journey but a vain attempt to gratify the human queries that ends in crushing on grounds with hopelessness and disillusionment. Nirode says: I’d never go, David, I never shall... I hesitate. That’s my undoing - this lack of faith and this questioning. I just stand and watch the train rush off, leaving me behind like a ghost in a bloody nightmare. (Desai 39)

Unlike Vladimir and Estragon in Becket’s *Waiting for Godot*, who are in total disillusion of their journey and destination, Nirode thinks he would rather not start the vain journey. He is dead with the meaningless journey of life and “what he wanted was shadows, silence, stillness... that is exactly what he would always be left with” (VC 10). This is not Nirode, an individual who desires silence, stillness and shadows, but the whole human race that are infected with the virus of modern diseases are in search for this. Vladimir and Estragon start an endless journey or rather a waiting for their fate to be opened by an unknown authority. Their journey or waiting results in nothingness and ends with the message that life is really meaningless. Nirode is also a traveler who thinks that he has to travel alone. He converses with his friend David: “you and I will always be travelers; David and we’ll always travel alone” (VC 90). But like Vladimir and Estragon who could never determine their minds whether to stay or move away, Nirode moves back and says: ‘I haven’t even begun yet’.

Nirode finds no solace or sense in the life’s journey: “unfair, life is unfair - and how faint and senseless it sounded in that tumult of traffic and commerce” (VC

9-10). This is no more a holy journey of Bunyan's Christian, nor a crusade of Arnold's Arthur. As Desai writes: He (Nirode) loathed the world that could offer him no crusade, no pilgrimage and he loathed himself for not having the true, unwavering spirit of either within him. There is only this endless waiting, hollowed out by an intrinsic knowledge that there was nothing to wait for. (Desai 63)

Unlike many of the Western writers - Kafka, Becket, Camus - who see life only as an entity filled with 'absurdity' and whose works are quite concerned with the absurd and meaningless journey of humanity with no sign of hopeful attempt to find any meaning and purpose, Desai presents us with characters who possess some instinct and inner inquisitiveness to discover some marks of meaning on the face of humanity. Nirode, in this novel, when he finds it difficult to reach the human destination through the normal ladder, likes to take a different way: "And since I never was any good to going along with the others, I thought, I would take the other direction and follow failure after failure and reach the bottom of the arc much quicker..." (VC 182). Unlike Willy Loman in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* who after finding himself failed in life ends his life, Nirode, though he knows 'it is damned from the start' and 'it's a failure already', confirms: I have the spirit to start moving again towards my next failure. I want move from failure to failure to failure, step by step to rock bottom. I want to explore that depth. When you climb a ladder, all you find at the top is space, all you can do is leap off - fall to the bottom. I want to get there without that meaningless climbing... (Desai 40) Desai admits to an interviewer: I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated, or have been driven into some extremity of despair and turn against or make a stand against the general current. It is easy to flow with the current, it makes no demands, it costs no effort, but those who cannot follow it... know what the demands are, what it costs to meet them. (Anita Desai. Interview by Yashodhara Dalmia. *The times of India* 29 April, 1979:13)

Nirode and Monisha both are detracted from the mainstream of the current but they try to continue even against the current. Regarding Nirode's spirit to find some truth even after several failures, we can quote from Desai's interview where she says: Writing is my way of plunging into the depths and exploring this underlying truth. My writing is an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things. I must seize upon that incomplete and seemingly meaningless mass of reality

around me and try and discover its significance by plunging below the surface and plumbing the depth... (Desai Interview 1- 6)

In the dystopian world of postmodern times, the word 'survive' comes to carry deep significance when each living species is facing threats to life in its own place. Desai doubts the long-believed security and stability of human life. Nirode here is the voice of those doubts and questions about the safety and happiness that are believed to lie in a family, or friendship or any human relationship. People somehow turn crazy in searching the ultimate truth of existence. Nirode, while conversing with his friend David, expresses his doubt about the happiness his friend demands to have in his life, and thinks that all cannot reach the happiness: "if we were all to become - happy... The world would come to a stand still and no one would move another step" (VC 93). Nirode who voices the modern anxiety of surviving in this world finds it difficult to manage his life in the changing social values of (post)modern society. He asks a professor of his life's journey and tells him about himself of his queries: "I don't know. How can I survive? It seems hard" (VC 19). Philosophers like Camus who propagate the philosophy that "eternal suffering at least would give us a destiny" (VC 41) seem incapable to provide 'right carriage' to human journey. Nirode regrets: "but we do not have even that consolation and worst agonies come to an end one day" (VC41). He continues: "happiness and suffering - I want to be done with them, disregard them, see beyond them to the very end" (VC 41).

People in this modern world just exist; they are just breathing and surviving, not living life of humanity. For many this breathing often becomes unbearable insomuch that they give up breathing. Nirode is from those who see the world changing to the destructiveness. "What does it all mean? Why are lives such as these lived? At their conclusion, what solution, what truth falls into the waiting palm of one's hand, the still pit of one's heart?" (VC 120). He rightly feels the threat to the normal survival of humanity. He tells his sister Amla that he is already undergoing difficulty in his survival and that he doubts of others' survival: "surviving! Yes, I'm surviving - I suppose that is just what one would call this state of existing, just breathing and eating and going around with a perpetual headache and stomachache"(VC 181). He thinks it "better to leap out of the window and end it all

instead of smearing this endless sticky glue of senselessness over the world. Better not to live” (VC 19)

Things that most concern today’s literature are death and the fear that crush down the very soul of humanity. The novel presents characters that are chased by the death and fear of total human failure in the meaningless human journey. They are in the fear that the journey they are continuing since their birth may end only in destruction which is accompanied by death. Jit expresses this fear to Amla telling her that she is moving towards the destruction: “you destroy - you destroy yourselves and you destroy that part of others that gets so fatally involved in you. There is - this dreadful attractiveness in your dark ways of thinking and feeling through life towards death” (VC 174). The love that brings the humanity peace is replaced by the destructive fear - a fear of some unknown threats, a fear that eats up the heart of humanity. Amla says: ... The vital element that is missing from Nirode and myself - the element of love. And I discover that it is the absence of it that makes us, brother and sister, such abject rebels, such craven tragedians. In place of this love... we possess a darker, fiercer element - fear. (Desai 134)

Monisha’s suicide by burning herself in the kitchen makes the postmodern question regarding human survival more valid and intense. Like Nirode she visualizes the emptiness and nothingness that lie at the end of the journey. She shares many ideas with Nirode about the life and the world. When she, after getting married with Jiban, comes to Calcutta, she finds no person or place compatible with her ideas and thinking. She closes up herself and lives a life of her own, a life of loneliness, fear and disappointment. As the day wears on, she loses contact with everyone and descends into loneliness and alienation. Her loneliness is the loneliness of the modern generation; it is the loneliness of the modern people who live life of terror and suffering. Desai says in an interview published in *The Massachusetts Review*: “the subject of all my books has been what Ortega Y Gasset called “the terror of facing, single-handed, the ferocious assaults of existence” (*The Massachusetts Review* 1988, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 521-537). Desai writes: Slowly she (Monisha) began to realize that in her heart no fountain had spouted and that what he feared was the great empty white distance set between her and this moist, crimson flowering of emotion in the street below. (Desai 236)

The novel ends luridly with Monisha's death exposing the illusory façade of reality. Monisha and Nirode realize that the earth is no longer the heaven for man's living which people used to believe. Monisha hailed from Darjeeling and came to Calcutta to find a better life. She got married here to Jiban. After her marriage she could not settle mentally or physically. Her sadness and loneliness eats up her mind and body. She herself does not know why she is sad and afraid: "why am I sad? Why am I afraid? Do I recall a time—oh an epoch—when I understood as well they? Then I feel bereft because I have forgotten, I have lost touch" (VC 237). And at last she becomes invisible to her people and the world: I grow smaller every day, shrink, and lose more and more of my weight, my appurtenances, the symbols of my existence that used to establish me in the eyes of the world. I am already too small to be regarded much by anyone. I will be invisible yet. (Desai 138)

Kafka presents the extreme heights of human's incapability to survive on this earth and shows man's gradual detachment from the mainstream of humanity. Kafka, in his novella *The Metamorphosis*, metaphorically presents the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a strange insect so as to show human alienation in the human crowds. Monisha has the marriage family and in-laws but she never finds herself involved in the marriage bonds and rather finds herself gradually being aloof and detached mentally and physically from every relation: "I cannot really hear them. I cannot understand what they say. I have never touched anyone, never left the imprint of my fingers on anyone's shoulders, of my tongue on anyone's damp palate" (VC 237). Monisha, not physically like Gregor Samsa, but mentally is transformed into some strange entity that finds no room suitable for her to exist. Amla, her sister, realizes this struggle of transformation in Monisha. Desai writes of Amla's mind about Monisha: Amla jerked into wakefulness, overwhelmed by a new fear of this sister who had turned sleepwalker, ghost some unknown and dread entity. This unnatural silence and unobtrusiveness of hers, it seemed to emphasize the distance she had travelled from reality into a realm of still colourlessness. (Desai 147)

Like Melville's Bartleby in *Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* Monisha travelled to her world of darkness insomuch that she could not get back to the life she left. When people in this post-modern world finds it difficult to survive the harsh reality, they create a world of their own so that they can get rid of the

disturbance of the real world. Desai realizes this tendency of man/woman to go away from the reality in hope of getting some relief in their minds. Desai writes: “Monisha she(Amla) saw as seated upright and mute in one corner, her gaze fixed on some mysterious point as though it were a secret window opening on to darkness, gazing and gazing, with not a word to say of what she saw”(VC 198). But the darkness of Desai’s Nirode or Monisha does not reach to the extremity of that of Melville’s *Bartleby*, or that of Kafka’s *K* or Gregor Samsa.

The novel is a family drama projecting a dystopia of modern family relationships where each member gets separated from each other and lives life of their own. The novel shows the dark island that emerges between the family relations. Jit, a character in this novel, arranges a party to bring Amla and Nirode together. Nirode says: “yes and we sat together and formed a little island of sense and sensibility in the centre of that murky bog - did not we Amla” (VC 170). Nirode used to love Amla much when they were children and ‘Nirode was the one in the family to whom she had always been the closest’. But now Amla finds Nirode too strange to have any intimate conversation with him. Desai writes: “obviously he had pulled himself through a crisis, both mental and physical... if she (Amla) worried about him it was because of this wasted appearance and his alienation from their yearning mother” (VC 157)

Nirode feels that he has nothing to do with the family and that ‘between him and his mother’s brilliant territory was erected a barbed wire fence, all glittering and vicious’. He does not respond to his mother’s letters. He wants to live with his own ideas and creeds. He wants to create a distinct identity of his own that will have no touch with family name and obligation. He asserts his sister Amla that he cannot live obliged by the family name and obligation. He thinks the family would ‘catch him and brand him with the family name, family money, family honour’. He says: “I have given up using a family name, Amla, and I want no more of a family life” (VC 156). He grows distaste for the family love, bond and affection that, he thinks, binds people to the boundary of a small family. Desai here shows the decline of social and family authority and that leads to individual depression and doubt within society. The family of the post-modernity is no longer a stable institution providing financial and social security and reliance.

People living in this post-modern world are experiencing an increasing situation of disintegration and fragmentation that fall on the family. They become strange towards their parents, sister or brother. The post-modern literature is much concerned with this strangeness of people towards their family relations. The American playwright Eugene O'Neill wrote the play *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) and showed the hollowness of the family bond and disappointment that resulted from the family failures. Each member of the Tyrone family in this play lives in Separate Island of their own delusion, disaster and disappointment.

Meursault, the main character in Camus' play *The Stranger* feels no shock and sorrows after getting the news of his mother's death, and rather feels annoyed to attend the funeral. One point worth mentioning is that the western postmodernity has left much impact on Anita Desai. She asserts to an interviewer: "I remember the first time I read Camus' *The Stranger*, what a tremendous impression it made on me...Dostoevsky was the other writer I think who interested me so much when I was young" (The Massachusetts Review 1988, vol. 29, no. 3, p. 521-537). Here in this novel Nirode's mother has some kind of Meursault's strangeness that she remains little moved even after her daughter's painful suicide and death. Desai writes about Nirode's mother when she came to visit after the news of Monisha's death: She did not look at once and he knew it was not out of cold vengeance but out of sheer disinterest. She no longer needed him nor her other children. She was a woman fulfilled - by the great tragedy of her daughter's suicide - and it was, he saw, what she had always needed fulfill her. (Desai, 249)

Desai sets her novel in a city that is undergoing such a phase of period that it neither totally leaves the old dying social values behind nor properly devours the emerging social system, creating a total confusion and disappointment among its people. This city appears as dystopia where children cannot live with their mother, or respond to their sister; where mother does not feel the need of their children; where men cannot trust their friends. The novel shows the city as filled with illusions, disappointment and hopelessness. The city appears to be filthy monstrous, dirty and dark. Darkness fell on the city. It fell so quickly, naturally and with such ineluctability, that Amla accepted at last that this was the true colour of Calcutta and that the luminous island she had visited, where goose feathers shone like white china

and each fold of a rolled pan leaf was sharp in clarity, was only a portion of a dream world, real only by reflection. It had not illuminated by the cheerful sun of her children but by the supernatural vision of those who live always underground, in the dark. (Desai 216)

This darkness engulfs its entire people making them partially blind. They see nothing but deception and depression. Nirode expresses his annoyance to his friend Jiban: “I am so tired of it, this crowd. In Calcutta, it is everywhere deceptively, it is a quite crowd—passive, but depressed” (VC 118). The city appears to him dead having no conscience. This city presses him from all sides transforming him into some strange entity. He describes: From all sides their moist palms press down on me, their putrid breaths and harsh voices. There is no diving underground in so under populated a burrow, even the sewers and gutters are choked, they are so full. Of what? Of grime, darkness, poverty, disease... has this city a conscience at all, this Calcutta that holds its head between its knees and grins toothlessly up at me from beneath black with the dirt that it sits on? (Desai ,116)

Nirode is one of the characters in this novel who realizes the violent thrashes of the post-modernity that disfigure the entire social fabric of his land. He sees the city transforming into some new shapes under the post-modern upshots. Nirode regrets: “Once the smoke clears, slowly, I see another face of this devil city, a face that broods over the smouldering fire - a dull, vacant, hopeless face” (VC,117). To conclude Desai, in this novel, presents us with people who are caught in the trap of the post-modern eccentricity which leaves them self-divided, unpredictable and vulnerable. Desai does not aim to detail the social defectiveness, rather tends to project a sense of the malleability of Indian society in the postcolonial/post-modern aura. Her incorporation of such characters - Nirode, Monisha, Amla - should not be taken as nihilistic. Rather she tries to dig out a way of taking the post-modern at the centre of humanist concerns. She also takes us to the recognition that the post-modern tends to individualism to have self-dependent and that it leads to lose faith on the family and social authority.

Works Cited

- Becket, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*. Faber Faber, n.d.
- Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

- Desai, Anita. *Voices In The City*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1965.
- Eugene, O'Neill. *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. New Delhi: New Hern Books, 1991.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. New York and London: Routledge, 1988.
- Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Broadway Books, 2014.
- Melville, Herman. *The Portable melville*. New York: The Viking Press, 1952.
- Miller, Arthur. *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1973.
- Smart, Barry. *Modern Conditions, Postmodern Controversies*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

Interviews:

1. Dalmia, Yashodara, "An interview with Anita Desai", *Times of India*, April 29, 1979.
2. Desai, Anita, "Reply to the questionnaire", *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*. Vol. III, No. 1. 1978.
3. Bliss, C D. "Against The Current: A Conversation With Anita Desai." *The Massachusetts Review* 1988: 521-537.

ŚĀNTARAŚĪTA AND KĀMALAŚĪLA ON THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

ALOK KUMAR KHATUA

In the intellectual tradition of Indian philosophy the discussions on the problem of universals are divided into two main groups, one is the realistic and other is idealistic (the idealistic view of Buddhist is known as nominalism). The realist school of Nyāya-vaiśeṣika in Indian philosophical system admits seven

categories such as *dravya* (substance), *guṇa* (quality), *karma* (action), *sāmānya* (universal), *viśeṣa* (particular), *samavāya* (inherence) and *abhāva* (absence). The universal (*sāmānya*) is the fourth category which is also known as class, genus, etc. It is by nature eternal and inherence in all its particulars. The general cognition of things as ‘cow’, ‘jar’, ‘red’, etc. necessarily proves the existence of universals as real as the common or general properties of particulars. The realist argues that the universal must be regarded as the common characteristic of the particulars in which it inheres. If we do not admit the universal as class or genus or the common properties of particulars, then the general cognition of cow cannot be understood by the word ‘cowness’. It means the general term denotes its particulars and the general properties of all particulars in which the universal (what the general term denotes) is inherent. But, the nominalists do not admit the existence of universal as real entity, universals are mere conceptual constructions and thus they have no reference to the external reality. As opposed to the realist, both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla maintain that verbal or inferential cognition can be expressed negatively without assuming real universals.

Realism and Nominalism

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school has admitted two kinds of universals – the highest and the lower, Being or Existence (*sattā-jāti*) and substantiality and the rest (*dravyatva*). The first (Being) is the highest universal or summum genus (*parā jāti*)¹ - the universal *par excellence*. Because it is the basis of its entire three -substance, quality and action, and so, for this same reason, it is not a particular at all. In this system the two words *sāmānya* and *jāti* are synonymous;² the universal is defined as a unitary and eternal category inhering and underlying a number of individuals. The other is substance universal (*dravyatva*), the quality-universal (*guṇatva*), the action-universal (*karmatva*) – these are called *aparā jāti* (minor universals). The highest universal acts assimilation which is a special type of function of a universal. The others universals have double function, viz. assimilation and differentiation.³

Śāntarakṣita does not accept this view. He represents the Buddhist nominalism to refute the realist view on universals. After the compellation of examination of *Karma Padārtha* he tries to examine the *sāmānya* (universal). Like

Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita holds that valid knowledge or valid cognitions as instants of new knowledge in the sense that the cognizer knows newly something which to that point was unknown. He admits traditional Buddhist *pramāṇavāda* that mentions two types of *pramāṇa*: perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). The objects of perception are the particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*), It is only particulars that are considered to be real (the point-instant and causally efficient). The objects of inference, on the other hand, are universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), words apply to universals which are mere mental constructs (*vikalpa/kalpanā*). Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla reinterpret the Dharmakīrti's notion *mental construction* (*kalpanā*) as just implicit or explicit verbalization or the association of a word or name to the object, but not association of concept (such as class-concept) with the object, because it might imply objectivity or reality of class-concepts or universals, such as cow-hood. There are two types of construction, one is verbalization (adding of names), and the other is conceptualization (associating class-concepts). Śāntarakṣita admits the first type of construction that is verbalization, while Dinnāga admits both although he denies the essential difference between verbalization and conceptualization.⁴ Universals are verbally possible but causally impossible and would be considered as unreal fictional entities that have no causal efficacy in the world. There are only three categories – substance, quality and action, all other categories have been assumed to subsist in the three categories. The universal or genus is also rejected by the way that considers it as an illustration.⁵ Only ultimate particular is real, universals are nothing but particulars. The universal cannot be admitted as an objective entity above or over the particulars.⁶ In the psychological analysis of our conceptual thought we see that there is no universal as real entity beyond the particulars. Particulars are considered as particulars, not as universals. Individuals are same as particulars which serve the basic feature of exclusion (*viśeṣa eva kecitu vyāvrttereva hetavaḥ*).⁷

How can the universals be proved?

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system holds that the different cows are distinct from one another such as they are different from horses, etc. This kind of difference can be proved by the direct perception of particular shape, qualities, action, etc. when the

sense-organs are functioning. It is true that we generally find the universals or class as ‘being’, ‘cow’ etc. in our perception of sameness or commonness (*anugataprātīti*) which is cognized through the sense-organs. The cognition of commonness cannot be possible unless we admit the universals as a general property (e.g. cowness). Uddyotakara mentioned that the universal *cow* is something different from the individual cow, because it is the object of different idea – like colour, touch, etc. and also because it is spoken of as belonging to the particular cows, just as cow is spoken of as belonging to *Budhi* and something different from *Budhi*. The individuals are different from one another because one appears as an individual or a differentiator.⁸ But, Śāntarakṣita replies that the universal has no essence in itself, because it is imaginary fiction. In fact, being, potness, etc. are not found in perception as the function of sense-organs, they are originated from a body of conventions. Even there is no strong evidence in support of it.⁹

When we see a *pot*, we try to identify it as a *pot*, to do it we call it by the name “pot,” to think it as *a pot* in our mind we imagine it, sometimes recall it and recognize it by the statement “this is the pot” – these are also applied to many other particular pots. The question may be raised, how can one thing, being-a-pot, share with many other particular pots? Again, is there any real entity in the external world, over and above the individual pots?¹⁰ The realist answer is that this real entity is universal (*sāmānya*, the commonness), the *potness* that is inherent in all the individual pots. But, Śāntarakṣita does not accept this view. The particulars, according to him, are absolutely distinct from one another and have nothing in common, and so the concept of class or genus cannot be accepted. The particular has special characteristic of causal efficiency which is not found in universals, and so universals cannot be counted by the particulars at all. Both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla hold that the idea of universal is nothing but conceptual fiction or a mental construction which is however hypothesized as an objective reality existing in its own right independently of the thinking mind (*antarmātrā-buddhiḥ*).¹¹ In order to refute the reality of universals they maintain that universals are subjective constructions but not real entities as realists admit. The whole universe is a flux of momentary particulars. There is no class-concept or universals in this flux, even there is no commonness as identity or similarity in a series of flux of momentary particulars. Even identity and similarity are nothing but products of our imagination;

these are constructed due to our unlimited desires.¹² The concept of commonness is nothing but fictional production of our imagination and it has therefore no reality.

Arguments in favour of Nominalism

Both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla clearly mention some strong arguments in favour of Nominalism, but these are considered as the idealistic view against Realism. Śāntarakṣita does not accept the realistic view, he says, *Dhātri*, *Haritaki*, etc are fruits, though in their different forms, having capacity to remove different diseases singly or jointly, they can be considered as the preventive medicine of various diseases, yet it cannot be right to argue that there is universal that has the capacity to act these. For this reason, there is no universal or commonness over the fruits by which the various fruitful acts would be possible.¹³ He denies the causal efficiencies of the different medicines are identical. Because some of them are more effective, but some are less, some act more quickly but some act very slowly, some are effective independently, while others act jointly with other materials. The diverse properties however are present in the *Dhātri*, *Haritaki*, etc. There is neither identity of cause nor of effect.¹⁴

Kamalaśīla also rejects the realistic view by saying that it cannot be right to assert that there is a universal which performs the various fruitful activities, even sometimes it is found that the various diseases can be cured in different ways i.e. quickly or slowly, the capacity of removing diseases may be different due to different types of *Dhātri*, *Haritaki*, etc. If there is universal as commonness, the above different results that are found in some cases would not be possible. Only individual particular thing (*Dhātri*) having the capacity of removing diseases can produce fruitful acts, the various fruitful activities would also be possible only by the particular things, not by the universals. Because, universal has no capacity to perform different acts in the diverse properties. The universal that the realist used as class or commonness can be defined through the notion of similarity (*sādrśya*)¹⁵ which is produced by the similarity of function. But it is mere mental-image or conceptual cognition which has no reality.

If cognition is always mental images such as universals, then what is the connection between the real particular and its heterogeneous cognition?

Kamalaśīla's answer is that the particular things, being point-instant real things, do exist in the things in themselves, not in a class or genus or universal, even not in the notion of commonness. When we have a conceptual cognition of universals, as we have seen or cognized, there is no universal as external real entity, even no commonness in all substances. We cannot assume that dissimilar objects produce similar results. The universal that realist admits as an independent category would be defined in terms of similarity (*sādrśya*), here the similarity is not a similarity of substances, but a similarity of producing effects.¹⁶ The universal, according to Kamalaśīla, is an imaginary fiction or an illusion; it is a mere name that sometimes is also called a mental construction or productive imagination (*kalpanā*) which has no external reality at all. The particular thing, the real thing-in-itself, is neither determined by the universal nor cognized by the faculty of understanding. The real particular is externally point-instant real, but the universal is both empirically internal and unreal. The former is the object of perception, but the latter is the object of conception or inference. Hence, the universal is nothing other than a subjective construction of our mind. Generally, a person who has no knowledge about the difference between *perception* and *conception* very often thinks that the object of conception seems to be externally real. But, this does not prove that names, universals etc. are externally real; because they represent only subjective constructions which are mere projections of imagination.¹⁷ The Buddhist nominalism holds that a name signifies only universal or thought-construct and names are not regarded as direct (i.e. conditional) or adequate expressions of reality, but they are representatives of images or concepts as such they are logical but not real. They are also considered as reflexes or echoes of reality.¹⁸ The fact is that it is happened due to our ignorance originated from beginningless desires (*anādi vāsanā*).

Are universals perceived?

Sometimes the realists argue that the universal has an objective foundation, because a class-concept is grounded in objective reality. So, common properties have distinct reference to the universal apart from the many forms of individuals. But Śāntarakṣita thinks that this view is untenable. A universal is never considered as real entity in our perceptual cognition. This objective foundation of universals is

purely an imaginary construction which cannot prove that the universal is eternal. The realists cannot presuppose the existence of universal without taking particulars; even they cannot postulate the higher universal such as ‘thingness’, the concept of ‘thingness’ would require another universal and that again another, this requirement will continue without any rest and so it is the case of infinity (*anavasthā*). To avoid this problem the realist, like Naiyāyika, admits the universals as a class of *sui generis categories* which have no need for other universals.¹⁹ Śāntarakṣita does not support this view. If there is universal as real entity, then how could it be perceived? Even there is no apprehension by which it would be made.

Like Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita argues that if the universal is regard as an external entity and perceived everywhere, then the case will come where its non-perception in empty space would be unexplainable. Even, if the universals jar, etc. are regard as all-pervasive entities, then they should have to perceive where there are no individuals at all, which is not possible to the realist. If the universal is eternal (*nitya*), as described by the realist, then it is unintelligible how the universal becomes related to the new-born thing or how the universal being eternal becomes pervasive entity in the locus of new-born thing.²⁰ There is no affirmative concomitance (of the notion ‘Being’) with the universal. Because the notion *Being* does not appear at all times. If the notions of Being, etc. are regard as eternal, then why could not the notions appear at all times and all places? Our general cognitions of common notions appear in succession, which are synthetic, produced and destroyed. The thing that is eternal cannot be produced with any effective causal function. All notions of commonness, having no objective basis, are conceptual constructs. The notion of ‘tree’ and such things cannot be based upon the universal. Because things are comprehensive and they appear in succession. Hence, the universal is not possible in the case of what are eternal.²¹ There is no causal relation between universals and general cognitions. The universals cannot be regard as the cause of general cognitions. When the realist admits universals as eternal entities, it is a mere hypothetical assumption. In the case of inference for the existence of universal it is possible to say that neither positive relation nor negative relation between universals and general cognitions is possible. Because eternal entity must be present at all times and its non-existence (negation) is quietly impossible.²²

Further, Kamalaśīla extends this argument by saying that when a thing comes into existence in another place, it is not understood how the universal is perceived there.²³

The realist holds that both the universals and particulars are apprehended in our sense-perception. The Nyāya School of Indian Realism maintains that both particulars and universals are perceptual facts. The Buddhist philosophers like Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti, on contrary, maintain that universals are never apprehended through our sense-perception, because they are mere thought-constructs, only particulars are perceived, because they are objects of perception. Śāntarakṣita supports the previous antirealist view on the problems of universal. He incorporates this view by positing that after sense-perception there is no immediate cognition of universal, because the cognition of universal is not the result of sense-object contact, but a work of understanding. The cognition of universal is cognized when the present data of sense is associated with the past data which is recalled in memory.²⁴ If the universal is considered as an external fact or an objective entity like particular, then its cognition would have been produced immediately after the sense-object contact. But, the actual fact, what in fact happens, is not so. The universal is not objectively perceived, but subjectively conceived; it is, therefore, not a real entity.²⁵ However, the idea of universals, several arguments of the existence of universals, ontological discussion about universals, etc may be continued, but these are falsified by our perceptual experiences. In fact, there is no locus where the universal exists as a perceptual entity.

The realist maintains that the universal exists in the external world as an independent category (as a separate unit) invariably connected with all the individuals in which it is present.²⁶ Kamalaśīla rejects this view by asserting that the point-instant real thing in its essential nature is unutterable. The absolute particular, in other words, is not however touched by the dialectic of the understanding. Because, it is momentary in its own nature, the pure object of sensation is the thing-in-itself which cannot be determined by conceptual cognition or inferential knowledge. As a matter of fact, the image of our conception or the projection of our imagination is often understood as universal or name or class etc. It represents the

picture of thought-construction which apparently seems to be externally real as people generally consider it, but as a matter of fact, it has no external reality at all. The universal, therefore, cannot be perceived or even exist by itself apart from its particulars; otherwise it would have to be regarded as baseless.²⁷

There is no inherence relation between the universal and particulars

The realist would strongly claim that there is a certain relation between the universal and its particulars, which is inherence (*samavāya*). There is a common notion with reference to the individual objects of a class; it would not be possible without the real existence of universal. Śāntarakṣita does not accept this relation between the two. If the universal *cook* is something entirely different from the individual persons, then it should be present in the new born child also, who also could be conceived of *as a cook*. But the fact is that this is not really possible in the case of newly born child. Again, when the act of cooking is destroyed as soon as it is produced, having its not lasting nature, the universal cannot subsist in it when the act itself is destroyed.²⁸ If it (universal) is possible like the idea of *being* (existence), then it does not subsist in the certain substratum i.e. the new child just born. The universal like *being* does not appear at all times. He adds one more point: If commonness is established by the common act, then the time will come when the notion should not be there when one is not engaged in the act of cooking. The attribute of commonness (*anugatadharma*) which belongs to every individual cook is ultimately different with other individuals; they are not same in time and space. We apparently think that the same attribute resides in all individuals, but it is not true, one's same attribute which resides in itself does not reside in the other. Therefore, the same attribute cannot be the cause of the notion of commonness. This reason is also right to prove that there is no inherence relation between the universal and particulars, because of the defective character of their relationship. The inherence relation called also 'inherence in the inherent (*samaveta-samavāya*) is not possible, and it, therefore, is not cause of commonness or the perception of common notion (*anugatapratīti*). When it is established by the realist (like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) on the basis of the inference that suffers from the fallacy of undistributed middle, it, therefore, cannot be established as a real entity.²⁹

Import of words (Direct and indirect meaning of a word successively)

It is possible to say that the Buddhist *apoha* theory of meaning in all phases of its development is radically nominalistic in intention.³⁰ The Buddhist nominalism considers the very old but an important question, does the general term stand for something that is objectively real? Śāntarakṣita, as a great successor of Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti, holds that a general term does not express particulars (because they are limited in numbers), nor the relation between the universal and particulars, nor the universal itself. The particular thing or the object of perception (the thing-in-itself or *svalakṣaṇa*) cannot be cognized by the notion of commonness (*anugatapratīti*). The universal is only a name with negative connotation in general, which does not stand for anything. The class-concept or the universal serve only the purpose of exclusion of differentiation of a class from another class, the meaning of a general term is determined not by the notion of commonness but by its exclusion of other referents.³¹ A *cow* is called *cow* not because it is included in the universal *cowness*, but because it is different from other which are not *cow*. The particular is not made by the universal. The particular *cow*, for example, cannot be expressed by the universal *cowness*; even the particulars do not include one another, because they are mutually distinct in time, space, potentiality, etc. Hence, there is no universal as real.³²

According to Śāntarakṣita, a word directly produces only a reflection (thought-image) of an object; it is the positive meaning of this word. Though the reflected object of this reflection is completely imaginary (*kalpita*) and has only phenomenal aspect in verbal knowledge, yet it has no external reality at all. The same word, on the other hand and in another way, indirectly refers to the thing that is qualified by the negation of opposition (the exclusion of others). The two processes are based on the two types of negation i.e. ideal or conceptual (*Buddhyātman*) and objective (*Arthātman*). Whatever is imposed upon the verbal cognition as a reflected object must be excluded from other things. Hence, there is no real objective factor that is expressed by word. One question may be raised here, if no word can express the objective factor, then how is it that the old master (Dinnāga) has declared that it is only a certain part of the thing that is expressed by the exclusion of others? The answer is that when the master said that ‘a certain part of the thing that is expressed

by the exclusion of others', here 'the certain part of the thing' means the reflected object qualified by the exclusion of other things.³³ Finally, in order to reconstruct the *apoha* theory of meaning he accepts both direct (positive) and indirect (negative) meanings of a word and this double functions of a word is occurred successively, not spontaneously.³⁴

Conclusion:

Some modern thinkers think that there are three distinct stages in the development of the *apoha* theory: The negativists (*pratiśedhavadin*) like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, the positivists (*vidhivadin*) like Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, and the synthetists (*samanvayavadin*) like Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti.³⁵ They claim that Śāntarakṣita is a positivist (*vidhivadin*). Because, he accepts the positive meaning of word. But, Mark Siderits strongly claims that Śāntarakṣita is not a positivist.³⁶ When Śāntarakṣita accepts the positive meaning of word, it is actually understood in terms of negation. As a matter of fact, a word performs two functions - the one denoting directly the concept corresponding to it, and the other of implying the negation of the contrary concepts. In this double function of word, the former is affirmative and latter is negative. He holds that whatever is directly expressed by word, from the aspect of illusion, is often apprehended as positive entity, but it is not ontologically admissible as real positive. Rather it is a representation or a reflection (*pratibhāsa*) which is considered as an effect caused by the word. Thus, it would be better to assert that he is a representation or reflection theorist (*pratibhāsavadin*).

Notes:

1. *Tatra sāmānyam dvividham – paramparam ca. Tattvasaṃgraha Pañjikā* (Hereafter *TSP*), Commentary on Verse- 708 of *Tattvasaṃgraha*.
2. Before rejecting the real existence of universals Kamalaśīla mentions the realistic view on universals i.e. the two words *sāmānya* and *jāti* are synonymous (*jātaya iti sāmānyāni*, - *TSP*, 13.707).
3. Mookerjee, Satkari. *The Buddhist Doctrine of Universal Flux*, op. cit. p. 87; Cf. *Tattvasaṃgraha*, (Hereafter *TS*, edited by Swami Darikadas Shastri, 1981, verse 709-11.
4. Matilal, B. K. *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar*, p.15-16.
5. *Dravyādiṣu niśiddheṣu jātayo'pi nirākṛtāḥ. padārthatrayavṛttā hi sarvāstāḥ parikalpitāḥ.* - *TS*, 13.707.
6. *Sāmānyaviśeṣayoḥ svarūpam*, *TS*, 13.70.
7. *TS*, 13.711.
8. *Nyāyavārtika*, 2.2.61; cf. *TS*, 13.714-19, Jha, G. N. (Trans.), *The Tattvasaṃgraha of Śāntarakṣita*, Vol.1, p. 407.

9. *Asāram tadidaṁ kārya prakriyāmātravarṇanam, na tu tajjñāpakamkiñcit pramāṇamīha vidyate.* - TS, 13.720-21.
10. Siderits, Mark. et.al (eds.), *Apoha: Buddhist Nominalism and Human Cognition*, 2011, Pp.1-2.
11. TS, 13. 734, cf. TSP, *ibid*; Mookerjee, S. *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, Pp.91-92.
12. Dravid, Raja Ram. *The problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, p. 61.
13. TS, 721-24, see also Jha, G. N. (Trans.) *The Tattvasaṁgraha of Śāntarakṣita*, p.408.
14. TS, 724-26, Jha , G. N. *ibid*; Dravid, *The problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, p.64.
15. *nānābidhavyādhipyāvarttanāsāmarthyādhyāsītā bhavantyantarenāpyanugāminam. na hi tatra sāmānyameva tathāvidhāmarthakriyām sampādayatīti yuktam vaktum;na sāmānyamasti.* - *Tattvasaṁgraha Pañjikā* (Hereafter TSP), 722-23.
16. *tullyapratyavamarśāderiti, ādīśabdena sallillasandhāraṇādyarthakriyāsāmartha parigrahaḥ.* - TSP, 724; cf. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, vol. I, Pp.445-46
17. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Vol. I, p. 447.
18. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Vol. I, p. 458.
19. Mookerjee, S. *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, p.94.
20. TS, 805-6, cf. PV, 3.152-56, see Dravid, *The problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, p.67.
21. TS, 776, 810-11, cf. G. N. Jha (Trans.) *The Tattvasaṁgraha of Śāntarakṣita*, p.429, 444-45, please see Dravid, *Ibid*, Pp.71-72.
22. TS, 773-76, see also Dravid, *The problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, p.66-67. *ghatādivyaktiśunyedeśe ghatādivastuprādurbhāve sati te jātimeḍā ghatatvādayaḥ katham tatra ghatādau ddaśyante varittante ceti na gamyate = nāvabuddhyata iti yāvat.* - TSP, on 805 of TS.
23. *tatsaṅketamanaskārāt sadā dipratyayā ime, jāyamānāstu lakṣyante nākṣadyāpṛtyanantaram.* - TS, 13. 728 .
24. TS, 13. 730, see Dravid, *The problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, p. 92.
25. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Vol. 1, p.444.
26. *na hi jāterāśrayagrahanamantarena kevalāyā grahanam = avasthitirvāsti; anāśritatvaprasaṅgāt.* - TSP,755; Jha, G. N. (Trans.) *The Tattvasaṁgraha of Śāntarakṣita* ,Vol. 1,1986,p.421.
27. *na tu naṣṭhakriye tatra lakṣitāpi na vidyate* -TS, verse 754.
28. T S, verses 756-59, cf. G. N. Jha, (Trans.) Vol.1, loc. cit. p.422; Shastri, D. N. *Critique of Indian Realism*, Pp.329-30.
29. Siderits, Mark. 'Word Meaning, Sentence Meaning and Apoha', p. 140.
30. TS, verses 870 cf. PS, 5. 33; Singh, B. N. *Bauddha-Tarkabhāṣā of Mokṣakaragupta*, p. 117.
31. TS, verses 870; Mishra, R. K. *Buddhist Theory of Meaning*, p.105-6.
32. TS, 1070-71.
33. Misra, Prabhat. *Śabdārthatattvabindu*, 2003, p. 24.-25.
34. Katsura, Shoryu. 'Jñānaśrimitra on Apoha', in *Buddhist Logic and Epistemology*, p.188; see also Mookerjee, S. *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, 2006, p. 132.
35. Siderits, Mark 'Was Śāntarakṣita Positivist?', in *Buddhist Logic and Epistemology*, p. 225.
36. Sharma, T. R., 'Analysis of Word and Meaning in Madhyamika Philosophy', p. 316-317.

References:

- Dravid, Raja Ram, *The Problems of Universals in Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1972.
- Jha, Ganganath (Trans.), *The Tattvasaṅgraha of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary of Kamalasila*, Vol. I & II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1986.
- Katsura, Shoryu., ‘Jñānaśrimitra on Apoha’, in *Buddhist Logic and Epistemology*, B. K. Matilal & R. D. Evans (eds.), New Delhi: D. K. Print World, 2012, pp.188-201.
- Matilal, B. K., *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, The Hague: Mouton, 1971; New edition, Jonardon Ganeri (ed.), New Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Mishra, Rajanish Kumar, *Buddhist Theory of Meaning and Literary Analysis*. New Delhi: D. K Print World (P) Ltd., 1999.
- Misra, Prabhat, *Sabdārthatattvabindu: A Primer of Indian Philosophy of Language* (in Bengali), Paschim Medinipur: Avidya, Kolkata: Krantik, 2003.
- Mookharjee, Satkari. *Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, Calcutta: 1935, Reprint, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2006.
- Sharma, T. R., ‘Analysis of Word and Meaning in Madhyamika Philosophy’ In *Buddhism: Art, Architecture, Literature & Philosophy*, G. Kamalakar and M. Veerender (eds.), Volume II. Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 2005, p.311-332.
- Shastri, Dwarika Das (ed), *Tattvasaṅgraha of Ācārya Śāntarakṣita: With the Commentary “Pañjikā” of Shrī Kamalashīla*, Vol.1, Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati Series-1, 1981.
- Shastri, Dharmendra Nath, *Critique of Indian Realism: Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School*, Agra, Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1964.
- Siderits, Mark. “Word Meaning, Sentence Meaning and Apoha”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol.13, No. 2, June 1985, Pp. 133-151.
- Siderits, Mark., ‘Was Śāntarakṣita Positivist?’ in *Buddhist Logic and Epistemology*, B. K. Matilal & R. D. Evans (eds.), New Delhi: D. K. Print World, 2012, pp. 208-225.
- Siderits, Mark, Tom Tillemans, & Arindam Chakrabarty (eds.) *Apoha: Buddhist Nominalism and Human Cognition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Singh, B. N., *Buddha Tarkabhāṣā of Moksakaragupta*, Asha Prakashan, Varanasi, 1985.
- Stcherbatsky, Th. *Buddhist Logic*, vol. I, Delhi: Motilal banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2008.

FREGEAN REFLECTION ON THOUGHT *

RESMEE SARKAR

The concept of thought is *an umbrella term* comprising feelings, emotions, sentiments, descriptions, assertions, facts and what not. According to Frege, philosophy, thought and language are intertwined with each other. It is supposed to

* I am thankful to my PhD supervisor Prof. Kanti Lal Das for his kind guidance in helping me to contribute this paper.

be the hallmark of any philosophical development—conceptual or non-conceptual. It holds the centrality of any philosophical development in general and Frege’s philosophy in particular. In fact, Frege’s semantic position actually hinges on his very perception of the concept of thought. According to Frege, we do not have sense without thought and the meaning of a sentence cannot be determined without the perception of thought. Early Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: 4 says, “A thought is a proposition with a sense.” Philosophers since antiquity have deeply been involved in exploring the philosophical implication of the concept of thought. Of course, there underlies a philosophical debate whether Frege’s concept of thought is very similar to the concept of ideas of Locke. Frege himself was concerned about this issue. However, closer examination would reveal that Frege’s concept of thought is distinct from Lockean concept of ideas. My point of contention is that the concept of thought is central to Frege’s philosophy. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to explain and examine with critical outlook the concept of thought as comprehended by Gottlob Frege.

It should be kept in mind that in this paper we examine Frege’s concept of thought with regard to his semantic theory. Frege’s semantic theory is known as *sense-reference theory*. We think that Frege’s semantic theory is primarily associated with the concept of thought. His semantic theory is based on the identification of sense and reference of formalised language. As a referential semanticist, he attempted to ensure the meaning of language with regard to the concept of truth. Now, the concept of truth cannot be determined without the concept of thought. According to Frege, the meaning of an expression is determined on the basis of the sense which the expression conveys. He at the same time contended that what language is meant to communicate is thought. In this regard, Frege brings the concept of thought. He conceived sense in terms of *mode of presentation*. Unlike him, the other referential semanticists, namely Bertrand Russell, Saul Kripke, etc. were non-committal about the functional aspect of thought. They developed no-sense theory of reference. For them, reference plays the all important role in determining the relationship between language and reality. Every name has two aspects, namely, denotation and connotation (*De re and de dicto*). A name denotes an object. According to this theory, the name (language) and what it denotes or refers to (object) are altogether different

entities. The relationship between language and reality is made possible because language adequately refers to what exists independently of language. Thus, in a sense they developed *linguistic realism* in the sense that every name either denotes or connotes a real object or entity. This is the hallmark of referential theory of meaning. A sophisticated version of referential theory holds that a sentence is *to be meaningful* if it refers something other than the sentence itself and there must be a referential connection between the sentence and what it refers to. Thus, it makes sense to say that the *referential connection* constitutes the meaning of the sentence. Many referential semanticists established the relationship between language and reality in accordance with the theory of reference. Importantly, many of them forfeited or overlooked the mode of presentation, that is, the sense of an object. The sense of an object or the mode of presentation of an object is in some sense or other is linked with the connotational aspect of language.

Interestingly, unlike the aforesaid semanticists, Frege offered us a different interpretation of semantic approach of language which eventually opened up a new dimension of semantics. He suggested that the problem of meaning is not associated primarily with the referential aspect of language; rather it is associated with the mode of presentation of language what he termed as *sense*. Thus, unlike the other semanticists, he developed sense-theory of reference. The debate between no-sense theory of reference and sense theory of reference is philosophically revolutionary because on the basis of this division subsequent developments in referential semantics took a radical turn. We cannot delve into the developments considering the scope of this paper. Our primary objective is to examine the philosophical implications of Fregean thought.

The concept of thought

What then is thought according to Frege? How did the concept of thought play a significant role in developing his referential semantics? Whether thought was conditioned to his development of sense-theory of reference? These are some of the important questions that need to be taken care of. Frege had elaborated his concept of thought in his article 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry' ('Der Gedanke' is the

untranslated name of the same work). His distinction of sense and reference (Über Sinn and Bedeutung, 1892) is deeply rooted on his concept of thought. He, in spite of being a referential semanticist and anti- psychologist, incorporated the relevance of *empty proper names* in his philosophy of language. In this sense, he perhaps may not be treated as an absolute semantic realist like Russell, Kripke. He contended that proper names must have connotation without exception besides having denotation. His sense theory of reference is grounded on his concept of thought as he repeatedly said that the sense or mode of presentation of an expression cannot be comprehended without thought. Thus, his philosophy of language had become comprehensive which played a significant role in the analytic tradition. What would then be the ontological status of thought? Of course, Frege in his aforesaid article involved in a discussion regarding the *ontological status of thoughts*. In this article he explored what we actually know when we take something to be true. His central claim was that to take something as true is to enter into a relation with an abstract entity called a 'thought', which to him is a specific sort of meaning expressible through sentences. For Frege, the word 'true' indicates the aim of logic. Unlike other sciences which take truth as their goal, logic tends to determine the laws of truth. He held that truth is indefinable. In this regard, he rejected the claim that truth may be predicated of pictures and ideas because in such cases it requires a correspondence between a picture or an idea and their representations in the external world. He presented three arguments against all such theories: First, Frege held that such theories go against the use of the word 'true' as they require a relation between two things, which the word actually does not assert. Secondly, if two items correspond perfectly, they would be identical, but this is not what a person using the word 'true' wishes to say. Thirdly, correspondence is also qualified to certain respects and admits of degree, whereas truth does not.

Sentence, sense of a sentence and thought

In any meaningful expression, the word 'true' appears as an adjective. When we ascribe true to something, we do not actually add something to already existing phenomena. Frege opined that it is the same thing to say that 'I smell the scent of violets' and 'It is true that I smell the scent of violets'. Truth is not like a material property like 'bitter', 'lilac-smelling' etc. The question of truth and falsity always

arises in a sentence through thought process. What then is a sentence? By a sentence Frege meant 'a series of sounds; but only when it has a sense'². He also made it clear that every series of sounds with a sense is not a sentence. Thus, it is clear that it is for the sense of a sentence that the question of truth and falsity arises. Now what does the sense of a sentence mean? Is the sense of a sentence an idea?

Frege opined that it is the *thought* for which the question of truth and falsity arises. The concept of truth, i.e., the meaning of a sentence cannot be comprehended without the concept of thought. However, while talking about the concept of truth within the realm of his semantic approach, Frege conceived different levels of thought. This actually helps Frege to deviate from Locke's ideas. Now the question arises: What did he mean by thought? Dummett opined that "A thought is the sense expressed by a complete sentence—a sentence which is capable of being used to make an assertion or to ask a sentential question (a question requiring an answer 'Yes' or 'No')"³. For Frege, thought is something immaterial and everything material and perceptible is excluded from the sphere of thought. Again, it is not a mental content. Thought, for Frege, is objective and independent of humans. He believed that the concept of truth is closely linked with every concept of thought. Until and unless we do not know a thing to have a property truly we will not be able to recognise the property of that thing. So the concept of truth is something very unique.

Now a question may arise: Do all types of grammatical sentences have sense or thought? For Frege, the sense of imperative sentence is not such that for which the question of truth may arise. Exclamatory sentences express one's feelings, wishes, etc. So here also the concept of thought, according to him, seems to be lacking.

What about interrogative sentences? Here he distinguished between two kinds of interrogative sentences. Word-questions do not have sense, for the sense completes after receiving the answer which is expected. But this is not the case with sentence-questions. We expect either 'yes' or 'no' from a sentence-question. The

² Frege, Gottlob, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 65, No. 259 (Jul., 1956), p. 292.

³ Dummett, Michael, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, London: Duckworth, 1981, Chap- 11, p. 364.

answer 'yes' means that the thought which was already contained in the interrogative sentence is laid down as true. In this way an interrogative sentence can be deduced to an indicative sentence. But direct indicative sentence contains something more i.e., the assertion. Thus, an indicative sentence contains two things –the content, i.e., the thought and the assertion. Both remains so closely joined in an indicative sentence that they very often seem inseparable.

Frege thus admitted three layers of thought- The apprehension of thought-thinking. The recognition of the truth of a thought – judgement. The manifestation of a thought –assertion. Generally, in science we advance in this way. First, a thought is apprehended which is expressed in a sentence –question and after appropriate investigation, the thought is finally recognised to be true. After that we declare the recognition of truth in the form of an indicative sentence. Frege contended that the use of the word 'true' does not add any extra content to it and even if we use it the real assertive force lies not in it, but it is contained within the form of the indicative sentence. Again, a form of an indicative sentence may lose its assertive force, if not speak seriously, as in poetry or in the case of actor- because it is only acting, the actor asserts nothing in his part. Thus, question about the assertive force of an indicative sentence must be answered negatively if required seriousness lacks.

He opined that thoughts may be expressed without being asserted the same thing. He contended that the *assertion of a thought* is a separate thing and the *recognition of its truth-value* is another, that is, one can say something true and yet not assert it. This difference can be explained by sentence-forms and the conventions surrounding their use. Thoughts and their associated truth-values exist independently of use. Frege in his article described several properties of thought. He argued that thoughts are imperceptible and it cannot be interacted with our senses. Here he used the example of Sun rise. The Sun rising may be sensed, but the Sun is rising is a thought with a truth-value and it can never be sensed. It has rather to be grasped by some other means.

Other properties of thought that he discussed are the under and over-determination of thoughts by sentential contents. Thoughts may be expressed in a sentence containing more content than that is needed to express the thought. He, for

example, cited expressive and poetic words in a sentence which are not required for the expression of thought because if we observe logically, such words are extraneous in spite of their use in our everyday language. Again, thoughts may not be expressed clearly due to certain features lacking in a sentence. Frege in his article used the word 'there' to explain under-determination of thoughts. Suppose, a sentence uses the word 'there' along with an accompanying demonstration, for example, a pointed finger. Here, we cannot grasp the thought by looking at the sentence only. Rather we have to know some extra-linguistic fact, that is, the pointed finger to know the thought genuinely.

He then engaged in a discussion regarding the nature of thoughts of sentences containing 'I'. Because he felt that the occurrence of the word 'I' in a sentence gives rise to some issues. For him, knowledge of language is a different thing when it contains proper names. For example, two people may not associate the same thought to the expression 'Dr. Gustav Lauben' if they do not know that they refer to the same individual. Thus, the sense of a sentence containing a proper name depends on how whatever it refers to is presented. For 'this can happen in different ways and every such way corresponds with a particular sense of a sentence containing a proper name'.³

For Frege, 'everyone is presented to himself in a particular and primitive way in which he is presented to no-one else'⁴. So if someone thinks that he is in pain, he will understand it in the primitive way and only he can grasp the thought determined in this way. After that if the individual wants to communicate with others about his pain and thereby use the expression 'I am in pain', he will use the word 'I' in a sense which can be grasped by others, by doing which he actually uses the associated conditions of his utterance to express the thought.

Thoughts and ideas

³ Frege, Gottlob, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 65, No. 259 (Jul., 1956), p. 292.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.298.

Frege maintained that *thoughts are not ideas*. Ideas belong to the inner world. Ideas cannot be seen or touched. It belongs to the content of whose consciousness to belong. Thus, an idea always needs a bearer. Again, one bearer has only one idea. No two bearers can have the same idea. For that there needs to be a consciousness which will know that the idea which belongs to the content of one consciousness is the same to the idea which belongs to the content of another consciousness. But this is not possible. If thoughts remain mere items of one's consciousness, they and their truth-value will become relative because it is impossible to share the content of one's consciousness with other. Again, thoughts are not the objects of the outer world. Objects of the outer world can be smelled, touched, seen or perceived with the help of sense-impressions. Thoughts cannot be so. For Frege, truth-value is attached to thought, but not to sensed objects. Thus thoughts are not external objects.

Then what is the locus of thought? Frege prescribed that a third realm must be recognised. A thought corresponds with ideas in that it cannot be perceived with senses but with things to which it is connected. However, it differs from the latter in that the ideas need a bearer to the content of whose consciousness to belong, Thoughts exist independently of any bearer. A thought is not true for the first time when it is discovered. It is true forever. It is timelessly true independent of whether anyone takes it to be true. Thoughts exist independent of human beings and it is for the humans to grasp the thoughts. Here, he took the example of the Pythagorean Theorem which is a mutually grasped formula and the truth of which has nothing to do with any person's consciousness. The thought one expresses in the Pythagorean Theorem can be recognised by others just as much as by him. That means, an individual is not its bearer. Otherwise, it would have been 'her Pythagorean Theorem', 'his Pythagorean theorem' instead of 'the Pythagorean Theorem'.

If it were the case, the truth and falsity of the Pythagorean Theorem could not also be recognised universally. For in such a case truth and falsity would characterise only the content of one's consciousness, it would be applicable only in the sphere of one's consciousness. But this is not the case. Identical things have the same properties and since Frege found that thoughts and ideas have divergent properties, so it follows that thoughts are not ideas. Frege then challenged the sceptical claim that ideas are all that exist. He argued that if thoughts and ideas were the same thing then there would

have been no common science in which we might engage in the discussion of truth and falsity regarding their various contradictions. If it were the case, we could not even assert publicly that a thought is not an idea and all these discussions would have been futile because all these may be one's ideas and belong to the content of one's consciousness only, that is, there is nothing to be public and everything belongs to one's inner world-the world of sense-impressions.

This point may be emphasised in another way. Suppose, I may have an idea of myself but I am not identical with this idea. That means the content of one's consciousness should be sharply distinguished from the object of his thought. For example, if I state something about my brother, I do not confuse it with the idea that I have of my brother. Frege contended that not only an object but an idea can also be the common object of thought for more than one people. Here he took the example of an invalid's pain and two doctors diagnosing the patient. Both the doctors have their own idea regarding the particular disease by which the patient is suffering. However, their ideas are not the object of their reflection. They actually reflect and try to find out the cause of the pain so that they may treat the patient well.

Frege then asserted that ideas cannot be all that exists. If it were, psychology would have contained all sciences within it. It would have been the judge over all the sciences. It would have subordinate logic and mathematics. Everything is not idea. One can grasp the thought which other people can grasp. Many people remain engaged in a particular research. We are not bearers of thoughts. We are bearers of ideas. Thoughts exist independent of us. Thoughts are things of the outer world. We do not have a thought as we have sense-impressions. We do not see a thought as we see a star. Thus, he used the special expression 'apprehend' with thought. Facts are true thoughts. Thoughts are timelessly true or false. The realm of thoughts exists outside of time and space, although their constituents are graspable.

Influence of Fregean thought on the external world

Finally, the question may be raised: How does a thought act? Frege answered 'by being apprehended and taken to be true. This is the process of the inner world of a thinker which can have further consequences in this inner world and which,

encroaching on the sphere of the will, can also make noticeable in the outer world'⁵. The grasping of thoughts leads us to action. In this way, thoughts have an indirect causal impact on the world. Our actions are usually prepared by thinking and judgement. So thoughts possess an indirect influence on the motion of masses in the human world.

In spite of these entire, one may regard thoughts as unreal because they do not seem to have direct influence on the events of the world compared to that of other external objects. But thoughts are not really unreal. Frege opined that their reality is of a different nature from that of other perceptible and sensible objects. Regarding the nature of thoughts Frege in his paper concluded: "They can be true without being apprehended by a thinker and are not wholly unreal even then, at least if they could be apprehended and by this means be brought into operation"⁶.

Frege used the idea of thought as an intermediary between a linguistic sentence and its referent. On the other hand, in order to deal with his puzzle of identity statements, he introduced his revolutionary distinction of sense and reference in his article 'On Sense and Meaning' ("Über Sinn and Bedeutung") in 1892. Frege realised that there must be some way in which two different linguistic expressions can refer to the same object. Then he solved his puzzle simply by a difference in the mode of presentation. Now, if two different presentations or two senses refer to the same object, it is logical to conclude that the connection between the linguistic sign and the sense is of pure convention. However, the connection between sense and referent is not only an arbitrary connection of this kind. The connection between sense and referent are determined uniquely because when we hear or read a linguistic expression we at once grasp its sense. Senses do not exist within any specific individual, but they are communal. If senses were to be determined by one person then there would be no shared understanding, no successful communication.

Frege's distinction between sense and thought

⁵ Frege, Gottlob, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 65, No. 259 (Jul., 1956), p.310.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 311.

The questions now arise here are: Is thought and sense same? Are they different? What is the distinction between sense and thought according to Frege? If we understand sense as an abstract object by which we understand certain linguistic expressions then thoughts may simply be said to be the logical extension of this to complete sentences, i.e., thoughts are the senses of sentences. Thus, one understands a sentence by grasping its thought where the question of truth and falsity arises. Such an understanding of sentence, where the question of truth-value arises, leads us to say that Frege understood thoughts to be almost interchangeable with the notion of propositions. For Frege, thoughts exist only in the assertive form of a sentence. Thus, the thought of a sentence is its meaning. Now it may be asked: How can we move from the sense of individual linguistic expressions to the thought of the whole sentence? Here, Frege introduced his another principle known as the principle of *Compositionality of Meaning*. According to this principle, ‘there is no more to the meaning of a sentence than what is determined by the meanings of the words of which it is composed and the way in which they are arranged’⁷. That means, a sentence’s meaning is constructed from the meaning of its individual parts and the syntactic structure of those parts.

According to Frege, *sense refers to some physical objects in the world but a thought refers to a truth-value*. Thus, when one utters a sentence containing a thought, it refers to either *the true* or *the false*. Now, let us finally illustrate the distinction between sense and thought with the help of a classic example that Frege had used: ‘The present king of France is wise’. In this example, we see that the individual terms all have a sense; but the subject of the sentence has no reference. Thus, it follows that we can grasp the meaning of the sentence because we can understand the senses associated with the expressions. But the sentence can neither be true nor false because there is no thought associated with the sentence which can refer to a truth-value.

Language and thought

⁷ Morris, Michael, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, Chap. 2, p. 25.

After having discussed all these the question may be raised: Why, after all, Frege felt the need of introducing his concept of thought while analysing his philosophy of language? Long before Frege, it was considered that language is a necessary vehicle for human thought. Frege asserted that ‘what language is meant to communicate is thought’. For him, it was the very insight that human thought depends in certain ways on language or on symbols in general, that compelled him to analyse the logical structure of thought in order to investigate the workings of language. Indeed it seems that language itself was never the primary object of his philosophical interest. Rather, most of the general philosophical issues upon which Frege reflected, aside from his more specialised projects in the philosophy of mathematics, had to do with the nature of thought in general and its relation to logic, to truth, to language, and to the objects it can be about. That is why, in 1918, Frege published the article entitled “The Thought: A Logical Enquiry”, in which he described his motives for investigating the nature of language:

“I am not in the happy position here of a mineralogist who shows his hearers a mountain crystal. I cannot put a thought in the hands of my readers with the request that they should minutely examine it from all sides. I have to content myself with presenting the reader with a thought, in itself immaterial, dressed in sensible linguistic form. The metaphorical aspect of language presents difficulties. The sensible always breaks in and makes expression metaphorical and so improper. So a battle with language takes place and I am compelled to occupy myself with language although it is not my proper concern here. I hope I have succeeded in making clear to my readers what I want to call a thought.”⁸

ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE *GĪTĀ**

SANDIPA GHOSH

The *Gītā* is the highest treasure amongst the spiritual and philosophical possessions of the Hindus. The gospel of the *Gītā* has been taken from the great

⁸ Frege, Gottlob, “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry”, *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 65, No. 259 (Jul., 1956), p. 292.

* I am thankful to my teacher Dr. Nirmal Kumar Roy for his kind guidance in helping me to write this paper.

ancient epic *Mahābhārata* by the great poet Vyasa, which is preached by the Lord Kṛiṣṇa on the battlefield of Kurukṣhetra to his companion Arjuna. It is a spiritual and religious book. Beside of this fact it is also true that the *Gītā* is the richest philosophical work of our ancient India. It is a beautiful synthesis of diverse values of human life and reveals the way to tackle a difficult situation in any context, at any time. The principal discussion of the *Gītā* is the ethical one, and it also contains a discussion about morality and immorality of action, position of soul, duty and non-duty. The ethical view of the *Gītā* and its philosophical realizations are accepted by every caste and creed. We can say the ethics of the *Gītā* is one kind of motivating ethics which leads us to join some movement; ‘movement’ in the sense of mobility. Each and every part of this universe, more specifically; each and every atom of this universe is mobile in nature. At the same time, we never think life from a ‘static position’. Every living organism or every ‘becoming’ needs some vibration or wave of motivation. Here I want to say that, when we lead a meaningful life, simultaneously we also need a motivating ethics for social development and the *Gītā* provides such vibration in our life. It is our duty to explore that ethics for making life more fruitful and save our future generation.

The *Gītā* has been written in the form of dialogue. From the most ancient period dialogue has its own glory for acquiring true knowledge and to solve problems. *Upaniṣads* and *Smritis* are the living examples of them. But one point is important to note here. In *Upaniṣads* and *Smritis* focus has mainly been given on theoretical knowledge whereas in the *Gītā* focus has been given in practical aspects. I think the proper application of the ethical philosophy of the *Gītā* can solve any problem of our society today. Perhaps keeping this in view the *Gītā* is said as “song of life” (*jīvanagītā*). Mahatma Gandhi describes *Gītā* as a dictionary where we can find out the meaning (solution) of all the problems of our day to day life. ‘Dialogue’ also is called as ‘*samvāda*’, which starts with proper ‘*jījñāsā*’ or ‘questioning’. ‘*Jīvanagītā*’ comes from such kind of continuous questioning.

Today, our society is running through an acute value crisis, and it happens because at the present time our education and culture are mainly influenced by materialism. So, our thinking and activities are determined by such type of teaching and culture. Our limitless demand makes us highly selfish; we have no scope to think

about social welfare of our near and dear ones or of the society. This darkness gradually grasps our soul and society. We are well known that darkness can be pushed back only by light. Likewise, materialistic teaching and culture can be pushed back only by the help of spiritualistic teaching and culture. It is my conviction that the *Gītā* can provide our society such type of spiritualistic teaching and culture following which all problems mentioned can be solved. The only need is an acute attention to the theories of *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the practical application of the same.

In the very first chapter of the *Gītā* Arjuna is found to face a conflict of duties. He himself cannot find out any solution to the problem. So, he raises a series of questions to Srikrishna in order to overcome this problem. Sri Krishna replies to all of the questions raised by the Arjuna. Apparently we may think that this problem is exclusively the personal problem of Arjuna, but actually this is not the case. In fact Arjuna is the representative of any individual of our society. The problem of Arjuna is the common problem of each of us. Here the war of *Kurukshetra* is a symbolic one. Such type of war is always taken place in our society. Every now and then we come across conflict of duties. We cannot decide which should be done and which should not be done. In all most all of the crucial situations of ethical conflict we can seek the advice of the *Gītā* to resolve our problems. To Arjuna, Srikrishna was a friend, philosopher and guide. In our society we all are Arjuna. So, Srikrishna is a friend, philosopher and guide not only of Arjuna alone but also all of us. In every crucial step of our day to day life we can take the help of the *Gītā* in order to find out a proper guide and solution. So, the *Gītā* is most practical oriented ethical work. Keeping this in view the *Gītā* is said as the *Jīvan Gītā*.

If we go through very carefully the second chapter of the *Gītā* i.e. *Sāmkhya Yogā*; a number of problems, both practical and theoretical will be solved. Death is one of the most unwanted phenomena in our life. The death of our near one's makes us cripple and barren. We have loss the capacity of our working and thinking. Some of us are found to be mad due to mental shock. This shock even sometimes leads to further death. The lesson of the *Gītā*, in this regard works as a most powerful and fruitful moral medicine in our life. Srikrishna repeatedly teaches Arjuna that soul of us is immortal because it is eternal. Soul is beyond birth and death. It can neither be slain nor be burnt. Birth and death is a cycle process which continues till we attain

liberation. The cycle of birth and death is like the cycle of putting on a new dress by leaving the old and turned one. Our body is nothing but like a cloth. If we learn this lesson taught by the *Gītā* then no mother will get mentally paralyzed, no father will get shocked at the death of their son or daughter. So, no parents can be shocked at the death of their child. The *Gītā* is a solace to each and every old man and women. Death appears as a panic to each and every individual human being. They cannot come out of the knot of the fear of death. In this stage the *Gītā* helps us to overcome the panic of death.

We face so many problems in our life because we cannot accept what is natural and inevitable. The *Gītā* teaches us to accept what is natural and unavoidable. Death, for example, is a most natural and inevitable phenomenon. So, Sri Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to accept as easily as possible the death of his near ones and dear ones that would take place in the war of *Kurukshetra*. Another important lesson taught to our society by the *Gītā*, is “*Niṣkāma Karma*”. This lesson plays a vital role in our life. We have a tendency to avoid our activities. This tendency is greatly responsible for the backwardness and non progress of our society. Srikrishna here advises Arjuna to take the lesson of regular and constant activities from the nature and Srikrishna Himself. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west everyday without fail. The winter season never forgets to follow the summer. Srikrishna has nothing to attain for Himself but yet He is always engaged in different types of activities. If we follow this lesson then no doubt, the picture of both of our individual and social life will be changed.

Another name of *Dharma*, according to the *Gītā*, is the performance of our “duty” in a proper way. But what is meant by duty? Following the *Gītā* it can be said that “duty” is not other than our action or *karma*. “*Mānavdharma*” is nothing but to render service for others. In fact, *Vedas* lay down a life of *karma* (action). Mere renunciation (*nivṛtti*) without action is undesirable. All the *Purāṇs* and the *Mahābhārata* lay emphasis on an active life. The mediaeval philosophers and saints like: Sri Visnu Swami, Ramanujacarya, Nimbarkacaya, Madhavacarya, Vallabhacarya have propounded such kind of theory of active work and devotion. In modern times Maharshi Dayananda, Lokamanya Tilaka and Swami Vivekananda argued for the practical ethics of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Sri Aurobindo has dealt with

pravṛtti dharma. Ethics of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* laid on *karmayogā* (the path of action) means performance of work without any attachment to the results whether it favorable or not. At the very first glance one may think that such type of “*Niṣkāma Karma*” is impossible to perform. But *Gītā* shows that we can perform this type activity through practice (master of all achievements). So, it is quite legitimate to think that if the teachings of the *Gītā* is implemented properly in our society then, no doubt we can be able to construct a society free from all types of egoistic problems.

Niṣkāma Karma teaches us not only to perform our duties, it also teaches us to perform our duties without self-interest. Motivation for satisfaction of our self-interest is the sole cause due to which most of the unwanted happenings are taken place in our society. Today almost all of the persons are found to satisfy their personal interests at any cost. We are not concerned at all about others. Today we are influenced by materialistic teachings. The more we achieve the more we want. We are never satisfied. Our slogan matches with that of *Cārvāka*, “*Yāvat jīvet sukham jīvet, Ṛnam kritā ghrītaṃ pīvet*”. Actually desire is something that can never be satisfied. That is why Sri Kriṣṇa advises Arjuna to perform his duty to satisfy the interest of the other (*Lokasamgrahārtha*), not to satisfy his personal desire or interest. The world is becoming a hell only because we are exclusively concerned for ourselves. If we, most of the people, perform our activities following the advice of Sri Kriṣṇa then our society will turn into a heaven and a devil will become a God. Keeping this view in mind it is said, “*ke vole svarga narak āchhe vahu dūr. Māmuṣer mājhe svarga-narak, mānusetē sūrāsūr*”. (Neither the hell nor even the heaven is far away from the world; both of them are within this world. Likewise, neither the devil nor even the God is different from human being; human beings themselves are devil and God). Swami Vivekananda was greatly motivated by the teachings of the *Gītā*. That is why he could speak from the very core of his heart, “The whole world is my family”. Swamiji sacrificed his whole life to ensure the betterment of the whole world. So, if we are taught the lesson of the *Gītā* then we can also become Vivekananda and Mother Teresa and like them we also can sacrifice our whole life for the welfare of the whole society.

The utility of the *Gītā* is not confined only within this life it also goes beyond. Indian Philosophy says of four *Purusārtha* - *Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa*.

Among them *mokṣa* is the ultimate one. That ultimate *Purusārtha* can be attained following the teaching of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* teaches that our *karma* (action) is not the cause of our bondage, the cause that leads us to bondage is the desire for fruit of our activities. So, that desire has to be given up. But that desire comes when we think that we are the real doer. Our *Kartrivābhimāna* is the cause of our desire. That *Kartrivābhimāna* in turn, comes from ignorance. Here the *Gītā* says that we are not the actual doer, actual doer is the God Himself. We are just the instrument at the hands of God. No instrument can be real doer; real doer is the agent by whom the instrument is operated. Since we are not the real doer, we are the dolls at the hands of God, we can not deserve the fruit of actions. God alone is the real doer, so He alone deserves the fruit of all actions. To illustrate the case an example may be taken. We construct our house, but construction is made by mason. Though they construct it they are know very well that they have no right to live in there as they are not the owner of that house. Likewise, we are just like mason. Though we perform our activities like mason we are not the real doer.

So, we cannot be the owner of the fruits of our actions. The actual owner is the God. Consequently, we cannot have any personal desire to enjoy the fruits of our activities. In fact, we can claim nothing as our own. The whole world is created as well as governed by God. So, the only owner of everything of the world is God Himself. If we follow the teaching of the *Gītā* then the very sense of ego cannot take its birth. Our *Sakāma Karma* gives birth two types of problems, one type of problem is Social and another type of problem is individual. If we perform our activities in order to satisfy our ego only then problems come. It will create so many problems in our social life and on the other, we fall in bondage. But if we do the same activities for ensuring the welfare of the whole world (*vahujanahītāya vahujanasukhāya*) or to satisfy God surrendering our ego on the feet of Him, then this world will turned into a heaven on the one hand and we will attain liberation, the highest goal of human being, on the other. In *Chaitany Charitamrita* it is beautifully said, “*Ātmendriya priti ichhā tare kohe kām. Kriṣṇendriya priti ichhā dhare prem nām*”

In the *Gītā* we can find the harmonization of ascent and descent. It ascends to the transcendental form from the empirical and descends from the absolute stage of realization of supreme self to the practical concerns of everyday life. It gives a

synthesization of the values existing in the spiritual excellence, mental efficiency, and physical fitness. If someone wants to get spiritual excellence then he will have to depend on his mental stability, which, in turn, depends on his physical fitness. All these have some values, as they are 'valuable' for giving human pursuit. Another valuable aspect of the *Gītā* is that it gives us knowledge about good food because by eating proper food we can achieve a good health. In India we can see that some of old and saint like people compare body with the temple. There is a great philosophical thinking behind it. Here I wish to drag another view which is equally important for further explanation. We have a tendency to refute body as matter, and we think that matter has no value as it is not permanent in nature. For them spirit is the highest thing and body is nothing but a bondage to the spiritual upliftment.

But I think that we must have the need of matter (body) in order to spiritual morality, like a figure of God in a temple which shows infinity in finite bondage. It is the reality that we can get the best test of freedom in limitation. So, as Sri Aurobindo thinks that our upper ward journey has been started from matter. I also believe that we need a good physical health in order to get morally qualified life, which is reflected by the thought "*tattvamasi*", to see God in every creation of God. Such ethical enforcement we get from the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which advises us to serve the humanity, as Swami Vivakananda teaches us. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* makes a systematic synchronization of the process of nutrition, digestive system with the knowledge of matter (body) and spirit (mind) to get a science of healthy living consisting of an ethical society in it-self.

Again following *Gītā* we can know that a particular quality of food generates a particular quality in an individual. In *Gītā* it is advised to take *sāttvika* food but not *rājasika* etc, as it associates an individual with life, energy, vigour, joy etc. The *rājasika* food, not being able to produce joy etc, can produce only pain, grief etc. The *tāmasa* foods are dearer to the ignorant persons in as much as they can produce inertia in them. An individual enjoying the *sāttvika* food will have mental efficiency and stability. Another important issue of the *Gītā* is said to be how a diseased and disorder mind like the Arjuna can be ordered through the development of moral health by the supreme psycho- analyst like Srikrishṇa. It is urged that the disorder in the mind is due to the habitual repression of his impulses from the outside and of the

emotion of mind. The accumulated and suppressed feeling shows itself in perspiration, palpitation, fear, grief etc. Srikrishna advises Arjuna to cure the disease of his mind by directing it to the attainment of the divine quality (*davī sampat*). The divine consciousness is then aroused and the mind is said to be cured. The Arjuna in this context claims— *naṣṭo mohah smṛtīrlabdḥā* (BG: 18/73), i.e. my delusion is destroyed. I have now regained by memory.

From the above discussion it can be said that there should be harmony between physical fitness and mental tranquility for the attainment of spiritual bliss. The consumption of *sāttvika* food gives rise to the *sāttvaguṇa*; he can have the awareness of *daivī sampat* existing in him, which induces him to do moral action. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* sacrifice (*yajña*) is taken as the essence of ethical life which is treated as divine quality. ‘Sacrifice’ is a great mile-stone for humanity which we should achieve by heart and soul. Without the sense of it an individual can not able to think of serving others. In a society there can be harmony if each and every individual finds some value in achieving his own ends as well as getting that of others, here comes the question of sacrifice. A self cannot sustain without social help. It can be said that the whole world is a systematic unity in which there is no gap between self and society, all these are inter-connected. It is our duty to perform act to the ancestors (*pitṛyajña*), celestial world (*devayajña*), material world (*bhūtajajña*), society (*ṇyajña*), because each of these are essential for our upliftment and existence.

The *Gītā* teaches that practice of austerity is essential for bringing purification and perfection in an individual’s thought (*mānas*), speech (*vāk*) and deed (*kārya*). The moral self does not become the slave of desire, but it stands as *jitatmā*. An individual, who has *jitatmā* can construct a bridge between individualism and socialism. A true humanitarian is interested in social well being. Peace is not the thing to enjoy alone, no one can attain peace if his neighbors are in distress. The materialists are not justified in the sense that they are not believed in spiritual well-being. Without the acceptance of spiritual values the work for the welfare (*vahujanahītāya vahujanasukhāya*) is not possible. It is only possible through the enlightened self love. The happiness of others should be accepted if the dignity of an individual is maintained. Individuals, who are engaged for the betterment of our society, are called *Dhārmikas*. It has been stated in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* that, “Self” exists in all beings

and all beings exist in “Self”. Moral virtues (*sadguṇas*) make a man’s life fruitful. In *Mahābhārata* it is stated that all these virtues are to be attained for the development of complete harmony. The forgiveness (*kṣamā*), steadiness, non-violence, equality, truth, non-miserliness (*akārpaṣya*), shame etc. are included in the moral virtues. *Kārpaṣya* indicates the lack of sacrifice (*tyāga*) in an individual. If sacrifice does not find room in society, there might be conflict, violence, hatred etc. in society. *Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvah* (BG: 2/7), here selfishness is described as a defect which counters the noble human nature. That is why; it is the injunction of the Divine Teacher to forsake miserly attitude and inertia to enjoy the taste of broadness. “...*apasadāyaibhyo yo bhunkta stena eva saḥ*” (BG: 3/12), i.e. one who enjoys some things from others without giving them anything in return is a thief, because the said synthesization of values is not there.

References:

1. “*Naṣṭo mohah smṛtir labdhā/ tvatprasādān mayā ‘cyuta/ sthito ‘smi gatasamdehaḥ/ kariṣye uacanāṃ tava//*” *Srimadbhagavadgīta*, 18/73
2. “*Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvah/ pṛcchāmi tvāṃ dharmasammūdhacetāḥ/ yac chreyaḥ syān niścītaṃ brūhi tan me/ śiṣyas te ‘haṃ śādhi māṃ tvāṃ prapannam//*” *Ibid*, 2/7
3. “*Iṣṭān bhogān hivo devā/ dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ/ tair dappān apradāyai ‘ bhyo/ yo bhunkte stena eva saḥ//*” *Ibid*, 3/12

TRANSCENDING THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY FROM HUMAN TO THE POSTHUMAN

PRIYANKA BASAK AND DEBIKA SAHA

The world of 21st century is full of different transformations. Among the sociological, political, cultural, moral changes, technological revolution creates a great impact in the present world order. This technological shift brings a lot of changing as well as new dimensions within human beings. Along with technological developments, medical science finds its new ground on biotechnology and its other areas, i.e. genetic engineering, stem cells and cloning. Although it is largely based on the biological science and mainly associated with different medical diagnostics, like-

production of insulin, hormones, drugs and medicines of any disease, cell and reproductive cloning, pathological tests, but equally it is related with diverse areas, like- modification of crops, bioconversion of organic waste, stem cell research, gene therapy, use of bacteria and viruses for food, water and medicinal research and advancements. So as a hot ground of research, biotechnology is applied uninterruptedly in the industry, agriculture and medicine and biology. Another important improvement of recent era is the progress of molecular nanotechnology. It is anticipation that, a complex three-dimensional atomic structure can be made possible using synchronized atoms having a precise bonding with each other and chemical reactions of non-biological machineries. So, it is a Nano-machine which could be made possible by rearranging the atoms in a special operative manner. This unique assemble of atoms enable the researchers to transform coal into diamonds, sand into computers, can remove pollution from air and water, tumor from healthy tissues, diseases from the body. With the handful of such developments one significant enhancement has been placed in recent period, which makes itself highlighted by its enormous changing roles. This enhancement is nothing but the intense development of human body using highly advanced technology. Human beings have changed their identity from only a 'biological being' to a 'technological posthuman'. It is really an issue about which every single person, whether a general public or a scholar, shows an interest and these raising interests in return bring up various investigations, through which it seems possible to know the influences of such interventions on human life and wellbeing. But when we convert human condition with the help of technology or biotechnology, it necessarily requires similar change in the nature of being human. However, can it be really possible to change the whole nature and identity of being a human for the technological impulses on the body? More particularly it is said by some persons that, are the resulting posthuman creatures really considered as a human being or as anything else? Are they the very part of our human ethics? And here through such questions, the ethical issues and values of 'more developed posthumans' open up a new venture. So, firstly it is essential to sketch out the active modifications within human beings, which is practiced for the betterment of human life, before proceeding to the ethical ground of human enhancement.

Towards the Enhancement Processes of Human Beings:

Human advancements find its highest position gradually from both negative and positive sense. Negatively, bodily improvement faces its necessity for curing various diseases, like- diabetes, cancer, heart dysfunction, organ failure, nerve problem and so on, and human inabilities, like- eliminating blindness, deafness and armlessness, while positively; it tries to improve the biological functions of a human organism by the admixing of machines. So, negatively enhancing technology attempts to improve the bad situation of a human towards good, and positively good situation to an even better position. Thus, normal body functioning is engrossed in both of the cases by enhancing interventions and human beings in return become technologically upgraded creatures, known by the name, cyborg, transhuman and posthuman.

Transhumanism is a cultural, intellectual and moreover a technological movement, which has been improved and popularized progressively from past two decades. Through the extensive use of advanced technology, it not only provides potential tendency to humans for overcoming and improving their fundamental conditions of desires and limitations, but by heightening the intellectual, physical, emotional and psychological capacities, human organisms are opened up in a new dimension. Human biology evaluates every opportunity for its highest enrichment on the basis of both recent technology, i.e. the genetic engineering and information technology and the future technology, i.e. the molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Transhumanist project actually gives emphasis on the positive extension of human life-span by eliminating unnecessary bodily sufferings. Being an interdisciplinary research, it not only bounded with medicine, body enhancement and electronic gadgets, but it also embraces the socio-political, cultural, economic and institutional schemes, enlarges marketing and consumerism, as well as manages psychological issues, by disseminating its own skills and techniques into these fields. As a revolutionary movement, transhumanism attempts to convey an evolution in the sphere of human life and perceives human nature as a work-place, where with the application of accurate science and technology human beings can be remolded in the desirable fashion. This scientific and technological transformation brings humanity to a phase of aposthuman, who carries more skills, capacities,

intelligence and healthier lifestyle than a normal human being. Whereas, even now some traditional theories give a conservative attitude towards technology, transhumanism makes a closer relation to technology and practices science and technology proactively in every approach. This close relation with technology works upon human body and nature, as well as provides an opportunity to live a longer and healthier life, sharpen up memory power, upgrade intellectual capabilities, improve emotional understandings, increase subjective value and security, and more particularly gives a chance to control over human's mental state, mood and life. This theory can be mentioned as a partial extension of humanism, because it found its ground in secular humanist thinking (Bostrom, 2005b, p.4) and does not deprive itself from rational humanism.

However, in its revolutionary manner, it not only embraces more on advanced medical science and technology as an essential means of overcoming human's fundamental biological limits, but at the same time does not disrespect traditional education and socio-cultural activity as an effective way of human development. Being an open theory, it is not in agreement with any kind of values that are externally imposed on human condition. It believes that, progress in the field of human nature would occur only when people can participate spontaneously and actively for their own sake. Through this kind of open and active participation it will be possible for them to reshape their lives, behaviors and the ways they relate to others. More importantly this progression finds its intense peak, when the capacities of external and internal part of human biological bodies are becoming more powerful, limitless and even more perfect, in accordance with their own deepest values. Thus, the acceptance of human's profound values makes this theory a free theory, where every human being is free and have an ability and right to plan as well as to choose a life of their own thinking and values.

The term 'posthuman' as an extension of transhumanist thought discusses the notion of the human body. In 'Posthumanism', the suffix 'post' lights upon a free thought, a thought which is in a negative sense, without domination, decentralized from reason only, breaking down from all modern systems of hierarchy, capitalism, colonialism, slavery and human-centric assumptions for instance, and in a positive sense, like postmodernism, it is mutable, nomadic, ephemeral, pluralistic,

discontinuous, multilayered and most importantly all-inclusive. Although posthumanism deconstructed human primacy over all, yet it does not mean that it gives a new kind of primacy to technologies as it regulates advanced technologies in a regular manner. It can be signified as post-centralized not because it decentralized itself from modern views centering on reason alone, rather actually it recognizes many specific centers of interest instead of a single one only. In the sphere of postmodernism speciesism unfolds all new integral aspect in a more critical way.

The Application of Morality in the Sphere of Science and Technology:

Science, technology and medical research are parts of larger human culture, yet they proved themselves essential for human life by saving people from the savage and cruel sides of nature. With the practice of all these aspects, human beings gradually become civilized, rational and enlightened from the uncivilized and inhuman stage. In spite of all their helpings to humankind, it is in return necessary and important too to evaluate the impact of science and technology over human culture, society and environment. As far as science, technology and medical research goes in a successive position, the necessity of moral evaluation is needed, and have to fix a guiding principle for betterment of human lives and situations, also at the same time, to protect the human goals, socio-cultural relationships, communications, and mostly our living world and environment. Nowadays, the main aim of medical science, medicine and technology is to enhance the power of a human from the basic ground of biological organism to technological creature. Thus, the ethical view which seems predominant for moral analysis in the bio-technological area, can be named as 'bioethics'. Bioethics provides a broader sense than medical and clinical ethics, research ethics, and public health ethics (Sass, p.9). It is not only associated with particular human and his own life, rather with his family, neighbours, socio-political institutions, cultures, rituals, interaction with others and lots more, in a single word, it actually covers the entire world of life (Sass, p.10).

The transhumanist philosophy does not come under an exact moral theory. Likewise, the ethical concern regarding posthumanity is still in a debated state. Being a postmodern in its very core, posthumanism believes in fragmentation and non-original ways of thinking. So, the rules of normative ethics are quite tough to settle down over transhumanistic as well as posthumanistic approaches. Even, there

are some supporters of both of the approaches who totally rejects the conception of morality within human enhancement project. They hold the view that, whenever we attempt to control the enhancement policy through any moral code, we basically manage it with the help of universalized, categorized norm-based systems, which traces its origin from human rationality and subjectivity, about which they confront purely oppositional thought. However, Posthumanism is not free from moral criticism and faces many moral quarries against them. But, they do not set any specific code of conduct, they just provide suitable answers about the moral questions raised against them. By means of answering such criticisms, thinkers engaged themselves to discuss about the extended capacity of human's moral enhancement along with bodily improvement through science and technology.

Criticisms against Transhumanity and Posthumanity and Possible Replies:

There are so many objections against Posthuman enhancement. Some thinkers say, making a posthuman is impossible, rather it is a utopia as well as a pseudo idea. It has no real ground. Not only that, transforming into a posthuman is costly, difficult, risky and brings psychological disturbance. But some crucial objections in the way of posthuman success are the following

1. Posthuman position is very bad for the society. It gives a negative impact on the human society and brings social inequality, conflicts, discrimination, and fragmentation among social relationships.
2. The life of posthumans will be worse than human lives, because scientific enhancement breaks the values, rules and regulations of the society. Again through technological breakthrough we can never become benefited, because in the process of becoming a posthuman, humans eventually loss their humanity (Bostrom, 2008, p.109).

To give an answer of these objections, it might be replied that, undoubtedly both human and posthuman have some moral values, nonetheless, it is difficult too to maintain that, are these values similar or not to both of them? Values are context-based; the situation always makes to feel people that, the values of their life 'will be good or bad?' or 'will be positive or negative'? Values of life signify the wellbeing of an individual and well surviving strategy of a subject. Sometimes we can see that, life

of a person is worst, who lives with intense pain and sufferings, health hazards, isolated from his family, friends and society than of a person who is leading his life by grasping all the good conditions of his life, family, friends and society. So, there is no such values which can be depicted as fixed, values are interchangeable depending on the human situation. If we want a moral value, which would remain unchangeable in any situation, then it will be necessary to maintain the characteristics of being intrinsic value, and a value, whether it is moral value or not, will be signified as an intrinsic value only when it provides goodness to all humans in every situation. Thus, if moral values cross the stage of being intrinsic in nature, then no 'posthuman', can ever spoils the basic grounds of humanity. Hence, it can be suggested now, the critics are more concerned about changeable values of human society, not with unchangeable intrinsic values. If they consider moral values as intrinsic, and then there would remain no problem, if a posthuman lives in the same world with a biological man.

Bioethicists give an objectionable view that, the transhumanist project of turning humans into an another personality, which they are not, actually dehumanizes the human dignity. Bioethicists in support of humanity assert, instead of using advanced technology as means of human enhancement, it would be better ever to improve the nature of a human by means of values that have been given by the nature. Though nature gifts us with so many opportunities for improving ourselves, at the same time in this recent era, we need something more for improvement than the natural ones only. In that very essence, Transhumanists puts importance on personal aspiration, values as well as advanced science and technology in accordance with natural order for reforming our natures. As there are so many erroneous systems in the human sphere, such as, capitalism, torture against weak, tendency of differentiating among peoples, patriarchic society, uncontrolled power of rich persons and so forth, this situations categorically lead people as the 'brave new worlders' (Bostrom, 2005a, p.206). These persons are dehumanized and inappropriate for the well-being of the society on behalf of their own egoistic nature. But, criticizers are putting blames to these types of worlds as the results of transhumanistic approach. But in favour of enhancement technology it could be remarked that, enhancement technology has become uncontrolled and as a consequence the *Brave New World*

(Bostrom, 2005a, p.206) has opened up. However, it is really a misfortune for advanced technology and social engineering that, humans used information technology aimlessly and unsystematic usage makes technology dangerous. The moral and intellectual capacities are eventually depriving its efficiency by this de-organized usage.

Moral questions are often raised by the bio-liberal thinkers, against transhumanism. Bio-liberals are those bio-ethicists, who supports human enhancement by means of advanced medical science and technology, but they does not depict themselves as transhumanist thinkers. Some thinkers like, John Harris, Julian Savulescu, Nicholas Agar or Allen Buchanan, who can be given the status of bio-liberals(Ranisch, p.150). Bio-liberalism mixes liberty and (state) neutrality (Ranisch, p.151) by the use of advanced technology. According to bio-liberalism, humans are definitely free to use advanced technologies in their everyday life for augmenting their possible capacities, only until other persons or animals or the environment is not harmed by their technological activity. Technological improvements are loosely used by people to qualify their lives from a good life to a much better life, but the using technology itself necessarily traces a responsibility towards every aspect of human as well as non-human life. Though both of the theories, bio-liberalism and transhumanism, talk about the use of technology in human's everyday life, their position of moral assumptionis quite different. Bio-liberalists want a (state) neutrality, while transhumanists struggle continuously with advanced technology with a desired aim of achieving posthumanistic phase by transcending the human biological limitations (Ranisch, p.151).Bio liberalist is associated with individual human beings and depending on their value of liberty claims that, individuals are free to choose any improved technology, which seems good for their own life. For them, individuals are their own controller over their choice of good life and it is essential for them to lead a life which they considered best among all. So, for bio-liberalists, individual matters more than the humankind. They again in their support claim that, human possible capacity could be enhanced more perfectly through state neutrality and liberty by the use of technology. While on the other hand, Transhumanists puts emphasis on advanced medical science and technology for enhancing perfections within the biological human beings and at the

same time sets certain objective values, depending on which transformation can take place. Instead of being individualistic, it includes whole human region and in an enthusiastic manner provides sufficient opportunity to humankind for participating into this revolutionary enhancement mission. They emphasise that, everybody is free to use of technology as per their own necessity but in the eyes of Bostrom, “it could be good for most human beings to become posthuman” (Ranisch, p.151). So, Achieving the position of Posthumanism through the specific use of developed technology in an evolutionary manner, is the goal of transhumanism. While, transhumanism tries to open a huge opportunity towards humankind and takes them to a long range of human surviving strategy, bio-liberalism, in contrast, it give efforts to bring the benefits from technology for themselves and their descendants. Bio-liberalists reject transhumanity by arguing that, although technological progression is important and desirable from a long period to human beings and it opens up a new region of information and communication technology between individuals and their family, friends, relatives, yet enlarged technology terminates the common values of human society, culture and relationship, which continuing as a negative result will be the foremost cause of loss of humanity.

It is definitely true that, in this 21st century we are facing tremendous problems regarding human behavior. But, as the prime worker of moderate technology, transhumanism never claims that, over usage of technology always brings a positive outcome. Hence, it does not hold an optimistic view about progressive science and technology. This system always tries to practice science and technology in a precise manner. As we all know every action has both the positive and negative sides, it also has some negative sides too. But from its negative results, some other theorists think that, transhumanists are less concerned about the technological failure. Even they are conscious about the technological disaster and comment that, though technological advancements have lots of potentialities of beneficial developments, yet these achievements can be a reason for bringing massive harm in human sphere. The technological achievements instead of providing a longer life, can make inactive the valuable intelligent life, essential human qualities and it may even take away human existence. Further possible negative outcome tends to bring wide socio-political and cultural inequalities, loss of valuable human

relationships and ecological uniformity. So, as a sensitive thinker, a transhumanist will acknowledge these risky issues and constantly work better for overcoming the negativity as well as tries to give more positive outcome.

In the process of criticizing we seem to forget that, whether it is transhumanism or posthumanism, both are revolutionary movement inspired by human hopes, desires and dreams of accruing a unique personality by means of advanced technology. As a human ideology in its core essence, there are no such transhumans or posthumans who could be designated as aliens, rather they are the human beings belongs to the same human race and human moral ideals. The difference only is, they are transformed themselves to achieve more possible perfections and capacities than normal human lives. So, when we talk about transhuman or posthuman morality, we actually indicate human morality of those persons who have motivated and dreamed themselves as a technologically flourished creature. But as transhumanism and posthumanism is associated with the very use of technology, we naturally assume higher-minded moral ideal for them through which they can be successful to lead a healthy life. Humans occupied a unique role both in the World and in the Universe. It is because, humans are highly rational than non-human animals and desire to become more perfect than what natural biology has given them. As a social being, humans live within a society. The very society generates some moral conditions and values and under these conditions people can flourish their lives. But, when a person technologically enlarges his categories of understanding and makes himself believed that, he is a mixed species of a medical science and biotechnological evolution, and then would he be fallen in the very domain of the same moral conditions and values, that has been already given by the society and culture? This is a crucial question about the morality of 21st century, because in this era, both human and posthuman is living together in a same planet. It is so true that; human being is covered by some phenomena, which are created by their own thinking, feelings and social activities. When individuals experienced something, they experienced by means of these phenomena, which in turn motivated them to perform their duties and responsibilities towards the society. However, sometimes this long termed phenomenon guided by the so called powerful capitalists creates marginalized people's lives more complex, isolated, ignorant and insecure.

This is really a major problem of our so called civilized and educated society, where less important peoples, the marginalized, the uneducated, the economic backward classes, are treated not properly by the upper classes. But, Transhumanist approach never treated any person as different from the other. For them all are equal and all possess the same possibility of both qualitative and quantitative (Gatti, p.446) improvement, whether through knowledge or science and technology. Again, it must have to admit that, humans continuously try to come out from their failure, dissatisfaction, frustration, unnecessary pain and suffering both in realm of body and mind, weakness, shortage of time, life and ultimately death, anxiety, powerlessness, insecurity. And they finally find their path for overcoming all these problems and attain pleasure, relief, satisfaction, happiness, freedom, by the successive practice of enhancing technology.

Position of Technologically Enhanced Being in the Human-world:

The concept of transition to a posthuman, at its foremost step, seems quite stressful to the researchers. Technology based evolutionary formulation leads masses to a negative position and transformation to a posthuman might be degrading in itself and as a result might harm ourselves. Again, posthuman might threatens normal human beings. But after further researches, researchers come to the decision that, posthuman as a purely enhanced being will not harm humans or threat the position of a human being in the world. Posthumans are biology and technology based organisms, cyborgs, which are equipped with a long range of human survival. According to transhumanism and as a succeeding stage of transhumanism, posthumanism, argues that, lots of negative vibes exist in the natural worlds, which continuously are harming people in different conditions. There are many body-health issues, like, malaria, dengue, cancer and damage of organs, brain difficulty, cognitive problems, unnecessary suffering and so on. All of these problems are not been accepted by us and all of us really want to get rid from these difficult circumstances. Even, our society is full of such people, who practices immoral rationality, who planned murder, rape, robbery, torture, genocide, cheating, human trafficking and so on. So, the world of 21st century appears more negative than positive one. Hence, some researchers came forward to overcome these negativities by means of technology. They are enhancing people with posthuman health span, cognitivity and

capacities. Through this type of transmission humans improved their health and they become much stronger, energetic, curious, young, elastic, and active and are in a possession of positive as well as balanced mind, which in return helps humans to engage with more difficult situations easily. They can experience matters and things more realistically with the help of strong, disease free, healthy, proactive body and sharp mind. So, technological expansion of body makes humans more active, healthy, and productive and as mind makes humans more sensitive, rational and positive the world will be blessed with improved cognitive being.

When we shift to the discussion of human society from human body, we find that, there are some wrong ideals still present in the society. Human society is totalitarian, static, imposed values extrinsically, class, creed and race bounded, capitalized, intolerant suppress the weakens and no opportunity of development of the marginalized. With all such social characteristics, its cultures make itself a wasteland (Bostrom, 2005a, p.206). Sometimes it will look difficult by its appearance, to know persons as posthuman, because their life and physique may be same, but their capacity of thinking, intellect, emotions, moralities and spiritualities may surely surprise us.

Conclusion:

In the concluding section it may be remarked that, we want only those kinds of values, with which we are well-known, clear and well acquainted. By our own nature we can never accept such values that cannot convince our human thinking, decisions and actions. But, there are immense numbers of values that are evolving gradually by way of new technological transmutations. These growing values may be acquired as the trendy values, which may in turn become a purposeful virtue for both humans and posthumans. But, our limited human capacities fall down to accept the posthuman values, because these values and virtues require full acquaintance with our capabilities of understanding and rationality. While producing new values, posthumanism or enhancing technology never tries to devalue human values. Philosophers of Transformation just wanted to put up new and innovative values, which can accommodate with changing moralities of posthumanism trend. Undoubtedly, in this random changing world, posthuman virtues also can take an important role in the changing society.

Transhumanism is not an anti-humanistic approach; rather human beings are the main pillars to this theory. It never wants us to believe posthuman persons over biological human beings and lay significance for understanding the human ideology more perfectly. What human enhancement theory highlights, like utilitarianism, is to highlight the highest possible well-beings for the masses and the society and definitely a large number of good consequences from every enhancement. As human beings are more powerful and intelligent than other non-human animals, so the agenda of enhancement researchers and philosophers, is to give a new path of different opportunities to develop the human conditions, both bodily and cognitively through enhancement. The best part of enhancement is to provide a disease free personality and in its very course of research ultimately tries to transcend human mortality stage.

Posthumans are not out of this world, they are the very much part of our society. Posthumans play the role of a medium between the organism and technology, real world and virtual world, social relations and cyber relations. Thus, biology, technology and social nature all are the part of a posthuman. But we have to admit it strongly that, as an independent creature, though not purely natural but scientifically developed, like humans, posthumans also have their own reality, ideology, experience, morality, virtue, values of life and responsibility towards the society. Last of all, it may be remarked that nowadays all achievements are largely coming up through technological intervention, and human beings are customized with all intermediations whether consciously or not. Nevertheless, all kind of developments directly affect their everyday life, body, culture and, society as well. Hence, as technological transformation in every field has been evolving day by day with a fresh hope and energy by different experimental ventures, so the thinking of getting rid of its enthusiastic features of enhancement would be absolutely a hopeless thought.

References:

- Lyon, D. (2002). *Postmodernity*, Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Malpas, S. (2007). *The Postmodern*, Routledge.
- Bostrom, N. (2005a). In Defence of Posthuman Dignity, *Bioethics*, 19(3), 202-214.
- Bostrom, N. (2005b): Transhumanist Values, *Journal of Philosophical Research* 30, (Issue Supplement - Ethical Issues for the Twenty-First Century), pp. 3-14.

- Bostrom, N. (2008). Why I Want to be a Posthuman When I Grow Up, Gordijn B./Chadwick, R.F. (eds.), *Medical Enhancement and Posthumanit*, Dordrecht:Springer, pp. 107-136.
- Ferrando, F.(2013).Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms Difference and Relations, *Existenz*, Vol- 8, No-2, pp. 26-32.
- Gatti, C. (2014).The Question of Disability in the Post-Human Debate. Critical Remarks,Cuadernos de Bioética, XXV (3ª), pp. 445-456.
- Holub, G. (2016).Human Enhancement, the Person, andPosthuman Personhood, *Ethics & Medicine*, Vol- 32:3 Fall, pp. 171- 183.
- Hopkins, P.D. (2008).A Moral Vision for Transhumanism, *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, Vol- 19(1) September, pp. 3-7.
- Ranisch, R. (2014). Morality, Ranisch, Robert & Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz (eds.): *Post-andTranshumanism: An Introduction*, Frankfurt am Main et al. Peter Lang, pp. 149-172.
- Sass, H. M. (2010).A Cultural and Moral Vision for the 21st Century, *JAHR*, Vol-1, No-1, pp. 9-10.
- Warwick, K. (2003).Cyborg morals, cyborg values, cyborg ethics, *Ethics and InformationTechnology*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Vol- September, pp.131-137.

INDIAN PERSPECTIVE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE

PURNIMA DAS

When we perform some work out of our own accord without being pressurized by other higher authorities or seniors or any other external force with a noble intention in mind, it is called a voluntary action. Normally a human being is inclined to perform some action if he has got some sort of cognition towards the conduciveness of what is desired (*iṣṭa-sāadhanatā-jñāna*). This is a kind of desired

action but not a voluntary one, if there is a narrow intention to perform some work connected with our own pathological interest. Each and every human being is involved in such action. In this context, there is no greatness and broadness in action and hence it, though voluntary, is taken as a self-chosen action for the fulfillment of one's mundane desire. In such cases there is no sense of service to the society.

The *Bhagavadgītā* and *Upaniṣads* teach us to have an inclusive attitude towards human society and nature. Otherwise, voluntary service towards society is not possible. The Upanisadic seers, though superior, do not neglect the inferiors who have not achieved the spiritual status. They always advised them to pass through the stages of passive, obedience and submissive studentship to attain such broadness. In order to maintain the social and individual peace they advised three things, the first of which is '*datta*' i.e. the injunction of being liberal and charitable to others which is followed by '*damyata*' i.e. 'resist yourself' from the passion of the sense-organs, pride etc. At last the attitude of compassion has been prescribed by the term- '*dayadhvam*' ('*damyata datta dayadhvam*'). From above it is proved that for being generous to other social beings by way of rendering voluntary service it is essential to control our internal enemies like anger, greed etc. which give rise the attitude of being compassionate to them. That is why; some education or training is needed to inspire others towards voluntary service.

The *Īśopaniṣad* says that the whole world is covered by self and hence one should not exploit others and should not be greedy with others properties ('*mā grdhah kasyasviddhanam*')¹. This notion gives an impetus to an individual to adopt voluntary work as a vow. Such tendency does not arise if there is desire for exploiting others and for being greedy to others property. *Upaniṣad* again gives us the message of 'enjoyment through renunciation' ('*tyaktena bhujijīthā*')². One should not enjoy one's life after confining oneself within but one can enjoy by sharing it with others. From this it follows that any type of voluntary sacrifice for others provides us a pure disinterested enjoyment or joy through sacrifice (*sevā*) which has no connection with our mundane life.

The *Upaniṣad* further teaches us to adopt what is 'good' (*śreyah*), but not 'pleasant' (*preya*). To exploit others, to be greedy towards others properties etc. may

seem to be 'pleasant' for us but not 'good.' That which brings universal welfare is called 'good' (*śreyah*). On the other hand, the factors serving narrow interest of an individual is *preya* or pleasant.³ Those who can see all beings in his own self and self in all beings cannot hate others (*'yastu sarvāni bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyati/sarvabhūteṣu śatmānam tato na vijugpsate'//*).⁴ If some one voluntarily donates his blood for saving of others or any other voluntary works, it is to be taken as 'good' as opposed to 'pleasant' attainable through the performance of actions meant for fulfilling our narrow interest. Hence, voluntary service is always glorified in Indian tradition.

If someone thinks others as separated from him, he cannot provide voluntary service to them. When he looks at others as his own self, he cannot think them as separated from himself and hence there does not arise of hating others or being fearful from others. It is hinted in the *Pāṇinian Sūtra - 'Dhruvamapāye'pādānam'*.⁵ One can be fearful from others, if one thinks oneself separated from others (*'bhītrārthānām bhayahetuh'*). If non-separated, he attains a feeling of identity with them, which is beautiful in the sense of *suṣamā* ('perfect balance'). If the situation is otherwise, it is unequal or the stage of disbalance (*viśama*) leading to the idea of alienation. That is why, a self-knower is called a 'fearless man' (*abhīh*). This situation is very essential or favorable for performing the voluntary service.

Those who are engaged in doing welfare of others are called *dhārmikas* in the true sense of the term. The qualities that make a man's life meaningful are called *sadguṇas*. The *Mahābhārata* endorses that all these have to be obtained for the development of complete humanity. The forgiveness (*kṣamā*), steadiness, non-violence, equality, truth, non-miserliness (*akārpaṇya*), sense of obligation or shamefulness (*hrī*) etc. are included in the *sadguṇas*.⁶ From the inclusion of *akārpaṇya* among the *sadguṇa*-s it is presumed that, if an individual thinks of his own self-interest ignoring that of others, it is due to his narrowness in attitude called miserliness (*kārpaṇya*), which again indicates the lack of sacrifice. Selfishness or miserliness is attitude the lack of sacrifice. Selfishness or miserliness is described as a fault countering the human nature in the *Bhagavadgīta* (*kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāva*). The performance of sacrifice is the only way to prosper. Just as a man gets whatever he needs from a mythological cow (*kāmadhuk*),

a man can have all desired object through sacrifice. Hence the term *prasavidhvam* i.e. prosper can be taken in the sense of both this worldly and other worldly prosperity. If the selfish attitude is strictly adhered to, the idleness may grasp us. Moreover, one who enjoys something from others without giving them any thing in return is a thief ‘(apradāyaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sa)’⁶. Hence, sacrifice for others is an essential quality of a human being, which is reflected in the voluntary activities.

In conclusion, it can be said that humanity in a human being is revealed through his selfless voluntary action, which is called service or *sevā* towards the social beings. It should also be borne in mind that there is a gulf of difference between mercy or *dayā* and sacrifice or *sevā*. In the former there is the expression of ego of an individual. For, an individual who is merciful to others is said to be superior and the persons to whom mercy is shown is considered as relatively inferior. In order to avoid such complication among human beings the term service or *sevā* has been taken into account. In serving others no question of superiority comes into being and hence *sevā* is always glorified in Indian culture. Let us take a vow to serve other social beings or downtrodden people voluntarily to honour our humanity.

In the *Bhagavadgīta* sacrifice (*yajña*) which is included in the divine qualities is taken as the essence of ethical life. Without the sense of sacrifice an individual cannot think of serving others. In a society there can be harmony if each and every social being does not sacrifice for others. A real well being is possible if each and every social being finds some value in *achieving his own end* as well as *getting that of others*. Here lies the question of sacrifice. The self is a social being and cannot sustain itself without social help. In this way, it can be said that the world is a systematic unity in which there is no gap between self and society. All these are interconnected. Sacrifice or *Yajña* is only a grateful offering made by the *Jīva* as the moral self to the universe for what it has received from it in its psycho-physical make up. It is a fact that one should perform duty to the ancestors (*pitryajña*), celestial world (*devayajña*), material world (*bhutayajña*), society (*nryajña?*) and preceptors, because each of them is essential for our existence.⁷

Divinity and human effort, moral and economic value, even desire unopposed to morality (*dharmāviruddho kāmah*)⁸, sacrifice for the human (*nryajña*) and non-

human world (*bhūta-yajña*) etc have been shown for leading a peaceful and harmonious life in present day society. In the society each and every one is dependent on other from the morning to dusk and hence one should remain obliged to them. This sense of obligation goads him to do some service towards him in return and in this way reciprocal love and respect among all human beings becomes possible. If the sweepers or other persons doing some so called inferior work in the society go on strike, nobody can remain in the society, which makes us understand that all activities and the performers of such activities are to be taken as sacred. If it is realized then an individual being who is benefitted by their service must repay his indebtedness to them through service. This phenomenon is called ‘sacrifice to mankind’ (*nṛ-yajña* or *nṛ-ṛṇa*). Human beings in the society are meant for themselves as well as others. If the cultivators do not till their land, if the shop-keepers close the shutters, others would not be able to survive in a society in spite of having sufficient money and property. In the same way it can be easily opined that without the active cooperation of the animals and plants our environmental balance would be at stake. Environment is protected by both the worlds that are called *bhūta*-s and our indebtedness towards them is called *bhūta-ṛṇa*.⁹ Rabindranath Tagore has seriously felt the necessity of the plant and animal world for the protection of the earth. He feels that flowers get blossomed in the forest. But in order to enjoy the beauty of the flowers we need an enjoyer who is nothing but bird. Hence the birds should be taken back to the forest from the remote sky (“*Bane yadi phuḷo kusum nei kena sei pākhī nei kena/ Kon sudūrer ākās hate ānbo tare dāki//*”). If our indebtedness is not repaid to them, they must take revenge of the same leading to various natural disasters like earth-quakes, global warming, and tsunami etc. That is why; a time has come to protect them in the earth to save ourselves and hence various forestation programmes, wild-life sanctuary, protection of wild-born property (*banaja-sampad*) etc have been done very seriously by private and public sectors. In the *Bhagavadgītā* such indebtedness is called sacrifice or *yajña*, but not *ṛṇa*. But we believe that the indebtedness towards a particular community may be repaid only through sacrifice towards them. The term ‘*yajña*’ is to be taken in the sense of sacrifice. Whatever service is rendered to them from whom we are benefitted is a kind of sacrifice to them which is metaphorized as a *yajña*. In the same way, we can repay our indebted to our fore-fathers (called *pitṛ-yajña*) from whom we have come into being, to our seers (called *ṛṣi-yajña*) who are

our lineage and deities (*deva-yajña*), the sources of our energy. In this way the Gītā and other texts ask us to repay personal and social our indebtedness to the concerned worlds. Though there is the glorification of social inclusion in our tradition, it gives us pain when we see the incidents like witch - killing, *Harijan*-killing, untouchability, bride-burning, exploitation in the name of caste, race, and separatism in the pages of newspapers and other electronic media. We must concentrate to the problems and try to remove the same through counselling, advertisement, highlighting our heritage and tradition.

References:

1. *Īśopaniṣad*-1/1
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Kāthopaniṣad*-1.2.2.
4. *Pāṇinisutra*-1.4.24.
5. *Mahābhārata, Virāṭparva*-6/20
6. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*-3/12
7. *Ibid*-18/73
8. *Ibid*-7/11
9. *Ibid*-18/5

KANT'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY: AIMS, METHODS AND SOME CORE CONCEPTS

GAMBHIR D. SUBBBA AND DEBIKA SAHA

Kant's moral theories are rooted mainly in his work *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is the work from which he started developing his moral theories. Kant's moral theories always take rational principles as the moral standard on the basis of which one can act or

judge his or her action. Rationality plays a vital role in his moral philosophy. According to his moral philosophy, irrational principle can never be a moral standard on the basis of which one can act or judge his or her action. Therefore, according to Kant's view, morality is completely rational in nature and what is irrational is always immoral.

Thus, Kant's moral philosophy also explores the concept of reason. In his pre-critical writings Kant believed that moral judgments are based on sentiment, which we come across in his work '*Observation on the sentiment of the beautiful and sublime*'. But he was in opinion that moral judgment cannot completely be rooted in sentiment rather it must have its foundation in some strict rational principles. When he came in contact with Hume's objection concerning universality of knowledge, he started working out his own system to be escaped from dogmatic slumber. His attempt to establish his own system in philosophy paved the way to *Critique of Practical Reason*. Hume's objection concerning universality of knowledge or cognition compelled him to investigate into the nature of cognition, which again leads him to make a distinction between sensitive (empirical) and intellectual (metaphysical) knowledge. Kant says moral concepts are all metaphysical in nature and moral concepts are based on metaphysical concepts not on empirical concepts. Kant assigns this metaphysical concept to reason, and says, reason supplies some fixed judgment which is neither deduced internally nor induced externally from experience but inherent in rational being and completely rational in nature. Other philosophers, such as, Locke and Hobbes also argued that, moral principles are based on standard of rationality; however, these standards are either based on instrumental principles or based on rational intuitions. Kant argued that moral principles must conform to rational principles or non-instrumental principles [categorical imperative]. Here Kant meant to say that a rational will must be autonomous or free in sense that it is the author of the law that binds it. Thus, according to Kant, fundamental principle of morality is categorical imperative and categorical imperative is none other than the law of an autonomous will. Thus in Kant's moral philosophy we find that, conception of reason gets greater importance and its reach in practice goes beyond than that of Hume's notion of Slave to Passion.

Kant's moral philosophy: aims and methods

From the very first two chapters of Kant's *The Groundwork*, it is possible to assume that the first aim of his moral philosophy must be the formulation of precise fundamental principle of metaphysics of morals. This work is being developed by Kant by analyzing the commonsense ideas of morality on the basis of which ordinary people make judgment. Kant endeavors it with the analysis of such principles on which all the ordinary judgments are based and all ordinary human beings would pass the judgment. When we go through the third and final chapters of *The Groundwork*, we can easily trace out the second aim of his moral philosophy. If we deeply analyze these two chapters of *Groundwork*, then we find that the formulation of basic fundamental principle as required by our rational will is the second basic aim of Kant's moral philosophy. In formulating the fundamental principle as required by our rational will, Kant emphasizes autonomy of will. Kant says that, autonomy of will is vital element in it and asserts that, rational will is always autonomous.

Besides these two fundamental aims of moral philosophy, there is another aim of moral philosophy in Kant's mind as to "what ought I to do?". To answer this question, Kant deals with the facts from *Groundwork* and also in the *Metaphysics of morals*. Kant's *Moral Philosophy* examines the demands of Morality that prevails in human social and psychological life. Questions of the demands of the Morality and its psychological and social impacts in human life is found discussed in *Second Critique*, *Metaphysics of Morals* and also found in *Anthropology from Pragmatic Point of View*. Final aim of Kant's *Moral Philosophy* is to enlighten the people about the final or ultimate end or goal of human life. In this regard, Kant establishes the concept of highest good and its relation to moral life.

Kant's aims of *Moral Philosophy* that we discussed above, needs some scientific methods to be employed to aim at it. He always aimed at employing *a priori* method to achieve the aims of his *Moral Philosophy*. He suggests here that an observation or external method is not capable of achieving and formulating the fundamental principles of morality. When we seek out and establish the fundamental principle *a priori* then we may apply this to consult the facts drawn from experiences in order to determine how to apply these principles to human life to the conclusion about how we ought to act in a particular situation in general. Some reasons can be noted here for his being involved in adopting the *a priori* method in *Moral*

Philosophy. First reason, undoubtedly, would be that Moral Philosophy would have become more or less a study of nature and structure of moral reality if observation methods were employed to study it. In his Moral Philosophy we find the question as to what is 'duty', what is 'value', what is 'good' and also their kinds and categorization. This makes his theory metaphysical and it is the matter of fact that metaphysical principles are formulated or established by *a priori* method.

Good will:

Concept of good will is the key point in Kant's moral philosophy. Precise meaning of the term good will cannot be compared with the ordinarily and commonly accepted terms like intelligence, courage etc. as talents of mind. Good will, according to Kant is the will which is good unconditionally. Quality of mind does not guarantee good will. Good will does not depend upon the qualities of mind. Sometimes ordinary person can get confused in contemplating the meaning of the term good will with some desirable things like power, riches, honour, health and general well-being. These are the desirable but not good unless it is corrected by our good will. Though these give pleasure and lead to some happy end, they cannot be considered as good if there is no good will to govern it. Some quality in our ethical life is very much desirable, and good in some respect, such as emotions, passions, self-comforts and calm deliberation. But these qualities are not good without qualifications. These qualities are not unconditional but depend on some conditions. Conditional quality cannot be good in itself.

Good will is good in itself and it is good not because it accompanies some end; it is good because it is good in itself. Good will is incomparably higher than anything which could be brought about by inclination towards something or depending upon some condition. It is like a jewel which shines in its own right. So, in this regard Kant says that, possession of good will makes a good person good and he makes decision on the basis of moral law. When one acts on the basis of this moral law, he is held to be morally worthy. Under no other condition we can claim our moral goodness as worth having to attain some desirable ends. We see different other qualities such as courage, power, cleverness, intelligence, pleasure but these qualities are not worthy because of their being dependent upon some conditions. These qualities are not unconditional. Most important thing to be borne in mind here is that

possessing moral goodness is the very condition under which anything is considered as worthy. Other desirable qualities such as intelligence, power, pleasure, courage are worthy if and only if these qualities are unconditional or do not require or do not aim at fulfilling some desirable ends. In another sense, these are worth having only on the condition that they conform to fundamental moral laws or moral conviction. Therefore, Kant concludes that good will is good in itself and shines on its own right. It is unconditional, does not depend upon any condition. It requires nothing to make itself good.

Duty:

According to Kant, an action has real moral worth if it is done from duty. If a person's action conforms to good will and good will is motivated by the thought of duty where moral law is decisive; action can be considered as having moral worth. So, thought of duty plays a vital and influential role in Kant's moral philosophy. We have already discussed the concept or precise meaning of good will and its role in Kant's moral philosophy. Here we need to take the help of good will to explore Kant's concept of duty. Duty is always associated with some sort of motives. We have different sorts of motivation out of which one acts. Our aim here is to find thought of duty out of which worth having action could be done. Here in this context Kant says, there are different sorts of motives, such as, motive of self-interest, happiness, sympathy etc. and actions done out of such motives are however sometimes praiseworthy, but they do not express good will.

Kant, therefore, turns his attention to the concept of duty which is, for, him is the salient feature of moral consciousness. He, further, divides actions into two; action in accordance with duty and action performed for the sake of duty. Action done in accordance with duty has no moral worth because it may be done on the ground that –honesty is the best policy. Therefore, Kant says that actions performed for the sake of duty only have moral worth. It has been explained by an example- To save one's life is a duty and everyone has inclination to save his life. In this case, if one saves his life due to inclination to do so, then his action has no moral worth. Act of preserving one's life will have moral worth if and only if it is performed as a duty to save his life. Therefore, one thing becomes clear here that the action performed in accordance with duty is not compatible with it and action has moral worth which is

done for the sake of duty. In this situation one thing should be made clear that Kant's assertion is not that all actions which are performed in accordance with inclinations are immoral. Moral worth of an action depends on the increase and decrease of inclination to perform action. Lesser is the inclination, greater the moral worth.

Categorical Imperative:

Kant's concept of imperative can be derived from his theory of subjective and objective principles of practical reason and concepts of different goodness in respect of these theories. To grasp the meanings of subjective and objective principles it is necessary to enquire into the meaning of 'principle' itself. A principle is a universal proposition under which other propositions are grounded. It is an absolute ground above which there are no other higher grounds. Kant conceives this principle as subjective and objective principles. Subjective principles are the real ground of our action and are at work in our action. An agent always chooses subjective principle to act as it is confined only to an individual. Objective principles are the principles on which every rational agent acts if reason has full control over his passion. Thus, objective principles, according to Kant are open not only to an individual but also are to every rational agent. Kant introduces 'maxim' as a technical name for subjective principle and it is a kind of principle. Maxim differs from objective principle in its being valid only for the individual agent. Objective principles are valid for every rational agent. Kant believes that a rational agent always acts in accordance with some maxim. This maxim is of two kinds: (1) material and (2) formal. Material maxim is *a posteriori* or empirical as it is based on sensuous inclination or some desired ends. Formal maxim is not based experience of desires, hence it is *a priori*. According to Kant if someone acts in accordance with principle, he acts for duty's sake. He again says each rational agent has a will which is a capacity to act in accordance with some principle. Definition of will raises the question of what kind of principle in accordance with which one is supposed to act. Subjective principles are of course not considered because a holy will doesn't poses maxim or subjective principle. As a holy will doesn't poses maxim, a will as such may not be in capacity to act in accordance with law or principle. A holy will again is not subject to sensuous influences. It is finite will determined by objective principle, is a capacity to act in accordance with laws or principles. Thus, a finite will, determined by objective

principle, is the capacity to act in accordance with principle and representation of this objective principle is *Command*, according to Kant. Kant again says, to be a command it must be valid and it must have normative force for the agent. This principle which corresponds to the representation of law in case of finite will is *imperative*. Imperative on the basis of the nature of objective principles and goods are of two kinds: hypothetical imperative and categorical imperative. When objective principle is conditioned by an end; the imperative is called hypothetical imperative. When an action is performed for the sake of duty without reference to any end, imperative becomes categorical imperative. Categorical imperative is unconditional and uncaused by any desired ends. Kant says this kind of categorical imperative takes the general form 'every rational agent ought to will the action good in itself'.

In Kant's Moral Philosophy autonomy of will is like a mirror through which all other concepts reflect. As we have discussed earlier, imperatives which are motivated by inclination or desires are hypothetical, that is conditional or depends on some conditions. He says, categorical imperative must be unconditional and should not be determined by any inclinations and interests. Here one thing will be clear that, the 'will' which obeys categorical imperative should also not be determined by any interests. It must be autonomous, that is, it must give itself law which it obeys. We can put it in another sense that categorical imperative which do not contain autonomy of will is meaningless. Therefore, Kant says autonomy of will is the supreme principle of morality. Kant's concept of autonomy of will is always expressed in the formulation of imperative.

Kant's moral philosophy makes epoch making history in the field of moral philosophy by giving totally new and critical way of thought. His critical thought and new way of contemplating moral concepts and reconciliation of traditional and modern moral concepts enhanced moral Philosophy towards a new and rational dimension. Concepts of duty, good will, Categorical imperative and autonomy of will are the fundamental concepts of moral philosophy from the unknown antiquity and these concepts were undefined and unorganized since then. Advent of Kant's new and critical method in moral philosophy gave new orientation to them and these concepts get organized and well defined in the light of Philosophy and Ethics.

References:

1. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Macmillan and Co. LTD, London 1978.
2. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Judgement*, translated by J.N Bernard, Macmillan and Co LTD, London 1914.
3. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan Press LTD, London, 1929.
4. Kant, Immanuel & Mary, Gregor. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
5. Immanuel Kant, *The Moral Law: Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Herbert James Paton (Ed), Psychology press, 1991.
6. Coplestone, Frederick. S.J, *A History of Philosophy*, volume 4, Paulist press New York, 1977.
7. Paton, H.J. *The Categorical imperative*, Hutchinson & co. LTD 1965
8. Timmerman, Jean. *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, A commentary, Cambridge University press, 2007.
9. Wood, Allen W. *Kant's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge University press, 1999.
10. Wolff, Robert Paul. *Kant: a collection of critical essays*, Garden City, N.Y, anchor Book, 1967. Rawman & Littlefield, 1998.

WITTGENSTEIN ON RELIGION AND MEANING OF LIFE*

ANUP DEKA

Wittgenstein's interpretation of religion opens up a new dimension in philosophy of religion in modern times. He offers us a *non-God based religion*. He understands and interprets religion within *the realm of language*, more specifically, within the sphere of religious language. In his early writings, Wittgenstein has claimed that religion *cannot be put into words or language*. Accordingly, religious

* I am obliged to my supervisor Prof. Kanti Lal Das for his kind guidance for this contribution.

statements are mystical and nonsensical. However, in his later writings, Wittgenstein acknowledges religious language as *a form of life or as a language-game*. However, his interpretation about religion remains the same because like his early interpretation, Wittgenstein in his later interpretation does not believe in the existence of God. In this regard, Wittgenstein was influenced by logical positivism. For logical positivism, religious assertions are meaningless and for Wittgenstein, religious assertions are nonsensical. They are nonsensical in the sense that they lack factual sense. Wittgenstein called them important nonsense. However, at the end of his philosophical career, Wittgenstein conceives religion with regard to culture and value. Like many others, he asserts that religion is culture. The religion of a community reflects the culture of that community in the real sense of the term. Thus, in a sense the value of life and the value of the world are determined by religion. Religious feeling is a sort of mental feeling through which one can reveal his deep association with God. This feeling gives him comfort and safety. In order to unearth the meaning of life, one has to be a part of religion. Thus, in a sense, religion determines the meaning of life.

Religion determines *the value of the world*. *The value of the world is at par with the meaning of life*. When Wittgenstein in his *TLP* asserted that ethics, religion, aesthetics are nonsense, he did not want to say that they are plain nonsense; rather he wants to say that they are nonsense because they lack factual sense. However, they have sense in other context. They help us to determine the meaning of life; they help us to determine the value of the world. They help us to have a sense of God. Wittgenstein does not believe the existence of God, but he acknowledges that one can have a sense of God without preconceiving its existence. To think of God is to have a better sense or feeling. One can reveal himself safe while thinking or feeling of God.

For Wittgenstein, culture and value are no longer associated with propositional value he has anticipated in his *TLP*. For Wittgenstein, the sense of the proposition is no way associated with the sense of the world. The sense of the world or the value of the world is higher than the sense of the proposition. Anything higher cannot be comprehended by means of anything lower. Therefore, the sense of the proposition cannot reach up to that. Wittgenstein in his *Culture and Value*¹ thus

¹ Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch, University of Chicago Press, 1977.

outlines the relevance of religion with regard to the twin concepts, namely, *culture* and *value*. In this regard, Wittgenstein intends to say that religion is in another sense culture. Or alternatively, it can be said that the culture of a community is reflected through religion. It is associated with *the meaning of life*. The meaning of life is made possible through the association of the value of the world. One can have a sense of the value of the world just by way of revealing the feeling of God. Thus for Wittgenstein, to think of culture and value through religion helps one to reveal his association with God. This sort of religious feeling makes him safe and comfortable. Thus in a sense, religious safety would be treated as absolute safety. The meaning of life cannot be determined without ensuring absolute safety of life.

This position of Wittgenstein is metaphysical in nature. Here we have to engage in self-reflection upon our reactions to the rituals and upon activities within our lives. Here we need to engage in self-reflection of our own which would be profoundly ethical and having religious implications. It would be “a sort of religious experience or feeling where we find ourselves *absolutely safe*.”² It would be a stage where the answer to the question cannot be formulated. It means to say that there is something wrong with the question. It is an attempt to get something said that can only be shown. Here Winch takes Wittgenstein’s pronouncement of *the feeling of absolute safety* to be one exemplification of ‘the ethico-religious idea’. In certain places, it exhibits a depth of self-exploration on Wittgenstein’s part comparable to that of many of the manuscript notes that came to be published in his *Culture and Value*. In our sense, the statement concerning absolute safety is one of the few instances of what Wittgenstein identifies as expressions or judgments of ‘absolute value’. While scrutinizing the statements of ‘absolute value’, Wittgenstein reveals them to be nonsensical in the light of the contemplation of meaningfulness to which he was still in thrall in the time of the lecture. Many would say that Wittgenstein’s remark about absolute safety need be allied to a notion of virtuousness as a guarantor of safety in the way that he remarks from Socrates and Kierkegaard. However, we think that unlike the latter, Wittgenstein’s remark seems better understood as gesturing towards a standpoint beyond what we ordinarily recognize as virtue and

² Wittgenstein, *A Lecture on Ethics*, op. cit., p.8.

vice altogether, a philosophical standpoint which may be characterized by Wittgenstein in his *TLP* as *mystical*. Thus, we reveal a tendency in the human mind concerning the feeling of absolute safety. In this regard, Wittgenstein says, “We all know what it means in ordinary life to be safe. I am safe in my room, when I cannot be run over by an omnibus. I am safe if I have had whooping cough and cannot therefore get it again. To be safe essentially means that it is physically impossible that certain things should happen to me and therefore it’s nonsense to say that I am safe whatever happens ... this is a misuse of the word ‘safe.’”³ Thus it seems clear that by the term ‘safe’, Wittgenstein does not mean *physical safe* or someone is safe physically, rather he intends to say *a tendency in the human mind*.

When Wittgenstein describes that what he has said as nonsense, it does not follow that he means there is no point in saying it. Rather what he seems to be getting at is that the words with which he has tried to characterize a certain experience cannot be given what he might want to call it a factual sense. That means they do not express a proposition. He took semantics approach in his early part of his *TLP* where he vehemently claimed that all meaningful utterances must express propositions, which in turn, correspond to facts. Thus, one should be aware that Wittgenstein was inclined to label as nonsense any use of language other than a description of such facts. However, we have seen in his *PI*, where Wittgenstein was to change his mind about this. Here he dispense with his notion of the general form of a proposition in favor of their being innumerable forms or uses of language, with no essential structure. We have to understand his talk of absolute safety within the context of religious allegory and to classify all such uses of language as ultimately nonsense. Here an attempt has been made to transcend language and the world by *means of language*. For Wittgenstein, they involve in running ‘against the boundaries of language, against the walls of our cage; and this, though a natural and respectable human tendency, is perfectly and absolutely nonsense.’⁴

We thus think that religious allegories are not instances of nonsense, but as pictures that have a particular use, and hence a sense, within a believer’s life. The fact

³ Wittgenstein, *A Lecture on Ethics*, op. cit., p.9.

⁴ Wittgenstein, *A Lecture on Ethics*, p.12

is that such pictures are not propositions devoid of evaluative content. They do not express or describe neutral states of affair in the world. However, this is not the reason for designating them nonsense, rather was merely a reason for denying that there is any point in trying to translate them into non-evaluative. A religious utterance, or an ethical or aesthetic one, can have a point and a use, and hence a sense differs from factual sense, irrespective of whether it expresses anything that the earlier Wittgenstein would have wanted to call a 'fact'. Thus, if Wittgenstein is able to have a sense in *ethico-religious uses of language*, then there seems no obvious reason for being deferred from seeking sense in an *ethico-religious* utterance articulated by Wittgenstein. We think that when Wittgenstein announces his religious feeling of absolute safety, he too is drawing a connection between invulnerability and virtuousness and in fact, unlike Socrates and Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein does not explicitly draw a connection between *safety and virtue*.

Thus, by calling for absolute safety, Wittgenstein has a different experience altogether. In this regard, Winch quotes Wittgenstein, "I will mention another experience straight away which I also know and which others of you might be acquainted with: it is, what one might call, the experience of feeling absolutely safe. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens.'"⁵ Here Wittgenstein has described his experience of religious allegory, namely, the experience of wondering at the world's existence, what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world and of the existence of absolute safety. He says that it has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God. He also added a 'third experience' of guilty feeling. Guilty feeling cannot be approved by God. Thus, in the case of feeling of absolute safety, Wittgenstein is alluding to something wholly unconditional. In this sense, it can be said after Wittgenstein that the feeling of absolute safe is deeply associated with the absolute value that would preserve one's upstanding moral character until the end of his life. Thus, if we take seriously Wittgenstein's use of the term 'absolutely safe' here we should reject the assumption that absolute safety, in Wittgenstein's sense, is based on moral character. Wittgenstein then said that the feeling of absolute safety

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8.

can be expressed as the feeling that we are safe in the hands of God. To feel safe in the hands of God is to acknowledge that the ultimate power over life and death rests not in one's own hands, but in those of supreme deity. It is to believe in the goodness of creation, where 'goodness' is used not in a relative but in an absolute sense. The feeling at issue here is not a denial of the presence of pain and suffering of the world, but recognition that there is a perspective from which everything without exception, is all right. More succinctly, it would be a sort of feeling that we are all loved.

According to Christ, this world is itself good. There are woes we suffer as much an expression of God's love as are our joys. God's love for his creation redeems us all. Commenting on this viewpoint as a possible response to the question of why we must undergo the suffering that comes to us as a consequence of natural events, Roy Holland said, "It is not possible for [such suffering] to be seen as God's love. I offer this neither as the answer nor as my answer to the question but cite it as a perspective: one which is not accessible to many but one from which it is possible for suffering to be seen, possible because it has been seen that way, by Julian of Norwich for instance..."⁶ If all shall be well with the world as a whole, by a kind of divine necessity, then it seems to follow that all must be well with oneself, no matter what happens. It must include the condition of one's own moral character among everything else. Everything would be a manifestation of God's love. Wittgenstein says, "What is good is also divine. Queer as it sounds, that sums up my ethics. Only something supernatural can express the Supernatural".⁷ Accordingly, you cannot lead people to what is good, "you can only lead them to some place or other. The good is outside the space of facts."⁸ The earlier culture will become a heap of rubble and finally a heap of ashes, but spirits will hover the ashes. Wittgenstein continues that the difference between a good and a poor architect is that 'the poor architect succumbs to every temptation and the good one resist it.'⁹ People now seeking religious epistemology, religious justification, attempting to develop philosophical

⁶ Holland, 'On the Form of "The Problem of Evil"', in *Against Empiricism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, p.241.

⁷ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Culture and Value*, translated by Peter Winch, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p.3e.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3e.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3e.

theories about religious matters, but it should be kept in mind that there was a time when people lead a good life with the help of religion when there was no question raised for its justification. In this regard Wittgenstein remarks, “If there were a ‘solution’ to the problem of logic (philosophy) we should only need to caution ourselves that there was a time when they had not been solved (and even at that time people must have known how to live and think)”.¹⁰

It would then be treated as *ethical monism* according to which the benevolence of the universe as a whole outstrips the categories of good and evil as used in most everyday ethical discourse. According to Wittgenstein, the goodness of the whole is *paradigmatically mystical one* - none of us can be harmed, irrespective of any features of our character that may be construed as moral flaws from the relative perspective of everyday morality. While reflecting on this issue, McGuinness asserts that “in mysticism the right feeling about the existence of the world (which is the same as to say: about the ultimate nature of reality) leads to an acceptance of the sort of world that there is, so that we cease to ask what the purpose of life or of the world is.”¹¹ Citing various texts of Wittgenstein, McGuinness related the experience of feeling absolutely safe. For him, the happy man of the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* would need to have the attitude of one with this experience. He would have to feel perfectly content, comparatively free from fear and anxiety of all the misery of this world. “To be indifferent to the facts, to live without fear or hope involves feeling safe whatever happens.”¹² If the life as a whole is virtuous, then the life and hence the person, cannot suffer moral harm. In such a case Wittgenstein’s inclination to say “I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens” The other points that needs to be taken care of at this point is that Wittgenstein unlike Socrates and Kierkegaard, is not associating absolute safety with integrity of moral character, rather than associating the feeling of safety with an understanding of oneself as innocent and virtuous, Wittgenstein associates it with the feeling that one is in the hands of God. For Wittgenstein, God is with one and that God’s miraculous creation is to be accepted as *an absolute one*. Of course, it always remains possible that one who has

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4e.

¹¹ McGuinness, “The Mysticism of the Tractatus”, *Philosophical Review*, 75, 1966, p.315.

¹² *Ibid.*, p327.

the feeling of absolute safety may lose it. The feeling of absolute safety may not be enduring. However, it would not invalidate the claim that one is absolutely safe. The question of whether one agrees with a statement such as, 'I feel absolutely safe irrespective of what happens' is a matter of one's own religious experience and conviction. It is a matter of the sort of life one is living and is prepared to aspire to. Whether the statement can have sense is irrelevant here. Rather the statement under consideration expresses *an attitude towards life and the world*. It expresses an attitude towards God that is both intelligible and spiritually profound. In expressing this attitude, Wittgenstein is not merely contemplating a religious form of life, *but inhabiting it, exploring it, 'from the outside'*. Here he is occupying the role of one who sees the world in a particular way - who has a feeling that one might characterize as religious *awe and reverence*. His role here is to play and act as an 'honest religious thinker' who reflects upon the role of that religious feeling. This is how one finds himself *absolutely safe and secure* in religion.

Call for honest religious thinking

We thus claim that only an honest religious thinker can find himself safe and secure in religion. Only through honest religious thinking one can become an honest religious thinker. An honest religious thinker can be able to determine the meaning of life; can be able to perceive the real meaning of life. One cannot become an honest religious thinker without sound moral precept. Therefore we need an honest religious thinker. The possibility of honest religious thinking matters the most *to lead a safe and secure life*. The image of the situation of becoming an honest religious thinker would be reflected in the writings of Tolstoy: "...there is a pillar at my head and the solidity of this slender pillar is beyond doubt, although there is nothing for it to stand on. A rope is hanging very ingeniously, yet simply, from the pillar, and if one lies with the middle of one's body on the rope and looks up there can be no question of falling. This was all clear to me and I was glad and tranquil. It was as if someone were saying to me: 'See that you remember.' And I wake up."¹³ It indicates that religious belief really is a matter of *wishful thinking*. Alternatively, following cynical

¹³ Tolstoy, *A Confession* in *A Confession and Other Religious Writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987, p79.

readers we can say that the absence of any basis for faith is precisely what *the believer is not ignoring*. By looking upwards to heaven, faith is acknowledged to be *an aspiration of love, hope and trust*. For the Christian, this will be *love, hope and trust directed towards God*. By acknowledging this, the believer recognizes that faith is not built on foundations of earth, and hence that looking downwards will never provide the support that is required for faith. According to Thomas, 'the height of wisdom is to set your face towards heaven by despising the world'.¹⁴ The same has been reflected in Wittgenstein as well. Wittgenstein has said that religious faith conceives as *a kind of suspension from above*.

While referring to Christ, Wittgenstein writes of religious belief as a holding fast to redemption, to redeeming love. This can be made possible, Wittgenstein reveals *if you no longer support yourself on this earth but suspend yourself from heaven*. In such a case, everything would be different and there would be no wonder. If you can do, then do what now you cannot do. Wittgenstein remarks, "It is true that someone who is suspended looks like someone who is standing but the interplay of forces within him is nevertheless a quite different one & hence he is able to do quite different things than one who stands."¹⁵ Wittgenstein elsewhere describes 'the honest religious thinker' as being 'like a tightrope walker' upon which the walker stands, the Grund, "is the slenderest imaginable. And yet it really is possible to walk on it."¹⁶ We think that through the image of the tightrope walker, Wittgenstein is depicting the *honest religious thinker*, someone who, while attending the needs of the heart and soul, does not neglect the pull of rational reflection. This actually creates a tension among the religious thinkers. In this regard Wittgenstein reveals that one way of seeing the image would be as embodying an ongoing tension in the life of one who strives to reconcile the passion of faith with the intellecter's desire for grounds or reason other than those of the heart - reasons which might take the form of empirical or theoretical evidence. Wittgenstein was alert of this tension and that is why he strictly adheres towards maintaining religious belief alongside honest self-critical awareness that would lend depth to many of his observations on religious matters.

¹⁴ Thomas, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated by Ronald Knox and Michael Oakley, London: Burns & Oates, 1959, pp.17-18.

¹⁵ Wittgenstein, Ludwig., *Culture and Value*, op. cit. p.39e.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.84e.

That means the value of religious matters actually hinges on honest religious thinking and it is the most important task of religious thinkers to find out the possibility of honest religious thinking. Wittgenstein with the influence of Tolstoy and Kierkegaard claimed that religious belief should not be conflated with other kinds of belief, especially of a scientific kind because they have different spheres. The tightrope walker feels the ever-present temptation to turn religion into a matter of metaphysical speculation.

The question then is: whether such religious tension can be solved or it would remain unsolved? Schroeder remarks that the tension embodied by Wittgenstein's tightrope walker is psychologically impossible. He doubts that it is possible to hold reason in abeyance in the way that the image suggests – to hold that a religious belief is not likely to be true. In this regard, Schroeder maintains that there is *an unresolved tension* in *Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion*.¹⁷ We think that the image of the tightrope walker does suggest a tension that has been personified in the honest religious thinker as something impossible. According to Schroeder, a putative honest religious thinker is impossibility and therefore Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion has in internal tension. Therefore, it is necessary to bring out the genuine life in Wittgenstein's contemplations on religion to show where Schroeder's contention is liable to lead us astray.

On the basis of the above observation, we conclude by saying that in religion culture and value play an all important role to determine the meaning of life. For Wittgenstein, language is culture and the cultural aspect of language determines the meaning of life and also determines the value of life. In this regard, the religious person must be an honest religious thinker. An honest religious thinker must be morally and ethically sound. As a result of that an honest religious thinker always reveals himself safe and secure in religion. Of course, the disappearance of a culture does not signify the disappearance of human value, but simply of certain means of expressing this value. Wittgenstein does not have any sympathy for current European civilization. For Wittgenstein, the current European civilization appears as a threat to culture. Wittgenstein foresees cultural decline within European civilization.

¹⁷ Schroeder, S., 'The Tightrope Walker', *Ratio*, New Series, 20, 2007, p.442.

Wittgenstein's culture and value give us an insight into his moral intensity and integrity towards determining and weighing the meaning of life. Here he wants to experience the intellectual thrill of thinking in a new and illuminating way. In this regard, Wittgenstein asserts that within the paradigm of culture and value, a religious man always tries to become an honest religious thinker. For that one has to stay within the religious sphere and one has to struggle for it. He has to believe that God is judging him out of his own mouth and he has to bow down his knee before God. This is how can reveal himself safe and secure in life.

AMBEDKAR'S POSTMODERN VISION*

RAKHI DEBNATH

Though Ambedkar belongs to the Indian Contemporary world and Postmodernism is a trend of the western contemporary world but they have some surprising similarities between their thoughts. Now the question arises that 'Is India postmodern or not?' For me the answer is paradoxical. I believe that India is traditional, at the same time it is modern and also postmodern. For instance, in many areas, we still follow the traditional worldview in our lives and at the same time follow the modern trend. Aafter analyzing Ambedkar's thought in relation to postmodern thought, comparison of these two ways of thought bring many points of

* I am sincerely thankful to my teacher Prof. Debika Saha for her kind help in framing this paper.

similarities which will reveal many interesting areas. But before delving this issue, let us try to analyze the concept of postmodernism.

Postmodernism, the western contemporary and intellectual movement has affected the entire socio-cultural and political milieu of our times. The influence of postmodernism is reflected almost in every sphere of life in literary circles and in scientific movements and also in the spectrum of academic disciplines. It questions the trust of modernity and calls for the affirmation of plurality and diversity. The term postmodernism is widely used to denote the number of philosophical views developed in France in the late 60s. Postmodernist argues in any objective universal meanings of words or texts or any such permanent structures that are at the foundation of human consciousness. So, it is claimed that socio-cultural structures are a burden to humanity and unless we get rid from our traditional cultural discourse we can't live our lives with freedom and creativity in its fullness. They hardly believe in any universal structures or categories of thought that form the human self. According to those philosophers cultures do not create man, rather man creates his cultures. Actually, postmodernism expresses its radical views on different spheres of life even beyond philosophy. The student revolution of the late 60s in Europe played a crucial role in making of a postmodern sub-culture.

So, the history of postmodernism in the 70s and 80s is basically one of widespread acceptance of the ideas spread by different philosophers. This trend criticizes the notion of 'presence' or 'presentation' in knowledge and also criticizes the effort of rational inquiry to examine the origin of the source of all human knowledge. It focuses on the marginalized, the outlawed and the abnormal of society. It calls for a critical analysis of our smug complacency towards accepted norms and traditions. However, it is difficult to define postmodernism. It is an umbrella term drawing within its fold different disciplines like philosophy, history, literary theory, art etc. Postmodernism as a movement is largely a reaction against the philosophical assumptions, values, and worldview of the modern period, roughly the period of scientific revolution from the 17th and 18th centuries till mid-20th century. Many of the doctrines typically associated with postmodernism can be fairly described as the denial of the 18th century Enlightenment faith in human reason and in the pursuit of science and technology.

Postmodernism denies there is an objective reality. They treat objective reality as a kind of conceptual construct. There is no such thing as absolute truth in philosophy, science or history. It questions the universal validity of reason and logic and distrusts science and technology as instruments of human progress. Hence, postmodernism is a response to the horrors of the holocaust and the dangers of an atomic age. Many of them believe that reason and logic is oppressive as they have been used to destroy others. It holds that there is no intrinsic human nature, it is completely socially determined. According to them, language does not represent the reality outside us; it is not a “mirror of the universe”. It is semantically self-contained or self-referential. The meaning of a word is a series of contrasts and differences with the meanings of other words in the system.

According to them, there is no magical meta-theory or universal theoretical ground that can provide a foundation for every other subsequent theory. Meta-theories are referred to as meta-narratives or very similar to ‘philosophy with a capital ‘P’. It is no longer a viable and credible enterprise. Thus, it reveals that postmodernity in general terms is a war against all forms of tantalization. It dismisses any totalizing systems of thought in man’s social, historical, biological development as a grand meta-narrative. Such grand narratives keep some social groups in power and others out of it. From Christian redemption to Marxism and political narrative of nationalism are all ‘meta-narrative’. If there are no absolute objective truths in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, then such truths are constructed by discourses. A discourse is a set of interlocking and mutually supporting statements used to define and describe a subject matter, e.g., the discursive practices of law, medicine, and aesthetic and so on. Some postmodernist hold that the prevailing discourses in any society are always influenced by power relations. They reveal the interest and values of the powerful, dominant elite groups.

There are lots of thoughtful remarks about postmodernism, which we find in ‘Of Grammatology’ and in many other books about postmodernism. Like, Norris says that postmodernism is a period of playful freedom, a kind of consumer choice. For him, it’s just an unfortunate mistake. Lyotard sees postmodernism as conditions. Cannor views it as a culture. For Jameson, it’s a cultural domination and even Eagleton narrates it as an illusion. American literary critic Ihab Hassan in his book

The Dismemberment of Orpheus: toward a Postmodern Literature in 1982 introduces a list of difference between modernism and postmodernism. But in this paper, it has been discussed briefly. After pointing out some of the remarks about postmodernism it's time to compare Ambedkar's vision and postmodernism.

As postmodernism stands against any kind of 'ism', likewise Ambedkar stands against any kind of 'ism'. The reason behind this is that any kind of 'ism' has been framed with rigid rules and principles which may not be reshuffled in the course of time and according to the needs and demand of transparent society. This happened in so many philosophical theories against which postmodernism are vocal. The position of Ambedkar is similar to this. Although he was born as a Hindu but in 1935 he quit Hinduism. He adopted Buddhism on 14th October at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur with his followers.

Ambedkar was struggling against Hinduism because it is based on some rigid rules and principles which are not transparent in any situation. Hinduism is dictated by God's will and what is termed as God's will cannot be negated by any means. He was victimized as untouchable and has been exploited and humiliated by the default of caste system prevailing in Hinduism. In 1935 he gave an important speech where he told his followers "After giving deep thought to the problem, everybody will have to admit that conversion is necessary to the Untouchables as self-government is to India. The ultimate object of both is the same. There is not the slightest difference in their ultimate goal. This ultimate aim is to attain freedom. And if the freedom is necessary for the life of mankind, conversion of Untouchables which brings them complete freedom cannot be called worthless by any speech of imagination."¹ Ambedkar throughout his life has struggled against the rigidity of *Varnavyavastha* prevailing in Hinduism. However, he eventually failed to do it because it is based on uncharacteristic 'ism'. Thus, Ambedkar's outlook towards Hinduism is post-modernistic in nature.

On the foundation of Indian democracy his views on caste, individualism, constitutionalism, economic and religion also gave a profound impact. Ambedkar with the great support of 20 million Dalits brought back a 'new millennium' and a

¹ See 'Why go for conversion?' Held on 30th to 31st May, 1936 in Mumbai.

new hope of a golden future for the depressed class in India. This was made possible because of the dynamicity of his thinking. The post dynamicity of great Ambedkar actually robs the power politics of the casteist elements in Hinduism. The urgency of the implementation of the *Hindu Rastra* agenda, the attempts at the saffronisation of education, the growing attacks and atrocities on Dalits and other minorities, the boosting of the capitalistic globalization process through privatization, liberalization exhibit that oppression is intimidating on the Dalit community with a new aggressiveness. This was the gloomy and dark period of the Dalit and at that time the appearance of Ambedkar as the savior of the Dalit community was a pleasant surprise. At that time the presence of Ambedkar was the need of the hour of India. To attribute the significance of Ambedkar as a reformer of Dalit, Victor Ferrao remarks, "Hence, we get a bird's eye-view of the life of this great man who could be said to exhibit a postmodern approach."²

Ambedkar visualizes the true reality of India with honesty and open eyes. He was shocked by realizing that motherland fails to provide two important things, such as equality and liberty. He felt that liberty, equality, and fraternity are three concepts on the basis of which a just society can be built up. According to him, on a social plan, the Indian society runs with graded inequality and on the economic plane even though we have immense wealth but due to social inequality there are 'many who are being in abject poverty'. Ambedkar says, "On 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social life and economic life we have inequality...we must remove these contradictions at the earliest possible moments or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously built up."³

Being a postmodernist, Ambedkar felt that religion was essential for human social growth. He said, "Man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind, which needs food for thought. Religion instills hope and drives him to activity."⁴ However, Ambedkar advocated a liberalized religion which according to him plays an important role in emancipating the minds and souls of people. In his view the religion that is not

² Lakeland, Paul, 1997, p.59.

³ Das, Bhagvan, 1969, p. 187.

⁴ See, Keer, 1991, p.502.

liberal, that breeds oppression and sanctions unjust inequalities is not true religion. Unfortunately, Hinduism belongs to this category by robbing human rights in the true sense of the term. He declared, “Inequality is the soul of Hinduism”⁵. Eventually, he left Hinduism and embraced Buddhism because behind this Hinduism failed to secure basic human rights. For him, Buddha Dhamma was the best and it was the most scientific religion. Ambedkar said in the hymns of Rig Veda “we see man’s thoughts turned outwards, away from himself, to the world of the Gods.”⁶ It is full of praise, worship, and prayer. But Buddhism is “directed man’s search inwards to the potentiality hidden within himself”⁷. He invited others to follow suit. He becomes clear when he says, “So long as we remain in a religion, which teaches a man to treat another man as a leper, the sense of discrimination which is deeply rooted in our mind cannot go. For annihilating caste and untouchability from among the untouchables change of religion is the only antidote.”⁸

According to Ambedkar, the actual fact is, a person is untouchable because he or she has been born of an untouchable parent. That is why he or she was polluted not in some special conditions but under all conditions and permanently. For him, it is something which is inherited. He realized that the main problem of Hinduism is the caste system, which belongs to the four castes; Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Here Brahmins are the highest caste. They are separated from other and teachers of the other caste, not only that but also they are the custodians of the Vedas and all other scriptures. Even they called themselves ‘Bhudevas’ means equal to God. These each caste was described in *Purusha Sukta*.

There was another outcaste besides these four castes are untouchable. Although in caste system shudras are occupied the lowest position but the untouchables were more suffering. According to Ambedkar, “they were born impure; they were impure while they lived, they died in the death of the impure, and they gave birth to children who were born with a stigma of untouchability affixed to them.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.66

⁶ *Why Dr. Ambedkar left Hinduism and Chose Buddhism*, 6th Dec, 2016.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See, Ambedkar, 1987, p.7.

It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse.”⁹ Like Hinduism, Muslim and Christian religion also believe their religious injunctions and customs. But against these superstitious practices and beliefs, Buddhism was a revolt. Here Gautama Buddha could not tolerate this evil practices.

The other important dimension of Ambedkar’s postmodernism is that he often criticised Gandhian ‘ism’. Even though Gandhi was non-committal regarding caste system, but he was an ardent advocator of *Varna system*. Ambedkar, however, thought that the Varna system of Gandhi actually invited the caste system of Hinduism. Therefore, Ambedkar simplistically drew the conclusion that “The only reaction and a very natural reaction of the Untouchables would be to run away from Gandhism.”¹⁰ Ambedkar thus quests for the kingdom of righteousness through righteous conduct. It aims at bringing about a total and integral liberation of every human being. Ambedkar felt that love, justice, and peace are the prime value of the kingdom of righteousness. Thus, by establishing the kingdom of righteousness, Ambedkar eventually breathed the cause of Dalit liberation.

In conclusion, we can say that Postmodernism is a war against all forms of totalization. Even though postmodernism as a theory did not appear in the time of Ambedkar, but one should look back to the past history to trace the relevance of postmodernism. In this regard, the relevance of Ambedkar, Buddhism, and Gandhi are noteworthy. Ambedkar has treaded the path of postmodernism through his socio-political thinking. The movement that Ambedkar had adopted against Hinduism and against all kinds of social injustice was based on rationality and science, but not based on rigid God based dictum and verdict which according to him was a social trauma. Just postmodernism stands against every kind of philosophical doctrine totalization, Ambedkar stood against every kind of social oppression based on any kind of rigid ‘ism’. Ambedkar’s postmodern technique of dismantling and reassembling of different ideas is found specially in 1948 publication *The Untouchable*. Gail Omvedt, an American Scholar, makes an important remark in her narration that although Ambedkar subscribed to certain Marxist descriptions of ideology and economic

⁹ Ambedkar, 1990, p. 266.

¹⁰ Ambedkar, 1990, p.296-297.

relations, he reversed the base-superstructure model to give primacy to the superstructure, of which religious factors were fundamentally important. Instead of falling back on a theory of caste oppression as determined by economic disparities, Ambedkar interpreted religious difference as having an equally material effect in explaining the nature of social oppression.

Ambedkar did exhibit postmodern tendency in his lifelong struggle against the casteist metanarrative just like the postmodernism has been struggling over the years against philosophical 'isms'. Ambedkar struggle against metanarrative of Hinduism, everybody should be inspired by this lesson.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

PROF. RANJANA MUKHERJEE
RETD. PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY

PROF. KALYAN KUMAR BAGCHI
RETD. PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
VISHWA BHARATI UNIVERSITY

PROF. ASHOK MODAK
CHANCELLOR
GURU GHASI DAS VISHWAVIDYALAYA
BILASPUR, CHATTISHGARH

PROF. RAKESH CHANDRA
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY

PROF. RAGHUNATH GHOSH
RETD. PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

PROF. KANTILAL DAS
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

DR. JYOTSNA SAHA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF GOUR BANGA

PROF. BALAGANAPATHI DEVARAKONDA
PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
DELHI UNIVERSITY

DR. NIRMAL KUMAR ROY
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

PROF. AMAL KUMAR HARH
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

COOCHBEHAR PANCHANAN BURMA
UNIVERSITY

DR. SAMAR KUMAR MONDAL
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

DR. ANIRBAN MUKHERJEE
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

DR. LAXMIKANTA PADHI
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

VARBI ROY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY,
SCOTTISH CHURCH COLLEGE, KOLKATA

DR. MAMATA KUNDU
FORMER ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
IN PHILOSOPHY
KALIYAGANJ COLLEGE

MR. MUKUL S. K.
RESEARCH SCHOLAR IN ENGLISH
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

MR. ALOK KUMAR KHATUA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY

MUGBERIA GANGADHAR
MAHAVIDYALAYA, BHUPATINAGAR
PUARBA MEDINIPUR, WB

MISS RESHMEE SARKAR
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

SMT. SANDIPA GHOSH
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MISS PRIYANKA BASAK
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

DR. PURNIMA DAS
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
MAYNAGURI COLLEGE, JALPAIGURI

MR. GAMBHIR D. SUBBBA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY
DARJEELING GOVT. COLLEGE

MR. ANUP DEKA
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

SMT. RAKHI DEBNATH
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

NOTES TO THE CONTRIBUTORS

This journal is a yearly philosophical journal published by the Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy, welcomes contributions from all fields of philosophy. The editorial policy of the journal is to promote the study of philosophy, Eastern and Western in all its branches: Epistemology, Metaphysics, Logic, Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Science, Mind, Religion and Language. However, it would like its contributors to focus on what they consider to be significantly new and important. The contributions should, as far as possible, avoid jargon and the author's contention should be stated in as simple a language as possible.

Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy is thus, devoted to the publication of original papers in any other of these fields. We hope followers and seekers of philosophy will receive much light and guidance in the field of

philosophical research from these discussions. It is also hoped that the papers in this journal will spark fruitful philosophical discussion of the vital issues raised in them. Please note that we are currently publishing behind schedule due to time-constraints and other engagements relating to our SAP DRS-I (2002-2007), DRS- II (2009-2014) DRS- III (2015-2019) of UGC, Centre for Ambedkar Studies and Centre for Buddhist Studies associated with our department. We plead an apology to all for the delay.

Submission

Contributions to the journal are invited in the form of articles, book reviews, and comments on articles published in the area of philosophy. Contributions should be typed in double space on one side of A-4 size paper and to be sent in CD or as an attachment to the e-mail of Editor-in-Chief/Head of the Department of Philosophy at nkr.anirban@gmail.com Contributors should submit papers as Microsoft Word documents or in rich text format, not in PDF or other formats unless specifically asked. If email is not possible, please send two hard copies of the paper and other materials, along with a disk. To allow blind refereeing, please ensure that your manuscript is anonymous by including your name, institutional address, contact details and self-identifying references in a separate file. A full postal address for editorial correspondence should also be given. A summary of around 200 words, and a list of four or five 'key words' should be provided for the use of abstracting services. Footnotes, which will be printed at the end of the article, should be numbered consecutively through the text, and presented on a separate sheet of paper, typed with double spacing. Bibliographic citations in the text or notes should include the author's last name and the title, year and place of publication, and include a page reference.

The Department of Philosophy shall be the copyright owner of all the published materials. Apart from the fair dealing for the purposes of research, private study and criticism, no part of the journal may be copied, adapted, abridged, translated, stored in any retrieval system, computer system, photographic or other system or reproduced in any form by any means whether electronic, mechanical, digital, optical, photographic, or otherwise prior written permissions from the publisher.

The editors, publishers, and printers do not own any responsibilities for the views expressed by the contributors and for the errors, if any, in the information contained in the journal.

**PUBLICATIONS UNDER SAP, DRS-I (2002-2007),
DRS- II (2009-2014) AND DRS- III (2015-20) OF UGC IN PHILOSOPHY**

1. *Vyākaraṇa-darśane Vagartha-prasanga* by Karunasindhu Das (NBU Studies in Philosophy-1), Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 2003.
2. *Language and Meaning*, Edited by Raghunath Ghosh (NBU Studies in Philosophy-2), Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 2003.
3. *Śabdārtha-Vichāra*, Edited by Raghunath Ghosh & Bhaswati B. Chakrabarti, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-3), Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 2005.
4. *Meaning and Reference*, Edited by Manjulika Ghosh & Chandidas Bhattacharya, (NBU studies in Philosophy-4), Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 2005.

5. *Philosophical Relevance of Language* by Kanti Lal Das (NBU Studies in Philosophy-5), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2006.
6. *Language and Reality* Edited by Kanti Lal Das & Jyotish Chandra Basak, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-6), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2006.
7. *Śabdapramāṇa in Indian Philosophy* Edited by Manjulika Ghosh & Bhaswati B. Chakrabarti, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-7), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2006.
8. *Sabda Kena Praman Nai?* by Dilip Kumar Mohanta, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-8), Lavent Books, Kolkata, 2006.
9. *Bhasha: Samsayavadir Drishtite* by Bhaswati B. Chakrabarti, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-9), Lavent Books, Kolkata, 2006.
10. *Language and Ontology*, Edited by Kanti Lal Das & Anirban Mukherjee, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-10), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2008.
11. *Language and Interpretation: Hermeneutics from the East-West Perspective*, Edited by Manjulika Ghosh & Raghunath Ghosh, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-11), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2007.
12. *Performative, Knowledge & Truth*, by Manjulika Ghosh, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-12), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2008.
13. *Language and Grammar*, Edited by Bhaswati B. Chakrabarti and Koushik Joardar, (NBU studies in Philosophy-13), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2009.
14. *Language and Truth in Buddhism*, Edited by Raghunath Ghosh & Jyotish Chandra Basak, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-14), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2009.
15. *Moral Language*, Edited by Debika Saha and Laxmikanta Padhi, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-15), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2010.
16. *Bhāṣādarśana*, Edited by Jyotish Chandra Basak (NBU studies in Philosophy-16), Levant Books, Kolkata, 2018.
17. *Nyayadarshane Vakarthabodha* by Raghunath Ghosh, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-17), Lavent Books, Kolkata, 2018.

18. *Language, Culture and Value*, Edited by Kanti Lal Das and Nirmal Kumar Roy. (NBU studies in Philosophy-18), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi. (in Press)
19. *Language and Aesthetics*, Edited by Raghunath Ghosh and Bhaswati B. Chakrabarti (NBU Studies in Philosophy-19), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi. (in Press)
20. *Language and Thought*, Edited by Jyotish Chandra Basak and Koushik Joardar (NBU studies in Philosophy-20), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2012.
21. *Semantics and Phenomenology of I (Professor K.C.Bhattacharyya's Philosophy of the Subject)* by Kalyankumar Bagchi, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-21), Northern Book Centre, New Delhi. 2011.
22. *Phenomenological Meaning* Edited by Debika Saha and Laxmikanta Padhi (NBU Studies in Philosophy-22) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2014.
23. *Reinterpreting Tradition: Critical Essays 20th Century Modern Indian Thought* Edited by Anirban Mukherjee and N. Ramthing (NBU Studies in Philosophy-23) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi (in Press)
24. *Semantics of Tarka* by Nirmal Kumar Roy (NBU Studies in Philosophy-24) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi,, 2018.
25. *Language, Logic and Truth* Edited by Kanti Lal Das, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-25) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi (in Press)
26. *Philosophy of Language*, by Raghunath Ghosh (NBU Studies in Philosophy-26) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2018.
27. *Navya Nyaya Language*, by Raghunath Ghosh (NBU Studies in Philosophy-27) Levant Books, Kolkata, 2018.
28. *Language, and Communication* Edited by Kanti Lal Das, (NBU Studies in Philosophy-28) Lavent Books, Kolkata, 2018
29. *Socio-Political Philosophy of Ambedkar*, by Raghunath Ghosh and Jyotish Chandra Basak(NBU Studies in Philosophy-29) University of North Bengal ,2016
30. *Reinterpreting Justice in a Globalized World* by Debika Saha (NBU Studies in Philosophy-30) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, (in Press)

31. *Current Environmental Issues and Philosophy* by Laxmikanta Padhi
(NBU Studies in Philosophy-31) Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, (in
Press)

ADDRESS OF THE PUBLISHER:

Northern Book Centre
4221/1, Ansari Road, Daryaganj,
New Delhi-110 002

Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd.
17, Chittaranjan Avenue,
Kolkata-700 072

Lavent Books, Kolkata
27/C, Creek Row, M G Road, Kolkata

Published by:

**THE REGISTRAR (OFFICIATING), UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
RAJA RAMMOHUNPUR, DIST DARJEELING- 734013, WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

WWW.NBU.AC.IN

Printed at:

**THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
Raja Rammohunpur, Dist.- Darjeeling- 734013, West Bengal, India**