

SPECIAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: THREE TENDENCIES IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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Going through the texts on Indian philosophical systems we find that the chief purpose of them is to find a solution against the conflicting ideas, digging out the problems, removing doubts of the opponents and getting freedom from them. Unless the thoughts are not clear they cannot be the part of our conduct. No problem is problem for itself; all problems are imposed at thought level and that is why they can be liquidated and removed by philosophical reflection. Removal of them provides bliss. The texts deal with cultivation of a wonderful capacity that accommodates conflicting situations for the greater purpose of living the life in harmony and peace. Great thoughts about the ways of life and the views of life dawn in Vedas and the classical texts. Philosophical systems originated as a safeguard for the maintenance and practice of those great ideas useful for the welfare of the universe. The history of great thoughts is at the same time the history of their critical observation, evaluation and refutation. Arguments in opposition and response in favour not only serve as breath of the protection of those thoughts but promoted Indian philosophical thinking to perfection of Indian culture that comprises the seed of almost all the reflective subtleties which serve as the novelty of the later thinking in India.

Three types of tendency in Indian philosophical thinking are apparently observed. First to analyze and reflect on all the arguments popular at a time and then to observe that no argument given for proving the subject and object is steady. Proofs and arguments do not prove what they intend to prove. Nāgārjuna, Sṛīharṣa and Jaiśībhaṭṭa represent this trend. Nothing can be founded well by arguments and in the matter of conduct we follow the way it is followed in day to day conduct. Secondly, the tendency of establishing the ideology of one's allegiance by refuting all other ideologies popular at the time. All the orthodox and heterodox systems adopt this tendency. These tendencies have wonderfully sharpened the argumentative, epistemological, analytic and logical skill of India. The third tendency tries to assimilate all the tendencies. It analyses and interprets all the ideologies popular at a time as different approaches venerable to the extent of their capacity and level of approaching the truth. This Philosophical systems whether they are heterodox – Jainism and Buddhism except Cārvāka, that is, Indian materialism, and orthodox systems like - Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā and Advaita Vedānta, all are life affirming systems. They adopt a therapeutic methodology through which they very nicely discuss how the ills of body, corruption in the use of language causing confusion and improper misleading thought and thinking can be cured. They all begin

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with the problem of suffering, analyze it, search out the means for eradicating it with its causes and finally affirm spirit as the goal. Not only these systems but other branches of learning like Ayurveda, Vyākaraṇa, and Tantra also are philosophies intensively concerned with the cure of ills of body, language and thought respectively. All philosophical systems believe in the sources of knowledge in the matter of objects but in cases of those objects where the logic and epistemology fall short to be a source of knowledge, the primacy of authority of the masters of the tradition is the infallible source.

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy of the Indian philosophical schools is decided on the basis of authority that is Veda. The discussion on authority is shifted to self- validity of authority which for some schools is knowledge by reliable persons. System of Vyākaraṇa provides such an importance to the authority that it accepts all knowledge is expressed by language and is veridical that serves as the cognitive ground of logical devices of validity and invalidity. Heterodox systems that do not accept Veda or scriptures as authority follow the teachings of the Bodhisattvas and Arhats as authority in a way that it is difficult to relegate them from the main current of thinking; they supplement the unity of Indian culture. Philosophical schools perceive life as a continuous process of conducting the wisdom that culminates in realization of spirit. Ignorance and suffering caused consequently are the primary problem and absolute freedom from them is the ultimate goal of Indian philosophy. It is philosophy in so far as it believes strongly in reflecting on the problems for clarity and wisdom and is religion in as much as it emphasizes wisdom for conducting, cultivating and fulfilling the human aspiration as well.

Why Indian philosophy is spiritual? I am asked this question. The great feature that one can notice about Indian philosophy is that all of its system is ways to cultivation to the extent of self-realization which they designate differently as mukti, mokṣa, vivekakhyaṭi, keval jñāna, nirvāṇa, freedom from the ignorance that veils the true nature of spirit. The spirit is pure and after realization the impurity is removed and the pure nature is realized. It believes in freeing the thoughts from all veils earned and imposed and not real and that which is imposed can only be removed. It does not pursue any dogma; theological, religious-a prophet, a book. The spirit is naturally assigned pure knowledge and hence bliss that can be realized and thus it is life affirming philosophy. The Ideologies leading life negating are the cause of all conflict and problem. In giving utmost value to life; it philosophizes transcendence from all the barriers or limitations imposed on spirit. Knowledge is not only the guide to Spirit but is considered the spirit itself and thus any or all theological, religious, ritualistic and the authority dogmas have never been a motivating factor of the mind of Indian philosophical studies.

Vedanta is the Philosophy of Prasthānatrayī comprising of Upaniṣads that is śruti prasthāna, Brahmasūtras that is Tarkaprasthāna and Gītā that is Smṛti prasthāna. Its influence on Indian life is such that it has got the primacy of Dharma. The Vedantic definition and character of the nature of Brahman, the ontological Reality is non-different from that of the liberation (mokṣa), the highest axiological value of life and the purpose of a dharmic life lies in the realization of this non-difference. This

realization is known as *jīvātmaikyabodha* (the realization of individual as the spirit). This realization is negatively a state of freedom from ignorance and positively a state of affirmation of spirit. Though we give importance to knowledge as spirit we do not overlook the creativity of spirit. The creativity of spirit gives way to the concept of *Rta*, the cosmic law according to which the same law is acting on in the nature and in the intellect of human beings. By having command over or controlling the intellect one can command the nature and the realization of the same principle in individual and universe is the true realization of spirit.

There is recurrence of the events, day after night, summer after cold, etc., and vice versa which we call creativity of nature and similarly birth, childhood, youth, old and death is a constant process run by the actions performed by men. This phenomenon is perceived by all the systems of Indian Philosophy except *Cārvāka* as operated by the law of karma. The fruits of the actions performed in present life is accumulated that act on for the future life and likewise the present life is an outcome of the fruits of the actions performed in the previous life. Nothing, nobody can undo the rule 'as you sow so shall you reap'. This circle continues till Freedom from the circle that is liberation. The creativity of the spirit does not exhaust with the liberation, it is not falsified as illusion but non-different from the bliss, the ultimate nature of the spirit. There are so many conflicting theories on the creativity of the spirit in relation to creation of the universe and all the schools share this controversy. But there is no controversy on the spirit as one's nature. By nature we mean that which is naturally assigned to one as consciousness on which anything and everything can be imposed and which can free from all those impositions or essences. This defines spirit as the possibility of all creativity –the possibility of bond and freedom from the bond. In between the bond and freedom from the bond it is the principle of karma and *Sansāra*.

I am thankful to Professor Zijiang Ding, Editor in chief who entrusted me to edit the special issue of *Journal of East-West Thought* on Indian Philosophy & Religious studies. It was a great event for me and I was very much enthusiastic about editing the issue to the extent of satisfaction of its distinguished readers. I invited almost all the distinguished scholars in the field. Great scholars are always awfully busy and it is very difficult to encroach upon their time for a work of other's will and choice. Despite of all odds, I have succeeded in collecting some brilliant articles from some of them. I am well aware that modern technique of footnotes/references has been followed only by some of the contributors. However, each of the articles contains a complete sentence. I am thankful to all contributors for taking interest and contributing scholarly writing for the present issue of the Journal.

The special issue on 'Indian Philosophy & Religion' is in your hand and I hope it is helpful in causing interest and inspiration to new researches in the field.