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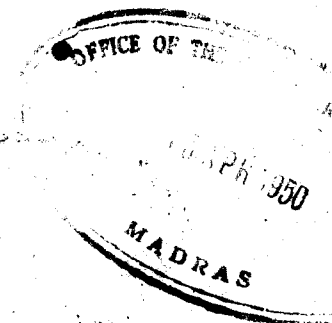
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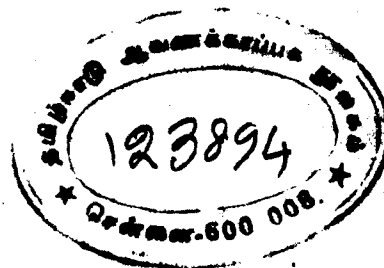
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THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

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Philosophical Truth

(Address of the General President to the Indian Philosophical Congress, XXIV Session, Patna, 1949)

BY

G. R. MALKANI

I

1. *Introductory*: I do not know whether I should be thankful to the Executive Committee for the honour they have done to me. I know my limitations; and if the post of the General President were merely a post of honour, I would have thankfully refused it. But I associate with it something more than honour. It carries a certain responsibility,—to serve the cause of philosophy in India. As I happen to have something of the missionary spirit for philosophy in me, I could not well refuse the call to make my contribution to those ends which I so strongly cherish.

2. *Too many technicalities and logical subtleties unnecessary*: I am one of those who believe that philosophy should be freed from unnecessary technicalities, and made intelligible to all those intelligent lay persons who have not made of philosophy their profession. It should cease to become a purely academic affair, and descend into the life of the people. It is only then that it can regain something of the popularity which it has naturally lost in recent years. I often believe that too many technicalities conceal a fundamental lack of clarity and depth in thought. When we cannot find our way to the solution of vital problems, we revel in the pleasant game of coining new words, new phrases and new

names, and we clothe our thought in these to conceal our failure and our ignorance. There is enough scope in the ordinary language of an intelligent person to express the very highest and the best ever conceived by man in his philosophical adventure. Simplicity here, as perhaps nowhere else, is of the essence of truth. Abstruseness in philosophy is a sin. A philosopher also need not be very learned. What is required of him is only a certain earnestness of mind and a capacity for thought. He must be able to formulate an intelligent question, and bent upon finding a perfect answer to it which will completely resolve it. The ideals of scholarship are different from the ideals of philosophic truth. Similarly, logical subtleties are one thing and truth another. It is a pity that some of the best read philosophical writings both in the East and in the West are loaded with unnecessary logical subtleties, which have a very remote relation to the truth, and which make the study of philosophy an arduous and uninteresting job. Philosophical questions have, in my opinion, quite a romantic and personal touch of their own. They belong to a realm of thought which lies nearest to the highest ideals of life. The pursuit of their solutions can certainly be made more interesting than the pursuit of the solution of questions connected with the neutral realm of nature that serves only our physical needs.

3. *Is Indian philosophy stagnant?* — Most men think that Indian philosophy is stagnant and unprogressive. Our greatest philosophers lived and did their work in the distant past. Their tradition has not been kept alive. The flame has died down and is only dimly visible. There are no men of equal stature in the India of today who can keep alive the Indian tradition through fresh contributions in line with present-day needs and intellectual demands. I agree with this view only to a limited extent. I agree that the best among us are neither here nor there in the field of philosophic creativeness. I do not agree that we have lost touch with the ancient masters, or that we necessarily need to progress beyond them. To a large extent, we have been creatures of circumstances. It was part of our political subjection that our intellectual and cultural ideals should undergo a change. We were overcome by the flood of the many-sided intellectual activities of the Western countries. Perhaps it was all to the good. We have certainly the feeling of being intellectually more enlightened than our fore-fathers. But intellectual enlightenment is not the whole of life. What is more important are the ideals which inspire the intellect. It is these ideals that have undergone change to our detriment.

The philosophy of ancient India was tied to religion. It was part of religion, and a necessary part. There was no great religion which sprang from the native soil, that did not tackle some of the more important philosophical problems. It tended to be more philosophical, and less dogmatic. It emphasised right knowledge as an integral part of religion. Philosophy was not a mere intellectual game of concepts to be pursued for its own sake. It justified itself in a certain type of life. It started with faith, but aimed at knowledge, or at least intellectual confirmation. It had a definite purpose, namely to educate and to instruct thought for the higher life of the spirit. It was like the back-stroke of the forward movement of religion.

It is different with modern European thought. It draws its inspiration from science. There is quite a natural alliance between the two, and only an artificial bond between philosophical thought and religion. The result is that science has infected our philosophy. The ideals of philosophic truth are supposed to be unattainable, like the ideals of science. Science, with its method of hypothesis, can only reach probable and practical truth, never absolute truth. This can be condoned in science. It cannot be condoned in philosophy. *The very problems of philosophy are problems that are not capable of a solution that is only probably true.* Philosophy seeks truth that is true literally and absolutely. It is this or it is nothing.

It is conceivable that different philosophers have different conceptions as to what is absolute truth. They may all be wrong. But they have a right conception as to the sort of truth that philosophy ought to seek. To maintain otherwise is to degrade philosophy to the level of one of the sciences, without the advantages which a natural science enjoys. A natural science is checked by facts, its theories can be tested and verified, and its truths serve the purposes of life in-so-far as they give us control over nature and facilitate the handling of natural forces. Scientific truth, hypothetical though it may be, has a biological value. Philosophy has no biological value. It has, in fact, a negative value in this sphere. It often makes us unpractical and vacillating in action,—a laughing-stock of our fellow-men. If it has any value, it is to serve the ends of spirit,—to remove ultimate doubts, and to make life at a higher level possible, more harmonious, more self-contained and more enlightened. But if doubts remain and we are not quite sure of the truth, this purpose cannot be served. The removal of doubt, even through erroneous reasoning, will serve the purpose, so long as the error in reasoning is not detected.

It may be *bad* philosophy. But, it *is* philosophy. A philosophy that vacillates between alternative views, or that regards Ultimate Truth as unattainable, is no philosophy at all. It is merely a sort of intellectual pedantry, having no practical value for life. The progress of philosophy is from one absolutism to another absolutism. In between we philosophise, but we have no philosophy yet.

Some learned people, impressed, or perhaps depressed, by the conflicting opinions of philosophers, think that philosophising itself has a value greater than that of any fixed system of thought. Philosophising, they say, gives us a balanced view of things. There is no need to have ultimate convictions, which are invariably short-lived and dogmatic in character. To be open-minded, to be always weighing and evaluating issues, to be ready to retract from a position and equally ready to advance to another,—this appears to them to be the very essence of the life of reason. But it is reason, in our opinion, that does not know its philosophical business. Reason is only an instrument of truth. We reason in order to get at the truth, not for the sake of reasoning itself. *To doubt its capacity to lead us to the goal is to de-rationalize reason.* A philosopher who distrusts reason should not philosophise at all. It is another story how this reason is to be handled for its proper tasks.

Philosophical truth is absolute truth. But, as we said, it is necessarily connected with the spiritual needs of mankind. There is in fact an internal connection between the ideals of life we hold precious and our theoretic consciousness. Every type of life has a theoretic back-ground of its own. It is difficult to think of a form of philosophical thought which has grown out of the pure light of reason, and which has not drawn its inspiration from life. There is a deep and intrinsic connection between life and thought. It would therefore be wrong for us philosophers to suppose that truth is an isolated entity, which we can pursue intellectually, while we let our life run its course just as it pleases. We live the truth, we do not merely know it. Truth may be true for all times. But it cannot be appreciated as true without the appropriate kind of life. The Advaitic system of philosophy, for example, appeared quite convincing when the spirit of man was dominated by religious ideals and yearned for the Unseen, the Whole and the All, and when science with its purely secular interest was not developed. It is quite out of tune with the type of life that scientific interest or interest in visible nature has inspired in us. A māyā-vādin in the twentieth century appears strangely unconvincing and out of

form. This is the age of science; and science goes hand in hand with technology and with Industry. It encourages a type of life that is fully extrovert and this-worldly. Humanism, with its materialistic bias, is the kind of philosophy that the modern man needs. Thus, philosophical thinking, aiming at absolute truth, is not a fixed and rigid affair. It is tied to the changing times. It has to keep pace with the cultural needs of man and the spirit of the age. What is absolute truth now may be discarded in the next generation. But that is no argument against the possibility of a truth that is true for all time, if the requisite cultural atmosphere is forthcoming.

Indian philosophy is not progressive, just because the types of religious life out of which it grew, are more or less fixed and cannot be multiplied indefinitely. European philosophy, in comparison, is progressive, because philosophy is conceived as a purely theoretical activity that must satisfy the intellect, but that has no necessary or intrinsic connection to religion or to life. Every philosopher is a small-scale creator. He thinks out his philosophical system in his own individual way, borrowing something from here, something from there, adding something of his own, and making the whole thing appear new and original. With so much freedom to the imagination, philosophy can never be stagnant or unprogressive. New systems of thought are always on the horizon, claiming our attention. This certainly is movement. We can legitimately have a history of European philosophy. There is no such legitimate history of Indian philosophy. Instead we have a number of more or less fixed traditions and types of philosophical thinking, continuing side by side through-out the ages. There is little or no progress. Our best philosophers seem to suffer from theological bias and from servility to the word of the scripture. The result is that philosophy as it is done in the West interests us much more than philosophy as it was done in ancient India. We do not care so much for the substance, the philosophic content and its meaning for life, as we do for the method through which that substance is presented to us. We belong to a different age, in which theology and the scriptures take a back-place, and free thinking, which we exalt as rational thinking par excellence, the place of honour. We find it difficult to recapture the cultural atmosphere of ancient Indian philosophy. It is no wonder that Indian philosophy interests us only distantly. It is not a living thing. It appears to have no relevance to present-day philosophical problems and the accepted methods of their solution. We do not ask the real question,—does any system of ancient Indian philosophy solve problems of

philosophy for us in the only way they are capable of being solved? If it does, it is a living thing. If it does not, let us at least cease talking cant about the greatness of ancient Indian philosophy, Vedanta and all. There is only one test of a system of thought, modern or ancient,—does it dissolve our ultimate doubts, and make life in the truth possible? It is not unlikely that we may have to revise our opinion of Indian philosophy, stagnant though it may appear to be, if we search within it the key to the highest form of living truth.

4. *The problems of philosophy are eternal problems*: A philosopher should be able to distinguish *eternal* truth from truth that is *temporal*. Every age has its own special problems. They may be called sociological problems in a general way. Philosophy is often called upon to tackle them. These tasks, valuable though they are, are outside the province of philosophy proper. Sociological problems are capable of various solutions and various approaches, according to the group-interests involved. There can be no single panacea for society, unless man as such is regenerated and his inner freedom is fully realised. Philosophy should therefore keep aloof from any involvement in social matters. There is no need of a race of philosophers, who should take upon themselves the dubious and unwelcome task of giving advice and guidance to politicians and social workers who do not ask for it, and who are quite sceptical about it when it comes from persons who are trained and nursed in a sort of artificial summer-house protected from the heat and the cold of social climate. The philosopher should not assume the role of a demi-god to his fellow men. It is nothing but ridiculous, for instance, for philosophers to hold up the ideal of pacifism or of non-violence before nations that find themselves, *nolens volens*, in a struggle of life and death, in an embrace which can only be loosened at the peril of self-destruction and the destruction of all those human values which a society lives for. It is also tempting for a philosopher to preach some form or other of socialism as a cure for social ills, and in general to preach idealism of every sort in order to justify his own existence. All this outside business philosophers have taken upon themselves in ignorance of their own proper tasks and their own proper problems. I do not know whether I should like to see a philosopher as a king. Perhaps if I see one, I shall either doubt that he is a good philosopher or that he is a good king. Raja Janak was indeed both. But then his kingship went with his philosophical enlightenment as any kind of *natural profession* might go with that enlightenment. But persons who are philosophers by *profession* should not

be forced into offices which they are ill-equipped to discharge. The ridicule often poured upon the philosopher by men of affairs is only merited when the philosopher forsakes his own proper tasks and invades fields where he has no special jurisdiction, and where he is considered an intruder without experience and without expert opinion.

The tasks of philosophy are not the tasks that the *zeitgeist* sets the human family to solve. The tasks of philosophy are to solve certain perennial problems, that arise for man, because he is man, not because he belongs to this age or that. There are questions that arise in every reflective mind in every age, for the simple reason that the spirit of man demands their solution for its own emancipation. If he can achieve this, his whole life undergoes a radical change. He can stand up to the world. All other problems of life are automatically solved. It is because of this inwardness of philosophical truth that philosophy is rightly called the kingly science.

This is not to deny that the cultural requirements of each different age demand a different kind of philosophy. We have accordingly Greek philosophy, mediaeval philosophy, renaissance philosophy, and modern philosophy of the maturer age of science. But behind these differences of approach, there are certain perennial questions which do not change. They appear from age to age under a different guise, and may be said to be implanted in human nature as such. What changes is the dress and the ideological bias, not the theoretical need for a higher truth. While the questions are the same, the answers too are not new. They are invariably old answers in a new dress. No philosophical question is ever solved in an altogether new way without any affiliations to the past. We only dress up the old answers in a language which is more up-to-date and therefore more intelligible to the people of that age.

Human spirit finds no joy except in creative activity. Stereotyped questions and stereotyped answers are as repugnant to it as liturgical formulae. It seeks to know the truth on its own, and in complete freedom from any outside authority. This is only possible when it has a *real question*. Very often we have no question *ourselves*. We adopt a question proposed by another. An adopted question, like an adopted son, may not elicit the reality of feeling and interest. The question hangs loosely from our mental life; and since it is not a very insistent question, no answer seems to satisfy us, or one answer appears to be quite as satisfactory as

another. Our mind is confused by different answers. The fact is that truth is not a free gift to anybody. We must evolve it out of ourselves. Others can only help us to look within and look well. But we must see it for ourselves. It is not the sort of truth that is in the keeping of a professional philosopher who must communicate it to us. To know it, we must be philosophers ourselves. In this sense, philosophical truth is the most subjectivist and personal species of truth. Every-one must learn it the hard way. He must go through the whole process of personal doubt and error. A person who has not passed through this inner travail will find philosophy a useless and dull study, that leads nowhere and gives no clear and definite answers. But if we go to philosophy in the right spirit, there will be nothing hackneyed, stale or insipid about it. The truth we come to know may be old and well-worn. But my seeing of it is something new and intimately personal. Nobody can see exactly as I see; for the previous schooling is part of the seeing. When philosophy is pursued in this spirit, in the spirit of a real philosopher, it will have a charm which no other human subject of study can ever have, although our achievement may be very humble indeed. It is true about philosophical truth as it is of no other truth, that the old is ever new, and the new never becomes old.

II

5. *Philosophical knowledge, like all knowledge, must be an answer to a question:* Philosophical thinking is evidently a species of theoretic activity. Theoretic activity has for its object some kind of knowledge. But every species of knowledge constitutes an answer to a question. The question may be quite explicit to us or it may be only implicit. But if there is no question, there is no knowledge. In fact, all knowledge derives its cognitive character from the fact that it is an answer to a question. No statement in the indicative mood conveys any sense, if we cannot see to what question it would be an answer. What then is a philosophical question? And can it be solved completely?

We tackle the latter question first. A philosophical question, if it is a legitimate question, must be capable of a complete solution. A question which cannot be answered completely is an illegitimate question; and an illegitimate question is only answered when it is seen to be illegitimate. But can a legitimate question have different answers? That too does not seem possible. Different answers may no doubt satisfy different people. But that is because their questions are different, which they fail to recognise. I may

have a question which you do not have. The verbal form of the question may be the same, but we mean different things by it. All philosophical controversies may in this sense be said to revolve round the interpretation of the question. If yourself and myself are asking the same question, then it is rationally impossible that different answers should satisfy us. There is an inevitableness about a philosophical question as well as about its answer. Often our questions are vague, and therefore they cover many meanings. Naturally several different answers seem to fit them and to satisfy them. Sometimes, they even look insoluble, because we are not sure what exactly we are asking. Perhaps we are asking many things in one question; and so there is no wonder that no particular answer seems to us to be *the* answer. Rarely, in fact *never*, do we have an identical question both in form and in spirit, and the answers different, which are equally true and satisfactory. We know the story of Indra and Virochana who went to Prajapati with an identical question. But the same answer did not satisfy both. Were they really asking the same identical question? Certainly not. Otherwise, there was no reason for Indra to become dissatisfied with the answer on reflection. A philosophical question, once made clear and definite, is only capable of a single and indubitable answer. We might even say that the answer is immanent in the question itself, and that it is delivered ready-made into our hands as the question itself is clarified and analysed. The question is resolved from within. It is rational certainty in a very special sense. What do you ask? The more certain you are about what you ask, the more certain is the answer. We never need go out of the question itself. It is an epitome of a certain confusion of the understanding. The analysis of the question removes the confusion. The question is seen not to arise. Where the expectation is for an outside answer, the answer can never fully satisfy. It is bound to be dubitable. But where there is no such expectation, and we are merely seeking to get at the bottom of the question itself, there can be no such doubt. We are seeking to understand our own mind so to say. Why are we asking this question? What exactly are we asking? These are simple enough questions. But they are the very life and soul of philosophical thinking. Naturally, the answer, properly pursued, cannot fail to satisfy. It is a kind of absolute certainty.

This certainty is to be distinguished from the sort of certainty that the mystics might be supposed to have. The mystic certainty is psychological or subjective. They have seen something ineffable and luminous, and they simply cannot make up their mind to doubt

it. They feel powerless before their vision. Their reason has forsaken them. We common people have a similar certainty about the physical world which we can contact sensibly. The mystic is only a greater subjectivist than the common man. The philosopher's certainty is in a class by itself. His reason never forsakes him. He can doubt what the mystic cannot doubt. He certainly doubts what the common man cannot doubt. Such being the scope of his doubt, the certainty he demands can never be a subjective certainty. It is rational certainty par excellence. It is the realization on the part of reason that the limit of doubt has been reached, that truth is not made true by a certain state of our mind, but that *truth reveals itself as true and as self-effulgent*. Reason here surrenders and is satisfied. This is the goal; and philosophy goes about it quite confidently.

In this connection, we may refer to a common misunderstanding. We are prone to think that philosophical truth is either mystic truth, something unusual and uncommon, or it is something common, hum-drum and on the whole unimpressive. We think it is neither. It is the perception of the common in an uncommon way. It is a new illumination of meaning. Facts of experience are what they are. Only their meaning has changed. Philosophy neither gives us a mass of new information about a reality which we know, nor does it put us into contact with a reality which we do not know and which is in a sense transcendent. It merely works its alchemy of meaning on the common-place and transforms it for our understanding into something uncommon. Every question is alluring. It has its roots in the infinite. If we could answer it decisively,—why!, we could answer every other question of philosophy decisively. There is an interconnectedness about them which a superficial view is sure to miss. Philosophy is not a mass of opinions on different subjects. There is a unity running through all its questions. But it requires a certain philosophical sense to appreciate a decisive theoretic issue, and to formulate a philosophical question. And it requires the reputed swan or the pearl-tester in a new role to resolve the question.

6. *The limitations of scientific knowledge provide the basis for a higher kind of knowledge*: We said that every species of knowledge is an answer to a question. What now is a philosophical question? The fundamental question of the theoretic consciousness is the question of truth. Science also pursues truth. But its approach to the problem is unreflective. It does not *consciously* seek truth. It consciously seeks to know the *object*. It takes the object for granted. It does not doubt the object as such. All its

questions are about the object. This knowledge can have no end or limit. What we come to know becomes only the basis for a new question. The goal can be nothing less than objective omniscience, which is ruled out by the very method of science, which is the method of trial and error. Scientific truth is *factual truth* only. And all factual truth can be questioned. If we want to have a theory of truth for science, it can be no other than that of coherence. Facts may be said to pursue facts and to reduce them to consistency and coherence. But the whole coherent system is still a fact of another kind, which can be questioned.

What we call an objective perceptual fact comes to us mediated by the whole apparatus of our knowledge. We therefore accept it with an instinctive reservation. Since the mediated fact claims to be a transcript of reality in knowledge, we have a problem. Is it true? Does it correctly represent reality to us? We may investigate the so-called real facts of experience with all the rectitude of scientific precision; and yet in the end, we are confronted with a big question-mark. There is a demand to go beyond science. Those who do not find in the facts of science any challenge to our notion of truth are those practically-minded and theoretically-free souls who have no need to philosophise. They do not look deep within their souls. Or perhaps pure truth, which has no biological value, does not interest them. They are contented and self-complacent souls, who are not tortured by the pangs of a second birth.

The philosopher is, in comparison, an unlucky species of mankind, who suffers from what may be called divine discontent. He is conscious that what divides him from the animal is not that lower reason which pursues the knowledge of science. The most materialistic of men know the uses of science better than anybody else. The *rākṣasās* of mythology were quite the equals of the *devās*, if not superior to them, in the skills of war and of diplomacy. It is not science that is the glory of man. Science, in fact, has always the tendency to turn man into the worst of animals. It is the symbol of physical power, not of any spiritual power. We add no great quality to animality by reasoning more efficiently than the mere animal does. The mere animal infers from habit. We infer more methodically and to greater purpose. But the practical ideals of this kind of knowledge, or *bhautic vidya*, are the same,—adaptation, success and self-aggrandisement. The philosopher is the animal seeking to be God-like. He reasons to know the true from the false, the real from the unreal. Truth in its purest light is for him the highest value, in fact Divinity itself.

7. *Speculative Philosophy is an exalted science*: Some philosophers suppose that philosophy is only an extension of science. It seeks the most universal kind of knowledge. It seeks what is called a world-view or *weltanschauung*. Philosophy thus understood as a speculative or constructive activity of thought is a species of philosophy that apes the method of science, without the advantages of that method in science. A philosophical world-view is a product of pure imagination. It is not knowledge in any sense. Imaginary things can never be true. Those who indulge in the pastime of theorising in philosophy can take all possible attitudes, and put all possible interpretations upon facts of experience with perfect freedom, and without the possibility of being exposed or effectively contradicted, unless they contradict themselves, which they need not do flagrantly. Philosophy is not a higher science in any accepted sense of that term. It is a science of the spirit, if we may so call it. It is *adhyātmic-vidya*. This *vidya* has nothing hypothetical or speculative about it. It is more properly a way of direct seeing or *darsan*. Imagination misleads. The pure light of reason does not mislead. Philosophy is the operation of this pure light of reason. This is the concept of philosophy that was current coin in ancient India. We need to revert to it, if philosophy is to justify its place of honour among all other human activities, both theoretical and practical.

Unlike science, philosophy does not go out to tackle objective reality. Its business only begins when the realisation comes that the object as such is open to negation. This business is all within. It is to put our understanding right with things. It is the understanding that is at the root of our bondage. Reality practises no deception upon us, our understanding does. Reality does not hide its face from us. We have hidden it away through the screen of our own misunderstanding. If we can clean up the understanding, correct it and reform it, the task of philosophy is over, and we are intellectually free. It is the negative task of correction, not the positive task of a search after a missing and unknown reality. For there is no positive way of knowing reality, if reality does not by its very nature reveal itself within our experience as it is. The truth which philosophy seeks is known automatically on the removal of error.

It must be remembered in this connection that philosophical truth is not a distinct variety of truth. There is only one kind of truth. It is truth in its wholeness and completeness. What is called partial truth is only a form of error. The distinction between

truth and error is a qualitative distinction. There can therefore be no degrees of truth. We may speak of degrees of error for convenience. For error can be more radical or less. It may come nearer and nearer to truth, till it is almost indistinguishable from it. But truth must be absolute truth or it is no truth. This is the truth that philosophy seeks; and when it finds it, there is no subjectivity about it. Truth speaks, and we listen. Verily is *srūti* or hearing the way to truth.

III

8. *Where our understanding goes wrong: The answer of Logical Positivism*: We said that the cause of error lies in us. What is this cause? It is imagination or *Kalpana*. But how can we get rid of it?, it is argued by some philosophers. It colours all our knowledge. There is no pure knowledge without any element of imagination. It is this that makes our knowledge subjective; and there is no way of getting rid of our subjectivity. We can only look at things through our subjectivity. We may commit errors. But these errors must be capable of being exposed by the facts themselves. True facts chase away false facts. Facts that stand the test of time, and have necessarily to be taken cognisance of, are true facts. Philosophy has no special claim to knowing truth. In fact, science alone is competent for the purpose. It can sift evidence, and determine its proper value. Philosophy has no scope here. It has a different job, and a more onerous one. It is not to correct our errors of knowledge as such, but errors of another kind which are peculiar to philosophy. Philosophers have often raised questions which are unanswerable, just because they are meaningless. And yet they never realise this. They are always in search of an answer, and that in the wrong way. They are tricked by language. They are under an illusion of meaning. It is the true business of philosophy, through analysis of the logical forms of language, to dissipate this illusion.

We use words and sentences with meaning. But sometimes we make a combination of words which appears to have a meaning, but which really has no meaning. The syntax deceives us. All purely metaphysical statements have this character. The way to rid ourselves of these non-sensical statements is to remind ourselves of the right use of words. This right use we all know when we are *not philosophers*. Language is a medium of communication and of common understanding. There is a correct and legitimate use of words which we all understand in social intercourse. The tradi-

tional philosopher has unnecessarily involved himself in trouble, misled by syntax, into a wrong use. He needs to be extricated out of himself. We must remind him of the right use. The modern philosopher, of-course of this particular persuasion, who has seen through the antics of his predecessors, must remove the dust of the centuries from philosophical discussion by insisting upon the sobriety of lingual expression and usage. Philosophy is certainly a form of home-cleaning and slum-cleaning, but the slums are of the philosopher's own making. There is no other positive truth which philosophy can aim at. All systems of speculative thought are so much meaningless verbiage. Philosophical truth is a more hum-drum affair. It does not lift us to the seventh heaven as some would like to imagine. It is a purely formal or logical affair of elucidating meanings of words and forms of language which are philosophically misused through an illegitimate extension of their legitimate meaning. There is no such thing as absolute truth. All truth is relative; and it is the privilege of science to pursue it. Philosophy is not concerned with the knowledge of reality, but only with the misuse of language in asking certain supposedly ultimate, but meaningless, questions. This is what I consider to be the view of Logical Positivism in rough outline.

9. *The theory of truth to which Logical Positivism is driven by its own logic:* This pre-occupation with lingual problems leads to a theory of truth which is in conformity with its general standpoint. Our knowledge begins and ends with propositions. We cannot get out of them to reality, or compare them with reality. Even when we so attempt, we only succeed in getting to other propositions about reality. We only know what the proposition states, or the meaning-content of a statement. But if that is so, truth of a proposition cannot be determined by an appeal to a non-lingual reality. "Statements are compared with statements, not with experiences of such reality." It is thus possible to have different systems of propositions, systems which are mutually incompatible but internally coherent, all claiming equal truth. The decision between them cannot depend upon any logical considerations, but merely upon the historical fact that a body of propositions is accepted as true by the "scientists of our culture circle," — Neurath, quoted from Russell. There is accordingly no ultimate validity of any particular body of propositions; and we can conceive that one body of propositions gives place to another almost endlessly.

If once we concede that all our knowledge is confined to propositions, a form of solipsism is inevitable. The word is not signi-

ficant of a reality beyond it which we know directly in experience; the reality beyond it is significant in the word. The word is all in all. Speaking is knowing. A non-lingual reality beyond the spoken word is meaningless.

This view may be controverted. It may be argued that "language is an empirical phenomenon like another, and a man who is metaphysically agnostic must deny that he knows when he uses a word," — Russell. But if to know is to use words meaningfully, how can any-one persuade me that I know in any other sense? There is nothing that I know, including the empirical phenomenon called language, that does not put on this lingual dress. Otherwise, it should be possible to know something without speaking it or expressing it in language. This has been denied.

The question naturally arises, how are words used meaningfully? If the meaning of a non-logical word is derived ostensively, —i.e. by perceiving a situation and hearing the appropriate word that designates it,—then evidently we can know before we have learnt the use of words, and extra-lingual knowledge becomes possible. This however can be questioned. It may be argued that we cannot perceive a situation unless we are *already* in a position to use words meaningfully. The meaning of words in the end consists of the use made of them in society. The use is governed by certain rules. When we have learned these rules, we have learned the right use. The meaning of words thus has no reference to a non-lingual reality, but merely to the rules which govern their right use. Logical Positivism thus reduces itself to lingual formalism. Not only metaphysics, but even science cannot reach out beyond the spoken word.

This form of extreme lingualism can be made self-consistent. It has a logic of its own. We use words meaningfully before we can discuss their right use. There is always a common basis of agreement about the rules of syntax which give meaning to words in a proposition. If anybody disagrees here, his language is different from ours. This different language is also possible, if there are people who agree that it serves their purpose of mutual understanding and communication. Language is after all a social affair. That is the only restriction upon its meaningful use. There is no question here of right use in itself or wrong use in itself, but only a question of accepted use and not accepted use. The only way therefore to convince a person that he is in the wrong is to show to him that he himself does not use words in the way he describes their use, and that there is an incompatibility between his use and his description of the use.

10. *Where Logical Positivism fails: The real function of language* :— We contend that language cannot be a closed circle. We must distinguish the word from the meaning of the word, the symbol from the symbolised. This meaning cannot be another word. Words cannot mean other words. To give verbal equivalents is not to give the meaning. The primary meaning refers to something beyond the word, or something that is in a sense known. Knowledge is the original fact. The word has meaning in it. If there is no knowledge, there is no function of language. *Language merely fixes what is said to be known and what is essentially a non-verbal reality.* Language is not the whole and the entire thing. It is only a function of knowledge. If there is nothing non-verbal that may be known, language has no meaning.

Indeed, this may be denied. Language may be said to be all in all. What the word *means* may be the function of the word itself. As the Hegelians say, thought realises itself through the other; but the other is the function of thought itself, and its reality is part of the reality of thought. We need only substitute 'word' for 'thought' in the present context. The word is thus all-powerful. It is the very creative power of God. As the Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," St. John. But the power of God is not the same thing as God. It demands the person of God that has power. God creates the world through the word. But He alone creates, not the word. What is called Veda is just the word or *śabda*. It is eternal. Brahman creates the world through the utterance of the word at each new *Kalpa* or creative era. There is thus a reality beyond the word and higher than the word that uses the word as an instrument of action. This reality may be *spoken*. But it cannot be literally *meant* by any word. For the word has meaning *in it*.

In the context of knowledge we might say that the *reference* beyond the word is only substantiated *in knowledge*. This knowledge itself must be a non-verbal awareness. As we commonly say, it is not the word that means, it is *I* that mean by the word. The word taken by itself is neutral and has no meaning. It is no more than mere sound or a visual mark. It is *I* that use the word meaningfully. The word has meaning *for me*. It has no meaning *in itself*. The *I* is the higher reality beyond the word. The word cannot be the last word in reality. The last word in reality is a non-verbal awareness which knows the word and the meaning of the word.

The inadequacy of Logical Positivism is shown by the fact that there can be reality that is beyond the word, but that cannot be literally expressed by the word. All reality is speakable, but all reality cannot be literally meant. If something is not speakable, it is nothing to us. It has no kind of reality. But it may be spoken and yet not meant. Here the word has a function, but it is only a symbolic function,—i.e. it points to something beyond the word, which may be symbolised, but not meant. Let us take the metaphysical entity called 'I'. The word 'I' is used meaningfully to stand for the speaker. It does not stand for a common or socialised object. It is not a character which can be shared by many things, as the character 'dog' can be shared by many individual dogs. The 'I' stands for one entity only at a time, and that a whole and entire entity that communicates itself to the hearer in all its unique and spiritual significance. There can never be many 'I-s' at a time, but only one 'I', namely the speaker. We can never point to several things, and say, this is an 'I', that is an 'I', etc. Indeed, we may have our problems and our doubts about the nature of the entity called 'I'. What is not in doubt is the meaning itself, which is absolutely unique and unmistakable, since it cannot be confused with any other meaning that refers us to a socialised object, or a 'this'. So far the word 'I' has a real and literal meaning. We mean by it the speaker.

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But the word has also a symbolic meaning. It stands for something which is spoken as 'I', but which is not meant by the word. Or as we might say, paradoxically speaking, it points to a meaning beyond all meaning. The speaking 'I' is still an entity that can be meant. It distinguishes itself from the hearer. The 'I' is meaningful only in contradistinction from the 'you'. To that extent it has an objective content which can be contemplated as the 'not-I' or as 'this'. This contradiction in its meaning requires to be removed; and it can only be removed when we negate its literal meaning, and through the negation, rise to its symbolic meaning. This symbolic meaning refers to nothing that can be known in the objective attitude. The word 'I' is used in both the senses; but the latter sense is the more important sense. It is the sense in which the word 'I' stands for something that is absolutely immediate, non-objective and self-evidencing. It is something that is truly metaphysical and non-empirical. It may be called the ultimate Self or *ātman*.

IV

11. *Problems of reflective thought*: Philosophical problems do not relate to the right use of language. They arise only after this use has been fixed and determined. Language is an instrument of truth. We should not therefore be engrossed in the instrument without regard to the ulterior purpose for which the instrument has been devised. Philosophical problems are problems of reflective thought which arise through consciousness of a conflict in the meaning of experience, and in the beliefs based upon it. There are distinct types in experience itself. We confuse one type with another. This confusion must be resolved in order to regain a healthy mental perspective and spiritual freedom.

We are familiar with the logic of the idea. It seeks, through internal analysis of the idea, to bring out its inadequacy and its self-discrepancy, and to make it more adequate and harmonious through transition to a higher concept. This is the Hegelian logic, which is supposed to give us the ultimate truth about reality. But the idea is not reality itself. It is only our way of grasping reality. It is necessarily abstract, one-sided and schematic. It can never be adequate to reality, and so above criticism.

Experience on the other hand is essentially concrete. If reality is contacted anywhere, it is only in experience. This experience therefore ought never to deceive us. If it deceives us, what can save us? It should be taken to be always in the right. What deceives us is our own understanding, which confuses different types, leading to endless questions. It is this understanding that we must put right. *There is a logic of experience*. It is the logic of discriminating the types, negating the foreign elements that are "confused" with each type, and in general purifying experience from within. We have no need to go outside experience, to conceptualise experience, or to construct a world-view. The so-called *synthetic* view or the *integral* view is pure imagination. Truth is given in experience from the very beginning. Only we do not see it, because it is hidden under a mass of half-truths and fanciful interpretations put by our understanding upon it. We need to remove these through a form of self-criticism, and truth ought to reveal itself for what it is. We must in particular remember that every conceptual dress, which the philosophers so often love to put upon reality, is a fancy dress that hides the naked truth.

12. *Does philosophy explain?* — We often expect philosophy to explain facts of experience. But philosophy does not really explain. All explanation is rational explanation. But what is

rational explanation? There is the causal explanation. But it explains nothing. Whitehead makes much of it. The causal event, according to him, is the only possible reason, if reason there is, of the successor event. We cannot start from pure potentiality or from mere possibility, which is tantamount to non-being, and explain an actuality. Only the actual can explain the actual. If we want to explain the world as a whole, we must still postulate a God who is actual and not a mere potentiality. But whatever may be said of a voluntaristic explanation which involves a creative act, it is not a rational explanation. Reason cannot accept one actual event as a *reason* for another. It involves an irrational jump. *The cause is not the same thing as the reason.*

A voluntaristic explanation explains only euphemistically. There is *no necessity* for the cause to transform itself into the effect. The effect is a matter of free creation; it need not be, and yet is. It has no reality co-ordinate with the reality of the cause. The cause is really real, while the effect is real only in a transferred and dependent sense. This cause cannot in its turn be an effect. It must in some sense be the primary cause or the first cause. The first cause explains only in the sense that it wills the effect *without any reason for it*. Where a reason can be given, the effect is not freely created, and the voluntaristic explanation fails.

Rationalists have been at pains to justify the causal explanation. By cause they mean reason. The causal relation is to be conceived on the analogy of the relation of the ground and the consequents. But this reduction is clearly artificial. The causal relation is essentially a temporal relation. The effect is never contained literally in the cause. It is an emergent. The causal relation is not a rational relation. Reason can only understand the logic of identity. This logic does not apply to the explanation of factual reality.

A sort of rational explanation has been evolved by Hegel. But that, it appears to us, has been achieved by sacrificing facts. Reason is supposed to supply both the *form* and the *matter* of experience. Reason is all the reality there is. What is real in the facts is their rational content; and this is of the stuff of the idea. Accordingly, we need not go outside reason at all. We can study its inner movement from one concept to another in a purely rational way. Reason has its own law, the law of negation, by which it seeks to perfect the idea. No idea is found on analysis to be self-consistent and stable in itself. It contains within itself

the seed of its own self-transcendence. Any position is found on analysis to lead to the counter position. Reason cannot accept this contradiction, and it is forced to move up to a higher concept which is more inclusive, and which reconciles the contradiction. It rejects nothing and includes everything in a rational whole. This is the Absolute Idea. Reason here is dynamic. Its logic is not the static logic of identity, but the logic of self-realisation. It supplies its own content, its own law of progress, and its own goal of fulfilment of the idea. Reason can explain the world, because reason is the world.

That all reality is rational is an assertion, which, it appears to us, is dogmatic. We are conscious of the limitation of the concept as such. No mere concept, which is necessarily of the nature of a generality or a pattern of thought, can ever be the real concrete Whole or a synthesis of all possible opposites. It partakes of the nature of all one-sided views of reality. To call something an idea and to call it absolute is a self-contradiction. An idea is significant only in its relatedness to other ideas. And then the process of deduction of the categories is anything but rational. Each positive step forward involves a leap which no purely rational considerations can justify. Critics have accordingly pointed out that Hegel is merely drawing upon his experience in order to make the so-called deduction of the higher categories possible. The transcendental logic derives what plausibility it has, not from the inner necessity of the process, but from our normal experience where certain concepts are found to be more complex and wider in scope than others. The self-evidence of a purely deductive process is quite absent. We are not literally deducing, but really hypothesising. The process has all the uncertainties of an adventure in thought, which can have no finality about it. It is just another instance of a constructive effort of the imagination, which is doomed to failure.

13. *Philosophy evaluates*: Philosophy does not explain facts. It evaluates them. This evaluation is dependent upon certain ideal forms that are immanent in experience. Each type of experience has its own ideal form. It defines the highest value of that particular type. We often identify philosophy with ontology. There is some justification for it. The problems of ontology are perhaps the most important problems of philosophy. They decide for us the question of truth. Truth is certainly the most important value. Other values are in a sense dependent upon it. But at the same time, problems of truth belong only to one type of experience, namely cognitive experience.

There are three clearly defined forms of relationship between the subject and the object, and each form gives rise to its own peculiar problems. There is the cognitive type of experience in which the object is all-important and ought to determine the subject. There is the volitional type of experience in which the roles of the subject and the object are reversed, and the subject determines what the object is going to be. And lastly, there is the aesthetic type of experience in which the subject and the object co-operate in equal measure to give rise to a unitary form of experience. The problems arise because the pure form of these types is difficult to find. We confuse the types, and this is at the bottom of all our misunderstanding. The demand is to get at the pure form, which would remove all doubts and questions pertaining to that type, and thus lead to a form of Absolute Experience. When we have achieved this for each different type, we have come to the end of our philosophical adventure. We have no further problem of an ultimate unity, or a problem about the Absolute. For the logic of experience, with which philosophy is concerned, the Absolute has alternative forms; each type of experience has its own absolute or ideal form, which is immanent in it from the very beginning, and the non-realization of which in actual experience gives rise to the problems peculiar to that type. Beyond philosophy is mystic experience, where the Absolute of one type may not be distinguished from the Absolute of another type. But that unity cannot be argued about. It poses no problem to reason. All the problems of reason belong to one type of experience or another, and not to experience in general; and they must be resolved on their own ground. The business of philosophy ends here. Ontology, ethics and aesthetics have different problems to tackle, but the goal is always the Absolute of that particular type. This leaves the ground open for mystic experience where truth, freedom and joy or truth, beauty and goodness are simultaneously realised in what may be called *sat-chit-ananda mukta-svabhāva Brahman*.

The function of reason in philosophy is analytic, not constructive. It adds nothing to experience. It merely elicits it in its pure form. It aims at the consummation of an ideal implanted in experience from the very beginning. The ideal is in this sense the always-old and the always-known. Only the recognition of it is new. Instead of reminding ourselves of the right use of certain concepts through philosophical analysis, as the Logical Positivists would have it, we remind ourselves of certain ideals of experience which are always present and always operative, but always mixed up and confused by our understanding or conscious thinking. If

that is so, philosophical knowledge is only the conscious recognition of what we possess already in ignorance. It is re-finding the found, or the re-discovery of what is in our possession already.

V

14. *Truth is the pre-eminent value*: It will be generally admitted that truth is the highest value for philosophy. It dominates the rest of our life. Our will and our feeling automatically conform to the state of our knowledge. If we feel and act in ignorance of the truth, we can never realize the highest value in those spheres of our experience. We shall be internally in bondage to certain false conceptions of reality, and thus act and feel wrongly. Hence the pre-eminence of right knowledge or *samyak-darśan* for the realization of all other values. We can only love truly when we know truly. To see the face of truth is to rejoice in the truth. Similarly, we can only act truly, when we know truly. Knowledge destroys all impure desires and blind passions. It makes us truly free in all that we do. Knowledge alone can make us free,—*jñānāt eva tu Kaivalyam*. *Bhakti-yoga* and *Karma-yoga* are not mere alternatives to *jñāna-yoga*, but they are subsidiary to it and attain their highest consummation only *after it*. This explains the preoccupation of the typical Hindu philosopher with metaphysics to the almost complete exclusion of ethics. His metaphysics swallows up ethics. Ethics is like a post-script in a metaphysical enquiry.

The problem of truth arises because what we know is something to us only; it is not *in-itself*. Reality is something in itself, not relative to us. It is only such reality that is the proper subject-matter of knowledge. Phenomenal reality or reality that is relative to us is not, properly speaking, known at all. It is conceived, not known. We are in the habit of thinking that metaphysics seeks the knowledge of ultimate reality or super-sensible reality. This is only a faulty way of stating the true business of metaphysics, which is to achieve knowledge that is true to reality as it is in itself or knowledge that is *vastu-tantra*. When this is done, the problem of knowledge is solved, and there is no ultimate reality left that demands to be known.

Truth belongs to the theoretic consciousness. When we purge this consciousness of all volitional and affective elements, we ought to get at the truth. That there are these elements mixed up with cognition is proved by the epistemological theories of realism and idealism, which emphasise just those non-cognitive elements, and

thus give us a warped account of knowledge. According to idealism, thought gives form to reality,—informs it and makes it knowable. It is the intelligible element in reality, the rest is all darkness and is not known at all. As a consequence of this view, knowledge is held to be an internal relation, so that knowing makes a difference to the object known. This is clearly the case in the volitional type of experience, where the agent determines the act, the subject determines the object. Thus idealism confuses cognition with volition, and still boasts of a theory of knowledge and of truth.

Again, the idealists hold that reality is neither subject nor object, but a unity of both; it is subject-object. This is the character of all feeling. Feeling is just a unity of this sort. It is found in aesthetic appreciation. An object is not beautiful *in itself* and independently of all subjective appreciation; nor does this appreciation *create* beauty in the object. Here then the idealists confuse knowledge with feeling. They over-emphasise the non-cognitive elements, and thus misinterpret knowledge. They have a theory of knowledge based upon a perverted view of knowledge.

The realists shift the emphasis to the object, which is all to the good. But they commit other sins. The intrinsic unrelatedness of the object, assumed by them, is only a dogma. It is not known, and can never be proved. As Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya says, "There is no knowledge of the circumstance of unrelatedness but only an extra-cognitive awareness of it." The object, according to the realists, is externally related to knowledge. If they were right, perceptual error should become impossible; for the object of perception is *in-itself* and independent of the perception of it by definition. "If this is a perception, then this is true." He will be a bold man who will subscribe to this dogma. The independence and the unrelatedness of the object therefore which is *not known*, but only believed, and believed falsely, is taken by the realists to be an actual and accomplished fact of knowledge. The whole problem of knowledge would be solved, if we could show a simple case of perception where the ideal of knowledge was completely realised, i.e. where subjective interference was wholly absent and our awareness was determined by the object and nothing but the object after the well-known conception of the *tabula rasa*. We could then have, in perception, the absolute standard of truth, and the problem of truth would no longer be on our hands.

It might be argued that there are after all certain limitations inherent in our human situation. We cannot be omniscient. Nor

can we jump out of our subjectivity and contact things as they are in themselves. We must therefore accept the appearances of things as they come to us with the humility appropriate to our embodied and finite existence. Any knowledge is true, and objectively true, till it is proved otherwise by further experience. We consider this an argument of despair. It cuts at the very root of a philosophical approach to the problem. We philosophise, in order to get rid of our subjectivity, not to accept it resignedly. If, as Plato says, we are confined within the cave of our subjectivity, and can only perceive the shadows on the walls of our mind, let us at least agree not to call the shadows "truth", till we have had an opportunity to look beyond the walls of our cave, and compare the shadows with the reality in all its wholeness and nakedness. It is the business of philosophy to strike down the walls of the cave, and to free the individual from his self-imposed shell of ignorance.

15. *True knowledge must be self-evidently true*: We contend that truth is not an extraneous character of knowledge, so that one piece of knowledge should require to be confirmed by another. Knowledge ought to be self-evidently true. It is different with falsehood. No piece of knowledge can reveal its own falsehood. Falsehood is only revealed by another piece of knowledge which corrects it. In other words, falsehood is revealed by truth, but truth itself is self-revealed. If truth itself required to be revealed by another piece of knowledge which was true, there would be the fallacy of *regressus ad infinitum*: "Each piece of knowledge is true, because another piece of knowledge which confirms it is true, and so on ad-infinitum; and since there is no last term in this series which is true in itself, the truth of any particular piece of knowledge cannot be established." The coherence theory of truth, which involves mutual support of propositions in a systematic whole, is equally vicious for the same reason. Falsehoods can be no less coherent than truths. The fact is that truth does not require to be coherent with anything. It is *svato-pramāṇa*, not *parato-pramāṇa*. Any piece of knowledge therefore which is open to doubt, or which requires confirmation, is less than the truth, and is not the truth.

But what is the truth? Empirically, we can only get truth, which is *probable*, and which is true *now*. It is always open to cancellation. Empirical knowledge is mediated knowledge. It is knowledge through the idea. Such knowledge can never be *vastu-tantra*. It is *kalpita* or determined by the idea. The idea gives form to the object, creates the dualism of the subject and the object,

and makes any direct contact of our awareness with reality impossible. In other words, knowledge at the level of discursive thought cannot be true knowledge. There must be some other kind of knowledge which is qualitatively different from it. We may call it for convenience the level of rational intuition. For thought here ceases to idealise, and becomes intuitive. It no longer functions through the senses, and is not associated and mixed up with imagination. It is pure thought reflecting reality as such. It rejects every sensible and every ideal element in our contact with reality; and through this negation, it rises to the direct perception of a higher reality that reveals itself as self-evidently true. The object as such is negated; and truth shines as true for all time, or eternally true. It is knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis*. We know the world in God, and as God. *Sarvam idam Brahmaiva*.

16. *Subjective illusions*: Our condemnation of all knowledge of objective reality may appear exaggerated. Objects of external perception have been doubted by most philosophers, but not objects of internal perception or mental objects as they are called. When Descartes doubted everything, he did not doubt the fact of thinking. A conscious or mental fact cannot be doubted. But it appears to us that introspection is not a superior form of knowledge. Introspection involves mediation no less than any other form of supposed direct awareness; and as such its testimony is open to doubt. As a matter of fact, its object is never co-present with it. It only knows the recreated image of a past event which was never known in the past. The idealistic dictum that all knowledge is mediated knowledge has no exception in the phenomenal sphere; and Kant showed that mental facts were no less phenomenal than facts of nature.

Mental facts may be no exception to the almost universal subjectivity of all our knowledge. But can they ever be *illusory* like objects of external perception? We think they can be equally illusory. What is taken to be a case of knowledge for example may be only an illusion of knowledge. Knowledge ought to be true knowledge. That is the only real knowledge there is. And yet we have doubted all so-called knowledge of objects. Is it anything more than an illusion of knowledge?

It may here be argued that knowledge itself can never be illusory. It is only an object that can be illusory. The snake-appearance may be illusory; but the fact that I saw the snake-appearance cannot be illusory. We think that this is a wrong analysis of our knowledge of the snake-appearance. If that appear-

ance is illusory, my belief that I really *saw* it is a false belief. I never really saw it, I only *imagined* it. I confuse this imagination with seeing.

What is true about knowledge can be shown to be true about feeling and willing as well. There too we suffer from illusions. We may believe, and believe falsely, that we are really willing, i.e. willing freely, while in truth we are being determined by the dead weight of desire, etc. Our freedom may be illusory only. We conclude that scepticism has scope over all facts, whether subjective or objective, physical or mental. What it cannot touch is what cannot be known in the objective attitude, if anything is left for knowledge, after we have negated both the subjective and the objective which are necessarily correlated.

17. *Beyond the subject and the object* : All theories of truth given by European philosophers are based upon the idea that we know truth when we know anything empirically. They merely seek to justify what is taken to be true knowledge in one way or another, through science or common-sense, but which philosophical reflection condemns as subjective, open to doubt, and a species of untrue knowledge. How can we have a *theory* of truth, unless we first *know truth*? Knowledge of the truth is the primary object, a theory of truth is secondary and even superfluous.

The question which we should ask is, is anything left of reality when we have negated both the subjective and the objective? It appears to us now that negation is never absolute and that we cannot negate everything. If we merely negate, there is at least the negating. If we negate the negating, we are either setting up another level of un-negated reality, or we are in the region of pure non-being where negating has no meaning. This non-being, which is the negation of all negation, cannot be a matter of knowledge or intuitive realization. Or if it is so conceived, as *Mādhyamika* Buddhists do, it can only be a *state of being* induced by withdrawing from both affirming and negating.

All negation is relative. When we negate, we take up a position which remains un-negated. If, for example, we negate an illusory appearance, we do not negate objectivity as such. The snake-appearance, being realised as illusory, is negated. But we still believe that there is some object there, which *illusorily* appears. We may go a step forward. We may negate objectivity as such, because we realise that it is a product of an act of the mind, or that it is ideal in character, being defined by thought. This creation of the mind cannot be reality, and it cannot be a fit subject

for knowledge. We negate it. But when we have negated all objectivity as such or the pure object, we have not negated the negating. The negating is the logical function of thought. We may negate even this as a subjective phenomenon, that is not literally known, but only ideally reconstructed. When however we have negated the logical function of thought, the 'I' that negates still stands. It is reality that nobody can deny or disown. Nobody meaningfully says, 'I am not', while he would be quite prepared to deny the existence of everything else. But we can go beyond the assertion of the 'I', and reduce it to a phenomenal object that can be negated. The only significant use of the word 'I' is in respect of the speaker, who distinguishes himself from the bearer, i.e. from 'you'. I am aware of myself only as I distinguish myself from the 'not-I'. The 'I' is a phenomenon, an object of a kind, although a most intimate object which passes as my very true ultimate Self. "It is always found either in identity with this Self, or it is not found at all and remains in abeyance."

Kant went as far as this in his epistemological account. The empirical 'I' was not the reality itself, but only a phenomenon. The non-phenomenal and transcendental functions of reason might be the ultimate reality behind the 'I'. But they could not be known in the ordinary sense. They were more logical than metaphysical. Hegel merely carried this argument to its logical conclusion. The logical forms were transformed into metaphysical entities, and metaphysics was reduced to logic. For Kant himself, there was no reality behind the empirical 'I'. The transcendent, permanent and substantival Self was only an idea of reason. This is, in our opinion, sheer dogmatism and lack of critical thinking. When I have become aware of the empirical ego, or *ahamākāra*, and negated it as a phenomenon, have I not retreated further inwards? I have rejected the ego itself as external to my real Self, as a mere object that emerges and also disappears, and which I have wrongly confused with the true Self. When everything is negated, this Self is not negated. It is the limit of negation; for it is the supreme subject, which does not present itself to thought and is no phenomenon of any kind. It is beyond the duality of the subject and the object which it illumines or reveals. If there is a sense in which this could be said to be known, a reality which is by its very nature immediate and not open to the mediating activities of thought, there would be a level of knowledge which ought to reveal the self-evident truth to us.

18. *Can there be an unmediated awareness of reality?* — It is often argued that any kind of immediate awareness, even if it is possible, cannot be reliable or true. Our knowledge begins with

judgment. What is prior to judgment is nothing to us. We can only go forward and develop the judgment. If the judgment is false, we should correct it; if it is one-sided, we should supplement it. The ideal of truth can only be a mediated and discriminated awareness made immediate. This is only possible when the process of supplementation and transformation has reached its limit, and we know the Whole. The mediating idea may then be found to be superfluous. Reality may be known as an all-inclusive Whole above the level of thought in a sort of Absolute Experience on the analogy of feeling. Alternatively, the idea itself becomes concrete, because it is the very Whole. To know reality as the Concrete Universal is to know it for what it is. All the content of reality is ideal content; and in the end, the idea as object is known as the reflection of the idea as subject. This ideal of self-consciousness is the ideal of ultimate truth.

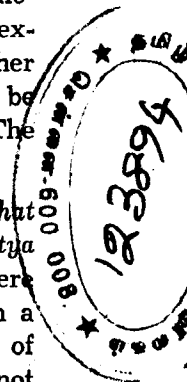
We cannot agree with this view. The idea does not require to be supplemented, it requires to be cancelled. No amount of ideal content can add up to reality, which is qualitatively distinct from the idea. The idea is ours and subjective, reality is in itself. Every idea therefore, however inclusive, is just false. It requires to be negated. Supplementation is out of the question. If we add one erroneous view to another, they will not cancel each other out. Errors can cohere and confirm each other as we often find witnesses do in law-suits. Besides, a mediated awareness can never be made immediate through supplementation. An infinity cannot be covered by any number of finite distances, and must always remain undiminished how-so-ever far we carry the process; even so, reality cannot be grasped in its concreteness through one-sided views or abstract ideas. How-so-ever much we may claim to know in terms of the idea, an infinite distance still divides us from reality. It is the distance that divides reality in itself and the appearances of it manufactured by the mind, or the distance that divides truth from falsehood.

We reject this idealistic approach to the problem of truth. It is based upon our knowledge of nature which is necessarily mediated. But this is not the only knowledge that we have. There is another kind of direct knowledge which we have, and it has very different implications. It is the intuition of 'I' or *aham-pratya*. This intuition is quite common-place; in fact so common-place, that no-one seems to take it very seriously, and few appreciate its significance. This significance consists not in the correlativity of 'I' to 'this', which is generally admitted, but in the absolute opposition of the two. This opposition is so clear-cut and unmistakable that it has been compared to the opposition of light and

darkness (*tama-pra-kāṣa-vat*). The two can never reside in the same locus. It is impossible therefore for any-one to assert consciously "this is I". No doubt, we often quite carelessly and recklessly identify ourselves with some kind of object, such as the body and its characteristics, thought, etc. But a little reflection immediately corrects us. Anything that we can contemplate as object is just what we call the 'not-I'. Here then is a form of reality that never does present itself before our thought. If we want to know it, we can never know it in the objective attitude, or as mediated by the idea. It is essentially something immediate by its nature. It is because we seek to know it in the objective way, as something that can be presented to thought, that it appears to us as a mythological entity. Many have sought to deny its existence or to explain it away. We however contend that it is the key to the higher form of knowledge which we seek. "Know Thyself" may be found to be the very quint-essence of philosophic wisdom. The Self may be the Truth that shall make us free.

19. *Truth consciousness is a higher level consciousness that is yet to be born*: The common intuition of the self or *aham-pratya* is only our starting point for the knowledge of the truth. There is no simple awareness of Truth. Truth is only born through a great effort of thought or rational mid-wifery. It is the result of discrimination, criticism and negation. Truth is a *value*. It is not a *fact*. A fact is something crude. Any believed content would be a fact. We know facts without being conscious of it. We can never know Truth without being conscious of the same. Truth is the product of reflective thinking or a crisis in theoretic life. It involves therefore a new awakening, or a new birth, the birth of a self-conscious awareness of Truth as such. It is the end of our philosophical adventure, not its beginning. The common intuition of the self, on which we have laid so much emphasis, merely provides a new dimension for our reason. Reason, ordinarily, is concerned with the study of the object. It has scope in physical, biological, mental and social sciences. It has no vital question about the subject as such. It treats the subject, at best, as some kind of ultimate fact to be accepted, but which has no content that we might seek to know. It is taken as a kind of attenuated object, too thin, too subtle, and too evasive for explicit awareness. The least said about it, the better.

This evaluation of our ordinary empirical thinking has got to be reversed. We have become reflectively aware that all science, with its subjective approach, can never give us the truth in a literal sense; and anything less than literal and pure truth is ultimately a form of error. The intuition of 'I' opens a whole



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new realm of the spirit to us. *Adhyātmic vidya* has its own different problems and its own methods of tackling them. It does not seek to build up or imagine a *theory* of truth. All theories are mere conceptual structures which have a use for science, but no use for philosophy. Philosophy seeks to know the truth itself. It is an effort not at *explaining*, which is always misguided, but at seeing the truth. This it does, not through any abstract argument, but through the inwardisation and the deepening of our experience, so that what everybody knows becomes more significant and more luminous.

If philosophical thinking aims at a higher kind of knowledge or a species of seeing, it is more akin to what may be called transcendental or rational psychology than to transcendental logic; for we can only see what is there already by a shift of attention, we cannot see what thought has imported into reality. There are various species of seeing, but the seeing which philosophy aims at is different from them all and in a class by itself. We see the sensible object. But this seeing is mixed up at all stages with interpretative elements, so that we cannot say what is the object in itself and what is contributed by the subject. In fact, there is no such thing as object in itself. The poet and the mystic are also said to see. But they only see what they have visualised vividly in their imagination. They have high-strung temperaments. The scientist sees, but he sees only in a metaphorical sense. It is a flash of imagination in which a mere mental suggestion or hypothesis clears up the mist of thought.

The philosopher has no use for poetic imagination. He subordinates imagination to the pure light of reason, in order to see what is. Imagination gives us a sense of freedom. It is at the basis of most of our joys. But it is no instrument of truth in its nakedness. It has its use in philosophy as in all theoretic activities. It accentuates certain issues, visualises possibilities, invests problems with a new meaning and importance, and it provides the over-tones of joyful appreciation and wonder when the truth is seen. But as a *method* of philosophical knowledge, it must be rigidly suppressed and kept under control. The philosopher sees the truth, because the truth has caught him, enslaved him. He cannot but see it. He has no option. His seeing is pure. It imports nothing into what is seen, but gets everything from it. There is no other seeing like it. It is seeing the truth face to face. The philosopher and the seer are not two persons, although a line can be drawn between them in a loose way: The true philosopher must be a seer, although a seer may

not be a philosopher. The philosopher-seer is in fact the greatest among the seers. His reason is disciplined to the highest standard, and it accepts nothing which is not absolutely true. The seeing is not divorced from reason, but it takes reason with itself, and transforms it into a higher form of intuition, the so-called intellectual intuition of God.

20. *The place of sādhanā*: It is sometimes argued that spiritual discipline or *sādhanā* is something more precious than philosophical knowledge. It supervenes after the business of philosophy is over, and it carries the philosopher a step further in the realization of the truth. I cannot agree with this view. There are certain spiritual qualifications no doubt (*sādhana catūṣṭaya*), which are presupposed by a serious philosophical enquiry, or what may be called *Brahma-jijñāsā*. But they are subsidiary to the enquiry itself, and by themselves they carry us nowhere. There is another kind of discipline which comes after the truth is known, and which is called *nīditdhyāna*. This too is in a sense a subsidiary affair. It is merely the humbler effort of the mind to keep in tact what has been attained through philosophic effort, to persist in the philosophic vision, and to transform it into a living and all-embracing feeling. It is a form of drilling of thought to stick to the game right to the end. Truth does not *reveal itself* through this discipline. It is merely made to *rule over* the mind by reforming and transforming the rebellious tendencies and the false ways of thought. It is because of this high conception of philosophy, as giving us the saving knowledge, that it is regarded in India as the apex of all other forms of knowledge. It is not an empty intellectual game to please the curious, or to provide tricky arguments for the mere logician, or to dazzle the simple-minded with learned discourses on high and abstract themes. It is the instrument for the highest kind of enlightenment for the more serious-minded and the more reflective species of mankind, that seek in truth the satisfaction of their highest ideal of theoretical and practical life. It is that truth, which, when realized, leaves no other value unachieved, or yet to be achieved. We can close the chapter of our life with the happy ending that our very will, the source of all our restless activities, is rendered submissive and peaceful, because there is nothing left that it can aspire after. Verily, Truth is the summum bonum; and if we, as philosophers, are true to our profession, there lies our goal.

My stand through-out has been that of Advait Vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya; and if any of my arguments are found similar to those of Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya, it may be taken for granted that I am to that extent indebted to him.

The Identity of an Object

BY

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By 'an object' is here meant a material thing like a chair, a table, a tree and so on. The term 'object' in a broad sense means any thing that is denoted by any word, or any entity that is somehow cognised or referred to by our mind. In this sense, a negative entity like the non-existence of a thing, quality, action or relation, is as much an object as a positive entity like an existent thing, quality, relation, action, etc. Nay more, even the subsistent entities, spoken of by some western realists, are to be regarded as objects in so far as they are thought of by us. As such, an object means whatever is or can be thought of by us. The world of objects will thus include the existent, the non-existent as well as the subsistent, to which our thought does or may possibly refer.

In this paper, however, we propose to restrict the word 'object' to an ordinary concrete thing presented to sense, or a material thing like a rose, a tree, a table, etc. The reason why we take an object in this restricted sense is this. While in the case of a material thing like a chair or a table we believe that it somehow is and remains identical, we do not think that its states and other characters remain the same for any length of time. We say that the qualities, actions, relations and conditions of a thing may change, but not so the thing itself. Again material objects like the water of a river, an electric current or a flame are not regarded by us as remaining the same identical thing for any period of time. With regard to mind and mental objects, what impresses us most is not their identity through time, but their incessant change in time, which is proverbial. It is only with regard to a concrete material thing, which may be large or small, and the soul or self that we generally think that they are identical or remain the same through some or all time. Reserving the identity of the soul or self for future consideration, we propose to discuss here the nature of the identity of a material object.

When we say that a table or a chair is an identical object, we mean, broadly speaking, two things. We mean first that the table

or the chair remains, in itself, the same through some period of past, present and future time, although its qualities and relations, states and conditions may change from time to time. We say that it is the same table or chair at which or on which I sit from day to day and year to year, and will continue to sit in future so long, of course, as it exists. We are not unaware of the fact that the colour or the condition of the table or the chair changes. Still, we believe that the table or the chair as a material thing or a substance with its primary qualities remains the same in itself. Secondly, what we mean by the identity of an object is that it is the same for, and is perceived to be the same by, all persons. We believe that the table which I now see before me will be perceived in the same way by all persons who enter into my room and look at the table. Thus the identity of an object means (a) its sameness in and through time and amidst its changing qualities and conditions; and (b) its sameness for all perceiving subjects.

Now the question before us is this: Is there any identity in an object in both the senses, explained above, or in either of them? If so, we have explain wherein the identity lies. If not, how are we to explain the sense of identity that we all usually have with regard to an external object like a table, a chair or a tree?

There are many possible ways in which the identity of an object may be explained. First, it may be explained by means of the substance of a thing. Secondly, it may be said to be a name for the continuity of successive states which constitute an object. Thirdly, it may be explained by the resemblance between different successive objects. Fourthly, it may be treated as a system of the appearances of an object in all possible perspectives. Fifthly, it may be said to lie in the idea or meaning embodied in an object, or the divine purpose realised by an object. In this case the identity of an object is not a bare identity but an identity in difference. Let us examine these different ways or views before we come to our own.

1. It is held by some philosophers, who are generally realists, that an object is an identical thing in so far as it remains the same substance despite its changing qualities and conditions, and is perceived as such by all persons in common. It is believed by them that although the qualities and the states of an object may change from time to time or from one person to another, yet the substance of it remains unchanged and identical throughout the whole course

of its existence. The identity of an object lies in the permanent substance which underlies its changing characters and conditions. When several persons look at a table at the same time, and, consequently, from different points of view, they see slightly different aspects or parts of it. Yet all of them perceive the same thing or substance before them. Even if they see the table at long intervals of time, the qualities and the states of the object perceived by them may be somewhat different, but the substance of it is the same for them all. And so, it may be said that what they see is the same table as an identical object.

This account of the identity of an object may be called the substantialist theory. It rests on the assumption that underlying the qualities and the states of an object there is a substance which is the permanent substratum of its variable characters. But what this substance is we do not know. While the qualities, activities and other characters of an object are perceptible, the substance of it is imperceptible. The substance being the underlying substratum is naturally hidden from our view or sense-perception. It is true that we cannot *think* of qualities apart from and unrelated to some substance. But this only proves that human thought is under the necessity of applying the category of 'substance' whenever it has to understand certain sensations as the qualities or the actions of a thing. It might well be that the qualities of an object are just the manifestations of a reality outside, in relation to our senses, and that our thought or understanding interprets these sensory manifestations of reality through the correlative categories of substance and quality, and thereby knows them as the qualities of a particular object. But in the perceptible qualities or characters of an object we do not find any that may be said to be permanent and to remain the same identical entity amidst their variation and fluctuation. The only entity that may be said to be the same or identical in them is their simple existence. The qualities and other characters of an object and so also the object itself exist as being particular forms or modes of existence *as such*. In each of them there is existence *as such* and when perceiving any one of them we perceive also existence *as such*. Therefore, existence, pure and simple, is, properly speaking, the real and ultimate substance of all objects of the world, for it is only this that is permanent in the real sense of being always present in them and always perceived along with them. Such pure existence, however, does not explain the identity of particular objects. Because, it stands, not so much for their distinctive particularity, as for their distinctionless unity. There being, then, no

other identity in an object, i.e. nothing which remains the same in it as an element of its existence as a particular, we have to find some other explanation of our sense of identity with regard to it.

While the realists generally try to explain the identity of an object on the basis of a permanent substance underlying its states and processes, the phenomenologists do away with any such hidden substance or substratum and reduce the object only to a series or a grouping of changing states and processes. On the phenomenologist view it becomes apparently very difficult to explain the identity of an object. If there really be nothing identical in an object like a chair or a table, how is it that we think of it as being the same for all persons, or as remaining the same throughout its limited history? Broadly speaking, there are three ways in which the phenomenologists seek to explain this. And these give us three other views with regard to the identity of an object.

2. Some phenomenologists hold that the identity of an object is just another name for the continuity of the series of successive states and processes that compose it. Just as we say that it is the same light that is burning throughout the night, although, as a matter of fact, it is a continuous succession of different flames, so an external object is treated as an identical thing because there is an unbroken succession of different states and processes that constitute it and are causally connected with one another.

This account of the identity of an object is not, however, acceptable. By the identity of an object like a chair or a table we do not mean merely the continuity between successive states. What we mean is rather its sameness through successive states, or its remaining the same identical thing in and through the succession of different states. And this is not, and can not be, properly explained on the phenomenologist view explained before. The continuity of different states requires *something* that continues through them and makes them continuous. Otherwise, we cannot sensibly speak of them, as we do indeed, as continuous states of the same thing, or even as continuous states, for states must be states of something. We say that a ball moves continuously from one place to another, because it is the same ball that passes through different contiguous positions in space.

3. Some other phenomenologists, who seem to be more thorough going, maintain that what we call one identical thing or object is really a quick succession of many different objects which very closely resemble one another. This is well illustrated by a fiery circle which may be described by quickly turning round a burning

stick. The stick as burning becomes different in length, colour, etc. from moment to moment. So also is the fire different at different moments. There is, therefore, a succession of different fires which closely resemble one another. Yet we get the impression of one thing and say that there is a fiery circle. Similarly, what we call a table is really a quick succession of different tables which closely resemble one another, and this produces in our mind the impression that there is one table enduring through many years. Although the impression is wrong, we uncritically accept it as right, and cherish the idea of the table's identity, because the impression is natural and the idea works in life.

The identity of an object is not properly explained by the relation of resemblance between different objects which closely resemble and quickly succeed one another. Two similar coins may be minted in quick succession, but that does not make them one coin or even one thing. Further, the resemblance between two things supposes some identical point or points of agreement between them beside certain points of difference between the two. Things resemble each other when they agree in certain respects and differ in certain other respects. The respects or aspects in which they agree would make them identical. If, then, they are regarded as different, that is because there are certain respects or aspects which are present in the one but absent in the other. But with this the chance of their fusion into one identical object is either lost or rendered illegitimate. The analogy of a fiery circle is not to the point. The natural impression that we may get here of one thing and the workability of the idea that we may form of it, do not prove that it really exists. They are rather contradicted by a more reliable, inferential knowledge in the same way in which the illusory perception of the sun's revolving round the earth is contradicted by present scientific knowledge.

Some modern realistic thinkers like Bertrand Russell¹ give up the idea of the object as a physical reality and reduce it to a system of all the appearances of an object that are presented to different persons from all places and in all possible perspectives. A table, for example, is not a real physical existent, but a system of appearances of it from different places, i.e. in different perspectives. Two persons see the same table when they look at it from

1. Cf. Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and other later works. A similar view of the object as a synthesis of all appearances is found in Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*.

very near places and get very similar perspectives. What they perceive is not the same physical reality, but different objects appearing in their different perspectives, which are cor-related by means of similarity. The physical object is thus a system formed by cor-relating (by means of similarity) a given object in one perspective with all the objects that may be given in all possible perspectives. It is, therefore, a *logical construction* and not a real existent; and its identity is only the unity of a logically constructed system based on the similarity of its parts of members.

The identity of an object is not better explained by the idea of a system of appearances which are cor-related by means of similarity. Two appearances may be similar and yet not cor-related so as to form one system, e.g. the appearances of two similar tables placed side by side. Further, appearances must be the appearances of reality. To speak of an appearance without any reality of which it is the appearance is meaningless. If different appearances, which are presented to different persons, form one system, it is because they belong to the same thing or the same reality, or at least the same locus. But for some identical point of references and a necessary basis in reality for them, appearances can hardly constitute the physical or material objects which chairs and tables undoubtedly are, not only for common sense but also for science. Hence we must look for some other explanation for the identity of an object than the phenomenalist view of it.

5. For idealistic thinkers, an object exists only as it is perceived or thought of by some mind and embodies some idea or meaning, and fulfils some definite purpose or function in the world. The world being a rational system, everything in it, i.e., every object has a reason or purpose for its existence. And it is one thing or identical object in so far as it embodies one idea or fulfils one purpose in the absolute Idea or divine purpose of the world. Even in the ordinary objects of experience like chairs and tables there is the embodiment or realisation of certain ideas or rational purposes. A table, for example, embodies a certain idea and fulfils a certain purpose in the divine scheme of things. It is and remains the same thing in so far as it realises the same idea and serves the same purpose in the life of man and God. The identity of an object lies, therefore, in the identity of its idea or purpose, despite all the changes of states and conditions to which it may be subject. It follows that the identity of an object is not an abstract identity apart from difference but a concrete identity in-difference. The idea or meaning is embodied in an object in so far as it is a unity

realised in the differences of its qualities and other characters. It has being only in and through the differences of its parts and aspects. Identity apart from difference is as meaningless as difference without identity. Hence the idea or purpose which is the ground of an object's identity must be a unity of its differences, or an identity-in-difference.

While the idealist view seems to offer a better explanation of the identity of an object, it obviously rests on certain beliefs or doctrines which may not be acceptable to all. That the world is a rational system and that every object in it embodies a divine idea may be true. But that does not help us very much to explain the identity of an object like a table or a chair, so long as we do not understand what the divine idea or purpose behind it may be. As a matter of fact, we do recognise the identity of an object and act accordingly in practical life, even when we do not know anything about its divine purpose. Hence it behoves us to try to explain the identity of an object without reference to such transcendent ideas of reason as the absolute Idea or the divine purpose of the world.

An object like the table or the chair may be analysed into a number of parts arranged in a certain way and having a certain form or structure. These parts may be resolved into smaller and smaller parts till we come to the smallest which cannot be further divided. The particles in which the analysis of a physical object terminates are called atoms; and these were once supposed to be indivisible. But from science we now understand that an atom may be broken up into electrons and protons, and that it is ultimately reducible to a vast system of forces or energies. So also the qualities and activities of an object are only certain forms of energy and their transformations into other different forms. If we would, as we should, accept the scientific analysis of a material object, then we are to say that there is no permanent substance underlying its changing qualities, states and processes. Rather, we should say that an object is a congeries of forces and a play of energies. But for our ordinary life and knowledge it is a concrete thing, i.e. a substance with qualities, activities and relations, existing in time and space, bearing a name and belonging to a class, and serving certain ends of our practical life. A concrete thing like this is not immediately given in our experience, but is constructed by our mind out of given sense-data like colour, smell, touch, taste and sound. Of course, we are not aware of any constructive activity of the mind when we perceive or experience a thing. Hence,

to all intent and purpose, the object appears to be directly experienced or perceived by us.² But then the question remains: how or why is it that we treat the object as an identical thing which remains the same through some period of time? So far we have not been able to detect any element in the constitution of a thing, which is and remains clearly identical amidst its changing qualities, states and processes. Although judged theoretically, we find nothing that is identical in an object, yet for the practical purposes of life there is a sort of identity in it. An object, as we have already said, is a concrete thing which has certain qualities, relations, etc., and serves certain practical ends, or performs certain practical functions in our life. An object is judged to be the same, if and when it serves the same practical purposes of our life, i.e., has the same practical functions for us. A man lives in the same house for a number of years, not in the sense that the house undergoes no change, no wear and tear, from year to year, or even from day to day, but in that it has the same practical use and utility for us, namely, affording shelter against the sun, wind and rain. Two persons may be said to drink the same water from the same spring. It is all but certain that the spring-water cannot be the same at two moments or places. Yet it is treated by us as being the same, because it produces the same practical effects in us like cooling the body, assuaging our thirst, etc. Even two things which are distinct and different are regarded by us as the same when they serve the same practical functions for our life. Two coins are numerically different no doubt, but practically the same, because both possess the same purchasing value. But for this, there would be no exchange nor any currency or trade. On the other hand, we see how one thing or person is judged by us to have become quite different when there is any abrupt change in its or his practical effects or conduct. Sometimes we hear it said that a sinner becomes a saint, although it is the same soul that exists in both. The same act is sometimes regarded as a play to some but death to others. What is generally regarded as a poison may be administered as a medicine under special circumstances. In our daily life we see how what is really a piece of paper is valued as a currency note because it enables us to purchase certain goods. In all these instances we see how things are regarded as identical or otherwise because of the identity or difference of their functions and practical uses. The theoretical identity of an object, which

2. For a fuller discussion on this point see the author's *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chs. VI and VII.

we are in search of, is neither demonstrable nor possible. It is not demonstrable because we cannot point to any element or constituent of an object which remains identically the same, while the rest are subject to change and mutation. Nor is it possible for any object of the world to remain the same all through its existence. The universe, as we know it, is never stationary, but always moving and changing. So all objects of the world *must be*, as parts of the moving universe. But for practical purposes of life this fact may be ignored and the objects of the world regarded as identical things so long as they serve the same needs and practical purposes of our life. A stable and standing order of the world is a necessity of man's practical life. It is probably man's civilisation and culture, especially his speech and language that have contributed most to the building up of such a stable order in which, notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary, objects are regarded as identical things, or permanent substances with changing qualities and characters.³ But, after all, the only identity which a critical study of objects will permit us to admit is their functional or practical identity and not any essential or theoretical identity.

3 Cf. *op. cit.*, *ibid.*

Knowledge and Self-Knowledge

BY

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There are two judgments : ' I know ' and ' I know that I know '. It is ordinarily thought that these two judgments convey different meanings. The latter is commonly designated as a form of self-cognition. By self-cognition is meant a knowledge in which the knower knows himself—a consciousness in which the subject and the object are one. There are some psychologists who hold that knowledge of the self is an impossibility. Knowledge is a relation, and a relation requires at least two terms, while in self-knowledge we have only one term.

In reply to this objection, we may point out that although knowledge involves a subject-object relation, still knowledge itself is no relation. Knowledge transcends relation. Supposing knowledge to be a relation, we ask the question : How do we know it ? That knowledge is a relation must be given by some piece of knowledge, with therefore, transcends the relation itself and is not identical with it. In fact the subject-object relation does not produce knowledge but serves only to manifest it just as light serves to manifest the colour of a thing and does not produce it. Moreover, knowledge of the self by the self does not mean any dichotomy in consciousness. The self is, in fact, immediately felt in all knowledge, subjective or objective. If the subject is *ipso facto* unknown and unknowable, what will be there to cement the discrete experiences and thoughts into one subjective whole ? But then, if we understand self-cognition to be cognition of self as an object, it will be a perversion of truth.

Some again, think that we can never get a genuine case of self-consciousness, even when one part of the self is supposed to know another part of it. For the knowing part being different from the part that is known, we find that, in this case the knower is conscious of an ' other ' and not of itself. McTaggart thinks that there is no absolute opposition between the subject and the object, and holds that the self can become its own object. He argues that

since we know that we exist it follows that we can become objects to ourselves.

McTaggart's analysis appears to be faulty and the truth lies in the fact that there is an absolute opposition between the subject and the object. 'To be a knower' means an utterly different thing from 'to be known'. In any concrete case of knowledge, the subject and the object cannot interchange their positions without altering the significance of the situation. If in one and the same act of knowledge the subject could indifferently be either subject or object, and the same was true of the object, then the two judgments 'I know the book' and 'The book knows me' would be equally good readings of the same fact. Experience, however, goes against this. Thus, if knowledge-situation has to retain its true meaning, the subject must remain subject and object, object.

The Naiyayikas as logical realists hold that the self is a substance and knowledge is its accidental attribute. Every cognition is other-revealing and not self-revealing. Introspection is nothing but retrospection. How, then, is the fact of awareness possible at all? The Naiyayikas answer that we perceive the pot first and it is only by an act of reflection at a subsequent moment *anubhavaśāp* that we become aware of the knowledge of the pot. Thus cognition is *Viśaya-prakāśa svabhāvaḥ*. After the primary apprehension of the *Viśaya* or object, there is *anuvyavasāp* or retrospection. The secondary cognition refers to the primary cognition and the primary cognition refers to the external fact as object. Thus the subject of knowledge is like the eye which sees all things but is itself invisible.

In criticising the Nyaya position, we may first point out that to suppose one knowledge to be the object of another knowledge is to hold that two states of knowledge exist together at the same time. But this is a manifest absurdity. If again, cognition cannot shine in its own light but only in the borrowed light of another cognition, how can the second cognition which equally lacks original light like the first, make itself shine? If original light is denied to any cognition, perception of objective reality will be an impossibility, as darkness cannot be removed by darkness. Further, the view that cognition shines in borrowed light is exposed to the charge of a *regressus ad infinitum*. The analogy of the eye, too, is inadequate. It cannot be held that even though consciousness does not reveal itself it still reveals the objects, because what is signified by revelation of objects is nothing but their cognition or awareness.

The Naiyayikas hold that there is first a direct connection of the mind with the self, with the knowledge inhering in the self. But this account does not mitigate the complexity of the problem. It goes without saying that all of the qualities of the self are not perceived in the perception of the self (e.g. infinitude is not perceived in the perception of the self). So, we may legitimately ask the Naiyayikas: why should the attribute of knowledge alone be perceived in the self, while the attribute of infinitude is not perceived? The Naiyayikas will reply: "It is because knowledge is an attribute, the nature of which is to be perceived". If so, we ask: what error is there to suppose that it is the very nature of knowledge to reveal itself? Thus, we see that the Naiyayika-solution of the problem does not stand scrutiny.

The Mimamsakas of the Bhatta school maintain that knowledge of the object is not perceived at all even at any subsequent moment. Knowledge is known through inference. Because we know the quality of 'knownness' (*jñātātā*) in an object perceived, we must suppose that there is such a thing as the knowledge of the object.

It is however wrong to think, as the Bhattas do, that knowledge is an activity of the self, yet the result of this activity (viz. knownness) is an objective characteristic on a par with colour, size, etc. The result of the activity of the self must be regarded as being in the self and not in the object. In other words, it must be subjective not objective. Thus the attempt of the Bhattas ends in failure.

The Prabhakaras repudiate *anuvyavasāp* because in it the primary cognition is known not as subjective apprehension but as object apprehended. In introspection, conceived, as retrospection as is done by the Naiyayikas cognition itself is not cognised as subjective apprehension but is cognised as an object apprehended. Here we do not cognise cognition, as cognition, but as content (the *Viśayi* is taken as *Viśaya*). Thus introspection does not solve the problem. The Prabhakaras hold that all cognitions are selfluminous. Perception is the awareness of the objects and also a simultaneous awareness of the awareness and of the self that is aware. This is known as the doctrine of (*triputisamviv*). Thus cognition is both self-revealing and object-revealing. This reminds one of the distinction, drawn by Alexander, between 'enjoyment' and 'contemplation'. In every act of knowledge, the mind 'enjoys' its own act and is conscious of itself as an entity distinct from the object it 'contemplates'. The self is known in 'enjoyment', the not-self through 'contemplation'. For Alexander, the consciousness of the

not-self through 'contemplation' is no hindrance to the 'enjoyment' of the self.

The Samkara-Vedantins however, think that the faintest trace of the consciousness of the not-self precludes the possibility of realising the self. The self is not realised as an entity distinct from other entities—nothing forms an 'other' to the self. For Alexander, the absence of self-division of the mind proves, not the unreality of objects, but only the independent reality of them; whereas for Samkara, the impossibility of self-division of the self proves the falsity of all appearances in the shape of the object and of all object-cognitions. Alexander's 'enjoyment' stands side by side with 'contemplation', while Vedantic self-realisation transcends the subject-object duality.

Thus, for Samkara, cognition is not objectively known *avēdya*. It is, as Kant holds, the unobjective presupposition of all experience. The self-manifesting nature of knowledge is regarded by the Vedantins to be a unique subjective characteristic. It should be noted however, that self-luminosity means only that the self is light and not that the self has light, because the self does not possess any attribute. *Svamprakāśh* is defined by Citsukhacharya as "what is fit for direct acceptance and transaction without being the object of the cognitive process. It should not be noted in this connection that a negative way of defining *svamprakāśh* must be adhered to. If we say positively: 'The self reveals itself' there is every danger of misunderstanding. We should rather describe it thus: without being the object of a cognition the self does not remain unrevealed.

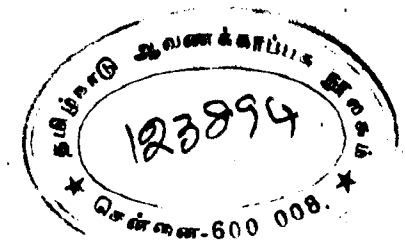
The revelation that is found in the conscious processes is not due to any external light, because there is consciousness even when there is no external light (e.g. in dreams); mind cannot supply the light either, because it is merely an organ which perceives things through the light of something else. Moreover, in dreamless sleep when the mind also is absent, the consciousness that persists cannot be anything other than the self's own light.

Vacaspati rightly points out that revelation means nothing but the generation of a process of consciousness, and if consciousness itself is not supposed to be self-revealing then the case for all revelation is lost. But then, the vital question crops up: If object is by its very nature unrevealed, how can it be supposed to be revealed merely because of its connection with something self-revealing? Samkara answers that an object becomes revealed only when it is in illusory identification *adhyāsa* with pure consciousness.

Thus we are inclined to believe that self-consciousness is bound up with all consciousness. The judgments 'I know' and 'I know that I know' may appear to be different, but in fact the latter judgment is only an explicit statement of the former.

When I say "I know that I know", by the second "know", I do not mean any new knowledge. 'That I know' is only a repetition of 'I know'. For it is impossible that within knowledge as expressed by the first 'know' another actual process of knowledge—as required by the second 'know'—should take place. When I say 'I know', I understand something and when I add further 'that I know', I only repeat myself and do not discover another real and new knowledge. It is possible to get the same knowledge twice over, but it is not possible to get knowledge of knowledge or knowledge within knowledge,—knowledge meaning the same thing in both the places.

The fact that 'I know that I know' is revealed and involved in the primary cognition, viz., that 'I know'. Thus self-knowledge as an aspect of knowledge may be overlooked at times, but it cannot be denied altogether without undermining the foundation of knowledge itself.



Handwritten notes: "3L", "Q. 10. 2. N 25", and "NSB-22-4".