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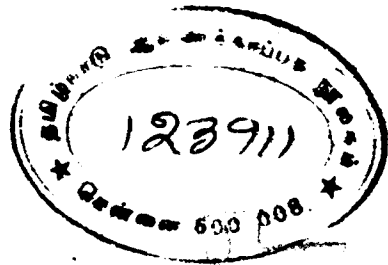
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The Interpretation of Vaisesika Categories

by

D. M. DATTA

The understanding of the Vaisesika categories is the very key to the more serious and developed philosophical literature of India. In a recent number of *Philosophy—East and West* there is a thought-provoking article by Karl H. Potter of Harvard entitled, "Are the Vaisesika 'Gunas' Qualities?"¹ The object of the present paper is to discuss this and other cognate questions. It is proposed to consider here briefly some of the basic principles underlying the entire system of Vaisesika categories and also their bearing on the conception of 'guna'.

Though Kaṇāda's appears to be the earliest² of all the Sūtra-works (which mark the beginning of systematic philosophical speculation), the six categories or *padārthas* (e.g. *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karma*, *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya*), which he forged as if at one stroke of his superb genius, remained for two thousand years the chief categories guiding philosophical speculation, notwithstanding the frequent onslaughts of searching criticism. There have, of course, been addition and alteration here and there, but his main scheme has been generally followed in philosophical discussion. Yet Kaṇāda's ultimate purpose was not ontological analysis, but to show the way to the attainment of the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*).³ He mentions the six *padārthas* as those through the proper knowledge of which one can attain the highest good. The

1. Vide pp. 259 of the Oct., 1954 number of this journal pub. by the Univ. of Hawaii Press, Honolulu. The same point is also raised by Potter on p. 272 in his review of Daniel H. Ingall's *Materials for the study of Navya Nyāya Logic* (Harvard U. Press, 1951).

2. Vide Chandrakanta Tarkalankara's Introduction to his *Bhāṣya* on *Vaisesika-sūtra*, pub. by R. Choudhury, Cal. 1887.

3. *Vaiś. Sūt.* 1. 1. 4.

doubt is possible whether Kaṇāda thought these six to be only the ethically important entities, or also regarded them as the exhaustive ontological classification of all possible entities. Prasastapāda,⁴ Udayana,⁵ Śrīdhara,⁶ Vallabha,⁷ and Śaṅkara Miśra,⁸ the chief exponents of Kaṇāda's Vaiśeṣika system, as also the later leaders of the combined school of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, tried to show by vigorous and elaborate arguments that Kaṇāda's six categories constitute an exhaustive scheme of all existing entities under one or another of which everything that can be conceived or mentioned as existing can be brought.⁹ It was recognised, however, that 'non-existence' could not be brought under any of the six positive categories and, therefore, it should be added as the seventh padārtha, so that the ultimate list became seven.

The word 'padārtha' used perhaps for the first time by Kaṇāda, was adopted by other schools as a very convenient term for describing their respective ultimate ontological entities (e.g. the twentyfive padārthas of Sāṅkhya, the three of Rāmānuja, the five of Kumārila etc.). It was used even to denote Gautama's 16 topics for study. Etymologically 'padārtha' (pada + artha) connotes 'whatever is meant by term or word.' As everything whether subjective or objective, real or unreal, existent or non-existent or subsistent, determinate or indeterminate, conceivable or inconceivable that enters or can enter into philosophical discussion, must be directly expressible or indirectly suggestible (e.g. by words like 'contradictory', 'inconceivable', 'square-circle', 'meaningless') by some word or another, it can be at once seen that 'padārtha' is the widest possible term for philosophy. 'Padārtha' would thus be found in this respect to be wider than the widest classical terms of Western Philosophy, like the 'concept' of Socrates, 'Ideas' of Plato, 'category'¹⁰ of Aristotle, 'Substance' of Propyry or 'Being' of Hegel.

In more recent times Bertrand Russell has come quite close to Kaṇāda. He says, "Whatever may be an object of thought, or may

4. His Padārtha-dharma-saṅgraha ed. by Dhundiraja Sastri (Banaras, 1923) under the title Vaiśeṣika-darśana.

5. His Kiraṇāvali and Lakṣaṇāvali (Banaras).

6. His Nyāyakandalī, com. on Prasastapāda's Padārtha, pub. Lazarus (Banaras, 1895).

7. His Nyāyalilāvati.

8. His Upaskāra, com. on Kaṇāda's Sūtras included in 4 noted above.

9. Vide also Viśvanātha's Siddhāntamuktāvalī and coms. ed., Nirṇayasaṅgraha (Bomby, 1933).

10. Which meant 'any predicate used to determine some mode of being.'

occur in any true or false proposition, or can be counted as *one*, I call a term. This, then, is the widest word in the philosophical vocabulary.... A man, a moment, a number, a class, a relation, a chimera, or anything else that can be mentioned is sure to be a term; and to deny that such and such a thing is a term must always be false."¹¹ But Russell's statement would appear to be rather loose in the eyes of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers whose passion for precision in thought and language has scarcely any parallel in the history of Philosophy. Russell would be found to confuse between the word 'term' and 'that which is meant by a term'. A 'man', 'an object of thought', is not a 'term' as such; but it is what is meant by a term. It is clear from the context that what Russell really means by 'term' is *that which is meant by a term*. So Kaṇāda's word, Padārtha (that which is meant by a word or term) would be found to be even more precise than Russell's expression, 'term'.

Judged in this light of Comparative Philosophy Kaṇāda's invention of the term 'Padārtha' must be regarded as a very remarkable philosophical achievement indeed! In its actual effect on Indian thought also it was a momentous thing. For almost all schools of thought tried to organize their ideas around this concept of Padārtha—asking themselves how many ultimate padārthas they should admit, and what would be the place of any object of belief in the scheme of padārthas. But it would seem that all followers of Kaṇāda were not quite conscious of the widest potentiality of the meaning of 'Padārtha'. Some virtually limited its meaning just to cover the six categories Kaṇāda happened to mention in the ethical context, or extended it a little more to cover also the seventh category of non-existence, added later. Thus, Prasastapāda¹² thinks that common to all the (six) padārthas are the three characteristics, existence (astitva), nameability (abhidheyatva) and knowability (jneyatva).

But it is realized by some later thinkers that if existence is a part of the connotation (pravṛtti-nimitta) of 'Padārtha', then the wide etymological sense of the word would suffer, and that 'non-existence' (abhāva) which is nameable and knowable would be excluded. Three kinds of attempts are made to meet this difficulty. Existence is interpreted by some¹³ in a very wide sense, viz., the possession of a nature of one's own (svarūpavattvam). Even non-

11. The Principles of Mathematics, 1903, Vol. I, p. 43.

12. Op. Cit., pp. 5-6.

13. Eg. by Śrīdhara in Nyaya-Kandalī, p. 16 of edn. cited.

existence which has its own nature and of which we say "There is the non-existence of a pot here," can then be treated as a *padārtha*. A second attempt, found in the *Dinakarī*, a commentary on *Viśvanātha's Siddhāntamuktāvalī*,¹⁴ is to take 'existence' or 'is' (*asti*) to mean 'belonging to time' (*Kāla-sambandhitva*). This is comparable to Kant's interpretation of the category of 'existence' as 'belonging to a particular time'. A third kind of attempt is to drop 'existence' altogether and to define *Padārtha* simply as 'the object of knowledge' (*pramiti-viśaya*). This is done by *Śivāditya* in his *Saptapadārthī*, and his able commentator, *Yatīndramādhava*, puts up a strong plea in favour of retaining the wide, etymological sense of '*Padārtha*' so that even illusory objects could be denoted by '*Padārtha*'.¹⁵

Turning from the meaning of '*Padārtha*' to *Kaṇāda's* method of exposition of the categories we are struck by the highly logical process of his threefold treatment of the categories, namely (1) *Uddeśa* or enumeration (or indicating the denotation of each category-term), (2) *lakṣaṇa* or definition of each term (bringing out its connotation and/or its unique character), and (3) *parīkṣā* or critical examination of its characteristics. Moreover, *Kaṇāda* points out that to have an accurate knowledge of any thing we must precisely know its points of similarity (*sādharmya*) and dissimilarity (*vaidharmya*) in relation to other things.¹⁶ He follows this method in treating of the different categories. It is this germinal passion for precision in thought and language which developed later into that highly complex, and sometimes cumbrous and impregnable, technique of philosophical discussion which we find in the full-fledged form in the later *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* (also called *Navya-Nyāya*), as also in the later works of other schools which could not but adopt this method of precision.

This later development has been compared by Dr. Saileswar Sen and Dr. Daniel Ingalls to the modern Mathematical Logic. But the great difference to be remembered is that while Mathematical Logic develops precision through artificially coined symbols, the *Navya-Nyāya* takes the current language of the people and tries to perfect it into an instrument for precise thinking. So its influence could spread to almost all branches of knowledge including even grammar, rhetoric and medical science. To an Indian trained in this method of precision much of even the logical treatises of the West appear to lack precision in thought and expression.

14. Vide pp. 101-2 of the *Nirnayasagara* edn. (Bombay, p. 1933).

15. Vide pp. 9-10 of *Saptapadārthī*, Rama Sastri's edn., (Banaras 1893).

16. *Vaiś. Sūt.*, 1. 1. 4.

In their search for the ultimate entities (*padārthas*) *Kaṇāda* and his followers realistically start from common experience (*anubhava* or *pratiti* or *saṁvid*)¹⁷ and the accepted linguistic usages (*vyavahāra*), subject them to critical examination (*parīkṣā*) and try to understand and explain them. On the two assumptions that every experience must have an object¹⁸ and that every phenomenon, including a linguistic usage, must have some adequate cause,¹⁹ they reach the different entities as the causes responsible for different experiences and usages, and without which the latter cannot be explained or understood. They are thus led to admit even some imperceptible entities like *samavāya*, *viśeṣa*, etc. Let us see now how the seven categories can be thus reached.

The most obvious entities presented by ordinary experience are things like tables, chairs, books, trees, houses etc., ordinarily called substances (*dravyas*). *Kaṇāda* accepts them as the first and basic kind of *padārtha*. As a philosopher his attempt is like that of many ancient Greek and modern European Philosophers to discover the few ultimate, elementary kinds of substances with the help of which the innumerable substances recognized by ordinary experience and speech can be explained. He lists nine such substances: the five physical elements (earth, water, light, air and *akāśa*), time, space, soul and *manas*, giving inferential arguments in favour of the imperceptible entities.

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Unlike many philosophers who stop with substances supposing that they explain everything, *Kaṇāda* has the acute insight to perceive that an exhaustive account of the world must also take into consideration the many characteristics and relations into which the world revealed by experience can be analysed. Substances are not the same as their characters. Nor are relations that relate substances, or substances and characters, or characters and characters, the same as what they relate. Relations are very important in the constitution of the world, because terms remaining the same, a change in relation changes the structure of things (cf. Dog and God).

Only recently Western realists (e.g., the American neo-realists) have begun to analyse and recognize these different elements or aspects of the world of experience. But still most West-

17. *Upaskāra*, 7. 2. 26, quotes "Saṁvideva hi bhagavatī vastūpagame naḥ śaraṇam" (The goddess of apprehension is our only resort in the matter of knowing reality).

18. Cf., the dictum, "Pratītiḥ Saviśayā".

19. *Vaiś. Sūt.*, 1. 2. 1—*Kāraṇābhāvāt Kāryābhāvaḥ*.

ern thinkers treat all characters of substances almost in the same fashion calling them by more or less the same name, like qualities or attributes or modes. Kaṇāda showed much greater power of discernment and analysis by distinguishing different kinds of characters and characters of characters, and clearly differentiating them by giving them different technical names. Considering the age, it was a great marvel in analysis.

All characters, i.e., dependent aspects of things, are called by the general name 'dharma'. There are two distinguishable classes of characters, first of all, those that directly and exclusively inhere in, or belong to, substances, and those that do not do so. Of the former class again there are two chief varieties, those that are non-dynamic (not of the nature of motion) and those that are dynamic. The first kind of characters is called *guṇa*, the second *karma*. Colour, touch, smell etc., which belong to substances are their *guṇas*, whereas, the different kinds of motion possessed by substances are their *karmas*. It should also be noted that *guṇa* denotes only simple characters (not compound ones), and *karma* denotes also simple (not mixed) movements. It was a great attempt made by Kaṇāda to find out how many such elementary characters (*guṇas* and *karmas*) should be admitted so that all other mixed characters could be analysed into these simple ones.²⁰

But in addition to these two kinds of characters (e.g., colour, touch etc., and movements) which can belong to many substances, and are, therefore, *general* in nature, there are the unique and particular characters of ultimate simple substances that differentiate each such substance from the rest. Every such singular character is called by the Vaiśeṣika, *Viśeṣa* (i.e., differentiating particularity).²¹ We are not aware of such nice distinctions in Western Philosophy. The 'differentia' of traditional Western Logic may be thought to be like a '*viśeṣa*'. But really there is a great difference. 'Differentia' may belong to many substances (e.g., rationality belongs to all men). But each *viśeṣa* belongs only to one substance (e.g., each atom or each soul has a *viśeṣa*, exclusively its own). A *viśeṣa* is, of course, inferred from the necessity of differentiating ultimate substances, as without such differentiating characters, they would be identical (cf. Leibnitz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles).

20. For definitions and lists of *guṇas* and *karmas*, Vide Vaiś. Sūt. 1. 1. 16, 1. 1. 17, 1. 1. 6 and 1. 1. 7.

21. Ibid., 1. 2. 3. and *Prasastapāda*, Op. Cit., pp. 168-170.

Besides *guṇa*, *karma* and *viśeṣa*, the three kinds of characters which can belong only to substances, another class of characters called *sāmānya* is also recognized by the Vaiśeṣika on still subtler grounds. We cannot think of a genuine class without admitting the presence of some essential common character which is present in every member of the class and which enables us to bring the members under one class. Now the class may be formed not only of substances, but also of *guṇas* and *karmas*. A *sāmānya* (class-essence or generic connotation) may inhere, therefore, in all these three kinds of entities (*padārthas*). For example, there must be cowhood in all cows, redness in all red colours, mobility in all motions. Each such *sāmānya* serves (like the Western 'differentia') not only to endow unity on the members of a class, but also to differentiate them from the members of other classes. Cowhood, the identical common character in all cows (present, past and future) cannot be said to be born with a particular cow or perish with it. So it must be an uncaused reality (*nitya*), eternal in character. A *sāmānya* resembles Plato's Idea in this respect. But it is neither transcendent nor the only kind of reality.

In trying to conceive the constitution of the world with the help of these five kinds of *padārthas*, Kaṇāda perceived the presence of a universal cementing principle, a unique way in which these five are related. All composite substances are found on analysis to *inhere* in their parts, and those in their turn ultimately rest in their component simple (indivisible) constituent substances. Again *guṇas* (e.g., colour, touch etc.) and *karmas* (motions) are found to *inhere* in the substance to which they belong. *Sāmānyas* (e.g., potness, redness, mobility etc.) *inhere* in the members of their class (pots, reds, motions etc.). This relation of inherence called *sāmavāya* is, therefore, found by analysis to be a necessary element in the mosaic structure of the world. It is, therefore, admitted as the sixth *padārtha* by Kaṇāda.²²

Kaṇāda gave formal definitions of the six *padārthas*, gave lists of the ultimate substances, qualities and movements, and brought out the natures of the entities by comparison and contrast. Yet he left many problems for his followers who tried to evolve a rigorously logical system out of Kaṇāda's brief *sūtras* (aphorisms). We have no space here to discuss these later developments, some of which would constitute very important contribution to the Philosophy of the World. We must mention, however, the seventh *padārtha*, called *abhāva* (non-existence), which was added to

22. Vaiś. Sūt., 7. 2. 26, *Prasasta*, loc. cit. pp. 171-75.

Kaṇāda's list on the grounds (1) that it was implicitly implied in the sūtras, (2) that non-existence (e.g., the non-existence of a snake in a room) is as real and practically as important as existence (e.g., the existence of light in the room), and (3) that the *summum bonum* itself was the *non-existence* of suffering, according to Kaṇāda.

We may now wind up the discussion by considering Potter's question whether the *guṇa* (as conceived in this system) should be translated into English as quality. Potter thinks that it would be misleading, because "the English word 'quality' usually suggests repeatability; we say, 'The house is red' meaning that this house shares a certain property with various other objects which are also red", whereas "the Naiyāyika's *guṇas* are not shared among objects at all, that a single *guṇa* is, in fact, an unrepeatable entity, an entity related to exactly one object and no more."²³

It is true that the English word 'quality' sometimes stands for universal characters. But it also sometimes signifies "Distinctive trait," any "Property or attribute" (in "Acoustics, that property of a tone which may distinguish it from another tone having the same pitch and loudness").²⁴ The more important point, however, is that Potter's interpretation of '*guṇa*' as an 'unrepeatable entity' and his suggestion that it can be, therefore, called "particular character" or "abstract particular,"²⁵ for fear that otherwise '*guṇa*' would be indistinguishable from a *sāmānya* (universal), seem to lead to the opposite danger of making '*guṇa*' overlap the concept of '*viśeṣa*' (the unique and particular character of the Vaiśeṣika, as previously expounded). Moreover his interpretation goes directly against the Vaiśeṣika's view, already discussed, that *guṇas* (like substances) possess universal characters (*sāmānyas*).²⁶

The real point to see is that though "a single *guṇa*" (like this particular shade of red in the present house) is particular, many *guṇas* (e.g., many particular red shades) form a class (e.g., of reds). In other words '*guṇa*' is not a particular but general term, a class term. Kaṇāda discovers seventeen kinds of *guṇas* (that is, ultimate and simple non-dynamic general characters possessed by substances) such as colour, touch, smell etc. His followers add seven more. And each class of *guṇas* again has sub-classes (e.g., colour has the sub-classes white, black, red, blue etc.).

23. Loc. cit., p. 259.

24. Vide Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.

25. Loc. cit., p. 264.

26. Unlike *Viśeṣatva*, *guṇatva* is a *jāti* (universal).

Another important point to be remembered is that a class and the class-essence (the common character possessed by all members of the class) are not the same. The cow as a class and cowhood are not the same. Therefore, *guṇa* (e.g., the class of reds) and its *sāmānya* (e.g., redness) are not the same. It was the distinctive merit of this Indian school to appreciate this point. In the analysis of this school, the substance, house, possesses the *guṇa*, red colour (a member of the class of reds), and the red colour has in it the universal redness. So 'redness' is *the character of a character* of the house, and is indirectly present in the house, whereas 'red' directly belongs to the house as its character. This analysis should help us out of the difficulty pertinently raised by Potter. His equation of 'red' (as a quality of the house and other red objects) to 'redness' would thus be seen to miss the important Vaiśeṣika distinction.

The suggestion of Potter that '*guṇa*' being an unrepeatable and particular entity should rather be translated as 'particular character' or 'abstract particular' than as 'quality' would, therefore, be open to serious objections. 'Quality' has the suggestion of being a dependent character of some thing, and for want of a more exact term, it is used for '*guṇa*'. No exact term can be found for any term of another language, yet the nearest word has to be used, remembering the original context; otherwise, retention of all foreign words makes a cumbrous translation. 'Particular character' would correspond to '*viśeṣa*', and not to '*guṇa*' which is general in nature. 'Abstract particular' would be also misleading, because (as distinguished from a concrete particular, a concrete universal and an abstract universal) it may signify even a substance (*dravya*) considered in a particular partial or momentary aspect, abstracted from its concrete many-sided reality possessing successive changing states; or it may signify even a particular movement (*karma*) considered apart from the moving thing. If a compound word is allowed, '*guṇā*' can be translated more exactly as '*a simple, non-dynamic, general quality inhering in a substance only.*' It would thus exclude composite characters (like beauty), movements, *viśeṣas* and universals—that is, all other characters. But we know that the philosophical language of the West is not yet accustomed to such strenuous exercises in punctilious precision, for which they would rather leave ordinary language and resort to algebraic symbolism. It is very encouraging, however, that the Harvard Sanskritists like Ingalls and Potter, well-versed also in Western Philosophy, have been mastering the intricacies of the Navya-Nyāya and trying to absorb them into Western thought.

The Business of Philosophy

by

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I

That sense and imagination are two (it may be, among other) avenues to reality is unquestionable at least at the start of philosophy. By 'imagination' is meant what is often called *association*, that attitude of the mind which, not being explicitly logical, anticipates a real—past, present (though distant) or future—when something is presented to the sense. Whether this imagination is implicitly logical and, if so, what the implicitness means will be seen later.

There is a third attitude of the mind called thought or reason—the explicitly logical attitude; and the question is whether it is a method of *knowledge* and, if so, to what extent. By 'knowledge' is meant the awareness of the *real*.

According to some, thought is only a way of interpretation (expression), having as such nothing to do with reality, its goodness consisting only in neatness, clarity, economy, etc. Some others treat it as not entirely without metaphysical import, but as only a substitute formula, a convenient short-cut to reality where the actual living process is elaborate and complicated *imagination*. Still others treat it as not by itself giving anything real, but capable of doing so in collaboration with sense-given data which are real. There is a fourth group of thinkers according to whom thought runs counter to reality.

Now, philosophy, whether different or not from sciences, cannot do without thought. Even intuitionists, mystics and irrationalists have to seek recourse to thought at least in exposition. To determine the exact function of thought is, therefore, a primary problem for philosophy.

Not that this cannot be determined. It cannot be said that this determination being itself a business of thought, epistemology is impossible. Epistemology has, as a matter of fact, been possible, and there is also an elaborate science called Logic. If these two

disciplines have been possible we have to admit that pure thought is self-evident, in the sense that *another thought* is not required to probe it. It is not, however, impossible that the mysteries of thought are unravelled in some super-thought attitude. But of that later.

Thought may be understood as either subjective thinking with its different modes or the system of objective idealities. In either case we have to recognise grades, for (i) not all details and interrelations are discovered all at once and (ii) definite groups of details and interrelations are revealed at definite stages.¹

(The above is true whichever way thought is understood — whether as a method of interpretation or as a substitute formula or a genuine spiritual or semi-spiritual process and as such revealing realities or not.)

We have said that philosophy cannot do without thought. This does not immediately mean that thought, whether as subjective thinking or as objective idealities, enters into the constitution of reality or forms a part of it. The truth or otherwise of this doctrine has to be found, we cannot start with it. In spite of what others have said, it is not impossible, at least at the start, that reality is thought-less. Reality may well be known in terms of sense and imagination only, sense offering data and imagination connecting these.

II

Thought is not a mere way of interpretation. X can be called mere interpretation if corresponding to it there is no X in the world of reals. But at least not all techniques of interpretation in philosophy are of this type. By 'technique of interpretation (in philosophy)' we mean pure words — words other than 'red', 'green', 'sweet', etc. which obviously are (conventional) names of actual reds, greens, etc. Words which are not such names are the techniques in question. It has been claimed that these techniques do not represent exact realities corresponding to them, they are only (conventional) formulae for representing a host of sense-given reals.

1. That thought itself is a grade removed from empirical reals follows, as we shall see, from the fact that (i) it is autonomous and (ii) yet constitutes the latter. Autonomous A as constituting B cannot be on a par with that B.

But are all techniques of this type? Contrast three sentences — 'This is blue', 'This blue exists' and 'I am disgusted with the world'. There may not be any difficulty with regard to primary sentences like the first. But what about the word 'exists' in secondary sentences like the second? It is not true that they are only repetitions of corresponding primary ones, for they are not used that way. Predication of existence is most often significant. Nor is the significance merely subjective. Modality may have considerable subjective import, but this is not the whole story. In modal awareness existence and like categorial features are asserted as objective in their distinctness. Modal assertions are really the beginning of the discovery of objective idealities. Yet the subjective side is not to be underestimated. The subjective side is there only because ideal objectivities do yet, in an important sense, as we shall see later, hang on to the subjective distinguishment.

If existence and like categories stand as objective entities in sentences like 'This blue exists', the world as a whole stands similarly distinguished in sentences like 'I am disgusted with the world'. The world as a whole, i.e., the infinite entirety, is a genuine objective ideality, no mere name. Relative entireties like 'all men', 'all dogs', etc., as objective entities are evident in general sentences like 'All men are mortal', and also in negative sentences like 'This is no man'. In neither case is the 'all' wholly reducible to the detailed particulars. The particulars being infinite in number can only be colligated through the genuine 'all'. Such 'all', no doubt, is also subjective, but that is because it, though objective, yet hangs on to the subjective distinguishment of it. Relative 'all's, again, are not reducible without remainder to negations. They may be *translated* in the language of negation, but translation is only a second-hand representation. What, now, is true of relative 'all' is true all the more of the absolute 'all', the world. Negative language is here absurd, there is nothing with which the world as a whole can be contrasted.

Existence, other categorial features and the infinite entirety are thus no mere techniques of interpretation. These at least are metaphysical entities, and similarly a host of other so-called techniques. Some of the expressions used in philosophy are, no doubt, mere linguistic devices, but this ought not to be generalised, specially when most of the expressions used in common sense are genuine.

It is true that all expressions whatsoever are in an important sense conventional and, therefore, technical. But this is not the

point here. 'Red', 'green', etc., are no doubt conventional expressions; but they represent realities. The question is whether the expressions branded as mere techniques are all to be tabooed. We have shown that not all are so, and we claim that most of them are genuine.

This would follow from an analysis of the expressions like 'red', 'green', 'sweet', etc. It is true that these words mean certain definite realities because of their association with them. But that they should mean *some* entities is no business of empirical association. Reference to objects-in-general is an intrinsic function of words. Such objects-in-general are divisible *a priori* into certain classes, studied in the Logic of Term. Particular words like positivity, negativity, generality, singularity, etc., representing these classes are, therefore, significant. These words are no mere techniques of interpretation. They possess genuine semantic import.

A whole sentence also has similarly a semantic import, both empirical and *a priori*. But the semantic side is possible here through the syntactical relations of the terms. The syntax-words, like the terms, have also semantic import—they refer to pure relations, studied in the Logic of Proposition. The relation between syntactical and semantic imports is too intricate to be studied in the present essay. It is enough that we show that there are objective idealities represented by most of the expressions which the thinkers under consideration propose to ban as unmetaphysical.

One more point against the verbalisation of pure philosophy. If the words that represent the sense-given are significant, equally so must be those which represent their associational connections. The reals include not merely sense-data but also their system as apprehended in imagination. Were it not so reality would have been reduced to the present and past data only, and those even as wholly discrete and unconnected. Such a view stands self-condemned. If discretes alone be real, each discrete would be absolute and we should have had no right even to speak of *two* discretes.

III

So far against those who treat thought as only a way of interpretation. Those who regard it as only a working substitute for elaborate and increasingly complicated processes of imagination

fare no better ultimately. They do not indeed treat the real world as a conglomeration of insulated sense-data. But they are in the same predicament with the first group of thinkers so far as they hold that thought has no metaphysical import.

The third group of philosophers who hold that thought by itself gives nothing real, but does that in collaboration with sense-given data are substantially right. But the point requires clarification.

Does thought as such point to anything at all, though that may not be a *reality*? Or does it point to nothing whatsoever? The second alternative is untenable, for then no inference would lead to a new reality and judgement would be scarcely distinguishable from non-judgemental perception except as a way of interpreting the same content. It cannot also be said that thought representing, in collaboration with sense-data, a reality is an ultimate fact the why and the how of which need not trouble us. For, we might ask—Does it in that collaboration represent those very sense-data or something else? If the former, there is no improvement on the first view dismissed before. If, however, it does represent something else thought must have a business, and that has to be specified. If the business is not pointing to anything (though not real), what may it be? As a matter of fact, many of those who hold that thought in that collaboration yielding a new reality is an ultimate fact pay scant attention to *thought* and are satisfied with the mere passage through imagination from one reality to another. They either do not notice or deliberately ignore the logical side. But that there is thought is evident from the fact that there are intelligible sciences like Formal Logic and Pure Mathematics, and our task is just to find out the business of this thought.

There might be a view, in this connexion, that thought is neither a linguistic device nor a short-cut substitute for imagination, but only the awareness of inductive generalities. The view, however, would be no improvement. An inductive generality is neither a sense-datum nor apprehended through imagination. Not the former, because, as already shown, all 'all's—relative or absolute—are (objective) *idealities* and as such unamenable to sense-intuition. Nor the latter, because imagination passes from one particular to *another*. Some believe that sense can apprehend idealities. But that is because according to them idealities as such are bodily present in particular reals. We shall show later that this their idea is wrong.

Thought as such, then, does point to something. But it is not real, it is only an objective ideality.² It is not real, because nothing that is distinguishable in itself and yet real can constitute another reality. Real wood constitutes a chair, but that wood is never distinguishable in itself; it is always a wooden thing—a log or plank—which is equally constituted by wood. Real threads, again, constitute a real cloth. They, however, constitute it so far only as they are *parts* of the cloth which is the *whole*; as separated from the cloth they are no *parts*, because there is then no cloth as the whole. They are then only threads—as absolute as the cloth was. A real quality, again, constitutes a real substance, but no quality is distinguishable in itself, except in name. Idealities, however, even as idealities, constitute reals. Hence they themselves cannot be real. That the empirical particulars are real is beyond doubt, because we start with this notion, and till it is sublated there is no question of denying or even doubting it.

But does an ideality *constitute* the corresponding real? Have we not already maintained that no ideality is bodily present in the real? We reply—both are true, only there should be proper clarification.

When thought discovers an ideality the question may be asked—Was it there before that discovery? Before the discovery there was only the real. Hence the question may be re-stated as—Was it present in the real? We cannot answer either way. For if it was not there we have to say that thought created it for the first time, but this is not what we feel. Nor can we say that it was there, because had it been already present there is no reason why it could not then be discovered. There was no defect on my part, nor was there any intermediate obstruction. It cannot be said that on my part there was a defect in as much as I did not then *think*—just as when I do not perceive, a real thing is not revealed; so when I do not think the ideality is not discovered. This cannot be said for the following reason:

My perceiving capacity being all right, when the object appears (supposing there is no obstructing medium), it is revealed. So if my thinking capacity were all right and if the ideality were pre-

2. The first group of thinkers should not here object that as these are mere idealities, not real, the words representing them are non-significant. Their notion of 'significance' is unduly restricted. These words are certainly not tautologies. Moreover, we shall show later that objective idealities have a necessary demand on reality.

sent, it too ought to have been revealed. As a matter of fact, however, it was not revealed. Where was the defect then? It will not do to answer that the thinking capacity was not all right, that it was in a latent form and that I had not the proper make-up for making this capacity patent, just as a man not up to the mark has the appreciative (aesthetic) capacity in a latent form. That this cannot be said is evident from the fact that it involves illegitimate double latency. Capacity by itself is already a latent phenomenon, and it would be meaningless to regard this latent phenomenon as having been further latent.

It would be useless, again, to urge that there is no *capacity*—whether of perceiving or thinking—and that the appropriate object being present perception or thought occurs. This cannot be said, because as a matter of fact idealities, by supposition, were present even before discovery and yet they were not discovered. Nor can it be said that the failure to discover was due to a subjective defect, viz., that the man was not up to the mark. What does this 'being up to the mark' mean, unless it be rousing up a sleeping capacity, which, we have just seen, is absurd? It may, of course, be said that the man by culture attains such a make-up of the mind that the idealities reveal themselves by grace. There is nothing against such revelation by grace. But it is useless to speak of the vague make-up, unless it be an *ad-hoc* hypothesis just to account for the fact that the idealities are only sometimes revealed and sometimes not. It would be more candid to admit that on account of the difficulties mentioned we *cannot assert* that the idealities were present before their discovery, just as we *cannot deny* that. So far as we cannot assert, the idealities were not bodily present in particular realities; and so far as we cannot deny they were present. This account is not anomalous if we put it in another language. We may say that idealities as such, i.e., as idealities, were not bodily present in those reals, they were present there—we might even say 'bodily'—in *another* form, i.e., as undistinguishably fused with the reals. It is thought that distinguishes and posits them in their proper form, as idealities.³ 'Undistinguishably fused' means that at that stage they did not retain their pristine identity in tact. It cannot be said that even as idealities they were present there, though hidden from our view. That would unnecessarily bring back the question of *defect* due to

3. That idealities are not real follows also from this consideration. A real is that which existed before it was discovered. But idealities cannot be said to have so existed.

which it was hidden. There would be further complication as to whether the defect was in the subject or constituted by an obstructing medium. It may no doubt be urged against us—Why were they not discovered if there was no defect? Our reply is that if every cause of non-discovery (supposing the object is present) be called a defect, we have to seek one here; but our central point is that it is to be traced in the object itself. The object, in other words, was not as it ought to have been. The ideality was not there as ideality. It was there as a generic shape or schema.

The net conclusion is that thought as such points to something which is not yet real—the ontic ideality that as essence constitutes the existent particular, constitution meaning that even as autonomous it is also present in the particular real, though not as ideality, but as undistinguishably fused. It would be too much to claim that even as ideality it is bodily present there, and too little to say that only its *reflexion* as separate from it is present in the particular real.

The view, therefore, that thought as such gives no reality but does that in collaboration with real sense-data is only half correct. When all this is said it is clear also that the view of the fourth group of thinkers—the anti-intellectualists—is untenable. There is no ultimate conflict between idealities and reals. Any question of conflict arises only when it is not noticed that even in the world of reals there are representatives of idealities—representatives, however, which are not wholly other than the originals. The representation here is self-representation, not deputing another. At every department of the real world—scientific, historical, social, political, etc.—there is some such appropriate self-representation.

IV

Now that anti-metaphysical views are disposed of we may venture to offer an outline of metaphysics, an account of the world revealed by thought. This world consists not merely of pure logical entities that are referred to by pure language—the entities, as we have noted, discussed in the Formal Logic of Term and Proposition, it is peopled by other entities also, viz., space, time, number and material idealities, and also by categories which are but concretions of logical entities in relation to space and time.

To explain. That corresponding to semantic and syntactical sides of language there are logical entities we have already seen. Those, therefore, who believe that there are only logical *relations*, i.e., propositions (with dead symbols as terms), no logical *entities*,

are mistaken. Those, again, who propose replacing logical entities by mathematical ones are doubly mistaken, first in denying the former and secondly in misreading the status of the latter. Space, time and number alone are mathematical entities, and they are never so elevated as the logical. They should be followed in all their genuine intricacy and complex construction by reflective imagination. They are classed with idealities only because imagination is a hybrid that partakes of the nature of both thought and sense-intuition. Self-conscious imagination is a bed-fellow of thought. But the same imagination as blind associational passage is the handmaid of sense-intuition. The relation between blind and self-conscious imagination is not like that between undistinguished and distinguished ideality, for while the undistinguished ideality is and yet is not the distinguished, the reflective and the unreflective imaginations are absolutely identical. Space, time and number as distinguished (reflectively apprehended as autonomous entities) are present in the world of reals not in *another form*, even though fused with real particulars as their extension, presentness, togetherness, etc. Material idealities (universals) and logical entities and relations, on the other hand, are in particular reals as only their generic images or thinly pictorial schemata.

Mathematical entities are to be followed by reflective imagination. This truth is missed equally by those who make unauthorised generalisation of mathematics through a false freedom of thought as by those who, unable to follow the ever-increasing complexity of imagination beyond a certain limit, too easily employ the language of thought, forgetting all the while that thought in this sphere is legitimate so far only as it is a short-cut to elaborate imaginal passage.

As for *categories*, they as necessarily applicative are but logical entities selecting for their media of application the imaginal idealities of space and time. Without such media which are the contents of the hybrid imagination they could not apply to the reals.

Material ideality is an enormously difficult topic. Not merely are the universals *cow*, *dog*, etc., such idealities, to this class belong also entities like *this shade of blue*. What do not belong to this class are the pseudo-universals like *house* and *colour*. *This shade of blue* is an ideality in the sense that it is predicable in the same sense of all such particular realities. An ambiguity has here to be cleared away. Those who admit its ideality have often in their mind that blue-in-general is no genuine ideality but a mere name and to be replaced by all the shades of blue which are genuine

idealities. But this is a wrong idea. It would have been correct if the different shades of blue were not intelligible as also in a continuous gradation from the lowest shade to the highest. The different shades are all felt as shades of *blue*. Blue-in-general is therefore a genuine ideality. Colour-in-general, however, is no such ideality, because different colours are not shades of colour-in-general, nor all in any genuine manner in continuous gradation. If the spectral gradation or the physical theory of colour is allowed, spectral colours alone would come under a genuine ideality, but not white, black and grey and mixtures of these with the spectral colours. These latter, however, are all colours, unless the word 'colour' is used in a restricted sense. It follows that colour-in-general is no ideality.

If, now, blue and a definite shade of blue are both genuine idealities, there is no distinction in status between *this blue* and *this shade of blue*. Hence by *this X*, where X stands for blue or shade of blue, we mean something else. The novelty meant is all constituted by the adjective *this*. 'This' is no doubt an ideality, but it is at the same time a reality also, in the sense that it constitutes the uniqueness of that reality and as such belongs to the world of reals. It should be noted in this connexion that there is no 'this' as other than the particular reality in question, so that the very particular reality X is, even as such a particular, an ideality also. This is the farthest conceivable extension of the realm of idealities, beyond even *infima species*, to the very particulars. Those who deny the ideality of *uniqueness*, admitting at the same time a special status of it as distinct from the real which is unique, have done that arbitrarily. In fact, in *this particular* the ideal and the real worlds coincide.⁴ It is useless to postulate a special relation between the two, and too easy to mystify it.

Logical idealities and the material ones like blue and a specific shade of blue come to be related to *this real shade* through the ideal 'this shade of blue', this last being an inhabitant equally of the ideal and the real world. As in the objective ideal world, however, all idealities—logical, categorial, mathematical and material—are co-ordinate and equally original, though in no way prejudicing their hierarchy. One to be subsumed under another does not necessarily mean that the latter is deducible from the former.

4. We have seen that imagination is also another bridge.

A special difficulty regarding material idealities is that they are discovered in what is ordinarily called empirical thought. This, however, is no difficulty in the province of objective idealities. Any question of empirical thought or material ideality being deducible from (i.e., a modification of) pure thought or pure ideality arises only at a higher level of reflection to be discussed in the next section.⁵

V

The possibility of this higher reflection follows from an important character, as yet unnoticed, of objective idealities. With a self-complete objective status of their own they yet bear a close relation to the apprehending subject—they necessarily hang on to the subject. They cannot be spoken of except as *as discovered*, any statement about them is about *them-as-discovered*. This is not the petty ego-centricity scoffed at by realists. What we mean is this:—When a table is spoken of as brown we say 'The table is brown', not 'The table as perceived is brown'; but such unqualified statement is impossible with regard to idealities. We have to say 'The ideality as discovered is such and such'. The table perceived is not necessarily the table-as-perceived, because we are sure that even before it was perceived it was there. But we have already seen there is no such assurance with regard to idealities; rather as idealities they were not. Their idealityhood is only as revealed or distinguished.

Combine this character of idealities with their nevertheless undeniable objectivity, and the exact relation they bear to subjectivity will come to light. The idealities, though necessarily *as discovered*, claim also an independent objective status, for we do also speak of them as objectively independent. The apparent clash between this genuine objectivity and the dependence on subjectivity has to be removed. One way of removing it is to hold that if the idealities are definite idealities as only being distinguished, then as independent they cannot be such definite idealities, and as such must be indefinite, indefinite in the sense that we cannot know their 'what' so far as they are independent. Not merely their status as neither reality nor unreality, but also their contents are thus indefinite. But this is a cheap solution. Nothing can be easily dis-

5. There will be no space in this essay for deducing the empirical or the material from the pure. In the next section we shall only offer a general outline of the subjective sphere.

solved into 'that' and 'what', as though these as metaphysically separate happen to be together. The 'what' of an empirical particular, once distinguished, is just the ideality which, we have seen, cannot as such be bodily present in the particular, and the mere 'what' of an ideality is evidently a false abstraction. Status and content are indissolubly one. From this point of view, the objective independence of idealities cannot but be understood as *demanding reality* as distinguished from *being real*. The idealities, we have seen, are neither real nor unreal. But this is no status at all, being entirely privative. *Subsistence* is only an empty positive name for this privation, no more than a working symbol. So the exact status of idealities is yet a question. The only conceivable answer is that it is a *demand to reality*. This demand, though falling short of reality, is yet a positive status. This means that though the empirical particulars were started with as realities (existents) theirs is not the only reality. Idealities also demand a type of reality. That demand they can fulfil, if at all, not necessarily by descending to the level of empirical particulars, but even as remaining above these.

This demand, however, can be materialised in one way only. If idealities, as we have seen, are necessarily related to subjectivity there is no question of getting rid of this relation, which means that they by themselves can never be real, unless there were a conceivable way of our self-annihilation. Hence the only way of materialising the claim is by concentrating on subjectivity and understanding the idealities as in some way based on it, without, however, denying their genuine objectivity. Only the reality they claim is to be understood as that of subjectivity.

But is subjectivity by itself real? Does it not also, as ideality, only demand reality? By 'subjectivity' here is meant pure consciousness, because that alone is above the level of empirical reals, not determinate mental states and processes. Pure consciousness, we hold, is intrinsically real for the following reason:—

That is real which is felt as having existed even before it was discovered. Pure consciousness is so felt, it being impossible that it did not exist before now. I may not be always conscious of myself, but now that I am conscious of myself I am absolutely sure that I existed even before now. Historical birth and death do not stand in the way of my eternal existence. My non-existence at any time is inconceivable once I catch myself, and historical birth and death are not concerned with myself as pure consciousness, but only with myself as embodied.

Pure consciousness is thus intrinsically real, although as pure it is above empirical reals. It cannot be said that as so above it cannot but be an ideality which is neither real nor unreal. Were it so, it must have, as already seen, hung on to the distinguishing subjectivity. But pure consciousness cannot be distinguished by another consciousness. Pure consciousness is self-apprehended. Arguments for this self-apprehension (self-luminosity) are well known.

Above the level of objective idealities, then, there is pure subjectivity which is intrinsically real, and the reality that is demanded by objective idealities is in the end the intrinsic reality of subjectivity.

Idealities thus depending on subjectivity for their reality, which indeed they borrow from it, is not their so-called tertiariness. Those who hold that they are tertiary will not be content with what much we have said. They would go beyond it. They would hold that even as idealities these are as much constituted by subjectivity as they stand by themselves. This, however, is too much. They depend on subjectivity for their reality only.

Idealities necessarily demand reality, and it is this very demand that constitutes their ideality. From this point of view any ideality is a value, an *ought-to-be*. It not yet is, it only demands to be. It is unnecessary, therefore, to distinguish between ideality and value. Ought-to-be is not necessarily in the context of doing; what is in that context is ought-to-do which is not subsumed under ought-to-be. While the reality that is claimed in ought-to-do is that of empiricals, the moral value being realised in the world of empiricals, the claimed reality in ought-to-be is above the empirical level. This second reality is ultimately that of pure subjectivity.

The distinguishment of pure subjectivity is thus at a grade higher than that at which objective idealities are distinguished. Whether there may be a grade higher still where this subjectivity, now at the relatively lower grade felt as still individual, will be distinguished as absolute is a very relevant problem for metaphysics. But there is no space in this essay for that discussion. The analysis of the absolute 'all' discussed earlier, would, if at all, lead to that highest standpoint.

Meaning and Truth

by

G. R. MALKANI

Meaning and truth appear to be related concepts. Truth refers to our knowledge of reality, and meaning refers to the language in which we express this knowledge. We have meaning when we have significant propositions which refer to reality. The proposition is supposed to represent the truth about things, and this representation gives it what meaning it has. The proposition is thus to be distinguished from the things on the one hand and from our awareness of the things on the other. It is midway between them, and constitutes what we may call the *content of knowledge* or that which we know *about reality*.

This way of putting things, although quite natural, raises a problem. If the proposition or the content of knowledge is to be distinguished from reality, we cannot be said to know reality in a *literal sense*. Reality is not the same thing as the content of knowledge. How can we be said to know the truth? This doubt about the truth of the proposition also affects its meaning. If the meaning of the proposition has a necessary reference to reality, what sort of reference is this? It cannot be a reference to an unknown reality. An unknown reality cannot be the meaning of a proposition. If it were, anything might be the meaning of any proposition. There will certainly be no one definite known meaning. If it is a reference to a known reality, that is ruled out by our analysis; for reality is not literally known. The proposition alone is known; and the proposition is to be distinguished from the reality. Thus the problem about truth is also a problem about meaning. If we do not have the truth, we do not have the meaning; or contrariwise, if we have an illusion of truth, we have an illusion of meaning.

Let us suppose that the proposition pictures things, so that the picture is not a stranger to reality. It is a picture of reality, or let us say a mental picture of reality. But is this anything more than a mere dogma? In the absence of an original knowledge of reality, we cannot know the truth of the picture. The proposition is the lingual expression of what we know; and what we know

is only a mental picture. The picture mediates. We know the mediator, but not that which it is supposed to mediate. In any case, our organism can only picture reality in accordance with its own laws, and there is no way of establishing any correspondence or identity of form between the picture and the reality. Kant would have to be answered before we can take the picture for the reality.

Some philosophers speak naively and crudely when they say, the meaning of a proposition is the way it can be verified. They simply do not question the process of verification. They think that there is a definite situation which gives meaning to a definite proposition, and this situation can always be truly known. If we were accordingly to analyse their theory of truth, it would come to the following propositions: (1) I believe there is reality which is the *cause* of my perception. (2) I believe that the percept more or less corresponds to or pictures the cause. (3) I believe that other men perceive in the same way as I do. (4) I believe that the proposition which expresses my knowledge of reality has a universal meaning or the same meaning for all.

None of these beliefs is self-evidently true or can be proved to be true. We can question each one of them. The cause of my perception need not be *outside my perception*. If it is outside my perception, it can never be known. What can never be known is as good as nothing to us. It can never be established as the cause. A causal connection can only be proved between terms that fall within our experience. If the cause falls *within our perception*, it is just what is perceived or the percept. The percept, constituting the very content of knowledge and so a part of it, *cannot be proved to have the necessary being-in-itself or reality-in-itself or prior being that alone can cause the perception to occur*. It is what is said to be internal to knowledge. In fact, what I know is mine and is determined by conditions which are peculiar to me. I cannot therefore establish any correspondence between what I know and reality which is *in itself*. The third proposition is equally doubtful. There is no evidence that others perceive exactly what I perceive. We certainly cannot compare perceptions. Lastly, how do I know that the propositions which I use have the same meaning for all? It is quite possible that I mean one thing and you mean a different thing by the same proposition, unless we are able to devise a satisfactory method of agreement.

It might here be said that we can prove definitely that certain propositions used by us have the same meaning for all. Proposi-

tions which do not involve any behaviour-pattern cannot be tested as to their meaning by any objective reference. Such propositions which make no difference to anybody's behaviour may even be taken to have no agreed meaning, and in that sense no meaning at all. But the same cannot be said about the other variety of propositions, namely, those which involve a behaviour-pattern as part of their meaning. We can here observe the behaviour of others in relation to certain propositional forms. A proposition then means for me a certain kind of behaviour that I associate with it. If we carried this argument a little further, we should come to the conclusion that only propositions which refer to some kind of activity have a meaning. Accomplished things (*siddha-vastu* or *bhûta-vastu*) can never constitute the meaning of a proposition. Or what is the same thing, a significant proposition does not say *what is*, but *what is to be done*. Even accepting all this, there is a difficulty. To observe the behaviour-patterns, we have to rely once again on perceptual knowledge. The meaning of the proposition is therefore ultimately dependent upon the truth of this knowledge, which we have questioned. The objective reference it contains cannot be justified as reference to reality as such. In other words, we cannot go beyond the proposition and what we know in it. Solipsism here becomes complete.

It is well-known that Logical Positivists give a new turn to the whole problem of truth and meaning. They have no use for super-sensible reality or even for physical reality. They confine themselves to knowledge that can be expressed in propositions. For them the important question is not what reality is in itself or what is *truth* in any ultimate sense. The important thing is the language in which we express our knowledge, and the meaning which we attach to it. The fact of language is the only thing that is ultimate; and the philosopher is primarily concerned with the meaning or otherwise of language. Philosophical problems are, as it is said, lingual puzzles. The question of meaning is easily answered. A proposition is meaningful, if it can be analysed into other propositions, the truth of which can be determined in sense-experience. Physical things are logical constructions. The terms signifying them can be analysed into terms denoting objects of direct sense-experience. Ultimately therefore we have not to deal with any kind of reality at all, but only with language and its meaning. That language is meaningful which can be verified through sense-experience.

This method of approach clearly disposes of all metaphysics or ontology. What about epistemology? Evidently that too must

go. It can be no concern of a positivist philosopher to ask the question, what knowledge is true to reality. If something is sensibly experienced, the matter ends there. Nobody doubts that the object of sense-experience is just as it is experienced. You have merely to reduce the proportions of the object to just what is actually experienced. The question whether the object which is experienced has a being independent of the experience of it is quite meaningless. It can never be answered through any kind of sense-experience. But then what meaning can we give to truth? It is not knowing reality as it is in itself. A statement is true if there is a validating sense-experience. It is false, if it conflicts with another statement which is so validated.

One can hold a view like this. But one can no longer speak of objective reality or of knowing that reality. One can only speak of one's own mental history and of the way one uses language to communicate to others what occurs in that history. Objective reference means objective being; and the knowledge of this being is a far cry from the personal history of the positivist philosopher. If the positivist philosopher is quite consistent with himself, he will have to be a solipsist, and all problems about truth and reality will be outside his sphere and quite meaningless to him. But they will not be meaningless to another species of philosophers. We can leave the positivist free to carry on his own verbal game of analysis to his own satisfaction, for he has no part in the more human game of search after the truth.

Coming back to the problem of truth, can we not bridge the gulf between reality and what we know about it and express in a proposition? It is argued that reality need not be alien to thought. Plato saw the importance of the concept in knowledge, and so he equated it with reality. But that is an extreme view. We distinguish the concept from reality. The concept is a function of our intellect, reality is not. Reality is always more than the concept, and goes beyond it. We refer the concept to reality, and it describes reality to us. But the description is not the same thing as reality. As a matter of fact, in any perceptual knowledge, we know more than what we can express or describe in terms of our ideas. This "more" is the indeterminate. The indeterminate sets a limit to all our thinking. It is the reality that escapes thought and refuses to be informed or determined by it. Accordingly, no real relation can be proved to exist between the indeterminate and our descriptive formulae or the propositional form of knowledge. When therefore the proposition seeks to describe reality, the description is always illegitimate and irrational. The indetermi-

nate will always remain the indeterminate, and nothing that we could thinkingly know would bridge the gulf between knowledge and reality. All knowledge in the propositional form is an illegitimate marriage between the concept and reality.

This view is clearly opposed to common-sense, according to which all propositional knowledge is more or less true and is quite literally grounded in the real. It is accordingly argued that nothing is absolutely indeterminate, that the purely indeterminate is the purely nothing, that all that appears indeterminate to us has faint determinations, that these faint determinations are what thought develops in a judgment, and that therefore judgmental knowledge, although partial, is more or less true. The logical position however is not changed by such evasions and half-truths. Whether our determinations are faint or clear, they are determinations of thought having reference to an indeterminate ground. If this ground is as good as nothing, then all the determinations are the determinations of nothing. The marriage of the determinations to non-being is certainly not more rational than their marriage to reality that is essentially indeterminate. The indeterminate is simply inescapable in any analysis of knowledge of reality. Kant was obliged to accept it as the unknowable thing-in-itself. Hegel of-course denied it; but then what was his substitute for it? Nothing but the abstractions of reason or the so-called ideas of reason. That can deceive nobody.

Advaita Vedanta justifies Kant, and also goes beyond him. The thing-in-itself or the indeterminate is inescapable. But why is it the unknowable? Is it not known for what it is, i.e., as the indeterminate or as incapable of being determined by thought and in that sense unknowable? The indeterminate is the pure being or *sat* of Vedanta. The knowledge of *sat* is always true and self-evidently true. We are never in error here. In fact, this knowledge supports error itself. Error lies in attributing to being what does not belong to it. Vedanta develops this knowledge of being into the knowledge of Ultimate Reality or the Absolute. *Sat* is Brahman, and Brahman is *ātman*. This knowledge is conveyed through propositions. There are propositions which describe Brahman, and there are propositions which point to the unity of Brahman and the true Self (*ātman*). But none of these propositions is literally true. They have only a symbolic meaning. They point to the truth, which is essentially *inexpressible* and *unspeakable*. In the end, truth goes beyond all meaning.

Propositions have meanings, quite legitimate meanings, and we can learn those meanings through experience. But all our meanings are based upon a distorted view of reality, i.e., upon false knowledge. This knowledge is necessary in order to have a problem of truth at all. Truth is not a natural gift to us in our human condition. It has got to be achieved through a sifting process. What is natural to us is error, and error is never pure, —it is always mixed with truth. To get at the truth, all we have to do is to negate the error. There is no original and first-hand intuition of truth which does not presuppose the context of error and the necessity of negating the error. All our meanings are based upon error. They do not therefore coincide with truth. We have meanings first, and truth afterwards. For truth is beyond all meaning. We go from the common meaning to the uncommon truth. Meaning is the way to truth. We all agree in our meanings. But can we quite so easily agree in what has no meaning, but which yet can be seen as the Truth?

On the Logic of Undecidability

by

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Recently¹ I have proposed some tentative analogies between the seeming restrictions imposed on the law of excluded middle or *tertium non datur* in the dialectic of Occidental and Oriental mysticism and the limitations attached to the law in the Brouwerian calculus and modern multi-valued logic. In this paper I shall first make a few remarks about the technical independence of "disjunction" and "negation" in Brouwer's calculus. I shall then draw attention to the possible wider significance, especially for mystical dialectic, of the "undecidability theorems" of modern logic.

(1)

Boole made the profound discovery that the algebra of propositions is essentially the algebra of classes; they can be treated as different models of the same deductive science. An algebra of classes corresponds to a logic of propositions in the same sense that Boolean algebra corresponds to a two-valued logic. Classical Boolean logic of propositions deals only with "truth" and "falsity". One may contemplate non-Boolean functions of elements in a Boolean algebra or non-Boolean extensions of Boolean algebra. Intuitionists like Brouwer, however, object to any Boolean propositional logic which is not categorical. They have argued that the naïve application of the law of excluded middle | "p or non-p" | to existential propositions involving infinite classes would lead to contradictions.

In the propositional calculus of the *Principia Mathematica* and allied systems, the equivalence of the law of excluded middle and the law of contradiction is a technical consequence of the interdependence of the logical constants "and", "not", "or". The non-independence may be explained in words thus: "p and q are both

1. *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. III, No. 4 (January, 1954), pp. 321-325; 335-336.

true if and only if it is false that either p is false or q is false". The calculus leads to the equivalence of not-not- p and p . In the intuitionistic calculus, four symbols are introduced for conjunction ("and"), disjunction ("or"), negation ("not"), and implication ("if-then"). These symbols, say, $\wedge$, $\vee$, $\neg$, $\supset$, are logically independent of one another; for instance, $a \supset b$ ("a implies b") is not the same as $\neg a \vee b$ ("not-a or b") where a and b are propositions. The law of contradiction is embodied in the formula of intuitionistic logic $\neg (a \wedge \neg a)$, Not (a and not-a). Although the formula $a \supset \neg \neg a$ ("a implies not-not-a") occurs in the calculus, $\neg \neg a \supset a$ ("not-not-a implies a") does not occur; nor the classical $a \wedge \neg a$ ("a and not-a"). Since the formula $\neg \neg a \supset a$ ("not-not-a implies a") is logically derivable from $a \wedge \neg a$, "a and not-a", it can be shown that the law of excluded middle is equivalent to the formula $\neg \neg a \supset a$ ("not-not-a implies a"). Curiously enough, the formula $\neg \neg (a \vee \neg a)$, not-not (a or not-a), which has been interpreted as the "falsity of the falsity of the law of excluded middle" (or, as Dr. Vaidyanathaswamy, former professor of mathematics at the University of Madras, put it, "the absurdity of the absurdity of the law of excluded middle"), is derivable in intuitionism. I have explained elsewhere² that if something "fails to be true" in this calculus, it is not necessarily "false"; for "falsity" is here interpreted positively, as the capacity to imply a contradiction.

Kolmogoroff has provided a suggestive interpretation of the intuitionistic calculus by regarding it not as a "propositional calculus" but as a "solution calculus". Symbols like a and b are said to denote problems awaiting solution. $a \supset b$ ("a implies b") means, for instance, the problem of determining the solution of b assuming that the solution of a has been given; $a \wedge b$ ("a and b") indicates the possibility of solving both the problems a and b ; $a \vee b$ ("a or b") signifies solving at least one of the problems; $\neg a$, "not-a", signifies obtaining a contradiction given the solution of a . Kolmogoroff has shown that the "solution calculus" is symbolically equivalent to Heyting's intuitionistic calculus. In the "solution calculus", the law of excluded middle, $a \vee \neg a$ ("a or not-a"), does not occur; since it would mean our establishing for all problems a either that a method of solving a is available or that the assumption of a method of solving a entails a contradiction.

2. *Philosophy East and West*, op. cit., pp. 321-323. Intuitionist logic replaces the classical $\neg \neg a \supset a$ by $\neg a \supset (a \supset b)$.

Brouwer, in fact, explicitly pointed out that the assumption of the unrestricted validity of the *tertium non datur* is tantamount to the assumption that any and every problem is solvable.³

(2)

An outstanding problem of contemporary metamathematics is the "decision-problem" (*Entscheidungsproblem*) of determining whether a "decision-procedure" for a given formalized theory T exists, i.e., whether a method can be prescribed by which we can decide, in each particular case, if a given statement, formulated in the symbolism of T , can be proved by the devices available in T or, more generally, can be regarded as valid in it. The arithmetization of metamathematics has become a potent tool of modern metamathematical investigations.

Kurt Gödel's original establishment of the impossibility of an intrinsic proof of freedom from contradiction of cardinal arithmetic was the impressive demonstration that every consistent formalized system of mathematics, rich enough to contain recursive arithmetic, necessarily contains undecidable statements; that is, statements which can be neither proved nor disproved with the proof-resources of the system. A sentence, of course, may be undecidable in a formalized system T and yet decidable in some richer system T' .⁴ A consistency proof by methods which transcend the limits of the system is possible. Gentzen, for instance, utilized transfinite induction for ordinals up to ϵ_0 , the first ordinal to satisfy $\omega^{\epsilon_0} = \epsilon_0$, as a minimum deviation from finite proof-process, to establish freedom from contradiction of classical arithmetic. It has been shown that ϵ_0 is the least initial ordinal for which transfinite induction is needed to prove that a descending sequence of ordinals is finite.

Gödel's theorem, and the fine generalizations of it by Church and Barkley Rosser, demonstrate conclusively that mathematical induction and the rule of substituting for free variables do not suffice to express the intuitive notion of "any number" by a variable in a formal system. Recent work⁵ on the necessary and suffi-

3. For a useful, technical exposition of intuitionist mathematics, see Raymond L. Wilder, *Introduction to the Foundations of Mathematics* (John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1952), Ch. X.

4. See, for instance, A. Mostowski, *Sentences undecidable in Formalized Arithmetic* (North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1952).

5. See S. C. Kleene, *Introduction to Metamathematics* (Noordhoff, Groningen: North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1952).

cient conditions of a Gödel theorem has shown that the incompleteness discovered by Gödel is not just an accidental feature of a particular formal system. We may follow Gödel in utilizing the numeralwise expressibility of recursive functions. A function $\varphi(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$ may be described as general recursive if there is a finite set of equations from which, for any set of numerals $\xi_1, \xi_2, \dots, \xi_n$, an equation of the form $\varphi(\xi_1, \xi_2, \dots, \xi_n) = \eta$ is derivable for a certain unique η , using only the operation of substituting numerals for variables and equals for equals. Primitive recursive functions, and every extension of them, such as multiple recursion, are general recursive. The thesis of Church and Kleene that every effectively calculable function (effectively decidable predicate) must be general recursive can be argued on the ground that no example can be constructed which contradicts the thesis and also on the ground that no alternative definition (Turing's computability, Church's lambda-definability, Post's normal systems) which has been proposed leads to a wider class of functions than the general recursive. The attempted construction by Ackermann and Peter of a function of transfinite ordinal ω which is general recursive but not multiply recursive for n seems to suggest that the class of general recursive functions transcends the class of multiply recursive functions.

The philosophical importance of Gödel's work on the undecidability of the sentence in T expressing the consistency of T may be reinforced by some considerations relating to the famous Skolem-Löwenheim theorem which asserts that every consistent system has a model in the domain of natural numbers. This theorem seems to lead to the paradoxical result that a formalization of set-theory in the predicate calculus (any predicate which is satisfiable in a non-empty domain is also satisfiable in the domain of natural numbers) admits a denumerable model; in other words, the primitive notions can be interpreted on the assumption that there are only enumerably many sets although a theorem of the set-theory asserts that there is a non-enumerable infinity of sets. Kleene himself has interpreted the paradox in the form of an incompleteness theorem which asserts that the class of pairs which correlates the sets of the set-theory with the natural numbers is not definable within the formalization of the theory.

Nearly two decades ago, Church and Barkley Rosser contended that Peano's arithmetic, and any consistent theory which is an extension of it, is undecidable. Jaskowski by a somewhat involved method, and Grzegorzczuk by a simpler method, have

attempted to establish undecidability for the elementary theory of closure algebras. Recently Tarski has argued that, if the elementary theory of groups is regarded as an axiomatic theory with a standard formalization, involving the binary operation symbol, and a set of three axioms, then the theory is undecidable.⁶ Barkley Rosser⁷ has summed up the philosophical issues about Gödel's theorem by declaring that, however much we may discountenance the belief that present-day mathematics actually contains contradictions, we can "offer no reason why it should not be the case."

Paul Rosenbloom⁸ has explained the significance of the modern "undecidability theorems" for the general syntax of language. A "canonical language" is a language with a finite alphabet in which the rules of word and sentence formation are constructive, i.e., in which we can determine, in a finite number of steps, whether a given chain constitutes a valid proof. By eschewing the special features of particular languages, we can obtain and state results which apply to canonical languages in general. The class includes practically all languages which have proved useful in logic and mathematics. The theorems of Gödel, Church and Barkley Rosser in effect tell us that there are certain problems which cannot be solved by the constructive methods available in the canonical languages. If these are the only methods on which human thought can depend, there are intrinsic and irrevocable limitations to what it can accomplish. The only precise and adequate languages known to us are incomplete; they cannot demonstrate their own adequacy and consistency by using the constructive methods formulated in them.

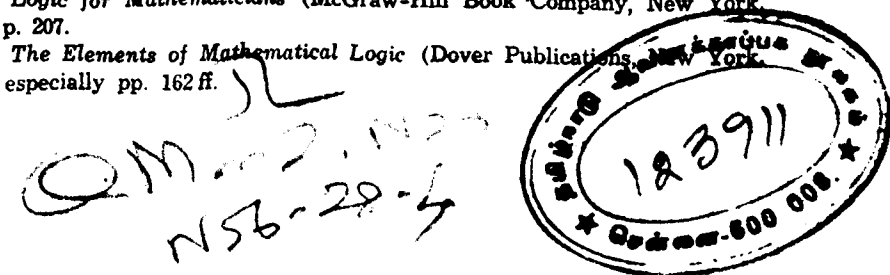
(3)

The recognition of the essential incompleteness of definite languages provides new perspectives for the dialectic of mysticism. One ground on which mysticism has been often repudiated is that its language is not propositional in any recognized sense; the mystic resorts to no constructive methods of proof. According to A. J. Ayer, the mystic, in stating his experience, does not "produce any

6. A. Tarski, in collaboration with A. Mostowski and R. M. Robinson, *Undecidable Theories* (North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1953), Ch. III.

7. *Logic for Mathematicians* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1953), p. 207.

8. *The Elements of Mathematical Logic* (Dover Publications, New York, 1950), especially pp. 162 ff.



intelligible propositions at all". He speaks of a "mystery which transcends the human understanding". "But to say that something transcends the human understanding is to say that it is unintelligible, cannot be significantly described, cannot be defined in terms which are intelligible to the reason." I suggest that Ayer here assumes that problems are either solvable in principle; or, if they are not, they are *provably* unsolvable by the methods available in the propositional languages (logics) which have been useful in ordinary discourse and in scientific research. The assumptions are hardly justified. Just as ordinary human thinking about one's own methods of reasoning is the capacity of using a syntax-language for reasoning about an object-language (Rosenbloom has sketched, *pace* Wiener, a "proof" of the "theorem" that the human brain can tackle some problems which no machine, however ingeniously contrived, can), so mystical experience may well be the profound realization that the consistency-proofs of all human languages (scientific and philosophical) are embedded in a framework which is not *constructively* given as a whole. One may demur to the far too ready attempts to read a metaphysical significance into modern logic and yet agree with L. O. Katsoff⁹ that "the Gödel theorem tells us that there can never be a complete and final theory of reality", i.e., a complete and final theory constructed by human thought relying on its own tools.

I may be permitted to offer a few comments on what one of the greatest authorities on mysticism, N. O. Lossky,¹⁰ regards as a veritable "chasm between mathematical and traditional logic". Professor Lossky finds that the modern rejection of "synthetic propositions" leads to self-stultification. "Those who reduce mathematics, logic and deductive inference to tautologies extremely impoverish the subjective reason; as to objective reason, they either deny it altogether, or, at least, assert that it is not given in experience". Professor Lossky has honoured me with his friendship and I should be the last to suggest that so distinguished a savant could have wilfully misunderstood the modern temper. Undoubtedly, the breach between the old and the new exists. But, as I remarked once, the fault of modern logic is not its preciousness

9. *A Philosophy of Mathematics* (The Iowa State College Press, Ames, U.S.A., 1948), p. 195.

10. *Analytic and Synthetic Propositions and Mathematical Logic* (International Universities Press, New York, 1953), p. 16. I am grateful to Professor Lossky for sending me a complimentary copy of this booklet which he has written in his ripe, old age.

and virtuosity but rather its limiting itself to narrow ranges of experience: sensory verification, scientific and mathematical validation. There is nothing in the logic itself which prohibits the recognition of the higher ranges. To say that a mark like "p" is a symbol which does not represent anything, and therefore does not represent a proposition, but which we can, if we choose, *interpret* as a proposition, is apt to give offence to those trained in the methods of an older logic. I would say, nevertheless, that the postulationist divorce of symbolic language from its interpretation in an ordinary syntax-language provides for a greater generality of treatment. In the first place, the possibility of interpreting symbolic formulae in terms of other than *propositions* emerges. Secondly, there is the frank recognition of *alternative* systems, which, interpreted in an ordinary syntax-language, would yield non-Aristotelian modes of argument. It seems to me that modern logic is here far superior to traditional and idealistic logic. And, on Professor Lossky's own showing, it can be claimed that the modern gain in generality is extremely worth-while. He objects to the view that the law "S is either P or non-P" is a mere tautology. He insists that the law is rather a synthetic proposition giving us information about reality. "The law of excluded middle states a very important property of every definite limited object."¹¹ Earlier in the same paragraph, however, he states the imperious issues about mysticism. "A metalogical principle like the 'Super-One' of Plotinus and Dionysius Areopagita is not subject to the law of excluded middle." He hastens to add that the law is not "violated" in this domain, but just has nothing to do with it. I should judge that Professor Lossky is belittling the very serious departure from all definite syntax-languages prescribed by mysticism. The "undecidability theorems" of modern logic perhaps provide the opportunity for a truce between modern logic and mysticism. The discovery of the intrinsic limitations of discursive intelligence is not only ancient; it is also modern.

What is true of mystical intuition would also apply, though with some reservations, to the higher ranges of poetry. The Abbé Henri Brémond has said: "In literary criticism a moment comes when reasoning must cease and contemplative recognition take over. It is the duty of reason both to retard this moment of its inactivity and silence as much as it can and to decide at the right moment to judge no more, We, the Pedants, the weighers of

11. Lossky, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

syllables and dissectors of images, find our glory equally in our resistance prolonged to the utmost, and in our final submission to this mystery."¹² On the approach to mystical dialectic I am recommending, human intelligence must not be gagged; the "undecidables" of reality reveal themselves in the truest perspective only after the most strenuous exercise of the intelligence. The unplumbed depths of being can be adequately recognized only after we have fashioned the plumbing rods of scientific and philosophical discourse.

12. H. Brémond's *Les deux musiques de la Prose* (Paris, 1927), cited by Pepita Haezrahi, *The Contemplative Activity*, (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1954), p. 81.

A Positivist Approach to Religion

by

G. N. MATHRANI

Introductory

Section I

Positivism and particularly Logical Positivism of Cambridge School of Philosophy is essentially a method of approach and not a dogma or a set of beliefs about Reality. As a method it can be applied to any of the problems relating to the Life and the Universe.

Positivism, as a method of thinking, claims to be empirical and analytical in character. Its empirical character has developed from the British Empiricist theory of Ideas and knowledge. According to Empiricist philosophy, ideas are derived from impressions, that is, sense experience and introspection. Accordingly, the Positivist theory of meaning presupposes that all our ideas and beliefs are derived from experience, but the two schools differ regarding the manner of derivation. According to the Empiricist theory and particularly Hume's theory, ideas are copies of impressions, whereas the popular view in the Positivist circles is that ideas are logical constructions. All significant ideas should be shown to be logical constructions and no idea is a mere copy. Even idea of a particular object cannot be identified with any one or a collection of mental pictures of that object.

'Idea X is a logical construction' implies that a proposition containing X can be adequately translated away into one or more propositions not containing X, but containing terms denoting objects of experience. For example, Idea 'nation' would be a logical construction if any proposition about 'nation' could be adequately translated away into propositions about the nationals. Idea 'self' would be a logical construction if any proposition about 'self' could be adequately translated away into propositions about behaviour and mental states.

The analytical character of Positivism cannot be separated from its empirical nature. Positivist thinking is at once empirical and analytic. If its empirical character is due to the influence of natural sciences, its analytical character may be due to the influence of mathematics. There is one difference between the

form of mathematical analysis and the positivist analysis. In mathematics, by the method of analysis, mathematical propositions are traced to certain basic axioms, definitions and postulates. These axioms, definitions and postulates in mathematics presuppose certain innate ideas and beliefs. In the positivist analysis attempt is made to bring out the empirical origin of the philosophical concepts and beliefs. Concepts and beliefs which cannot be traced to empirical experience are rejected.

The purpose of the present paper is not to justify Positivism, but to apply the Positivist method of analysis to the problem of Religion. However, one main argument in support of the Positivist theory of meaning may be stated here. It is said that the fact that meaning is derived from experience is evident from the way children learn to speak. Wittgenstein mentions that children first learn to speak through the help of ostensive experience, direct or indirect. The first words they learn are the noun words, then some verbs and then a few adjectives. At the second stage, the child learns through description. The third level of learning is learning through definitions, and the fourth level of learning is learning through verbal paraphrasing. At the basis of all these levels of learning is ostensive experience.

Section II

Two Aspects of Religion: Religion is essentially a set of beliefs and a way to realise God.

Religion as a set of beliefs: Most of the religions of the world are embodied in some scriptural texts. The religious scriptures contain not only beliefs about God, soul, the world of here and hereafter and other problems, but also they contain moral commands, mythological stories and rules regarding *sādhana*. The Buddhist scriptures comparatively are free from theology and mythology. The Buddhist scriptures mostly state the moral ideals and the rules for seeking those ideals.

(i) *Religious propositions are meaningless.* From Positivist point of view, religious beliefs would not be considered meaningless if they could be shown to be logical constructions, i.e. if they could be shown to have been derived from ostensive experience. The positivist claims that many of the religious concepts cannot be shown to be logical constructions. According to the admission of religious believers, God and soul are trans-empirical and trans-temporal; whereas common-level experience is temporal and empirical. The two are fundamentally different in kind, and as such one cannot be shown to be a logical construction out of the other.

It is, therefore, alleged that for the common believer, the religious beliefs are much too obscure and transcendental to convey any definite thought. In other words, religious propositions are meaningless.

(ii) *Religious propositions are poetic.* Sometimes in the positivist circles, it is mentioned that religious propositions are forms of poetic expression. This point of view may have been suggested to them by the poetic character of religious literature. Most of the religious texts are poetic compositions; and even when the religious text is apparently a prose presentation, the frequent use of the various figures of speech suggests that the motive behind may have been poetic and not scientific.

The point of view mentioned in the above passage is based on the positivist theory of the dual function of language.¹ To describe facts and to express attitudes and emotions is said to be the dual function of language. Each of these two functions requires a suitable form of expression. Poetic and literary forms of expression are generally suited for the expressive function of the language. Even if the descriptive element be present in some poetry, it would not be prominent. Even when it would be apparent, it would be subservient to the expressive function. The descriptive function cannot be adequately carried out through Poetry.

The latest view² regarding the language functions is slightly different from the one just mentioned. According to the latest view, in every language three forms of expression have developed; of course, not all of them have developed to the same extent in each language. The three forms of expression present in each language are: (i) poetic and literary, (ii) scientific, (iii) formal and symbolic. Through the first, attitudes and emotions are expressed; through the second, facts and their inter-relations are described. With the help of the third, verbal and conceptual analysis is carried out.

Poetry, drama and other forms of literature, such as novels and stories, constitute the largest part of literature in any language. This type of literature is essentially 'expressive' in character. Positive sciences (natural and social) are primarily descriptive in character. Mathematics, logic and other normative sciences are formal and analytic in character. Philosophy and Religion, at their best, are mixtures of expressive and symbolic languages.³

1, 2, 3. Read Chapter II in the author's book 'Wittgensteinian Philosophy.'

Religious texts, being poetic compositions, cannot be considered as embodiment of knowledge relating to any factual order. The view that religious propositions are a form of Poetry is different from the earlier view, wherein it was mentioned that religious propositions lack meaning. This view does not condemn religious propositions as meaningless, it only interprets the significance of religious propositions in terms of poetic and aesthetic values and not in terms of intellectual or scientific communication.

That religious propositions are a form of Poetry is also evident from the method of uttering religious propositions. *Very often religious texts are sung out and not read out. Whereas science is read and not sung.* The motive of singing and rhythmical recitation is to produce effect (to induce certain emotions) and not to convey thought and information. This may be the idea embodied in the theory of 'Matrabāl' mentioned in some Upanishads.

That religious propositions are not primarily forms of intellectual cognition is also suggested by the fact that in every community prayers are taught to children at very early age. At that tender age religion is no more than a form of vocal and motor activity. It remains a vocal and motor activity even at the adult stage. Sometimes this vocal and motor activity is accompanied by some vaguely felt and unanalysed emotions. But the intellectual part of the prayer remains obscure till the end.

Besides the above two interpretations, there may be a third one which is that religious propositions at the initial stage in religious life are intellectually obscure and emotionally ineffective. When properly and periodically repeated, they become emotionally significant and dynamic. The repeated experience of the emotional effects of religious propositions tends to silence the mental agitations of the seeker; and in that state of growing silence the seeker undergoes an inner transformation which is considered to be an indication of moral progress.

Thus, we have three views regarding the positivist interpretation of Religious beliefs: (1) that religious beliefs carry no meaning, because they are not logical constructions from common-level experience: (2) that the religious beliefs and propositions are forms of poetry and express (also tend to induce) certain attitudes rather than communicate facts about Reality: (3) that religious propositions when properly recited and contemplated on lead to mental silence and moral transformation.

Section III

Religion as a Sadhana: Religion as a sadhana is a systematic effort to know God and to become godlike. The religious seeker

generally believes that to know God and to be godlike go together. In other words, the belief is that he who knows God becomes godly in his nature and he who is godly attains the knowledge of God.

The proposition 'the religious seeker becomes godly' means that 'he undergoes unconscious inner transformation and in due course he acquires in some measure the moral perfections and virtues associated with the divine life.'

The concept relating to 'the attainment of the knowledge of God' requires analysis. Psychologically, knowledge is a mental state. Logically, knowledge is a judgment. Knowledge as a mental state presupposes some introspective awareness (at least of implicit character) of the distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge. In the absence of this relational awareness, the subject will not even seek any knowledge. Knowledge as a judgment implies logical distinctions between subject and predicate or between other related concepts that constitute the judgment. In logic no experience is recognised as a case of explicit knowledge unless it can be described in terms of propositional language.

In either sense of the term 'knowledge', the term 'knowledge' cannot be applied to what the religious man calls knowledge of God. The alleged knowledge of God is attained when the mind ceases to function, when the mind enters its causal state, or to use the words of Ramana Maharshi, 'when the mind cremates itself.' It is also claimed that in that state of silence all distinctions vanish. Experience which does not involve any awareness of the logical and psychological distinctions may be a source of delightful emotions, but it cannot be a state of knowledge or awareness. Such an experience cannot be described or even named, because description presupposes distinctions. The above analysis would suggest that the mystic experience must be primarily of the nature of unanalysed feeling and not of conscious cognition.

That mystic experience is not a form of knowledge is confirmed by such facts as that what is common between the mystics of different lands and periods is their holiness and not their metaphysical and theological wisdom. Their wisdom is more or less a repetition of the traditional beliefs they imbibed from their cultural environment before taking to the mystic way. Their holy life gives a special prestige to their utterances which in themselves are very often repetitions of the traditional beliefs. Sometimes even palpably false beliefs gain prestige, if they are uttered by a holy man of recognised merit.

The suspicion that the mystic experience must be of the nature of feeling and not of cognition is also strengthened by the fact that most of the mystics are highly imaginative and deeply emotional. Besides, in most of the systems of sadhana a deliberate effort is made to stop reflective thinking and encourage imagination of a prescribed pattern which is given different names in different religious cults. The Hindu Yogi calls it meditation, some call it contemplation. The various forms of worship, prayer, meditation, contemplation and other mystical methods are all mental processes involving play of imagination and emotions; whereas reflective thinking is left out from all the forms of mystical methods. *Imagination and emotion can never lead to the attainment of knowledge.*

Even the forms of sadhana which are not based on imagination and emotions, but which are based on thoughtful contemplation, cannot lead to knowledge. In the latter forms of sadhana the seeker starts with a firm faith in the truths on which he seeks to contemplate. It is claimed that by contemplation, faith develops into knowledge. The psychological factor that plays an important part in contemplative methods is Auto-suggestion. In view of this evidence, mystic experiences of the contemplative mystics also cannot be characterised as knowledge.

There have been some mystics whose contemplations were not based on faith, for instance, Lord Buddha in the ancient times and Ramana Maharishi in the modern times.

A survey of different forms of sadhana would indicate that every sadhana is essentially an attempt to silence the restlessness of the mind. The methods of sadhana are different. Through those different methods, each seeker strives to attain the state of silence. The Bhakta seeks silence by self-surrender, the Karma Yogi by unselfish service, the Rajayogi by pranayama and psychic control, the Jñānayogi by one-pointed contemplation.

Ramana says "All scriptures without any exception proclaim that for attaining Salvation mind should be subdued. For the subsidence of mind there is no other means more effective and adequate than Self-enquiry."

In the state of silence their auto-suggestions derived from their initial faith appear as direct perceptions of the ultimate Reality. Buddha attained silence, but did not claim to receive any revelations about Reality. The simple explanation is that his silence was not preceded by any faith in beliefs which he did not know to be true; therefore in the state of silence there were no auto-suggestions to appear as revelations.

Ramana however claims to have attained the mystic knowledge of Reality; but in his mystic utterances he repeats the words of the scriptures which he was in the habit of reading or hearing during the course of his sadhana. Whereas Buddha had completely rejected the Shastric truths and thereby he had thrown off all the suggestions that might have sunk into his Unconscious during the course of his early education.

Ramana's method of contemplation does not presuppose any faith in Shastric truths, but Ramana himself was full of faith in Shastric truths. Therefore it is quite possible that Ramana's mystic knowledge born of mystic silence was a reaffirmation of the beliefs embedded in his Unconscious, rather than knowledge derived from higher sources.

The divergent and differential metaphysical wisdom of the mystics of different countries and religions can be more adequately explained in terms of their differential Unconscious rather than in terms of the identical Divine source of Knowledge. Their metaphysical wisdom is not the same, because their religious beliefs embedded in their Unconscious and imbibed from their religious contacts are not the same. If we postulate that the source of their metaphysical wisdom is their mystic experience of the Divine, it will be difficult to give satisfactory explanation of the differential character of the metaphysical wisdom of the different mystics. Moreover, where a naturalistic explanation is available, a supra-naturalistic explanation should be considered as gratuitous and superfluous.

The present writer, however, believes that the active determinant of the inner moral transformation and the consequent attainment of Holiness (which is a composite of the major moral perfections) on the part of the mystic cannot be merely due to the operations of the Unconscious. Since the moral transformation and the consequent attainment of moral perfections is the common characteristic of the mystic way of life, there must be a common determinant operating. Perhaps the common determinant of their moral transformation is the mystic experience of the Divine which in some sense embodies all the moral perfections that flow down, as it were, in the lives of the mystics. At the pre-mystic level of experience, the Divine is a concealed presence; at the mystic level, the Divine becomes a felt Presence; but at no level of experience does the Divine become a Known Presence.

It is not that the mystic makes a pseudo claim for his mystic Knowledge of the Divine and His mysteries. In the actual act of

the mystic experience, the mystic is in the direct presence of the Divine, but the mystic's awareness of the Divine is only awareness of the bare presence of the Divine, that is, the Divine becomes only a felt presence and not a Known Presence. When the mystic descends a little towards the level of subject-object consciousness, still retaining the joy and ecstasy of his mystic experience, he sometimes begins to utter the words of wisdom about the mysteries of life and the universe. The mystic, by implication, claims that his words of wisdom are based on his mystic communion with the Divine. The mystic is not wrong. In a sense his mystic utterances are derived from his transmental level of consciousness. *But it should be specifically noted that his mystic utterances are the intellectualised formulations of experiences which in themselves are formless and contentless.* Just as our perceptual experiences and judgments are the intellectualised formulations of sense data which in themselves are 'blooming buzzing confusion,' similarly it may very well be said that the mystics' utterances about the mysteries of life are the intellectualised formulations of mystic experiences which in themselves are contentless and formless, which are more feeling than cognition, and the cognition in them is only awareness of the bare presence of the Divine. Just as the previous associations and memories and the innate categories of Thought give shape and form to the formless sense experience, similarly the unconscious religious beliefs and ideas conserved in the mental structure of the mystic operate to convert the formless and contentless mystic experiences into the apparently intellectualised formulations uttered by the mystic in his semi-trance state or in the state of divine recollection.

Just as the poet in his inspired and ecstatic moods enjoys the beauty of Nature without understanding the objective facts about Nature, similarly the mystic in his trans-mental state of consciousness enjoys the Presence of the Divine without knowing the mysterious nature of the Divine.

It is therefore clear that the present writer, in this paper, does not dispute the validity (subjective and objective) of the mystics' experiences. He, however, does not subscribe to the traditional interpretations of such experiences.

Thus the conclusion of this paper is that through religious sadhana a seeker can attain moral transformation, but not enlightenment. He can become godly, but can never know God. *What is given to the world as revelations from God are no more than auto-suggestions voicing themselves in the state of silence.*

The Point of Departure of Metaphysics

by

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1. The immediate endeavour of a geneticist who wishes ultimately to obtain a new variety of plant is to obtain a new seed which will contain, in the manner proper to a seed, the specific features of the variety desired. Similarly, it appears that metaphysicians, intent on obtaining an improved kind of Metaphysics or, simply, Metaphysics at its best, ought to devote their first effort to the discovery of an adequate seed or point of departure for that science. In order to discover it, they should (a) fix their ultimate aim, i.e., define clearly the particular type of science which they wish to build, (b) establish from a thorough analysis of this definition all the elements and properties to be found in the starting-point of that well specified science, (c) examine the merits and demerits with regard to those requisites of all possible points of departure of Metaphysics, and (d) decide whether one of them satisfies the conditions established in (b).

2. The time-honoured definition, "*Metaphysics is the science of being as being*", can in my opinion serve to indicate our ultimate purpose, provided we agree on explaining it as follows: the term '*science*' (true knowledge of things through their causes) receives in this context the following qualifications: *speculative* (as opposed to practical), *purely rational* (as opposed to other kinds of science based on testimony either fallible—historical sciences—or infallible and proved to be such—theology), *true knowledge of things through their ultimate* (as opposed to 'proximate', as in the physico-mathematical sciences) *causes* (cause means any principle on which a thing depends in some way or other in order to be and to be what it is); besides, this science should be understood to be *human* (as opposed to divine, for instance,) and even '*mine*', not in the sense that it would be mine exclusively, but in the sense that, although true for all men, it must always be elaborated by the individual and become his own personal possession. The term '*of being*' indicates the subject-matter or material object of this science; '*being*' here denotes reality itself, not its idea in the mind, and includes every existent thing together with whatever it implies. The term '*as*

being' indicates the formal object of this science, i.e., the cognitive aspect under which it grasps and studies its material object; different sciences, indeed, may have the same material object; but all sciences are specified by their formal objects. In the phrase, 'as being', 'being' does not mean reality itself but its apprehension by the intellect, abstraction being made of its apprehension by the senses. Hence the phrase, '*being as being*', means reality in so far as it is intelligible, i.e., in so far as it can be the object of a judgement, since judgement is the proper act of the intellect as such; the term 'judgement', indeed, denotes any intellectual act, whatever be its external expression, which posits truth, i.e., which asserts the mind's actual conformity with reality.

3. It follows from the explained definition that among all purely rational sciences Metaphysics is *first*, since to all other such sciences reality is knowable under a limited aspect only, on account of their intrinsic dependence on the senses, whereas the formal object of Metaphysics is most universal, its dependence on the senses being extrinsic only. But such a primacy entails obligations. Being the first, Metaphysics cannot, like the inferior sciences, receive its object and principles from a higher science; on the contrary, it must, at the very outset, seize its own object and justify not only its own principles but the principles of science as such. Indeed, if the principles of science as such, which no science inferior to Metaphysics can entirely justify, were not proved in the first place, all human sciences would rest ultimately upon a mere assumption of the validity of science as such and be open to the radical criticism of the Sceptics. Hence the discovery of an adequate point of departure is absolutely essential for this first science if we wish its validity not to remain eternally hypothetical.

4. From what has been said it is plain that, in order to be adequate, the point of departure of Metaphysics ought to be able to meet the following expectations:

a—to provide the metaphysician with his *material object* or subject-matter: reality, namely, at least some *existent thing* and, virtually, everything;

b—to provide him with his *formal object*: the *idea of being*, which is the cognitive aspect under which he considers his material object in this science;

c—to provide as valid not only that notion of being but also the other absolutely *first notions* connected with it, such as the notions of *self* (at least as denoting an absolute centre of reference of activity), *activity* and *relationship*;

d—to imply in the undeniable fact of its own existence the immediate evidence of the validity of the *first principles* of science. Any science consists of a certain number of definite assertions or categorical propositions, which are either affirmative or negative, and which reasoning links together in such a way as to constitute an organic body of knowledge. Hence the first principles of science are:

(1) *The principle of the affirmative propositions*, also called principle of the objectivity of human knowledge, or principle of identity. It can be enunciated in various ways, namely, "not all affirmative propositions are untrue", "judgement as such, i.e., that mental operation which consists in asserting, by means of the copula, the reality of a mental synthesis (S-P) of a subject (which stands for an existing thing) and a predicate (which stands for an idea), is valid, i.e., is the operation by which truth can be obtained," "the operation symbolized by '*being is being*', (i.e., being as a real thing is being as an idea,) is of itself true (i.e., if it happens to be untrue, it is so for other reasons than because it is such an operation)", etc.

(2) *The principle of the negative propositions* or principle of non-contradiction, also expressed in various ways, namely, "any proposition which negatives either partially (and then it is a *contrary* proposition) or entirely (and then it is a *contradictory* proposition) a true proposition (that true propositions exist is the import of the first principle) is itself untrue", "there exist such pairs of propositions that if one of them is true, the other is false", "the same cannot be both affirmed and denied about the same object at the same time and in the same respect", etc.

(3) *The principle of the syllogisms* or principle of the universal propositions: "not all universal propositions are untrue, and, if a universal proposition (i.e., a proposition of which both S and P are distributive terms) is true, then all particular propositions implied in it are true", or "if it is true that *p* is *q*, and *n* is a particular case of *p*, then *n* is *q* (affirmative syllogism in *barbara* or *darii*); and if *n* is not *q*, then it is neither a particular case of *p* (negative syllogism in *camestres* or *baroco*)", etc.

e—to be such that simple but *complete reflection* upon it be sufficient to permit the metaphysician to grasp evidentially the existential or mental realities enumerated in a, b, c, d, excluding therefore any new experience (otherwise this new experience should be a constituent part of that point of departure) and any form of real reasoning (since the validity of reasoning is precisely to be

made evident by that reflection). In order to be complete, such a reflection ought to bear not only upon the explicit terms or form of that which is selected as the right point of departure, but upon its very reality or nature and upon the necessary or *a priori* conditions of possibility of that reality. And the whole task of the metaphysician should consist in pursuing this reflection to the whole extent which that point of departure is capable of.

f—To be such that every man endowed with reflective power can take hold of it with absolute or *metaphysical certainty*. A fact or a proposition is metaphysically true when its very (explicit) negation asserts it (implicitly). If the point of departure of Metaphysics is thus entirely beyond the reach of any objection whatsoever and if Metaphysics consists in revealing whatever this beginning involves, it is easy to see that the absolute certainty of the point of departure can propagate itself throughout a whole body of propositions obtained from it by reflection and organically connected by reasoning (after the validity of reasoning has been ascertained at the very outset of this science).

5. The limits of this paper prevent me from treating extensively point c of paragraph 1, namely, investigating the adequacy to the above-defined requirements of all possible points of departure of Metaphysics. But we can proceed rapidly by way of elimination: a—The metaphysician cannot start straightaway from existent reality because, though absolutely first, existence is never given apart from the conscious experience in which it is grasped; hence in the order of knowledge this experience is first.

b—If the seed of Metaphysics has to be a conscious experience, it cannot be a purely intellectual, absolutely immediate and exhaustive grasping of reality, because, at least in this life, which is the setting of our metaphysical science, we have no such perfect ontological intuition. To the objection that some men have pretended or pretend now that they enjoy in this life an intuition of that quality, the answer is, first, that there is no total agreement between the recorded intuitions of those men, (which is against the principle of non-contradiction which our point of departure will prove apodictically), and their claim should therefore be tested by means of a criterion prior to, and more certain than, those intuitions; second, that, supposing I am ready to believe in the legitimacy of any of the latter, my belief must be enlightened, that is to say, rational, hence it depends upon a rational ascertainment of its credibility and, thus not being first, it cannot be the origin and root of my science of being as being.

c—The experience of remembering, conceived either in the manner of Plato or of the believers in *samsāra*, has no more claim to the title of point of departure of Metaphysics, because it has no apodictic evidence and is but the outcome of theorizing based upon insufficient analysis of the facts of human experience; at any rate, it is not incontrovertible as the point of departure of Metaphysics should be.

d—Pure sense experience is also to be rejected because we have no such experience; any human experience, indeed, is accompanied by intellectual awareness; hence, sense experience as such is always for us an abstraction already and therefore never first. Besides, *as such*, it contains nothing properly intellectual and can never provide us with our first notions and principles.

e—Similarly any intellectual abstraction, such as a mere concept (i.e., not actually predicated of anything) or even the mental operation called simple apprehension, which consists in the first apprehension of a concept (i.e., of a meaning), is also insufficient to our purpose because it can never be first, but always presupposes the complexity of a sensitivo-intellectual experience of reality, on the basis of which it is constituted through an abstraction which leaves out the existential element of that experience, i.e., the very element which we are in need of.

6. There remains therefore only one kind of experience which can serve as the point of departure of Metaphysics, namely, *my* (i.e., proper to each one) *sensitivo-intellectual experience of reality*. Such an experience can be either volitional or cognitive, but even when it is volitional it implies cognition. Hence, without excluding volitional experience as such, we can, at the outset of Metaphysics, concentrate upon that experience as cognitive only, i.e., as *judgement*. Whatever be its external or internal expression, any judgement, i.e., any assertion (even a false one) of the reality of a certain concrete synthesis of S and P provides as such all the requisites of Metaphysics. The nature of that S and P is indifferent, but there must be such a synthesis; besides, the copula 'is' must function existentially, i.e., as an assertion of truth, i.e., of the conformity of this mental synthesis to some reality. This is the form of *judgement as such* and it requires but a little reflection to perceive that it is actual in every proposition which presents itself as an assertion of truth, whether this claim is legitimate or not, and whatever the terms of that proposition may be. Any of my existential assertions, or even any proposition which I understand to be such an assertion in the opinion of somebody else can serve

s the experience from which Metaphysics can start. Metaphysics begins at the very moment when, through reflection, I perceive that experience as a particular instance of existential assertion or judgement as such.

7. If it can be shown irrefutably that every instance of the above-defined experience possesses all the requisites set forth in para 4, it will be undeniable that metaphysicians have in it the adequate point of departure of their science. This is shown not by recourse to any form of deductive reasoning, but by appeal to reflection, as follows:

a—No man, not utterly deprived of the use of his intellect, can deny sincerely that he has the experience of affirming some truth, for if he consents to reflect just a little and become aware of what a denial is, he cannot help seeing that his very action belies his words and is totally useless as an objection. Thus the existence of the experience which we have singled out as the adequate point of departure of Metaphysics becomes as immediately evident to him as to myself and is to be held as metaphysically certain by everyone (requisite f).

b—Once I know that I cannot reject the experience of asserting truth, it becomes immediately evident to me that "not all assertions are untrue", for the opposite would nullify that experience by making it meaningless, but in order to do that it should itself be meaningful and, being itself an assertion intended to be true, it would posit implicitly, by the very fact of its own existence, the principle which it rejects explicitly. Hence the principle of identity or principle of the objectivity of human knowledge is such that its very denial is impossible, since it can only be a denial in words, while as a real mental operation it would posit our very principle as the necessary condition of its own possibility. Thus metaphysical certainty extends to this first principle (requisite d. 1).

c—I have an immediate evidence of what "to deny" means and if anyone pretends that he has not the same evidence, I have only to ask him whether he means what he says. If he answers, "no", he agrees *ipso facto* that he has it and, besides, he cancels his objection; if he answers, "yes", he agrees that he knows his own statement as being a denial of mine; thus, in both cases, he agrees with me against his own explicit objection. Since everyone therefore knows the meaning of negation, everyone understands that the meaning of contradictory propositions consists in this, that the first says, "it is true that a certain S is now a certain P", whereas the

second says, "it is not true that that S is now that P", in other words, that they are opposed as truth and untruth. Hence if anybody acknowledges one of them as true, he acknowledges that the other one is untrue. But we have seen (in b) that it is metaphysically certain that some assertions are true. Therefore, in such cases, the operation which consists in setting forth their contradictories is no longer hypothetical but refers to reality and such contradictories appear immediately as objective untruths. If in spite of this evidence someone wishes to reject the validity of the principle of non-contradiction, he will not be able to do it otherwise than by denying my own contention, and such behaviour implies as the necessary condition of its own meaning the validity of the principle which it rejects explicitly. Thus this principle also is beyond the reach of any possible objection and therefore metaphysically certain (requisite d. 2).

d—Even if the experience from which I started (in a) was a particular proposition, (but it could have been a universal one, since it can be any of my assertions whatsoever,) I have already, through my abstracting reflection, derived from it two universal propositions, namely, (in b) that of itself any assertion is true, and (in c) that any proposition which contradicts a true assertion is untrue, and I have also realized the immediate evidence of their metaphysical certainty. Now the principle of the (deductive) syllogism implies that I know the meaning of "universal" ("all") or "distributive" ("every", "any") and perceive the validity of that notion. In particular it implies that I know the meaning of a universal major premise, of which both S and P are distributive terms, and of a particular minor premise, of which P is a distributive term while its S is a particular term. Against the second part of that evidence the opponent would have to say that his own position, namely, that there is no proposition whose P is a distributive term, is true and that it is therefore true that my opposition is an error, but thus he would admit that his objection distributes the term "true" to two particular subjects and thus posits implicitly my own position. Against the first part of my evidence he would say that no proposition has a distributive term as its subject or that all propositions whose S is universal are untrue or something similar, and thus again he would posit implicitly what he denies explicitly. But since it is true that some universal propositions are true and that everybody has an immediate evidence of the meaning of "universal", it is also immediately evident that the particular proposition whose P is the same as the P of a universal true proposition and S is an actual instance of its S, is also true (conclusion of a

positive syllogism in the 1st figure), and that the proposition whose P is the same as the S of that universal proposition and S is not an actual instance of its P, is untrue or has to be negated to be true (conclusion of a negative syllogism in the 2nd figure). Any one who, in spite of this evidence, would oppose any syllogism would have to argue that "no syllogism is valid, but a particular set of propositions is a syllogism, therefore it is invalid"; in other words, he would himself make a syllogism (in *celarent*) and thus grant implicitly the validity of the syllogism which he rejects explicitly. Thus the metaphysical certainty of this principle is also evident (requisite d. 3).

e—Any affirmative judgement asserts the reality or existence of its subject according to the measure indicated by the synthesis of its S and P (i.e., hypothetically, or universally but logically only, or actually and then either universally or particularly). But we know (from b) that not all affirmative judgements are untrue which is the same as saying that the existence asserted by some judgements is true, in other words, that judgement as such posits the material object of Metaphysics, namely, existent being (requisite a). In a remarkable passage of his *Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara has shown that existence is posited by judgement *as such* and "is perceived even in the absence of one of the two (i.e., either of S or P), as in the case of a mirage, etc., (when we say:) this is water" (2.16). On the other hand, Descartes missed existence in its universality and found only the particular existence of his self as *res cogitans* (thinking substance) because his point of departure was the particular import of a reflex judgement (*ergo cogito*) and therefore already an abstraction, not a primitive experience. On the contrary, the point of departure proposed in these pages precedes all abstraction and is thus really first and pregnant with all the richness of Metaphysics. It is not a "*cogito*" but a "*judico*", an "I assert that this S is P" and therefore, in the language of Husserl, it implies the "*cogitatum*". Indeed, were it not an experience of reality, it could not be the point of departure of the science of *being*.

f—Reflection upon any judgement discovers judgement as such and can therefore consider the general formality implicit in any judgement and express it in a universal term: being. The meaning of this idea is directly experienced in the experience of judgement as such which is implicit in any judgement. It is therefore primitive and cannot be defined by means of more primitive concepts. But we can give of it a quasi-definition by reference to the

operation of judgement and say that the idea of being is the idea of "something existing in its own way": "existing" refers to the truth-function of the copula, "something" refers to the subject (that term which stands for reality as it is in itself), "in its own way" refers to the predicate as attributed to the subject, i.e., for the mental synthesis S-P which stands for reality as it is in the mind, and the whole phrase is a unit of meaning because it refers to the whole judgement as a synthesis. Being thus the exact expression of what judgement as such posits, the idea of being is implicit in any judgement and immediately present to that reflection which in each judgement considers the nature of judgement as such (requisite b).

g—In the validity of judgement as such the validity of other ideas besides the idea of being is also perceived. Indeed, I immediately perceive any of my judgements as mine, i.e., as dependent upon a certain centre of reference with which I identify myself, and as a certain kind of activity, since it is a mental operation, and as a relationship, namely, the particular relationship of conformity of my mind with reality, since any judgement is an assertion of truth. Thus the validity of four at least of the notions necessary for the development of Metaphysics is implied in the perception of the validity of judgement as such in any particular assertion (requisite c).

h—Finally the very fact of the above reflective analysis proves that reflection alone can discover with evidence in any experience of existential assertion all the objects, principles and notions required at the departure of Metaphysics (requisite e). As has been seen, this reflection should bear not upon the particular terms of that experience (these indeed provide the objects of the other sciences), but upon the existence and nature of that experience, i.e., upon that judgement not as *that* but as *judgement*. By pushing that reflection to its utmost limits and using reasoning (now proved to be valid) to connect all its findings, it is possible to develop a system of Metaphysics each element of which enjoys the metaphysical certainty of its point of departure. But just as motion is proved by walking, this last contention also is not expected to carry full conviction until it is proved by actual realization.

Did the Buddha Deny the Self ?

by

K. VENKATARAMANAN

A fresh approach to this important problem has become possible through the availability of a small text in the Chinese collection of the Buddhist Tripitaka. It is a text belonging to the Sāmmitiya School of Buddhist thought. It is called the "Sāmmitiya Nikāya Śāstra" in the Chinese collection. But at the end of the text we have its name recorded as the "Āśraya Prajñāpti Śāstra", which must have been the original title of the text.¹ This is the only text available to us now of this very important School of Buddhist thought which had a wide influence and a long history. We have been familiar with the name Sāmmitiyas and we also know that they along with the Vātsīputriyas maintained a certain view about personality which differed from other more prevalent traditions, by the adherents of which they were branded, on account of this difference in view, as "heretics within the fold".² The Sāmmitiyas had a complete collection of Tripitaka in Apabhramśa.³

In maintaining that the Buddha did not deny the self, they were not alone. We have evidences to say that there must have been a tradition within the fold of Buddhist thought which affirmed the existence of self,⁴ stood for the meaningfulness of the sense

1. Taisho. No. 1649; Bagchi—Le Canon Boudhique en Chine, I p. 240. The English translation of the text with Introduction and Notes has been prepared by the writer of this article and published in *Visva-Bharati Annals*, Vol. V. pp. 155-243, under the title, Sāmmitiya Nikāya Śāstra.

For the name Āśraya Prajñāpti Śāstra see at the end of the text, on p. 211. Āśraya-prajñāpti means conditioned cognition or cognized as conditioned. The text is essentially an attempt to settle the view that the individual is āśraya-prajñāpta, conditionally cognized and cognized as conditional. The conditioned self is the principal theme of our text. This is to be distinguished from the Unconditioned Self which we find mentioned in the text but not developed.

2. Cp. Bodhicaryavatara Panjika, IX 60.

3. Cp. Dr. P. C. Bagchi: "On the Original Buddhism, Its Canon and Language", in *Sino-Indian Studies*, Calcutta, Vol. II, p. 108.

4. Sāmmitiya Nikāya Śāstra, p. 214, n. 11.

of unity and freedom which is the heart of personality, and fought against the total reduction of personality to its constituent elements as well as against the affirmation of the individual self as a simple, eternal, soul-substance. The Sāmmitiyas maintain that the self is neither a mere name for a collocation of many separate elements nor is it a simple eternal substance. Self is an organism, an organismic whole which is āśraya prajñāpta, i.e., conditionally cognized and conditionally existent. (Hence the title of our text). Reduction of personality to a combination of discrete elements would give us a mechanistic view of personality, and an imagination that self is a simple eternal substance which is yet associated with the rounds of birth and death would give us a completely static view of self. Both commit the error of ignoring the sense of unity and creative freedom which is the very essence of personality. By ignoring freedom they tend to ignore moral agency and moral responsibility. Tending to the view that deeds do not make a difference and effort is a misnomer, they cut at the very root of individual initiative which is the essence of moral worth. So, rejecting these as inadequate, not only as theories of self but even as interpretations of the teachings of the Buddha, the Sāmmitiyas say: "Totally to deny the existence of self would be to commit a heresy. But if we say the self is (conditionally) existent, that would be the right view."⁵

It is significant to note that the opening paragraph of the text deals with the moral agency and moral responsibility of the individual. "One does one's own deeds." The deeds of everyone being done by himself, their results are received by the doer and there is no confusion in the receiving of the results. "The results of one's deeds do not go to another." "In order to bring one's deeds to manifestation, one proceeds to take another birth". "One proceeds towards the path of work for manifestation."⁶ Again, later, we have, "Deeds are done in the world by men; these deeds are their treasures, seized by themselves and followed by themselves." Again, "Good and bad both are deeds done by men who follow and seize and expel the course of Karma."⁷

The text mentions seven different views on the nature of self: that the self is totally non-existent, that it is impossible to say whether the self is existent or non-existent, that the self is actually

5. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

existent, that the self is the same as the constituent elements, that the self is different from them, that the self is impermanent, and that the self is eternal. All these are views within the fold of Buddhist thought itself and each of these draws its support from the very words of the Buddha.⁸

The Sāmmitiyas steer clear their way through these conflicting views and maintain that neither an absolute existence nor an absolute non-existence would be the right view in regard to the individual self. "The self exists, but conditionally, this is the right view."⁹ Again, an assertion of absolute difference or of absolute identity would land us in difficulties. Absolute difference between the self and the skandhas (or the constituent elements, i.e., the bodily and mental events, which constitute personality) would make the person completely unrelated to the latter, and absolute identity between them would again make the self as impermanent as the skandhas. Moreover, in the case of absolute identity, the skandhas and the self would not be designated differently at all. To contend that 'self' is a mere name with nothing corresponding to it is to ignore the meaningfulness of the term and the essential relation between the term and its import. That it is unspeakable whether the self is existent or non-existent (in absolute terms) does not mean that the self is not speakable even as conditionally existent.

That the self exists does not mean, again, that it is an eternal substance, nor does the denial of self mean its total non-existence. "The Buddha said that the person exists as conditionally cognized. Therefore that which the Buddha here refers to (when He speaks of the self as existent) is only the objective counterpart (āśraya) of the cognition (of self, viz., the organismic whole of personality analysable into and speakable as constituted of the five skandhas). He does not refer here to any eternal self as substance." But if the self were absolutely non-existent, then there would be neither the doer nor the deed nor any result thereof. On the contrary if there is the person, if there is the self, there would not be the errors mentioned above. "Therefore the self truly is."¹⁰

The Sāmmitiyas make a distinction between ātma-dr̥ṣṭi and mithyā-dr̥ṣṭi. The one they consider to be correct and the other,

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-73.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 77.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

wrong. "Now if we say that the self is describable in terms of (absolute) existence or (absolute) non-existence that would result in the wrong views of eternalism and negativism. And the Buddha would not permit us to rely on these two views. And if we say that the self is (absolutely) non-existent, we would be violating its unspeakability (in absolute terms.) So this is not right. Totally to deny the existence of self would be to commit a heresy. But if we say that the self is (conditionally) existent, that would be the right view. Therefore it can be said that the self is. It is said in the Sūtra, 'To say that the self is not would be a mithyādr̥ṣṭi, while, to say that the self is would be an ātmadr̥ṣṭi'."¹¹

The distinction between the ātmadr̥ṣṭi and mithyādr̥ṣṭi as borne out here is that while the one asserts a conditional existence of self, the other totally denies the existence of self. In addition to this distinction between these two views, there is another. In regard to the relation between the self and the skandhas, the extremists would maintain either that the self is totally identical with the skandhas or totally different from them. The Sāmmittiyas reject both these extremes and say: "Take for example, the relation between rūpa and the receiver of rūpa. It cannot be said that the receiver of rūpa is (absolutely) different from rūpa or that rūpa is entirely different from the receiver of rūpa. On the basis of rūpa is derived the name, the receiver of rūpa. If one says that 'this is rūpa and this is itself the receiver of rūpa,' this way of his establishing rūpa would be called ātmadr̥ṣṭi. But if one says that 'rūpa is the self' then one errs (in affirming that) the five skandhas are themselves the self."¹² The Sāmmittiyas continue, "If one says that the receiver of rūpa is different from rūpa, that would again be the wrong view that the self is different from the skandhas."¹³

The Sāmmittiyas thus distinguish between "this is rūpa and this itself is the receiver of rūpa" and "rūpa is the self." The point of distinction which they mean to make between the two seems to be that while in the one case rūpa and the receiver of rūpa are divisions within the concrete personality which is their basic unity, designated here by the 'this', a totality analysable as rūpa and the receiver of rūpa, in the other case the totality is reduced to one of the terms of abstraction. Thus the point of

distinction between the two is the one between what we may call the concrete view and the abstract view. While in the concrete view, the organismic unity of the self is never missed, this is just the thing we miss in the abstract view. In its extreme form, the abstract view would split the organism into minute divisions, reduce it to a mere collocation of many simple atomic units, and then imagine that self is a mere name, and the simple atomic units are real and ultimate. Or, it would take the self as wholly different from and independent of the constituent elements, and imagine that the self remains unaffected while they arise and perish. In either case, the abstract view holds to difference as absolute, and fails to do justice to the organic relation between the self and its constituents. So, the Sāmmittiyas say, "The receiver of rūpa exists only as mutually dependent on rūpa, that is all. He is not mentioned as a separate reality. But if one's statement that rūpa and the receiver of rūpa depend on each other leads one to heresy and if, by this heresy, one says that there is no self at all, then the errors mentioned above would be his. Therefore these are the three errors (i.e., the errors of absolute identity and absolute difference between the self and the skandhas, and the error of an unconditional denial of self). And therefore absolute difference is a heresy. Therefore not to take the lead of absolute difference is not to follow heresy."¹⁴

How is the person said to exist? The object of the idea of self is a mind-body organism, a self-conscious personality whose existence can be denoted differently through different aspects. The Buddha said that there are three kinds of persons (or strictly three ways of denoting personality). They are: denoting through the objective basis (āśraya, of the notion of personality), denoting through transition (saṅkrama) and denoting through extinction (nirodha). What is meant by reference through the objective basis? The Buddha told Pāpaka: "On whatever aggregation a thing depends for its being spoken, from that the thing derives its name. This is reference through objective basis. Take for example, fire; (it derives its name from the fuel on which it depends)."¹⁵ How about reference through transition? "Just when certain beings are crossing over to another existence, precisely then, does the Buddha call them, 'beings in transition'." Beings in transition are denoted through past or present or future transition. The Buddha's statement, "In my past life I had already been the highest

11. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-83.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

of kings," is to denote through past transition. "Ajita, when you will become the Buddha, you will be called Maitreya." This is to denote through future transition. "One who is the master of great wealth commands a lot of riches, so much, at his wish." This is to denote through present transition. The Buddha has thus spoken of three ways of referring to beings through their movements in the three times.¹⁶ How about reference through extinction? The saying, "at the time of the extinction of the past body" is denoting through extinction. Again, when the Buddha said, "the five skandhas of a bhikṣu whose āsraṇas have come to an end become extinct before long," he meant the reference through extinction.¹⁷ From the standpoint of reference through the objective basis and reference through transition, it is said that there is the person who leaves the present five skandhas and takes up the five skandhas of the intermediary state (i.e., the passage-state that lies between death and rebirth). From the standpoint of reference through extinction, the Buddha has said, "there is never more the state of receiving the skandhas."¹⁸

The self which is the complex of skandhas is the conditioned self. It is the organismic unity of the ever-perishing skandhas. It is a dynamic unity, its very essence consisting in its continuous and constant reconstituting of itself through the ever-fresh systems of events which it gives rise to in its very urge to bring to light all that lies dormant in it. This is the conditioned finite object-self. The three modes of reference are the three ways of denoting the individual through the complex of skandhas which constitute individuality. While the reference through objective basis is a general reference, references through transition and extinction are references to the individual through the specific states of transition and extinction of the complex of skandhas. What is in transition is the self which is the complex of bodily and mental events, and what becomes extinct is also the self which is the complex of bodily and mental events. The extinction is either final as in the case of the wise who realize Nirvāṇa, or it is only a phase in the transition between one span of life and another, as in the case of the ordinary people when they die.

Now this last statement is to make a distinction between the conditioned self which becomes extinct when the forces that constitute it become extinct with the realization of Nirvāṇa, and

the unconditioned self which does not become extinct with the extinction of the conditioned. The forces that constitute the conditioned self, the self which is a dynamic unity revolving in the cycle of birth and death, are ultimately forces of ignorance and craving. Ignorance covers the real nature of self and the unreal is mistaken as the real, the conditioned is mistaken as the unconditioned. But the sense of the truly unconditioned is never wholly removed. Under the imagination of one's nature as conditioned, the sense of the truly unconditioned takes the form of *tṛṣṇā*. Impelled by *tṛṣṇā*, the self-conscious individual seeks for self-expression and self-realization. The rounds of birth and death are the endless repetitions of seizing and abandoning, which result from the initial confusion, the basic error, of misplaced absoluteness, the mistaking of the conditioned for the unconditioned. It is, in other words, by ignorance about one's real nature that one is 'bound'. The only binding there is, is the false sense of self-hood, the seizing of the not-self as self. Really there is no binding. This is the ultimate truth.

From the standpoint of this ultimate truth, the self-conscious organism, the dynamic unity of the skandhas, is still a not-self. For, while the conditioned self, which is the self-conscious organism, has only a derived existence and is revolving in the cycle of birth and death, the true, unconditioned self is not so. The conditioned self, in being not only subject to pain but actually constituted of pain, can itself be called pain. There is no pain other than the divided existence. This self can again be called *citta* or *vijñāna*, which we can express as "the self-conscious seed of personal life",¹⁹ in reference to its passing from one span of life to another, its essential nature consisting in a 'seeking to become'. This self is truly a name for the organismic unity of the skandhas and does not stand for the True Self. "It is a name based on the (complex of) impure skandhas." "Being shrouded in ignorance, people speak of the complex of the five skandhas as their own self. Even as the new-born babe calls others' mothers its own, just so are the five skandhas spoken of by the ignorant as their own self." "The Buddha said, the birth of *dukkha* is the only birth and the extinction of *dukkha* is the only extinction. We cannot speak of birth and death as the characters of self."²⁰ For the Unconditioned Self, which is the True Self, is an Undivided Being. "When the Buddha says that 'I' and mine cannot be found in reality, He

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-84.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 222, n. 34.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

refers to the usual objects of 'I' and 'mine' which are not self-contained. No real essence can be found in these."²¹ In the case of this Unconditioned Self what the Buddha denies is conditionedness. "That which is made known by others is not the self-known and that which is self-known is not made known by others. Therefore what the Buddha really dismisses is the other-illuminedness of the self (-luminous). He did not deny the self."²²

Even in the case of the conditioned self what the Buddha denied was its independent reality or self-containedness and not its existence itself. "It cannot be believed that the unreal and the non-existent are equally non-existent. Therefore, of the self, non-existence is denied and existence is affirmed. The self itself is not denied."²³ "Although of this conditioned self, permanence and impermanence cannot be spoken, still that the self exists can be said."²⁴

"If one sees rightly, one will have no doubt that the person turns in the cycle of birth and death, bound by the bond of the craving for existence."²⁵ This is what the Buddha wanted to show when He said that "man seizes *tṛṣṇa* as his second and dwells for long in birth and death and when *tṛṣṇa* becomes extinct, there is never more this turning in the wheel of birth and death."²⁶ "As the *dukkha* is destroyed and the stream of *āśrayas* is put an end to, one reaches the *Nirvāṇa* with residues. Then his body still continues to be, and at that time one is said to cross over to that shore and abide there. Only at the time of realizing the residueless *Nirvāṇa* does one realize the immovable joy."²⁷ "But the view that the person as such is eternal, (that the self which is subject to birth and death is as such eternal) should be banished."²⁸

Did the Buddha deny the Self? The answer of the *Sāmmittīyas* to this very important question would be:

The Buddha did not deny the self itself. In the case of the conditioned self, what the Buddha denied was unconditionedness, and in the case of the Unconditioned Self, what the Buddha denied was conditionedness. The Buddha did not deny the self itself.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

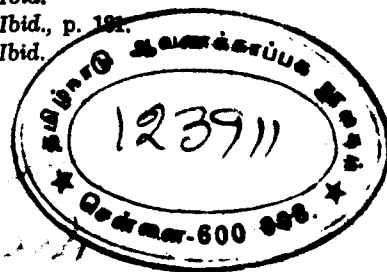
24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

28. *Ibid.*



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