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Stoics and Buddhists

by

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I feel rather like an undergraduate sitting for an examination in which he is asked:

Compare and contrast the philosophies of X and Y!

In the case of Stoicism and Buddhism I am not sure that I know enough to be able to institute a *fair* comparison. Probably most of you who are present know much more about classical Buddhism than I do—and I know no Pali, save a few odd words.

So, much attention however in the West has in recent years been devoted to the study of Stoicism, that I think I may be able to present you with a fairly fresh picture of it, and after indicating briefly certain points in which Stoics and Buddhists seem to take a similar line, and occupy in their respective spheres a similar status, leave my audience to discuss, and to fill in the gaps which in my ignorance I am sure to have left.

It is odd that the word 'Stoic' gives no indication of the nature of the teaching of this school. Whereas I understand that the word "Buddha" means 'the enlightened one'—in whom clear vision has arisen, a Stoic means literally a man belonging to the group sitting in a particular *stoa*, porch or portico, and such a man might teach or believe anything. There might even be a number of groups sitting in different *stoas* (porches)!

But by a curious freak, it was this one Stoa which became famous — "the porch;" and so when a writer in the Christian New

Testament tells of certain of the Stōikes approaching Paul for information as to his message, his readers are expected to know their doctrines without further explanation, and why, after listening for a few minutes, they dismissed the apostle as a "spermologos" or "babbler".

The founder of this school of doctrine (as you no doubt are aware) was Zeno the Cypriot, the son of Mnaseas. What is perhaps not so well known is that his mother-tongue was Phoenician, an Asian Semitic language not unlike Hebrew. Mnaseas is said to be a hellenising of a Phoenician proper name similar to the Hebrew names Manasseh or Menāhem. Zeno's birthplace, Kition, was a seaport facing to the S. E. in the direction of Tyne and Sidon, and it had a considerable population who were of Phoenician stock. Many Semitic inscriptions have been found in the ruins of Kition, and we know that the rulers of this city state bore Asian names and that its citizens worshipped a Phoenician deity, Melkarth. Some grave-inscriptions are bilingual, and even a man with a Greek name, Menexenos, could have sons called Eschmunsilleh and Marjehai, which can by no stretch of the imagination be called Greek, still less European.

I have stressed this point, because it is only too often assumed that Stoicism was a *Greek* way of thought. But frankly it is hybrid, and one questions whether we shall ever know exactly how much it owes to Asia. (Of course H. J. Mackinder, the philosophical geographer, once described Europe as a peninsula projecting out of Asia!) Pohlenz, our principal modern authority on Stoicism, to whom I shall be much indebted throughout the first part of this paper, says that the tradition that Zeno was a full-blooded Semite is "merkwürdig einhellig"—remarkably clear and consistent. Cicero calls him Punic, (i.e. of the same race as Carthaginians); his own teacher Krates always referred to him as 'that Phoenician youth'; and his contemporary, Timon, who disliked him, spoke of him contemptuously after his death as "that greedy old Phoenician woman". Zeno himself wrote a book called "The Hellenic Culture"; and Pohlenz says no Greek would have ever chosen such a title.

But Zeno soon came to learn Greek. His father was bilingual, and as a wealthy merchant, often visited Athens, and brought back with him, it is quite certain, Greek philosophical manuscripts for his son to study. Finally, at the age of 22 Zeno himself came to Athens about the year 312, where he studied under Krates the

Cynic, a disciple of Diogenes, though gentler and more humane than his master.

Before we inquire in detail into the system which Zeno developed and transmitted, it may be well to see the whole Stoic movement in outline.

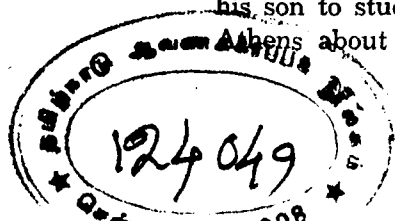
It falls into several periods:

First there is the age of the founder. He was followed by a disciple Persaios, with whom we also associate the name of Sphaيروس, who undertook for Kleomenes the education of the youth of Sparta, but after the fall of his patron retired with him to Alexandria.

But the real successor to Zeno was Kleanthes, a Greek from Assos. We remember him chiefly on account of his great hymn to Zeus. We have also to record Aratus, another Stoic poet of this age, a line of whom was subsequently quoted by Paul in his speech at Athens. After them came Aristo of Chios, who seems to have been rather a disaster—a rhetorician of fine rolling periods rather than a genuine thinker. Stoicism under him was threatened with collapse, and was only rescued by the emergence of Chrysippus, who may very well have also been a Semite, since he came from Cilicia in Central Asia Minor. He was essentially a dialectic teacher, and he set the school on its feet again; and it is said that both he and Kleanthes were popular in Athens for their democratic views, e.g. Kleanthes refused to dedicate his work to any potentate. Chrysippus was a great teaching professor, and he worked hard for his school.

Next follows what may be called the period of defence against criticism. Adult Athenians, while welcoming the added prestige which Zeno brought to the city, and his moral influence upon its youth, found him too austere for their easy-going habits, and kept themselves in watchful aloofness from him. He did not gain many adherents in Hellas outside the city, but was more successful outside its borders, in Macedonia, South Russia, Asia Minor, and North Africa. Through Chrysippus, Cilicia became a sort of outer province of the Stoa, and Tarsus in particular produced many of its subsequent teachers, Heraclides, Antipater and Zeno of Tarsus among them.

But there were, of course, critics. Some said that Zeno had stolen his ideas from Plato, and dished them up in his own words. Others like Straton were modern enough to say that for the under-



standing of a teleologically constructed Kosmos there was no need to posit the existence of a Creator Deity such as was implied by Kleanthes and Aratus in their poetic writings, but only Natural Force.

We then come to what is known as the middle period of Stoicism. The first of its teachers was Panaitios (b. 185), and he, like Kleanthes, was a genuine Greek, a man from the island of Rhodes. After a distinguished career, during which he visited Rome and became the friend of the younger Scipio, he was followed by one of the greatest teachers and constructive thinkers of the school, Poseidonios (b. 135), a Macedonian Greek from the Syrian city of Apameia.

Panaitios and Poseidonios between them exercised an immense influence on the Mediterranean world, and the former especially may be regarded as the founder of Roman Stoicism. Panaitios was convinced, as a pure-bred Greek, that the teachings of the Stoa, however much they might owe to Asians, stood in the closest relationship to Attic philosophy, and he constantly quoted from its chief exponents. Yet for him Stoicism was not merely the doctrine of a school, but a way of living, and the Logos-philosophy which he whole-heartedly embraced was not merely an abstract piece of dogma to be preserved and defended at all costs, but a general view of the world which was of immense practical import.

Poseidonios, although born in Syria, was of Greek parentage, and came to Athens to study, where he became Panaitios' best pupil. He travelled much, and took a keen interest in everything that he saw, and eventually landed up in Rome, from whence he travelled northwards and observed Celts and Teutons almost with the eye of a modern anthropologist. Finally he settled down at Rhodes, where in 78 B.C. Cicero studied under him. He died shortly after 51 B.C., at the age of 85. He differs from the earlier Stoics in having a keener interest in history, and in recording and reflecting upon the significance of the sequence of events. It is a misfortune that his works, apart from a few fragments, no longer survive; but we know that Cicero reproduced many of the ideas of Poseidonios and his master in his Latin philosophical treatises.

There is a good story related of Poseidonios by Cicero. Pompey, he says, visited him in order to hear him discourse on the Stoic philosophy, and was distressed to find him seriously ill and in much discomfort. Poseidonios however insisted that his visit must not be in vain, and went on to expound the doctrine that

nothing was good unless it was honourable, though at intervals he was interrupted by paroxysms of pain. During these attacks Poseidonios would exclaim: "You are making no impression, Pain. Although you are hard to bear, I will never admit that you are evil." The Sophos, being self-sufficient Autarkēs, alone is free and master of himself. He is rich in the midst of poverty, and experiences joy in the midst of torment. (Very Pauline).

After these two important teachers came a number of lesser ones, Stratokles, the historian of the movement, Hekaton, Mnesarchos, Dardanos, Diodotus, Antipater of Tyre, and Athenodorus. It was in the late republic that Stoicism developed as a force in Rome, and there, as has often been said, it eventually gave a soul to the young Roman Empire.

The names of the Stoic philosophers under this earlier empire are not unfamiliar, Areios Didymus, who was court philosopher to Augustus, Sextius, Cornutus, Persius, Seneca, Epictetus, Lucan, Thrasea and Musonius. Things did not always go smoothly, for Stoicism from its Athenian days had favoured democracy, and was not too respectful to despotic rulers. Epictetus himself had been a slave, and Seneca, in spite of his having been tutor to Nero, was eventually sent into banishment.

Finally however a man ascended the imperial throne, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who was himself an adherent of Stoicism; and thus for a short time was fulfilled Plato's dream of a philosopher king.

By this time, of course, the Christian movement was well under way, and the rest of the story is of how the latter came to find much that was congenial in the doctrines which stemmed from Zeno and Chrysippus, and gradually absorbed them into itself.

We must now go back and see what those doctrines were, how succeeding teachers, especially such men as Panaitios and Poseidonios amplified and developed them, and how Cicero and others popularised them in the western world among educated persons, so that Cicero's writings continued to be part of a European gentleman's education right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The first consideration I think is that although Zeno stands out as the initiator of the movement, there is no single personality round whom its activities revolve. There is, in modern jargon,

no personality-cult, as there seems to have been in the case of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, and most certainly in the case of the Buddha, the influence of whose mind runs through the entire Buddhist community past and present, and who is central to it in art, in spite of the number of Bodhisattvas whose images also appear.

In the second place, Stoicism is as much concerned with the external as with the internal. As we shall see, it carries on from Aristotle the interest in the physical world. It is different in this respect from Buddhism, which, unless I am mistaken, is chiefly concerned with the internal structure of the human personality, and seems to regard the study of external nature as irrelevant.

The Stoics were definitely interested in the origin and structure of the objects they saw around them in the universe, and they pursued their task with reason, and by rational research. Thus Pohlenz writes of Poseidonios: "He is the greatest scientific spirit that Hellenism has produced . . . Philosophy was for him the striving after knowledge concerning things both divine and human, and their origins." Poseidonios was essentially a monist, and yet beneath this monism there are to be detected two different spiritual streams of activity. He is a more complicated character than his rationalist master, Panaitios, and seeks to investigate scientifically the nature of divination and prophecy, in which he undoubtedly believed. But I am here anticipating. Let us go back to the earlier Stoics.

Both Zeno and Chrysippus, as we have seen, were of Semitic blood. From Amos to Mohammed, the Semitic religious genius tends towards a transcendent monotheism. True, Zeno from the age of 22 onwards made Athens his spiritual home. But the system he developed, while genuinely Hellenic in many respects, is not so humanistic as that of its predecessors, and never loses sight of this particular type of unitary conception of reality. Zeno takes over from the much earlier Greek Ionian thinker Heraclitos the use of a special term in this connexion.

We know Heraclitos to-day, it is true, only from fragmentary quotations, but it is clear that almost up to 300 A.D. if not later, entire manuscript treatises of his were in existence, and were read by such men as Justin Martyr and Lactantius.

Now fundamental to Heraclitos is the idea of a ruling cosmic principle, emanating, so to speak, from the ineffable and indefinable

Absolute. He calls this principle the *Logos*, and the good life for him is to live in harmony with the *Logos*. All things in the Universe, he says, happen *Kata Ton Logon* (according to the *Logos*) and he complains that most men do not notice this, but are uncomprehending. Recent scholars have rendered *Logos* (in translating Heraclitos) as "formula" or "element of arrangement"; but perhaps the best description would be to say that for Heraclitos *Logos* is an attribute of the Absolute. It sometimes seems to him to be impersonal, but at other times he invests it with qualities which can only be described as personal. He oscillates between two opinions about it; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that he applies to the *Logos* his well-known technique of paradox. "It will be called Zeus: it will not be called Zeus." This is quite typical. Among the fragments we have many such sayings. When I was at Princeton last autumn I heard Professor Vlastos read a paper on them, and I ventured to point out during the discussion that this kind of paradoxical statement about the Absolute is to be found in a number of Upanishadic writings, notably in the *Isa Upanishad*.

It moves. It moves not.

It is far. It is near.

It is within all things. It is outside all things.

It is motionless. It is swifter than the wind.

But to return to the *Logos*. In the interval between Heraclitos and Zeno it was more fashionable to use the term *Nous*. Plato, it is true, in his *Epinomis* speaks of "the Divine (*Theios*) *Logos* that directs all things", but for a long time the *Epinomis* was regarded as late and spurious, though I am informed that present-day scholars are disposed to treat it as a genuine work of Plato's.

At any rate, the Stoic teachers returned to the use of the word, and the *Logos*-concept becomes central in their philosophy, and displaces the *Nous* of Aristotle. The *Logos* is the source of the external universe. The *Logos* determines its physical order, the *Logos* ordains the structure of the human mind, and so presides over its activities, directing them into a reasonable system of thought—hence the actual term *Logic*, reasonable thought and speech. To think or speak "illogically" is to do so in a way which is out of harmony with the directing principle of the universe. So too in matters of conduct. Ethics for the Stoic is based on the principle that one ought to live in harmony with nature. What-

ever the Logos ordains as part of the constitution and course of nature must be by human beings observed and obeyed. Right on into the time of Epictetus we find this taught as a fundamental principle; "To enquire into the ordering of the world and the place in it which reason occupies, this", he says, "is the content of philosophy."

For Zeno the Logos was not merely conscious and reflective reason, but also the spiritual principle which established the universe on a firm foundation conditioned by reason, and ordained for all individual phenomena their proper functions. Under such a system, it was the business of Physics to show how the Logos worked as Creative Principle in the Universe, and Ethics to show how it determined for man the goal and purpose of his life, and the norm for his daily behaviour.

It must, I think, be clear already how deeply this kind of teaching has influenced European thought, especially since the end of the fifteenth century, with the revival in the study of Greek writers. What is called "a classical education" has continued right down to the year 1900 (roughly) in our Western world, and (albeit unconsciously) has determined the progress of the sciences from Francis Bacon to Eddington, Rutherford and Cockcroft.

But here I think we encounter a real difference between the mind of Hellas and the mind of India. Nature to Indians is unfriendly and even hostile. It does not invite investigation. It is not that Hellas was "more advanced" than India. The thinkers of the two areas proceed along different lines. Nature was not only hostile. Her activities followed one another at a feverish speed, and with excess either of sunshine or of rain. What the Greek called *Phthora* and the Buddhist *anicca* was evident everywhere in India. The transience and evanescence of the finite was more apparent there than in the west—as I think it still is.

Hence it was perhaps inevitable that Asian man should turn his gaze inward, and seek for release from the rapidly spinning 'Wheel of life', for deliverance from *samsāra*, and for refuge in the Changeless and Imperishable. The Greek was quite as conscious of the evanescence of the finite, but I do not think it obsessed him as much as it did the philosophic Indian. He still felt it worthwhile to go on investigating the world around him, though of course Gilbert Murray points out that after a time he lost his nerve. Hence it was in the eastern Mediterranean that some of the earliest machines were invented, the earliest attempts

made at formulating what we have come to call "laws of nature", and the earliest questions asked concerning the why and wherefore of natural phenomena. One can hardly imagine Pliny's Natural History being composed in India. I think it can be maintained that Stoicism aimed at restoring man's nerve, and perhaps to some extent succeeded in doing so.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Poseidonios. His interests range over the whole field of what we to-day call the natural sciences. Sometimes of course he went wrong, and differed seriously from Aristarchus of Samos in regarding the earth as the centre of the universe; and of course he made far too much of astrology. But like Pliny after him, he tends on the whole to ask the right questions, and very often he gets the right answers. One major difference between him and the earlier Stoics is in his estimate of the part played by the Logos in the sub-human creation. Zeno seemed to accord it comparatively little part in (e.g.) the life of dogs and horses as compared with that of mankind, but Poseidonios takes the position that because of the fundamental homogeneity and *Sympathēia* of the universe, we are able to see the Logos at work as a governing principle everywhere; so that in constructing a ship's rudder—we are able to see how to set it going by a study of the movements of the tail of a fish. To-day he would of course have said that in making aeroplanes we have to study the way in which birds use their wings and tails; which is exactly what has been done.

But we must not make the mistake of supposing that the study of the external world and the doctrine of the Logos exhaust the teachings set forth from the Stoa. As a preliminary to all this there is a clear attempt to set forth an epistemology.

The very foundation of Zeno's system is that man with the aid of his senses can actually *know* objects, and in what he calls *Katalēpsis* possess a sound criterion of truth. He draws a distinction between the apprehension of the data of consciousness by animals and by man. The Logos operates in man in such a way as to give him a greater and more complete insight into the relative values of what he experiences in '*sensatio*' (Tennant's word). Man unlike animals, has *Katalēpsis* i.e., true and full apprehension of the value and significance of the object perceived or experienced in *sensatio*. This was of course a way of explaining a difference between the human and the sub-human of which all could not help being aware, however they might account for it. The object of *sensatio* Zeno called a *Phantasia*, and Kleanthes and Chrysippus were dissatisfied with his too materialistic interpretation of the latter, so that Chrysippus sought to modify his master's epistemology. But Arkesilaos and Carneades in parti-

cular did not consider that Zeno allowed sufficiently for the possibility of misperception and hallucination. These facts show clearly enough that what proceeded from the original *Stoa* was not a completely closed system, but rather a *method* of thinking about the world which was subject to revision and development all along the line. Hence we keep coming up against reflections upon the universe and man which sound familiar, simply because they represent intelligent human minds using their free reason in trying to understand things around them which are around us as well. Thus the teachers of the *Stoa* and their successors faced the problems of the Self-Existent and of human mortality, of the moral consciousness and its dictates, just as we do to-day, and sought to construct a working theory of life which would carry them through. But for this reason we cannot call them pure humanists. The existence of Deity is for them not merely a belief, but a scientifically demonstrable certainty. Yet they do not seem to be fanatical anti-polytheists any more than was the Buddha. Like him they conceive that there is no valid objection to be urged against the existence of a plurality of *daevas*, or as Cicero might have said, of *numina*. But to the Stoic also they are not *ultimate*, but are all subordinated to Supreme Deity; and the stories about them (whether myth or history) are only symbolical attempts at describing the activities of the Supreme Deity, and may therefore be interpreted allegorically. They were therefore tolerant towards what Pohlenz calls *Volks-religion*.

It is in the realm of Ethics rather than of Physics that we find Stoicism and Buddhism drawing near to one another. There are several words which recur in the writings of the Stoics, and which represent fundamental attitudes to life as taught by them. I propose to develop a little the consideration of these words.

First of all there is the idea of the Heimarmenē. I can hardly do better here than quote Pohlenz' paragraph upon it:

"Providence, as the rational creative and preservative power, is identical with Logos and Physis. It is Deity seen from a particular angle. From another angle it appears as Heimarmenē . . . Everything fulfils itself in the world according to a continuous chain of cause and effect, which no Deity can alter. The essence of this law was found by the Stoics expressed in the ancient word Heimarmene, which they derived, by an impossible etymology, from the word *Eirmos*, and interpreted as "the sequence of causes"—series causarum—or *Eirmos Aitiōn*. Chrysippus defines the Heimarmene as 'the eternal continuous and orderly movement', or as 'the natural ordering of all that happens, according to which

from eternity one event succeeds another, and unrolls in an unbroken interwoven pattern".

Pohlenz points out that this conception is very ancient, and is to be found implicitly in Homer. But whereas in pre-Stoic times it seems that there was a strong tendency towards pure determinism, we find Zeno and Chrysippus questioning whether man is not in the last resort responsible for his own actions, and whether a measure of free-will is not a definite reality. The Heimarmenē may provide him with the external incentive, but it also gives him internally the possibility of self-determination. Up to a point Heimarmenē seems like a combination of the Indian concepts of *Samsāra* and *karma*. But to the Stoic there is also the conception of a pre-determined freedom on the part of man. If not entirely a bus, he has some of the characteristics of a tram!

Next we come to the term *Pathos*. I suppose we might equate it with the Pali word *dukkha*. The Stoics say that *Pathos* is of four kinds:

- | | | |
|--|-----|------------------|
| (i) Discomfort or physical pain | 456 | <i>Lupē</i> |
| (ii) Fear | | <i>Phobos</i> |
| (iii) Desire, lust, craving (<i>tanha</i>) | | <i>Epithymia</i> |
| (iv) Selfish pleasure. | | <i>Hēdonē</i> |

The cause of any kind of *Pathos* is a false opinion, leading to a false *Krisis*, judgment or estimate of any condition or situation in which the individual finds himself. It is due to "wrong mindfulness". (I must leave the reader to supply the Pali).

Release from *Pathos* is thus to be found in what the Buddha called "right mindfulness", and this leads to the state of mind which is called *Apatheia*, or detachment. It must be noted carefully that *Apatheia* is not callousness or hard heartedness, even though it may sometimes seem to be. It is a proper estimate of what things are good, bad or indifferent (*Adiaphora*). Most, if not all physical affairs and circumstances are indifferent in the view of the Stoic teachers, and the Stoic ideal man cultivates an emphasis upon the spiritually good, which neither time nor change nor disaster can touch.

Zeno says that the proper end of man is to live according to nature (*Zēn Homologoumenōs Tē Physei*) and the *Adiaphora* do not help or hinder one in doing this. Virtue is independent of them. Health and riches are not "goods". Poverty and sickness do not

hinder a man from being virtuous. But to follow *Hēdonē* or any other form of *Pathos* is not to live in conformity with nature, and is therefore evil. Zeno adds that *Pathos* is a flaming up of the soul which is opposed to right reason and to nature.

There are three good elements in the soul which, if cultivated, will dispel *Pathos*. These are Joy or *Charis* which is the opposite of *Hēdonē*, circumspection which is the opposite of *Phobos*, steadfast will which is the opposite of *Epithymia*, and each of these also has subdivisions.

The soul itself has 8 component parts or elements.

1. The 5 senses. 2. Speech. 3. Thought. 4. The urge to reproduction. The word "soul" here is perhaps the wrong one. It would be better perhaps to say the "ego" or body-soul complex.

In addition to the obvious tendency towards analysis, there is a considerable resemblance at this point between the doctrines of Gautama and those of the Stoics. Both see life as marred by *malaise*, which is the effect of what Gautama calls *anicca* and *dukkha*; and both seek to remove the *malaise* not by changing the conditions prevailing in the external world, but by changing the ego on the inside, and by inducing the individual to rethink how to conduct himself: and like the Buddhists, the Stoics seek, as a preliminary to achieving right mindfulness, to analyse the constituent elements in the ego.

Here both Stoics and Buddhists stand on the same side, and it is undoubtedly the case that they differ from modern scientific thinkers, in that the latter regard the external world as capable of manipulation to a degree which the ancients did not. I do not say that the ancients never did anything to alter circumstances. They invented suitable clothing. They made some tools. In the course of time they invented the wheeled carriage and revolutionised transport. They also did some medicine and surgery. But they never thought of the world as capable of being altered to suit human needs to the extent which people do to-day, and so they contented themselves with devising a technique which would enable man to bear the ills that seemed inevitably connected with finite human existence upon this planet.

I am not saying that they were entirely wrong in so doing on the whole, for no alteration of the external world can entirely eliminate those items in it which afflict human beings with worry, anxiety, or distress. What I say is that they regarded so much

in human circumstances as beyond manipulation, that it seemed to them more important to persuade people to protect themselves by cultivating a definite species of mentality, an inward calm and detachment. Their ideal person was the *Sophos* or wise man, corresponding to the Buddhist ideal of the person who is *buddha*, i.e. awake or enlightened.

The *Sophos* is without pride, is temperate in all things, is austere, is sincere and avoids all hypocrisy, is never ill at ease, and is the equal of Zeus, in that he possesses the qualities that belong to Divinity. Epictetus says that he saves his life in losing it. This, though apparently independent of the well-known logion of Jesus, could be an echo of it, since Epictetus was born about twenty years after the crucifixion. There are of course a number of passages in the Stoics which remind us of the Christian Gospels, such as "be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow shall be anxious for the things of itself", "be ye not as the hypocrites", and "be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect"; and of course Paul, having been brought up at Tarsus, is full of Stoic allusions in his letters. But I think it is only fair to note in passing that the Jew, whether rightly or wrongly, tended to think of the world as capable of being changed, so that when Karl Marx says "Philosophers have only explained the world: the task is to change it", he is being true to his Jewish inheritance, for the Jews always seem to have believed that there could be "a new heaven and a new earth" to replace the present imperfect ones.

But the resemblances between Stoic and Buddhist logia are even more striking. For example, in the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus, III, xix we read

"The wise man will always expect more evil from the wicked than he receives. So and so has said something injurious about me; I will give him thanks for not having struck me. He has struck me; I will give thanks that he has not wounded me. He has wounded me; I will give thanks that he has not killed me".

Compare with this the words of the Buddha to the Venerable Purna, who wished to preach *dhamma* to a wild and dangerous tribe:

"But, Purna, these are violent, cruel, and furious men. When they get angry and curse you what will you think?" "I will think" (answered Purna) "that they are certainly kind and good men, they who address me in insulting words, they who are angry and curse me, but who do not beat me with their hands and stones". "But", said the Buddha, "if they do beat you with their

hands and stones, what will you think?' 'I will think that they are kind and good men, since they do not attack me with clubs and swords'. 'And if they do attack you with clubs and swords?' 'I will think they are kind and good since they do not kill me'. 'And if they do kill you?' 'I will then certainly think that they are kind and good, since they deliver me with so little pain from this vile body'. 'Very well, very well, Purna', replied the Buddha; 'with such perfect patience you are allowed to fix your abode in the country of these violent men'.

In one of the books of the fifth Nikaya we find a list of blessed activities, and among them this:

"The soul of one unshaken by the changes of this life, a soul inaccessible to sorrow, passionless, secure; this is the greatest blessing".

We are inevitably reminded of the famous picture of the Stoic wise man in one of the Odes of Horace:

*"Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinae".*

And again in Epictetus I, 17 we read:

"Never say about anything: 'I have lost it', but 'I have restored it'. Has your son died? You have restored him. Has your wife died? You have restored her. Has anyone seized your land? What has happened is that you have made restitution. But, you say, he who has seized it is a wicked man. What does it matter by whose hands he who has given it you wishes you to return it? While you have it, use it as something which is to you indifferent, somewhat as travellers make use of inns on their journeys".

Compare with this the story of Gautama's comment on the behaviour of one of his disciples:

"A man, it is said, who had left wife and child in order to become a disciple of Buddha, came in his wanderings to the town where they lived. The woman learned the presence of her husband, betook herself with her child to where he was, and said to him, 'See, here is your little son; give me support'. The man would not vouchsafe her one look, but kept silence, and remained silent while she put forward her request a second and third time. Finally she laid her child down before the man, saying, 'that is your son, nourish him', and went forth. When, however, she looked back after a short time and saw that the man was not even looking at the child, she returned and took the child again with her, saying to herself, 'not even his little son matters to him'."

The story ends with the remark that the Buddha, with his supernatural eye, observed the incident, and remarked:

"'Over your coming he rejoices not, over your departure he grieves not, him whom I see freed from love and desire, him I call a true disciple of the Buddha'."

What was the attitude prescribed for the Stoic towards other people? Quite briefly, to other *Sophoi*, friendliness; to the rest of the world, compassion for their unhappy condition. It is not clear that this compassion was quite the same as pity. Seneca says that pity is the vice of a mean spirit: the *Sophos* does not show pity, since he regards the unfortunate or the erring as suffering from that which in himself he would perhaps not regard as an evil. But perhaps Seneca is here not quite typical. Nevertheless I think the compassion of the wise man towards the rest of the world was rather more tepid than the attitude prescribed by the Buddha towards all living creatures; and I feel sure that it was more tepid than that of the Christian and the modern humanist. Still it was one of tolerant goodwill. I don't think it would be fair to say that the Stoics ever inculcated hatred of anyone.

Two quotations from Marcus Aurelius may serve to illustrate this, although he belongs to the late period of Stoicism, and in spite of the fact that he disapproved of the Christians, may conceivably have been influenced by them.

(i) "Fit and accommodate thyself to that estate and to those occurrences which by their destinies have been annexed with thee; and love those men whom thy fate it is to live with; but love them truly".

(ii) "When any shall either impeach thee with false accusations, or hatefully reproach thee, or shall use any such carriage towards thee, get thee presently to their minds and understandings, and look on them, and behold what manner of men they be. Thou shalt see, that there is no such occasion why it should trouble thee, or what such as they are should think of thee. Yet must thou love them still, for by nature they are thy friends."

It is clear that the Buddha, though not prohibiting friendships, regarded love between persons as a little dangerous, because their evanescence would be bound to end in the sorrow of an inevitable separation. Hence the celibate life seemed to be preferred. It provided an assured peace which that of the householder, married person, and parent could never possess. While it is true that he had a message for the laity as well as for his *bhikkus*, he differs widely here from the Stoics, who never seem to have visualised the existence of a community of celibates as an inner order. Their teachings assume that all Stoics are laity, and may marry. Thus, while the Christians incorporated the idea of *Apathēia* or detachment into the life prescribed for the monk, they seem to have taken the idea of the monastic recluse from further east. The

Stoic, as we have seen, said that one ought always to think of wife, husband or children as beings who might be taken away from one, so that when natural causes operated, one was not disturbed by grief.

The attitude of the Stoic towards his own death must seem to many of us rather curious. Being *Autarkēs* the *Sophos* appears to claim that he is entitled to do whatever he wishes with his own life. Perhaps the Jain, if interrogated, might say the same thing.

Zeno, we read, suffocated himself to death in his old age because he had damaged one of his hands (we don't know the details—it may have become irretrievably septic, and of course in those days there was no penicillin). Kleanthes, suffering apparently from what dentists now call *gingivitis*, prolonged his fast until he expired from starvation, even though he was apparently on the road to recovery; and the Stoic teachers, on principle, saw nothing wrong about infanticide.

Yet from the outset, the Stoics would seem to have acknowledged that life taken as a whole was a good thing and worth living. I have no time (and indeed it is hardly necessary) to stress the work of both Stoics and Buddhists in breaking down the barriers of race and class. The idea of *Sympathēia* in the Universe naturally involves the idea of a common humanity, and it is well-known that the Buddha's teaching overthrew, when accepted, the barriers of caste and race. How much this idea of a common humanity may have owed to Alexander the Great, I have discussed elsewhere.

And finally: no-one can read the writings of the Stoics without feeling that although some of their earlier teachers verged upon a species of pantheism, the later ones seem more theistic, and even the earlier Stoic poets sound like theists. But ultimately one supposes the followers of Zeno and Chrysippus identified the Universe with Deity, of whom the gods of popular polytheism were manifestations. Man's personality is an emanation from this Deity, into whom it will eventually be absorbed.

But no Stoic writer, from Kleanthes to Cicero, however humanistic, seemed to treat the concept of Deity transcendent as wholly irrelevant to his purpose in the way in which the Buddha is sometimes represented as doing. Of course we do not know the exact nature of the Buddha's earliest logia, and it is arguable that he was not in the strictest sense of the word atheistic.

My own view is that like the Stoics he was humanistic in his interests rather than theological, concerned with the practical amelioration of man's condition; but that if he had been *cornered*, he would have taken his stand on the indefinability of Deity or the Absolute (the principle of *neti, neti*) and would have said that since all that happens in the cosmos happens *within* the Absolute, what matters is that by a steadfast treading of the Aryan 8-fold path one should reach a blissful condition of release, harmony and integration, (his ideal of *nibbana*), a blissful relation to the Absolute which is of much greater importance than spending one's energy in trying to define what the Absolute really is, since that is a thing we can never know.

Philosophy and Self-Consciousness

by

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(I)

There is a singularity of the discipline called "philosophy" in this that, as distinguished from various arts and sciences, an unambiguous definition of it has not yet been formulated. Some seek to define 'philosophy' in terms of its method, others in terms of its subject-matter. Some hold that it is the knowledge of the supersensible, ultimate reality, others hold that it is the study of pure phenomena or phenomenology. Still others take it to be the apprehension of the highest values of life and hold that value is reality and reality is value. Some take philosophy to be a super-science—a sum-total of all sciences; others place it beyond science. Some think that a philosopher is to defend common sense; others like to put common sense on the dock and to take the role of a critic of common sense. Still others hold that philosophy is the defender of faith. Some think that philosophy is pure existential thinking, exhibited in our experience of anguish, dread and anxiety, through a grand sense of death trembling on the verge of nothingness. Some mean by philosophy a kind of analysis, rather than discovery, of the truths of science i.e. clarification of the language of science; others mean by it a kind of therapeutic elimination of what Wittgenstein's followers call mental cramps growing out of linguistically created puzzles. Many others close their eyes and delve deep into the recesses of mystic meditation exhibiting a kind of divine discontent. In recent times we come across various meta-philosophical statements about philosophical statement itself; such as, philosophical statements are "verbal recommendations," "linguistic innovations", "incapable of being confuted or verified and hence nonsensical", and so on.

This is the situation in the field of philosophy in spite of the fact that there is such a thing called "History of Philosophy", both eastern and western, which is nothing but the history of philosophical ideas. The very existence of such a thing proves beyond doubt that we can recognize philosophers and distinguish them

from scientists, politicians, historians, psychologists, artists, engravers, palm-readers or fortune-tellers. If we recognize philosophers, we also recognize philosophy and hence the controversy on the nature of philosophy is odd. This oddity can perhaps be explained by the fact that though a general definition of "philosophy" can be extracted from its history, yet there may be subsequent refinement of the old concept, leading even to a complete change of the original concept. But it is not proper, I think, to mean by "philosophy" something that is not in the least like what has been believed and pursued by accredited philosophers. My endeavour will, therefore, be to stick to the traditional meaning of the word "philosophy" and to distinguish it from the sciences, with which it is most likely to be confused. Both science and philosophy are theoretic activities of human beings, and yet the two must not be confused. The main task of the present thinkers seems to be finding a clear criterion of distinguishing science and philosophy. We have witnessed successes and failures in this regard. The positivists applied the criterion of verifiability and after some undeserved success, failed. They could not show that *all* scientific statements are empirically verifiable in the strong sense and that *no* metaphysical statements are so verifiable. If the general statements of science are hypotheses, only to be weakly verified, metaphysics also can formulate such hypotheses. I shall, in this paper, try to apply a criterion of distinguishing science and philosophy and I hope that my observations will not alter the traditional meaning of philosophy, substantially.

(II)

Philosophy is the fruit of self-conscious and self-reflective nature of human beings, whereas science arises out of that knowledge of facts which may be designated as "other-consciousness" i.e., consciousness of something other than knowledge itself. Science takes no cognizance of the subject of knowledge and concentrates wholly upon the object. But if there be any reflection on the self itself, such self-conscious activity will be philosophy and not science. If knowledge *proper* is knowledge of facts then such self-consciousness need not be designated as "knowledge". Philosophy does not give us any information, old or new. Philosophic knowledge is a kind of philosophic *understanding**, a deepening of our consciousness, i.e., an interpretative awareness where we necessarily pass

* See my paper in "Selected papers" for the 34th Ind. Phil. Congress, "Knowing and understanding".

from the first order consciousness of the natural attitude to second order consciousness. Logic and Epistemology have been traditionally recognized as branches of philosophy, and these are due to self-reflective awareness of knowledge itself and of its validity or truth. This is knowledge of knowledge at a deeper level. The criteria of truth and falsity can be discovered, if at all, only in the second level of consciousness. If it is said that knowledge itself is the *object* of such self-knowledge, I would like to make it clear that such object is not analogous to objects or facts investigated by the sciences. Though the two phrases "knowledge of stars" and "knowledge of knowledge" are grammatically similar, their logical behaviour and import are entirely different. If "knowledge" is an object of self-knowledge, it is an attenuated and rarefied object that tends to lose all distinctive features that are necessary for something to be called an "object" in the usual sense. If philosophy is a knowledge of object, it is a knowledge of *infinite* object, and this is perhaps the reason why there is so much difference of opinion in philosophy. There is a possibility of removing initial disagreements in science, for science is a study of *specified* objects.

Now if philosophy is self-reflection, psychology as an introspective analysis of mental phenomena, will also claim that title. There is at least *some* reason why psychology is still the child to be weaned from the breast of philosophy in some universities. But there is no reason why we should confuse philosophy with psychology. If introspection be a kind of self-consciousness, the self-consciousness that gives rise to philosophy is entirely of a different order. The latter exposes an infinite object which is not 'object' in the proper sense. The objects of introspection are various mental phenomena with marked specifications. The so-called objects of philosophic understanding have no specifications in this sense. The self-consciousness of psychology is really a mode of "other-consciousness". If psychology is empirical, philosophy is transcendental psychology, where we carefully remove the objects of introspection by the method of phenomenological reduction. Such a process rarefies the object so that we may be aware of the transcendental grounds of our empirical knowledge. Though Kant denied metaphysics as a knowledge of some esoteric object, philosophy, according to him, is a kind of transcendental reflection. Such self-reflective awareness of the transcendental preconditions of empirical knowledge is not to be confused with any full-fledged knowledge of objects. These transcendental grounds are

not sufficient, though necessary, to give rise to empirical knowledge of objects. Husserl also opposes "psychologism" to philosophy. A study of pure experience, of transcendental subjectivity to which the psychical *me* is present, cannot be the same as psychology. Ludwig Wittgenstein also, in his own way, makes the remark: "Philosophical problems are solved, not by giving new information but by arranging what we have always known". Philosophy is understanding, but not knowing.

(III)

Our drives at genuine self-consciousness of transcendental subjectivity create the problem of ontology or the study of existence-in-general, traditionally recognized as the core of philosophy. Pure existential thinking is, perhaps, possible in spiritual self-consciousness, but surely not in scientific "other-consciousness". This is because 'existence' is never a genuine predicate and thus predicative, i.e. scientific knowledge of existence-in-general is impossible. Science can take cognizance of the *characters* of existent facts, but not of existence itself. Existence of facts is a universal postulate of the natural sciences. It is instinctively believed by us. Such being-in-general is again an infinite object, if object at all it is. In genuine self-consciousness there is the self-certitude of transcendental subjectivity. I can never doubt my own existence. But when I say "I am", this is not equivalent to the proposition, "I exist", since existence is not a predicate. The so-called proposition "I exist" can at best mean "I am I"—an analytic tautology and not a synthetic statement of science. "I" am pure existence without any character, and its self-existence is self-evident. It reveals itself in an attempt to know it and reveals itself as unknowable; for such revelation is not a knowledge of fact in the literal sense, but a deepening of understanding, beyond the reach of scientific knowledge.

Of course, different philosophers give different criteria of being as such and the controversy in this field is almost chronic. This is but natural with regard to such an ultimate question. Some contemporary thinkers point an accusing finger to such barren metaphysical disputes. But the very presence of controversy shows unmistakably that the demand for metaphysical understanding is a genuine demand of our spiritual nature. No intelligent person ever enters into such fruitless controversy like, "Is happiness round or square?" It is nonsense to hold that metaphysics is nonsense simply because we accept a *stipulated* definition of mean-

ing in terms of empirical verifiability. So long as man remains a self-conscious spiritual being, he will feel the demand for understanding being as such. His failure in this regard indicates his limitation only.

(IV)

Another kind of infinite object of philosophic self-reflection, about which I want to make a brief reference, is constituted by ideals and intrinsic values that are beyond the scope of scientific enquiry. It is commonplace that science can know what "is", but not what "ought to be". Empirical test of "ought-sentences" is meaningless for, the fact that people sometimes tell lies cannot falsify the principle "Man *ought* to speak the truth". Moral maxims as imperatives concerning what ought to be, differ from natural laws or uniformities of existence. We need not be disturbed by Lord Russell's remark that values are "soft" facts; for these are not facts—hard or soft. There can be no science of imperatives.

Ethics and aesthetics come within the scope of traditional philosophy. Here also I venture to suggest that the awareness of the intrinsic values or norms is possible in some kind of self-consciousness that is peculiar to man as a spiritual being. Lower animals have inclinations and appetites of the moment, but they cannot *reflect* on these impulses and distinguish impulses that are good from those that are bad. Man alone is capable of formulating an ideal and of pursuing it with devotion. He alone can have what is called *evaluative* self-consciousness. Or, in other words, he alone can evaluate his own thoughts, feelings and inclinations. Such *evaluative* self-consciousness is to be distinguished from factual or descriptive self-consciousness, which latter is to be found in psychology. Absolute categorical ideals and norms remain as *distant* ideals in spite of all our efforts to realize them. These are infinite objects with ever-expanding horizons, the understanding and apprehension of which can never constitute "knowledge" in the true sense.

Animals, we believe, are not self-conscious though a knowledge of facts need not be absent in them. A dog knows its master by sight and sound. Scientific knowledge of facts differs in *degree* only from that of animals. If you throw a small object in the cage of a monkey, you may find that the animal rushes forward, picks it up, and observes it from different angles. And in that observing animal Lin Yutang* saw the promise of a

* *Importance of Living*—Lin Yutang.

Newton. I, of course, hasten to add that differences in degree, when widely separated, amount also to differences in kind and may even be regarded as in some sense opposite. But this is not sufficient reason for alleging that the difference cannot be one of degree at all and that animal consciousness and scientific knowing are opposed as "wholly other". But animals cannot reflect on knowledge itself and determine its conditions, as we, human beings can. Such self-consciousness, giving rise to philosophy, is never a concern of the brutes.

(V)

It may, perhaps, be maintained then that all the main problems of traditional philosophy are forged on the anvil of our self-conscious spiritual nature, whereas the problems of science are those of "other-consciousness" leading to an impartial, objective knowledge of facts and of their universal laws. Philosophy necessarily has a touch of subjectivity about it. In his self-conscious spiritual being man is above the brutes and is truly human. His spiritual nature gives him his philosophy, art, morality and even religion that are distinctively human activities par excellence. We come across in recent philosophical literature phrases like "meta-language", "meta-meta-language", "meta-ethics", "meta-meta-ethics", "meta-metaphysics" or even "meta-philosophy" which, I think, only indicate, in the garb of modernism, a hierarchy of thought and knowledge revealing deeper and deeper strata of self-consciousness. I may be old-fashioned and may have indicated the problems of philosophy in terms of self-conscious, spiritual nature of man. But I am convinced that the recent terminology is the old wine in new bottles.

Because the main problems of philosophy are nurtured on the cradle of self-conscious, spiritual nature of man, it is but natural that the philosopher is a bit more self-conscious than any other reflective creature. He is forced to turn back upon himself again and again and to transcend the natural attitude of the common man and of the scientist. We get, in that natural attitude, a knowledge of facts and events as distinguished from the knower himself. It is well-known that a philosopher comes back to himself again and again and tries to determine what exactly is he doing when he is doing philosophy. Such self-criticism and self-examination of the philosopher qua philosopher prevail in the world of philosophy, but not in other sciences. The

subject-matters of the latter undertakings are more or less fixed. But the controversy on the nature of philosophy itself is sometimes taken to be philosophical. The meta-philosophical statements about philosophical statements themselves are the results of such self-criticism on the part of the philosopher. When we pass from philosophy to meta-philosophy we do not, therefore, reach an entirely different level. Philosophy itself, as we have seen, grows on the seed-plot of self-conscious spirit, when we turn our reflective eye on the significance of the various kinds of our experiences—sensuous, theoretical, moral, aesthetic, religious etc. The meta-philosophical language and discussions, which we meet with in books of philosophy or in learned periodicals dealing with matters philosophical, express, therefore, a kind of self-consciousness of the second level i.e., a self-consciousness of some self-conscious activities of the human spirit. If philosophy is presented in meta-language, a criticism of philosophic activity itself is presented in meta-meta-language. These are expressions of deeper and deeper levels of self-consciousness where we may have an interpretative understanding of the ultimate significance of the original level of acquaintance with facts in the natural attitude. Man is a spiritual being, and if he cannot degrade himself to the level of lower animals, he will never be able to banish his philosophical endeavour altogether.

Logically Good Reasons

by

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The use of reasons in order to settle a dispute or defend a decision is the mark of a civilised society. It is not unusual or unnatural to determine the cultural and intellectual maturity of a community by finding out to what extent its members are habituated to use rational methods for resolving their disagreements which they are bound to have due to their conflicting desires, demands and ideologies. Reasons can be good or bad, and they can be good or bad in various ways. There can be various senses of the phrase 'good reason' (and consequently of 'bad reason'), and, therefore, that which is a good reason in one sense of the term may not be so, or may be a bad reason, in another sense of it. Moral reasons, i.e., reasons offered to settle moral disputes, to defend moral choices, etc., are also sometimes good and sometimes bad. Even those which are good do not always do the same thing. The problem of distinguishing between good and bad, or between various types of good, moral reasons is a very complicated one because of the fact that moral arguments, i.e., the arguments offered by the participants in a moral controversy in defence of their respective positions, are usually informal and almost always immensely practical in character. In his famous book, *Ethics*, Mr. P. H. Nowell-Smith has distinguished between two types of good moral reasons. He calls them logically good reasons and morally good reasons. As his ethical theory has very much attracted the attention of present-day moral philosophers, it is worth while to examine his treatment of the problem of good reasons in some detail, at least for the reason that such an examination has not yet been accorded to it. But, in what follows, I shall be mostly concerned with his discussion of the nature of logically good reasons because he does not say much about morally good reasons.

According to Mr. Nowell-Smith, choosing is the most basic of the functions for which moral language is used. Therefore, to

give reasons for a moral judgment is to defend a choice. Moral reasoning is concerned with showing that the choice made, or going to be made, or advised to be made, has sufficient reasons in its favour. To seek reasons for a choice is to ask for an adequate answer to the question, 'What shall I do?' or 'Why did you do that?' He clearly admits that to speak of good and bad reasons is as meaningful in ethical contexts as in non-ethical ones:

...It is certainly true that we do give good reasons for doing things, if only because the phrase 'giving good reasons' is the phrase in English for something we all know we do; and if any argument tends to show that this is impossible there must be something wrong with the argument.¹

He criticizes intuitionism on the ground that it fails to account for this common fact. However, he thinks that the expression 'good reason' is ambiguous and, therefore, proceeds to clarify the different senses in which it may be used. It has two senses, he says, because it may mean 'morally good reason', or 'logically good reason'. "A morally good reason is that which justifies an action and exempts the agent from moral censure."² A logically good reason, on the other hand, is that "which leaves no further room either for the question 'what shall I do?' or for the question 'why did you do that?'"³ A moral judgment expresses a choice or an advice to someone else to make a choice. One can be asked to give reasons for one's choice in any one or both of the two senses of 'good reason'. Mr. Nowell-Smith makes a policy decision only to investigate what can, and what cannot, be a logically good reason. He holds that all logically good reasons which can possibly be given to justify a choice are not of the same logical type and criticizes Hobbes who maintains that "all action is caused by desire or aversion" and therefore explains "reasons for doing or refraining from something on a single model."⁴ However, Nowell-Smith thinks, they can be put into two groups, one containing expressions referring to 'pro-attitudes' and the other containing expressions referring to 'con-attitudes'. By pro-attitudes he means such diverse mental phenomena as desiring, liking, wanting, approving, enjoying, etc., and by con-attitudes such ones as hating, disliking, disapproving, rejecting, declining, etc. To give

1. P. H. Nowell-Smith, *Ethics* (Pelican), 1954, p. 78.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

a logically good reason for any choice is always to mention a pro- or con-attitude:

Sentences containing pro-and con-words provide good—that is say, logically complete—explanation of choice. If you ask a man why he is gardening or why he is going on to turn on the wireless and he says that he enjoys gardening or wants to hear some music, he has given a reply that makes the repetition of the question logically odd.⁵

A logically complete explanation is, thus, one which stops further questioning. If one still persists in asking 'What shall I do?' or 'Why did you do that?', what he is doing is logically odd. This kind of explanation is given if and only if a sentence containing a pro-word (i.e., a word designating a pro-attitude) or a con-word is given. To give a sentence containing a pro-word is therefore sufficient to make an explanation logically complete. In this respect all pro-words are equally effective. "Pro-words differ from each other in many ways, but they all have this in common that they provide logically impeccable explanation of why someone chose to do something."⁶ He further maintains that his "lists of pro- or con-attitudes must be so construed that anything which could be offered as logically good reason for or against doing anything must be included in the lists."⁷ This means, and he frankly admits, that "the proposition that any statement which gives a logically complete reason must include a reference to a pro- or a con- attitude is thus a frank tautology."⁸ It can be said, then, that what he is, in fact, doing here amounts to pointing out the existence of a class of words at least one of which, according to him, must occur in the explanation of any choice to make that explanation logically complete.

What has been said above is true of all choices and therefore of all moral judgments, singular or general. He does distinguish between what he calls 'superior rules' and 'subordinate rules', but he clearly maintains that reference to a moral rule is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain any choice, and goes on to say that an impeccable explanation of moral rules themselves requires a reference to pro-attitudes. He admits that sometimes we do offer a moral rule to explain a choice, but urges that such an expla-

5. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*

nation can be logically complete only if it contextually implies a pro-attitude towards obeying the rule. According to him, whenever we want to give a logically good reason for any choice, we must offer a sentence containing a pro-word, or some such sentence which, though it does not contain a pro-word, contextually implies one containing a pro-word. A sentence containing a pro-word can be contextually implied by a descriptive sentence, an aptness sentence, or a gerundive sentence (i.e., a moral sentence, singular or general). It is clear, then, that sentences which express moral rules fare no better in moral reasoning than those which do not, and also that they fare definitely worse than those which contain pro-words.

It follows from the above that, according to Nowell-Smith, if A asks B 'Why did you kidnap your neighbour's daughter?', and B replies to him by saying 'I am fond of kidnapping girls', B offers a logically good reason for what he has done, because after this reply it becomes logically odd for A to ask the same question again. One can make the repetition of a question look odd (1) by putting forth a consideration which shows the pointlessness of the very act of asking the question, (2) by using a rhetorical device which enables one to silence the questioner without adequately answering his question, or (3) by offering an adequate answer to the question, i.e., an answer which satisfies the questioner in the sense that it removes the puzzlement, to remove which he asked the question. In the above example, if B in reply to A's question says that his neighbour has no daughter, he would be doing (1). By doing this he certainly does not answer A's question, but shows that it is not logically admissible because there is no point in asking anybody 'why did you kidnap your neighbour's daughter?' when the neighbour has no daughter. Asking the question meaningfully presupposes that the neighbour has a daughter, and, therefore, by letting A know that he has not, B would show that A's question is illegitimate. The use of a pro-sentence, which alone can be, for Nowell-Smith, a logically good reason, certainly does not do this, though it also stops further questioning. But it is also obvious that it does not answer the question asked. Even after knowing that B is fond of kidnapping girls, A's puzzlement as to why he kidnapped his neighbour's daughter remains unabated. In fact, he could have asked the same question even if it was already known to him that A was fond of kidnapping girls. Rather, it is certainly true that the information whether one was or was not fond of doing what one did is very often considered to be of

no explanatory value if supplied in order to explain why one did what one did. Nowell-Smith might argue that what he is saying is true of logically good reasons, and if one feels that what according to him is a logically good reason fails to do, or does something other than, what a logically good reason in fact does, then what one has in mind is not the notion of a logically, but of some other type of, good reason. Maybe, one is thinking of a morally good reason and feels dissatisfied with his account of logically good reasons, simply because what for him can be a logically good reason does not do what a morally good reason normally does.

But the trouble is that Nowell-Smith makes it a matter of definition that a sentence containing a pro-word alone can be a logically good reason. To solve the problem of good reasons by definition is to offer no solution at all. It seems to me that sentences referring to pro-attitudes do what I have mentioned under (2). That is, they rhetorically silence the questioner without giving any adequate answer to his question. It is because Nowell-Smith thinks that merely stopping the question from being raised again is all that is required to make an explanation logically impeccable that he attaches so much importance to them. But this seems to be a very far-fetched sense of the phrase 'logically impeccable (or good) explanation'.

Nowell-Smith admits that if a person wants to offer a morally good reason for a choice he has made (or is going to make), he can present it by means of a sentence in which no reference to any pro-attitude is made. Such a sentence when presented as an answer to the question 'why did you do that?' will behave differently from the way one containing a pro-word will do. But if he wants to offer a logically good reason, he must refer to a pro-attitude. That is, if we want a logically good explanation for an action, or a logically sound justification for a moral judgment we cannot have anything better or more satisfying than what the use of a sentence containing a pro-word can offer.

I admit that a sentence expressing a morally good reason will be a moral judgment, and, therefore, the determination of what can and what cannot be a morally good reason will amount to making a set of moral judgments. To offer a theory which contains such a set of moral judgments is surely to offer an ethical, and not a meta-ethical, theory, and, therefore, a meta-ethicist like Nowell-Smith may not wish to do that. I also admit that the logical analysis of what is involved in the notion of a logically good reason, or

in that of a logically good explanation, is a very important philosophical task. And, I would not say that a philosopher, who limits his enquiries to the latter task and does not say anything about what can function as a morally good reason, is failing in his duties as a philosopher. But I am not at all prepared to accept the view, which, I think, seems to be obviously true to Nowell-Smith, that if one proceeds to determine what can do the job of a logically good reason, i.e., offer a logically good explanation of a choice, one cannot find anything better than certain rhetorical devices (i.e., certain sentences containing pro-words) the use of which leaves no room for further questioning. There is no space here for presenting my own analysis of what is involved in justifying (logically) a moral judgment (or a choice) and I do not want to repeat what I have already said elsewhere.⁹ I would only say, in conclusion, that a moral judgment (or choice) made by a person can be logically justified only if it is shown to be the result of his prior moral commitments (i.e., maxims or principles accepted by him). Anything which shows that the acceptance of the judgment in question is required by such commitments will, therefore, be a good reason, a logically good reason. To determine what can be a good reason in this sense of 'good reason' one will not have to make any moral judgment, nor will one have to reduce good reasons to rhetorical question-blocking devices. And, this sense of 'good reason' is not at all far-fetched or non-ordinary. When anybody shows that what he did he did because he was committed to do it, that is, he could not have refrained from doing it, or could have done anything else, without going against his prior commitments, he does all that we can ask him to do in order to answer the question 'why did you do that?'. If he succeeds in doing this, he certainly makes the repetition of the question logically odd and the answer given by him offers a logically complete explanation of his choice in a more natural sense than the use, if made by him, of any sentence containing a pro-word could have done.

9. For my views on the nature of ethical justification see my paper 'Justification in Ethics', *The Indian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. I, No. I.

Rational Method in Philosophy

by

G. R. MALKANI

The method of reason is pre-eminently the method of science. Is it possible to adopt a similar method for philosophy? If so, what form can it possibly take here?

The elements of a rational method in science can be clearly determined. Science accepts certain facts on common sensuous evidence. It then raises certain questions on the basis of those facts. All these questions are empirical questions,—*how things happen*. What are the laws of the world or patterns of behaviour of things in nature? The laws enable us to relate sensible occurrences, so that we can predict future occurrences. This predictability of future events is the most important part of our scientific knowledge.

We can see the limitations of this kind of knowledge. (a) We do not question our facts. They are just taken as given. But do they truly represent reality? Can we not go behind them to something more fundamental and therefore more truly real? Kant did go behind them to a more pervasive reality, which was the ground of all sensible phenomena and therefore the ground of nature. It was a kind of super-nature which we could not know, much less investigate. The sensible facts were, in comparison with their underlying reality, *subjective* only. Their ontological status was not absolute,—it was relative to the percipient mind. Some modern philosophers, who are more scientific than philosophical, reject Kant's analysis, and even regard it as quite illegitimate. They take their stand upon an arbitrary view of language and the supposed limitations of its meaning. But language has no such limitations. Even where its literal meaning fails to point to the reality, its symbolic meaning never fails. The point to emphasise here is that all sensible facts are dubitable. A person who does not doubt his sensible experience and the reality known in it is not taking even the first step for a genuine philosophical knowledge. He has successfully immunised himself against the philosophical virus. Perhaps we need not take him seriously as a

philosopher. Science can begin and end with sense-data, philosophy cannot.

(b) The laws of science are not a matter of simple finding. They are products of the imagination. They have a hypothetical character. A hypothesis is imagined to be true, not literally seen to be true. It is a device of our mind only to group certain phenomena under a unitary formula. A scientific law is accordingly open to correction and modification. It has provisional truth only. As our scientific knowledge advances, new laws, more adequate to facts, perhaps simpler and wider in scope, replace old ones. This is reason in action in the sphere of scientific knowledge. *Ultimate truth* is never known and is not attainable by this method. Concrete reality is reduced to the *abstraction of a law*; for the law abstracts from everything except a certain relationship of sense-data. We first arbitrarily reduce reality to sense-data which are relative. We next go beyond the sense-data to certain relationships between them which are purely hypothetical. Truth thus becomes doubly relative. Indeed, the scientific imagination is said to be controlled by facts. But however wide our acquaintance with facts, the hypothesis never loses its hypothetical and therefore problematic character. It may pass for fact in course of time. But that is only a way of speaking. The so-called fact is still a problematic fact. The relation between fact and theory is relative only, not absolute.

We know the limitations of reason in science. But scientifically-minded philosophers are not daunted. They want to introduce a form of rational method in philosophy also. (1) One way of doing this is that we disclaim any pretension to know reality in philosophy. The only way to know reality is the royal scientific way. There is no other species of genuine knowledge. We have therefore no problems about reality which are not problems about sense-data. What then is the business of philosophy? Must it go out of business? No. Its business is to throw out philosophy as a way of knowledge of reality distinct from that of science, and to show the non-sensical character of all its problems in-so-far as they refer to non-sensible reality. Philosophy, rationally pursued, has a negative function only,—the function of disenchantment with the super-sensible and the metaphysical.

(2) Another way philosophy can be done *rationally* is to accept the same facts as science does, but to ask different questions. One such question, and perhaps the most important, would be,—is

there any ultimate unity of all the facts? If there is such a unity, what must be its nature? Here the facts are not denied. They are accepted, and at the same time they are sought to be explained through an all-embracing unity. Such knowledge will be in the scientific tradition. Instead of partial unities which explain groups of phenomena, we seek a unity of all unities which will explain all known and possible facts of the sensible order. The method of arriving at the unity might be somewhat different from that of science because of the width of the subject-matter; but it will still be largely speculative. We have to draw upon our imagination. Imagination is thus at work in philosophy as it is in science. There is only one difference,—a philosophical theory cannot be verified, while a scientific theory is nothing if it is not verifiable. Since a philosophical theory embraces all supposed facts, there can be no facts which fall outside of it or conflict with it. Different philosophical theories can thus exist side by side and claim to be equally true. This claim cannot be refuted by any appeal to facts; for the facts are just as they are interpreted by the particular theory under consideration. Materialism, Idealism and Spiritualism can all claim to be true, and they are irrefutable by their own logic. Reason thus ends up with various different theories, each claiming to be based upon the same identical facts and each also claiming to be final. A speculative method in philosophy copied from science can only lead to philosophical chaos. The truth is that reason here is in the service of the inclination or the prejudice of each particular philosopher in turn. There is no such thing as *rational philosophy* which can claim the universality of science. Every philosopher is a law unto himself. He has a way of looking at things, and that is all the truth about it.

(3) It has sometimes been argued that philosophy has an intimate relation to science. It starts not with the facts of common-sense, but with the fuller and more advanced conclusions of science. It constructs on this basis a whole-view or a world-view. As science progresses, philosophy must also progress with it. Philosophy must continually reconstruct its world-view to conform with the conclusions of science. In other words, philosophy must keep abreast with science and have an up-to-date outlook on things.

This is, it appears to us, a complete misunderstanding of the nature of philosophical problems. They are in some sense ultimate problems, going to the beginning of things and to forms of reality which are not sensuously presentable but which can form the

ground of the known and the visible world. No amount of empirical investigation can throw any light upon these problems. The speculations of scientists turned philosophers are thus neither science nor philosophy. These hybrid philosophers can, in principle, construct various different philosophical theories all in conformity with the conclusions of science. There is almost no limit to the number of world-views they can so construct. It is all a misuse of science for purposes of philosophy.

(4) The rational method in philosophy can take a different direction altogether. Let us say, it is not construction, but criticism. Now, criticism pure and simple can be universal. Any particular system can be criticised. But mere criticism is only a negative process. It can lead to no positive truth, something which we can see or believe. Kant's criticism, for instance, led us nowhere. It led us only to agnosticism. Criticism should be in the service of a positive understanding of the truth. This is only possible, if it is supplemented by a positive method of knowledge. What is this method? Is there anything rational about it? Perhaps we shall have once again to enter the field of speculative thought, which is not a genuine method of knowledge.

(5) Philosophy is a theoretic approach to reality like science, but its problems and its method are quite different. Science studies the object in abstraction from the subject. Philosophy stays within experience, and raises questions which are implicit in it. In experience, there is the subject and also the object. The two are related in different ways however. The problems of philosophy arise from the nature of these relations. These relations may be complicated. But there are three main types which can always be distinguished. There is the relation in which the object is supposed to determine the subject,—this is what we understand by knowledge. There is the relation in which both the subject and the object have an equal contribution to make—this is called feeling. Lastly, there is the relation in which the subject determines the object,—this is volition. If no reflective problems arise from within experience, philosophy has simply no problem and no scope. We cannot go outside experience, and raise fanciful problems and call them philosophical. 'Is there life after death?', 'Does God exist?' are some such problems.

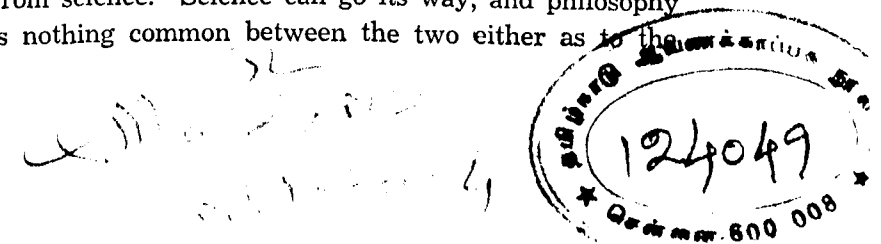
The questions of philosophy arise from within experience and must be resolved through an analysis of experience. Experience has a meaning of its own. We often fail to understand that mean-

ing and confuse it with some other meaning. All our philosophical problems arise from this confusion. Analysis should dissipate this confusion and put our understanding right. The problems are thus resolved from within. They were the product of confusion and misunderstanding. When these are removed, the problems do not arise. This is a modest, but an all-important, function of philosophical analysis. We are free from every self-made and self-created problem. We are merely disillusioned. Every philosophical problem is in the end seen to be illegitimate. It should not have arisen. Its source is in error and misunderstanding. We ought to be able, as a result of philosophical analysis, to read the book of experience for the truth that is really contained in it.

If what we have said is true, philosophical questions must be capable of being resolved completely without leaving any residue of a problem. They are not questions about fact, and their resolution does not depend upon any investigation of facts. They are questions about meaning,—the meaning that is immanent in our own experience but not recognised. This recognition will only come when we have reached, through analysis, a level of discernment where no further problem can be formulated about the meaning. The meaning is self-evidently clear. There is nothing further to be done about it. We are without doubts and without questions. The sun of truth shines within our own experience, and it constitutes its essential meaning. It is a species of direct seeing which disarms all questions and all doubts.

Philosophical truth is often equated with theories, stand-points and world-views. It is nothing of the sort. Theories, stand-points and world-views are all subjective matters. There can be no finality about them. They all stand at the level of *opinion*, not the level of *knowledge*. True knowledge is a spiritual undertaking of finding the truth within us, and finding it whole and entire. It is arrived at through what may be called a form of Socratic mid-wifery or rational analysis of experience itself. Absolute truth is within us, we seek it outside. "Know thy Self" may in this sense be said to be the universal motto of all true philosophy as against the dictum "know nature" which is the motto of all science. "*Adhyātmic-vidyā*" is the crown of all the sciences and supersedes them completely.

It follows from what we have said that philosophy has nothing to gain from science. Science can go its way, and philosophy its. There is nothing common between the two either as to the



goal or as to the method. Science does not seek absolute truth, and philosophy does not seek factual and relative truth. The problems of philosophy can be solved completely, the problems of science are ever expanding and endless. Philosophy can therefore completely ignore science. It can receive no help or guidance from it; and its own truths cannot be modified even in the least by any advance that science can make. It can correct science as a way of truth, it can receive nothing from science that is material to its own undertaking. It may be said to begin where science ends. This is our estimate of the relative merit of scientific truth and philosophical truth.

Spirituality—Indian and American

by

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Santha Rama Rau in a recent article in *The New York Times Book Review* (July 31, 1960) writes, "We (Indians) think of ourselves as emotional, outgoing, argumentative, hospitable, inquisitive, touchy—but always articulate." This excellent analysis of the Indian character would have been enhanced if the author had added that Indians are especially articulate about abstractions.

My wife, daughter, and I have vivid memories of Indians making pronouncements on abstract human values during our recent year in India: a stationmaster on the dignity of labor, a taxi driver on the enjoyment of religion, and a tailor on peace of mind. Our last conversation with an Indian in India was with the customs inspector at the New Delhi airport, who was far more interested in discovering what we thought of "Indian spirituality" than he was in the contents of our luggage. Again and again during our year in India we were informed, "Indians are spiritual-minded; Americans are material-minded." We heard it so often that we could almost predict when it would be brought into the conversation. We dreaded its coming, and winced when it came. Seldom was it presented as an hypothesis; rather it was an assumption, or perhaps a conclusion which had been reached with such finality that evidence which might have weakened it was not even considered.

Radhakrishnan has sagely observed, "There is not much truth in the pseudo-science of national or continental psychology which affirms that all Easterns are this and all Westerns are that. The history of any people is slightly more complicated than these sweeping statements would suggest." (*East and West*. Harper and Brothers, 1956, p. 13.) People of broad experience and learning realize the correctness of Radhakrishnan's statement, yet few are able to resist the temptation to display sophisticated erudition by making simple classifications of an entire nation or cultural group. Americans often characterize Indians—all 400,000,000

Indians, of course!—as unrealistic dreamers, and Indians describe all Westerners, and especially all Americans, as materialists. The tendency to make broad generalizations recognizes no national or cultural barrier, although this tendency manifests itself in different ways. For example, whereas Indian generalizations are likely to appear as abstractions, American generalizations usually appear as specifics. Nehru noticed this difference in *The Discovery of India*: "In India from the earliest days there was a search for those basic principles, for the unchanging, the universal, the absolute. . . The very thing India lacked, the modern West possessed and possessed to excess. It had the dynamic outlook. It was engrossed in the changing world, caring little for ultimate principles, the unchanging, the universal." (Anchor Book, pp. 384, 385.) In India we were asked about "American materialism," "Western imperialism," and the absence of "spirituality" in the United States, whereas not once in the year since our return to the United States has a fellow citizen asked, "What do you think of Indian spirituality?" or "How do the Indians regard our American materialism?" But we have been asked many specific questions about Indian food, clothing, shelter, agriculture, industry, politics, and religion which were founded on the assumption that all Indians are alike.

Intercultural and international understanding must begin with the recognition that human wants and needs are fundamentally the same. If "spirituality" refers to man's interests in religion, morality, philosophy, literature, music, and art, then all people are spiritual-minded; and if "materialism" refers to man's concern for food, clothing, and shelter, then all men are material-minded. Circumstances may cause one people for a time to direct more attention to spiritual values and another people to be more concerned about material values. One Indian friend argued with us that Indians are more material-minded than Americans because they spend more time seeking and preparing food than do Americans. It is the hungry man, not the well-filled man, who dreams of food, he argued. The aim of this essay is not to determine who is more spiritual-minded and who is more material-minded, but rather to point out that spirituality is differently conceived in India and in the United States.

When Indians speak of "Indian spirituality," they may have in mind a vow of silence, or a death fast, or an act which shows indifference to pain. They may be thinking of Gandhiji's teachings on Satyagraha, or of Vivekananda's observation, "In the

West they are trying to solve the problem of how much a man can possess, and we are trying to solve the problem on how little a man can live." (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashrama, 1931, Vol. III, p. 181). Or they may have in mind the few possessions which the Buddha allowed the members of the Sangha to possess: begging bowl, water pitcher, water strainer, three robes, razor, needle, and thread. The spiritual man, according to the Indian view, is the one who controls, curbs, and even denies his appetites for food, drink, and sex. He is indifferent to creaturely comforts and discomforts.

Indian spirituality is rooted in a spiritual-material dichotomy. This may be the continuing influence of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. Although the Vedānta in its various forms is the dominant philosophy of Indian intellectuals, the dualism of Sāṃkhya appears to reign in the separation of spiritual and material values. The ancient Vedic division of human life into the four ashramas again rests on the supposition that a man cannot pursue the material goals of life and the spiritual goals concurrently. Westerners agree with Indians that it is disgusting to watch a middle-aged person try to act and look like a teen-ager, but on the other hand Westerners believe that it is cruel to expect the old person to cut himself off from his family. I must confess that I was shocked at the Thirty-third Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1958 when in the discussion which followed the very interesting paper of S. H. Kelshikar, "The Place of the Father in the Modern Family," a number of men contended that the man in the sannyasin stage of life does not need love because that is the claim of śruti writings, although, as was brought out in the discussion, modern psychologists agree that the human being never outgrows the need for love.

Spirituality for Indians means anti-materialism. Hence, when the average Indian compares his income, his intake of calories, and his pleasures with those of the average American, he is likely to conclude that Americans are materialists—and perhaps profligates, gluttons, and debauchees. This conclusion is as unwarranted as is the common belief of Americans that an Indian holy man who practises some form of asceticism is a demented person who ought to be given shock treatment to bring him back to sanity. Obviously here are widely divergent interpretations of the proper means of manifestation and realization of some basic human needs and aspirations.

The American view of human life does not separate the material and the spiritual as does the Indian. Whereas the Hindu ideal is that the first half of life should be devoted to the material or physical values (*artha* and *kama*) and the second half of life to the spiritual values (*dharma* and *moksha*), the Christian view of life—assuming that it makes as good sense to designate American culture as Christian as it does to designate Indian culture as Hindu—blurs the distinction between material and spiritual, or, to be more exact, Christianity holds that the spiritual is a quality which can be realized in and through the material. Christianity is a hybrid religion with roots in both the Hebrews and the Greeks. From the Hebrews Christianity derived the conception of the goodness of the world. For example, in the Hebrew myth of creation the Creator surveyed the total work of his hands and declared that it was “very good.” The Greeks, on the other hand, often felt that a conflict existed between the physical and the spiritual. The wise man, said Socrates, always seeks death, for then at last he will be free from the demands of the body. In the history of Christianity there have been many attempts to introduce a dichotomy between flesh and spirit. There was Gnosticism in the second century, Manichaeism in the fourth and fifth centuries, Catharism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Puritanism in the seventeenth century. These movements have left their marks on Christianity, but for the most part they have been rejected as aberrations of the true Christian view. The conflict with Gnosticism prompted the early Christian Church to insert into its first creed the amazing statement: “I believe in the resurrection of the flesh.” However this statement may be interpreted in the various Christian churches today, in its inception it was an effort to deny that spirituality required the rejection, neglect, or abuse of the physical human body.

Americans out of this Christian background deny that possession of material wealth or attention to the needs and desires of the physical body necessarily disqualifies a person from spirituality, that a person must be poor and hungry in order to be spiritual, that gaiety is detrimental to the spiritual life, or that the spiritual person must turn away from the things of this world. A vow of silence, or poverty, or hunger does not seem to Americans to have anything to do with spirituality. While acknowledging the intrinsic value of such “spiritual experiences” as religious worship and aesthetic participation and appreciation, Americans reveal their typical pragmatism in insisting that an essential ingredient of the

total “spiritual experience” is activity directed to the solution of the problems of men. Unfortunately, overt expressions of humanitarian concern can be shown in the absence of genuine humanitarian emotions. But the American view is that action without profession is preferable to profession without action. Spirituality is an active concept in America. Not he who says, “Lord, Lord” will enter the Kingdom of God, but he who *does* the will of God. For this reason Americans are not greatly impressed by such prescriptions of behavior as the Buddhist’s five rules of conduct (*pancha shila*). These rules are rules of abstention. For example, the first rule, “I take upon myself the vow of abstaining from causing hurt to living beings,” could be perfectly observed by a man who never raises a finger to hurt or to *help* a fellow being. The American counterpart of this rule would be “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you” or “Inasmuch as you have *done* it unto the least of these my brethern, you have *done* it unto me.”

The Indian charge that Americans are preoccupied with luxury and wealth is unfortunately true of some Americans. Some are debased by that which has come to them by fortunate circumstances. Three observations should be made at this point. One is that most Americans work hard for the standard of living they enjoy. Again and again Indians in my country have expressed amazement at the speed, vigor, and efficiency with which Americans work. The second observation is that the symbols of wealth status vary in India and in the United States. The amount of gold jewelry possessed by Indian women staggers the imagination of the average American woman who is perfectly satisfied to wear nothing but costume jewelry. The American woman would rather put her money into an automobile than into gold ornaments! The third observation is that Americans have a curious tendency to deprecate the ideals which direct their lives. Pomposity is perhaps the most detested vice among Americans—and above all braggadocio about one’s moral or spiritual goodness. For example, an American friend of mine, a man in his sixties, once said to me that his philosophy of life was “Good food and plenty of it!” He tried to present himself as an epicure, yet I knew he was a good citizen, a considerate friend, a loving husband and father, an honest merchant, a sacrificing college trustee, a lover of good literature, and a loyal church member. “Running one’s self down” is a popular sport in America. It is a trait of the American which is easily misunderstood by foreigners.

At this last point Indians seem to be quite different—at least that is my observation. Indians are articulate, said Santha Rama Rau. I would add that they are articulate about “that which matters most”. If it is true that Indians are the most philosophical of all people, one evidence for that conclusion is that Indians are usually not embarrassed to introduce into ordinary conversation topics dealing with personal religion, ultimate values, and intimate relationships. Americans are not articulate in this sense. They rarely introduce such topics into polite conversation. They regard direct questions about personal guiding principles as an invasion of privacy. This is a great loss for Americans. It prevents them from deriving the benefits of verbalizing, and perhaps defending, their own values and thus clarifying their own thinking on such basic concerns. Americans’ taciturnity on fundamental values gives to others the false impression that they are not interested in such matters. The typical American attitude is “What you are speaks so loudly, I can’t hear what you say.” To jar an American from this habitual reserve, I recommend from personal experience a trip to India!

Descartes’ Idea of ‘God as The Cause of His God-Idea’ A Critical Analysis

by

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Descartes has given two causal arguments for God’s existence. In one he tries to prove God as the cause of his God-Idea; in the other he tries to prove God as the cause of the human self. In this paper I shall analyse and examine the first one.

I. *Statement*: — ‘My idea of God is the idea of the supremely perfect Being. *I cannot be the source of this idea*, because I am finite and imperfect. The cause cannot be less perfect than the effect; the cause must be at least as much, if not more, perfect as the effect’.

My God-idea cannot be shown to have been derived from the experience of the world, because it is not a negative idea. Only a negative idea can be constructed from some observational experience. For instance, the idea of darkness is a mental construction from the experience of light; this is possible because the idea of darkness is nothing more than the idea of the negation or absence of light. The God-idea (idea of the infinite) is not constructed (by the method of negation) from the experience of the finite. The infinite is not the negation of the finite; it is the other way, the finite is the negation of the infinite. We understand the finite in the light of the infinite, the imperfect in the light of the perfect.

‘My idea of God is so rich and perfect in its contents, that only the being who actually embodies all the perfections represented in my idea could be the real cause of it. Such a being can be no other than God.’ This statement is my free summary of Descartes’ argument, as presented by him in Meditation III of his ‘Meditations on First Philosophy.’

II. *Analysis*: — Descartes seems to base this argument on two presuppositions; (i) the ultimate cause of any significant¹ idea

1. Descartes distinguishes significant ideas from imaginary or fictitious ideas. Fictitious ideas are those whose origin is the subject’s own imagination. Significant ideas are those whose origin is something other than the subject himself.

must be 'formal' in character (objective and not of the nature of idea); (ii) the ultimate cause of a significant idea must have as much 'formal' (objective) reality as the idea has 'objective' (subjective or ideational) reality.

His first presupposition implies that the immediate source of an idea may be some other idea, either of the subject himself or of some one else; but its ultimate source must be some objective reality. In short, he wishes to emphasise the objective basis of ideas.

His second pre-supposition implies that the objective origin of a given idea must be as rich and perfect (even more) in quality and contents as the idea itself. In other words, the objective origin of an idea must actually and objectively possess at least all the qualities and perfections which are mentally represented in the idea.

In one place, Descartes himself has very clearly and categorically stated what we have given here as implications from his two postulates about the ultimate cause of ideas. Descartes says, "Although it may be the case that one idea gives birth to another idea, that cannot continue to be so indefinitely; for in the end we must reach an idea whose cause shall be so to speak an archetype, in which the whole reality (or perfection) which is so to speak objectively (or by representation) in these ideas is contained formally (and really). Thus the light of nature causes me to know clearly that the ideas in me are like (pictures or) images which can, in truth, easily fall short of the perfection of the objects from which they have been derived, but which can never contain anything greater or more perfect."

It is as clear as anything that Descartes holds Copy theory of Ideas and he bases his argument for God (under consideration in this paper) on Copy theory of Ideas. He holds the view that the ultimate origin of any significant idea must be an objective reality, none other than the ontological object or the real thing (the original) from which the idea is derived as a copy. Applying this theory to his God-idea, he could argue that his idea of God is a significant idea (i.e. generated in his mind by some cause other than himself and not a fancy of his own creation) and therefore it must be a copy, and as a copy its ultimate origin must be an objective reality which embodies all the qualities and perfections which are mentally represented in his God-idea; and that source can be none other than God himself.

Descartes' division of significant ideas into adventitious ideas and innate ideas is logically based on his copy theory of Ideas (or the belief that the ultimate origin of every significant idea must be none other than the objective original of which the idea is a representation). Accordingly, he puts all those ideas whose objective originals could be of empirical character in the class of adventitious ideas; and those ideas whose objective originals are thought to be trans-empirical he puts under the category of innate ideas. He considers God-idea to be an innate idea.

III. *Evaluation*: — In order to estimate the logical value of Descartes' causal argument under consideration, it is necessary to examine the truth value of (i) the copy theory of ideas and (ii) the view that the God-idea is a copy.

III. (i) The copy theory of Ideas (or the view that every significant idea is a mental representation of some objective reality) is not a generalisation based on an exhaustive and critical study of ideas held to be significant. It is merely an arbitrary presupposition. However for centuries it dominated the minds of philosophers in the West till Professor John Wisdom (some 30 years back) formulated his theory of 'Logical constructions'. Wisdom's theory of 'Logical construction' is a partial denial of the copy theory of Ideas. Wisdom points out that we all have certain ideas in our minds, which we all consider to be significant and true, but which cannot be proved to be copies of real things; there are no objective entities corresponding to them. Examples—'Nation', 'British Nation' etc. He rightly points out that such words are not names of entities, as they cannot function, like proper names, as pointers or indicators of entities. "You cannot point out to me and say 'this is the British Nation' in the sense in which you can say 'this is John'". (From Wisdom's class lectures—1937). According to Mr. Wisdom, our ideas corresponding to such verbal symbols are of the nature of logical constructions and not of the nature of mental pictures. An idea is said to be a logical construction if it is analysable into ideas of the nature of copies or logical correspondents. A statement about a logical construction can be adequately analysed into a number of statements about logical correspondents. For instance, a statement about France can be shown to be logically equivalent to a sum of statements about particular French men.

In the scholastic and Cartesian philosophy, three classes of entities were postulated; existents, subsistents and transcendents.

Ideas which, according to Wisdom and other analysts, are treated as logical constructions were considered as ideas of subsistent entities, by the scholastic and Cartesian philosophers. From the scholastic and Cartesian stand-points, abstract and general names denote subsistent entities; whereas the modern analysts treat them as logical constructions and not as entity-words. The analysts allege that the Copy theory of Ideas and the doctrine of subsistent entities are rooted in certain misleading features of language. It is argued that the logical dissimilarity between the verbal symbols used for referring to particular objects and those used for referring to classes and qualities is concealed by their syntactical similarity; this syntactical similarity has misled the philosophers into the superstition that all nouns function alike. (The reader may refer to the author's book, on 'Wittgensteinian Philosophy', Chapter VII, for a fuller account of the psychological genesis of the Copy theory of Ideas).

III (ii) The modern theory of Logical constructions disproves Descartes' Copy theory of Ideas, but not his argument for God, that the God-idea is a proof of God. This argument of Descartes could be refuted only by establishing that the God-idea cannot be of the nature of a copy of some objective original.

The theory of Logical constructions does not deny that some of our ideas are logical correspondents or copies of real objects; it is possible that the God-idea is one of them. But is it reasonable to admit that any person's idea of God could be a copy of the real God? Let us examine for a while the meaning of 'idea as a copy of a real object'. At the moment I have in my mind an idea of my writing table kept in the other room. This idea could very well be said to be a copy of my table. In a sense this idea is only a memory image.

From this example we can get the distinguishing characteristics of ideas which could rightly be treated as copies. There are three distinguishing marks of the copy-ideas; (i) ideas which are of the nature of copies are ideas of some entities. Corresponding to their objects of thought there are some ontological objects. Such ideas are to be distinguished from ideas of the nature of logical constructions which have no ontological objects corresponding to their objects of thought. (ii) ideas which are copies require not only some entities as their basis; but they require knowable entities. They are to be distinguished from ideas of the nature of vague presuppositions, implying merely a possible existence of some entities, without revealing their nature and

function. Locke's idea of Matter or Material substance may be cited as an example. Locke said 'My idea of Material substance is idea of something "I know not what", except that without postulating it I cannot comprehend something which I constantly experience, viz the co-existence of sense-perceived qualities'. It is clear that for Locke the origin of his idea of Matter was his clear and constant perception of qualities and their co-existence; but the original or the ontological object of that idea was beyond the realm of his perceptual experience and therefore his conception of it was very vague and indistinct. (iii) The most important test or condition of ideas which are copies is that their conception should be preceded or accompanied by a direct knowledge of their respective ontological objects.

In order to judge whether the God-idea is of the nature of a copy, we have to answer three questions, (i) Is God an entity?, (ii) Is God a knowable entity or is knowledge of God possible?, (iii) Is any one's God-idea based on and derived from his direct knowledge of God?

Let us deal with these three questions in the reverse order. Is any person's idea of God derived from his knowledge of God? In this connection Descartes points out that his idea of God is implicitly involved in his self-knowledge; that he becomes aware of the presence of the God-idea in him whenever he reflects on his own nature. 'In my experience of reflective self awareness, I know myself to be imperfect, incomplete and dependent; and this self-experience derives its significance from my God-idea'. This seems to be the main idea stated by him in the last part of his Meditation III.

According to me Descartes' analysis of self-knowledge is true, but incomplete. In the experience of self-awareness, the act of self-awareness is more prominent than its contents. The introspective awareness of the self, as the subject of the changing mental states, seems to be similar to what Locke said about his awareness of the physical objects, as something over and above the qualities of the physical objects perceived by him. Just as in our perceptual experience, perception of the qualities is more prominent than perception of the objects in which they inhere; similarly in our introspective experience, introspective awareness of the mental states (thoughts, feelings and desires) is more prominent than awareness of the subject of the mental states.

In the strict sense, idea of the self is a logical presupposition of the introspective awareness of the mental states²; and idea of the physical object is a logical presupposition of the sensory awareness of the qualities. Idea of God is a logical presupposition of idea of the self and of the external objects.

Conclusion: Descartes seems to be wedded to the copy theory of Ideas and therefore has failed to make an unbiassed and deep analysis of his God-idea. In his analysis of his idea of God, his attempt has been only to show that the God-idea constantly present in his mind is not a fancy and invention of his own mind and that it is also not like his ideas of sense-perceived things.

Having done this, he proceeds to state that "God, in creating me, placed this idea within me to be like the mark of the workman imprinted on his work". This statement of Descartes is more an expression of his imagination forced on him by his irrevocable belief in the copy theory of Ideas than a proved conclusion.

2. In part IV of his Discourse on the Method, Descartes seems to hold the same view. He says 'to think is to be', which implies that thinker or self is a logical presupposition of thoughts. The reader may refer to the author's paper on 'Descartes' ontological arguments' (Philosophical Quarterly, October 1957).

The Logical Structure of "Tattvamasi" According to Suresvara's Naiskarmya Siddhi

by

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The importance of the distinction between primary and secondary meanings for the understanding of Śaṅkara's exegesis of "Tattvamasi" and other *mahāvākyas* is fast becoming recognised by those scholars who take the trouble of reading all the authentic writings of the great Ācārya and of studying the works of his immediate followers.

Thus, for instance, Professor Louis Renou writes in a recent article:

What is the Śaṅkarian Vedānta but a total adherence to the letter and the spirit of the "great propositions" contained in the *Upaniṣads*? The initial principle is that these propositions must necessarily teach the Absolute as the sole reality and assimilate to it the immaterial Self which resides within each human being. However, it is patent that most Upanishadic propositions make use of both images and fiction. Does it then follow that they are lacking in authority, that they belong to a category of discursive knowledge? No; rather they express the supreme truth but on an implicit plane: they use the artifices peculiar to ordinary language in order to achieve this truth on another level. Since the Absolute is not designated by a *direct* term (and how could it be?), everything that serves to *evoke* it necessarily belongs to a *secondary* and implicit semantics. The Śaṅkarian Vedānta is based on a certain ambiguity arising from the language.¹

To take another example, Professor A. C. Mukerji, in an article published about the same time, emphasizes "the 'advaita' distinction between the adjective (*viśeṣana*) and what is known as *lakṣaṇā*." He rightly considers that this distinction between

1. Louis Renou, *The Enigma in the Ancient Literature of India*, in *Diogenes*, 29 (Spring 1960), p. 40.

'the expressing and the indicating powers of terms "has saved its exponents from one of the disastrous and far-reaching fallacies of thought."²

One of the first post-Śaṅkara exponents of this distinction was Sureśvarācārya. He was a direct pupil of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and the references to Bhagavan Pūjyapāda (as he usually called his spiritual Teacher) which we find in his writings constitute, together with those of Padmapāda, the only really trustworthy personal information we have about the great Vedāntin.

"The individuality as well as the charm of Sureśvara consists largely in the vehemence with which he insists on the full purity of the doctrine of Advaita."³ His *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi* reiterates many verses of the *Upadeśa Sāhasrī* of Śrī Śaṅkara and contains clear echoes of his *Gītā Bhāṣya*; this is a first indication that he follows his master very closely. A comparative study of their respective teachings can further show that they differ very little. There are, however, according to Mr. A. J. Alston, three peculiarities of doctrine in the *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi* which deserve mention. The first is a refinement which tends to uphold pure *naiṣkarmya*: "The injunction (i.e., 'he should meditate only on the Self') can only be a restrictive (*niyamavidhi*: this is Śaṅkara's opinion) or a negative one (*parisaṅkhyāvidhi*: this is the alternative opinion preferred by Sureśvara) for we can meditate on the highest Self only when the not-self has already been excluded from view" (NS. I. 88). The second is Sureśvara's peculiar treatment, in certain passages only, of the concept of *ahaṁkāra*. He treats it as the most subtle modification of the *manas*, the nodal point where consciousness is inserted into the empirical personality and, therefore, the last element to be transcended in *Brahmajijñāsā*. The third peculiarity of Sureśvara's doctrine is his insistence on the magic power (*mahiman* or *mahimā*) of the *mahāvākyas* when pronounced by a genuine *guru* to an attuned pupil. The presence of this power cancels the need for a final *manovṛtti* to destroy nescience.⁴

The third book of the *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi* explains the meaning of the cardinal text "That thou art." This explanation of the

2. A. C. Mukerji, *Idealistic Trends of Contemporary India*, in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, July 1960, p. 119.

3. A. J. Alston's Translation of *The Naiṣkarmya Siddhi of Śrī Sureśvara*, Shānti Sadan, 29 Chepstow Villas, London, W. 11, 1959, Introduction, p. i.

4. Cf. *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. i-ii.

grammatical and logical structure of that text prepares the pupil immediately for the solemn hearing of the formula from the lips of his *guru*. It is itself preceded by the well-known discipline destined to purify his mind and qualify him for *Brahmajijñāsā*, and more immediately by the discursive reflection which, proceeding according to the method of agreement and difference (*anvaya-vyatireka*), should lead him to discriminate the permanent from the impermanent (*nityānityavastu-viveka*). "Without reasoning (*anvaya and vyatireka*) there is no understanding of the meaning of the (great) sentences, and without this, nescience cannot be destroyed" (NS. II. 9). Sureśvara emphasizes this role of reasoning and considers it as usually indispensable, but he also stresses that this function is purely ancillary. Indeed, "because the inferences merely establish the existence (of the *Ātman*), they do not reveal the meaning of the (great) sentences" (NS. III. 57).

The meaning of *Tattvamasi* is strictly *akhaṇḍārthaka*: its reference is to the absolutely simple Reality. Any exegesis of it which would result in a final residue of duality is therefore inappropriate.

For instance, we should reject all *samuccaya* views, even if they are proposed by such Vedāntins as Brahmādatta or Maṇḍana Miśra. The first falls into line with the Mīmāṃsaka insofar as he holds the view that the Upaniṣads like the *karmakāṇḍa* of the Veda are essentially injunctive in character, their injunction being about symbolic meditation, variously termed *prasamkhyāna*, *bhāvanā*, or *upāsānā* (NS. I. 67). Accordingly, such assertive propositions as *Tattvamasi* are merely subsidiary (*arthavāda*) to the corresponding injunction *Ātmetyevopāsita* (*Bṛ. Up.*, I. 4.7). They do not bring about final release directly through the knowledge they convey, but rather through the special conviction which is generated by *prasamkhyāna* and which improves upon ordinary knowledge. This improved knowledge is entirely the result of the creative work of the meditator. But, replies Sureśvara, "the spiritual conviction (*bhāvanā*) amassed through repeated meditation cannot bring *all* saṁsāra to an end, for in this case, the cessation of saṁsāra is a result, due to the generation of that spiritual conviction and, as such, it cannot be eternal" (NS. III. 91). Besides we should remember that the truth of knowledge depends upon the reality of its object (*vastutantram*) and not upon the effort of the knower.

Maṇḍana Miśra incurs the same criticism insofar as his teaching agrees with that of Brahmādatta in upholding *bhāvanā*

arising from repeated meditation (*abhyāsa*). He, indeed, holds that "the knowledge 'I am Brahman' generated by the Upaniṣadic sentences is *relational* (*saṃsargātmaka*) and hence does not penetrate to the real nature of the *Ātman*. But this is no fault, for in the case of one who meditates as continuously as the Ganges flows, *another kind of knowledge* arises which does not consist of a propositional meaning (*avākhyārthātmakam*). It is this latter knowledge alone which eradicates all the darkness of nescience" (N.S. I. 67).

Against this position Sureśvara upholds the immediacy and the finality of the knowledge generated by the *mahāvākyas* and rejects as misapprehension the accusation that they are relational:

"The knowledge derived from the *śruti* demolishes nescience... at a single stroke. Hence there can be no association between the two (i.e., between knowledge and action even in the form of repeated meditation)" (N.S. I. 67).

"In sentences like, 'verily the ether in the jar is the ether in the sky,' we point (not to a subject qualified by its predicate but) to a reality not directly expressed in the words of the sentence, (namely, to the ether unlimited by jar or sky). So in sentences like 'That thou art' we *immediately* receive knowledge beyond the expressed meaning of the sentence" (N.S. III. 9).

"And if the meanings of the words are understood but the spiritual experience does not arise, it will not help to invoke purely imaginary injunctions to generate a different knowledge (through repeated pondering). For there is no other meaning to be understood but (that conveyed by the sentence itself)" (N.S. III. 119).

"And again, what need of action (such as symbolic meditation) has the one who has experienced successively the five *kośas* and rejected them as non-*Ātman*, and understood the meaning of 'I am Brahman' (according to the discipline of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*)?"

"If scriptural texts do not promote correct knowledge of the subject they refer to simply by being heard (under the proper conditions), how can *śruti* be regarded as authoritative at all?"

"If an objector (such as Maṇḍana Miśra) says, 'Man knows through symbolic meditation (*prasaṅkhyāna*)'—then

how can the word be teaching the truth? "We hold that knowledge derived from words is mediate and indirect (*parokṣa*)", the objector replies, "but that it becomes intuitive conviction of reality through *prasaṅkhyāna*."

"If his reason and the words do not produce correct and immediate (*aparokṣa*) knowledge in the first place, independently of that (symbolic meditation), how can they produce right knowledge later merely by being repeated?" (N.S. III. 121-124).

We can conclude this controversy in the words of A. J. Alston: "For Sureśvara *Brahmajñāna* is achieved through a discipline (*Brahmajñānāsā*) that has two stages. First comes *anvaya* and *vyatireka* on the basis of the *śruti* texts, key and subordinate, and on one's own experience. Then, when this has been brought to the point where one is certain of the unreality of all the non-*Ātman*, a final *mahāśravaṇa* (solemn hearing of the texts) serves to transport the pupil beyond the realms of empirical cognition altogether. The second stage of the discipline is thus brief, though Sureśvara regarded it as absolutely necessary."⁵

Since, according to Sureśvara, the first stage excludes *upāsanā* as leading to an *avākhyārthātmaka* knowledge, we are brought back to the necessity of understanding the proper *vākhyārtha* of the great propositions. Since the Reality they signify is absolutely simple, their meaning cannot be relational, even though taken at their face-value such statements do not appear different from common relational statements. We should then understand them in some peculiar sense, presently to be determined.

Should we call them identity-statements? This appellation would be ambiguous since strict identity is a reciprocal relation (if A is identical with B, then B is identical with A) whereas the *tādātmya* relation which exists between 'aham' and 'Brahma' or between 'tvam' and 'Tat' is surely not reciprocal. For "the effect," says Śaṅkara, "has its *ātman* in the cause, but not the cause in its effect" (*Br. Sūt. Bh.*, 2.1.9).

It would be better then to call the *mahāvākyas* identifying or identification-statements. An identification-statement can be understood as indicating an identity even though its terms are not strictly identical when taken in their direct and primary meaning.

5. A. J. Alston, *Op.cit.*, Note on N.S. III. 40, p. 140.

In the sentence "This is that Devadatta," the term "this" denotes directly "this grown-up individual in front of me," whereas the term "that Devadatta" denotes directly "that boy Devadatta who was my classmate in school", but my intellect strips them of their *upādhis* or accessory connotations in order rightly to understand their essential identity. This or a similar process of purification conditions the right apprehension of any identifying statement.

Accordingly, Sureśvara has proposed two *prima facie* different treatments of the *mahāvākyas*. The first proceeds through a negation of the formal connotation of the subject-term; the second discovers the correct but secondary meaning (*lakṣyārtha*) of both terms through *lakṣaṇā*. Let us call them the negation-process and the *lakṣaṇā*-process.

The negation-process is of the type "This snake is but a rope," "That stump is but a man", etc. Verbally, such statements refer to a snake or a stump, but actually to a rope or a man. Similarly, the *śruti*-statement "I am Brahman" is found to mean the exact opposite of its verbal or primary denotation. It has the logical structure of an affirmative proposition involving a concealed negation.

If the opponent says that the "I" must be non-different (from the supreme *Ātman*) on account of the *śruti*-text "I am Brahman", we reply that, as in the case of "I am fair", not all statements made about the "I" really refer to it. The sentence "I am Brahman" actually denies the "I".

The notion of "I" is negated completely by the rise of the notion "I am Brahman", just as the notion of the stump of a tree is negated by the notion of man in the sentence "That stump is a man." (NS. II. 28-29).

The term "I" indicates (the innermost *Ātman*) in the same way as the term "snake" indicates the rope. Indeed, it is only by excluding (the primary notion of) "I" that the meaning of the sentence is known, for that which it indicates is really the supporting abode of the "I". (NS. III. 27).

When a man wishes to dispel the erroneous notion of another, he first conforms his speech to that erroneous notion as if it were a fact, and then he informs him that "it is not so". It is in the same way that statements like "Thou art

That" (apparently affirming what they actually deny) dispel nescience.

(In the case of one who takes a post for a man) one does not remove the idea "man" by merely repeating (as if to the sky or with reference to another substratum) "post... post... post". One cannot remove the erroneous idea "man" without first conforming to it (and saying, "that man is not a man but a post").

The word "thou" is used only to conform to the (ignorant) standpoint of the hearer, and hence the state of being a limited (*jīva*) subject to pain is not inculcated (by the proposition but only apparently referred to). If (the sentence "That thou art") were a plain assertion, then indeed there would result a contradiction (between "That" and "thou", and the sentence would be as absurd as the assertion "horse is cow"). But between what is really affirmed ("That") and what merely repeats (the ignorant notion, as does the word "thou" used as a mere concession to the hearer), there is no conflict. Conflict, indeed, may be expected only when the two terms, (subject and predicate identified in a sentence) are understood according to their primary and proper sense (*svapradhāna*), (since in that case the sentence would identify things which are really different). But the two terms (of our sentence) are not denoting their own (specific) universal (*sāmānyā*), therefore they do not conflict.

Not tied to the (specific) universal (contained by their direct meaning), not used to express anything limited such as the *śruti* wishes ultimately to avoid, the terms "That" and "thou" are emancipated (from their primary and empirical meaning). Hence, they can coalesce without any contradiction. (NS. III. 73-75).

The above quotations show that in working out the negation-process we must of necessity develop the more complete *lakṣaṇā*-process. The first merely emphasises the negating phase of the second. It is but a part of the latter and there is therefore no adequate distinction between the two processes.

The *lakṣaṇā*-process has three phases. The first is the moment of *adhyāropa* or superimposition, when the sentence is understood according to its direct verbal import as asserting the identity of the individual ego (*jīvātman*) or at least, following Sureśvara, of

the ego-sense (*ahaṃkāra*) with the supreme *Ātman*. Next comes the phase of *apavāda* or negation: the pupil prepared through his training in *anvaya-vyatireka* realises that "this 'I' or 'ego-sense', which can be dismissed as non-*Ātman* through reasoning according to *anvaya* and *vyatireka*, is not the thing that is really referred to in texts like "I am Brahman", since, if it were, the "I" and the "Brahman", as subject and predicate of a proposition implying identity, would find that identity in being the non-*Ātman*! Evidently the word "I" is used in a special sense and not in the ordinary one" (NS II. 54). The pupil therefore denies the primary sense of "I". Yet he does not, like the Buddhist, deny all meaning to the word "I", but seeks for a secondary meaning (*gauṇī* or *lakṣaṇā vṛtti* or *lakṣyārtha*) which will destroy the incongruity of the *āropita* understanding and establish the compatibility of "I" with its predicate "Brahman". The nature of this predicate governs his search and leads him to the most elevated meaning (*paramārtha*) of the term "I", i.e., "*Paramātman*". This is the third phase of the process, the *paramārtha-lakṣaṇā* or assumption of the supreme meaning. The pupil at last realises that, *paramārthataḥ*, i.e., according to the supreme meaning of its terms, the sentence "I am Brahman" really means "My *Paramātman* is Brahman". Thus he discovers the *tādātmya* relation that exists between the limited "I", as an effect, and its innermost yet transcending Cause, Brahman as *Paramātman*.

Sureśvara explains this *lakṣaṇā*-process at length throughout the *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi*. A few quotations will give us his thought in his own words:

Since the meaning of the word "I" (in this sentence) is to denote the innermost *Ātman*, it ought to be explained by means of those secondary meanings which *lakṣaṇā* can bring about (*prasiddha-lakṣaṇā-guṇa-vṛttibhiḥ*).

Because (the ego-sense) is interior (to everything else but the supreme *Ātman*), because it is extremely subtle, and because it imitates the vision of the *Ātman*, for these (three) reasons all other notions are discarded and the (*Paramātman*) is indicated figuratively by the ego-notion (*ahaṃ-vṛttyo-* palakṣyate).

And again the supreme Self is indicated by the ego-notion since the ego-sense cannot exist without the *Ātman*; it would immediately dissolve if the *Ātman* were withdrawn, and it rests on no other support but the *Ātman*. (NS. II. 54-56).

The word "That" means the perfect Reality; the word "thou" means the innermost *Ātman*. Through these (secondary meanings), the primary meanings of those terms, namely, "suffering *jīva*hood" (of "thou") and "non-*ātma*hood" (of "That") are rejected, just as in the sentence "the lotus is blue" (the term "lotus" rejects non-lotus-*hood* and the term "blue" rejects non-blueness).

He who thus reasons through *anvaya* and *vyatireka* reaches through the sentence that real meaning which stands beyond the expressive power of any sentence (*vākyaḍ-evā-vāk्यārthaṃ pratipadyate*).

Just as in sentences like, "verily the ether in the jar is the ether in the sky", we attain to a reality not directly expressed in the words of the sentence (*avāk्यārtha*), namely, (the ether unlimited by jar or sky), through a rejection (*vyāvṛtteḥ*) (of the jar-ether directly expressed by the subject and of the sky-ether directly expressed by the predicate), so also (in sentences like, "That thou art"), we immediately (*sākṣāt*) receive knowledge beyond the expressed meaning of "That" and "thou."

The intelligence and interiority of the *Ātman*, which is firm as a mountain peak, are natural to it, and not accidental characteristics introduced from without (*animittam*). The *Ātman* is the cause of the awareness (of the intellect) and of the interiority (of the ego-sense). This is why it is indicated indirectly (*upalakṣyate*) as "knower" and as "I". (NS. III. 9-11).

The meaning of both terms is the same *Ātman*, void of duality and perfectly self-transparent. There is no non-dual (Brahman) without the *Ātman*; there is no *Ātman* without that Eternal Consciousness (which is Brahman).

"That" when placed in apposition to "thou" negates individuality and plurality as meanings of the latter; and "thou" can stand in apposition to "That" only if the latter has been shorn of its meaning of "otherness".

Non-duality and subjection to *saṃsāra* are mutually incompatible, as also are the quality of "otherness" and the *Ātman*. Subjection to *saṃsāra* and "otherness" are negated by "That" and "thou" respectively, but only by implication (*prāsaṅgikam*).

Because the implied meaning of both "That" and "thou" (viz. Brahman-Ātman) is that end of which is unknown, yet can be heard (from the *śruti*), it contradicts (the surface-meanings of) those words, without however cancelling their proper meaning. (In other words, this is a case of what is known technically as *jahad ajahal lakṣaṇā*). (NS. III. 75-80).

If the transcendent Seer could be indicated indirectly by the notions of those objects that belong to the thou-realm of objectivity (*yuṣmad-arthābhīh*), He would be "non-ātman", and all the teaching of the *śruti* would be vain.

Indeed, it is only through a fractional part (*guṇa-leśena*) of the primary meaning of the term "I" that the *Ātman* is indicated indirectly (*lakṣyate*), after all reference to the individual self either as subject or object has been discarded. The *Ātman* is not directly named by the word "I".

Why? Because words can apply only to things that have characteristics—such as relations, qualities, or activities—or else to things that can be subsumed under universal concepts (*jāti*), or else that can be named through universally accepted convention. Not one of these conditions is fulfilled by the *Ātman*. Therefore it cannot be named.

Then how can right knowledge ensue from the words "I am Brahman"?

To attain that to which no means applies, a means is found by a false route: it is because it is our own inmost *Ātman* that, if suitably disciplined, we can know it through the secondary meaning (*guṇavṛttyā*) of words (such as "I" or "thou") (NS. III. 100-104).

These texts need no further comment. They express clearly a firm doctrine which is one of the highest points reached by metaphysical reflection. Sureśvara and his master Śrī Śaṅkarācārya developed it as an ancillary requirement of the testimonial science of *Brahmajijñāsā*. In the wake of Aristotle's distinction of the various meanings of terms, St. Thomas Aquinas and other Christian thinkers have also developed it in equivalent terms to serve their own testimonial science, Christian theology. However, they also upheld its value as an independent piece of metaphysical knowledge, apart from its ancillary function in theology. Indeed, it essentially demonstrates the logical (or metalogical) structure

of any proposition that purports to indicate correctly the supreme Existent. Hence it is not to be wondered that this doctrine will always attract philosophers as the sweetest flowers attract the eager honey-bee. In a letter which he sent to Professor Russell to correct Russell's appreciation of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein wrote:

The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (*gesagt*) by propositions—i.e. by language (and, what comes to the same, what can be *thought*) and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only *shown* (*gezeigt*); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy....⁶

6. Quoted in G. E. M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, London, 1959, p. 161.

The Philosophy of Dewey—as An Indian Sees it

by

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A persistent characteristic of modern philosophy is the sharp divorce between academic philosophy and practical life. John Dewey blamed this on the rationalistic philosophy that was fashionable in his time and he vigorously tried to bring these two together. Even if there were nothing else for which we could admire and respect Dewey, at least for this we should be ever grateful to him. The philosophy of Dewey is a very interesting mixture of the past and the present in America. Not being able to completely shake off the influence of his first love, Hegelianism, he reduced the status of the individual to a unit in society, and emphasized that the so-called substantial and the actual are nothing but a scheme of transitory relations. At the same time, he is also strongly drawn towards naturalism and individualism that characterize American thought. The democratic insistence on individual initiative, the scientific insistence on the natural law of cause and effect, the psychological insistence on the importance of behavioural patterns,—all these are very strongly reflected in Dewey's philosophy. Thus typically American in his thought and philosophy, Dewey's influence will be a guiding star for a long time to come to Americans.

We in India admire Dewey's philosophy because we also believe that a philosophy divorced from actual life problems is a pseudo-philosophy. We define philosophy as a way of life meaning thereby that it is a search for concepts which would give a sort of coherence and harmony to the problems of man on earth. Where we differ from Dewey is with regard to the nature of these problems. However, proper knowledge is necessary for proper behaviour. Such knowledge is seen to be true or false in the context of human experience. In spite of these fundamental agreements there are major differences.

Philosophers of the West have always been tremendously attracted by the progressive exact sciences. Time and again the history of philosophy shows that a philosopher tried to remodel

philosophic speculation in terms of the methodology of such exact sciences as mathematics and physics. Dewey is one among them. Drawn by the neatness, accuracy and progressive character of modern science which starts with an analysis of experience, Dewey deplored philosophy's insistence on intellectualism. Thus began in America an era of philosophy which emphasizes the dependence of knowledge on experience.

Knowledge is the result of competent and controlled inquiry. Thought arises when action is blocked. The need for action and the blocking of action for lack of ideas produces a tension in the organism which gives rise to a doubt as to the possible ways of resolving the conflict. This leads to the formation of a hypothetical idea which resolves the doubt and produces future satisfaction based on proper action. Although Dewey may not agree, still this is what the intellectualists would call reflective thinking. Even for Dewey such action is not based upon passive acceptance by the organism of sense titillations. The inquiry results in an idea. In the light of this hypothetical idea the experimental experiential situation is altered making some aspects of it more prominent than others. New facts are brought into the situation by which the truth or the falsity of the original hypothesis is made out. When all these operations are concluded we have truth or as Dewey prefers to call it "warranted assertibility".

The Indian logician accepts the methodology involved in this procedure but works out the procedure all the way to its logical conclusion, thus arriving at results which are far more satisfying than Dewey's.

In this short paper it is not possible to discuss all the differences involved. So, only two fundamental aspects of Dewey's thought are considered here. To the Indian logician experience is clearly a relation between man and the world that was already there long before he ever thought of it. If this were not so, then experiences, thoughts, modes of behaviour common to all become impossible. Thus experience of the world is the starting point for knowledge. Knowledge grows and becomes richer with each contact with the external world. But for Dewey experience of the world is the beginning and end of knowledge. Such an experience can only be immediate and direct with no reference to the past. In other words the present cannot depend on the past for a solution. It is here and now. Even the reference to the future is only in the form of a satisfaction to be achieved as a

result of the *present action*. The future is moulded on the present. This emphasis on the immediacy of the nature of experience traps Dewey in the present. Experience here becomes the arbiter of the nature of knowledge. The persistent admonition of Dewey is "when in doubt refer to experience." This experience that Dewey talks of must be an impersonal one. Dewey is in a dilemma. If experience is impersonal then he is as much an absolutist as those against whom he was arguing. If it is not impersonal, then it becomes reduced to a man's immediate feeling and reaction, which is pure subjectivism. In this latter sense, experience is *some one's* experience carrying with it its own certainty. But this separation of the individual from the world of experience is what Dewey vigorously repudiates. Hence he defines experience as denotative, public and referential. This does not follow from his analysis of the knowledge situation. Let us recall this analysis. Ideas arise as a result of individual organism's blocking of activity. The satisfaction that results from the removal of such a blocking is the organism's satisfaction. Often the word "satisfaction" is used by Dewey not only to refer to the organism's satisfaction, but also to refer to the coherent pattern evolved out of a concrete situation. But we contend that even such "satisfaction" can only have a meaning in terms of the person involved. This means that the organism has specific needs and satisfactions which are met by ideas which direct action in a particular situation. If we just substitute the word "individual" for "organism", we can see where Dewey's epistemology lands us. There is already a separation effected between the individual, experience and the experimental situation. It is the tension in *me* that produces *my* ideas which are made use of by *me* to resolve the situation. Not only this, but also the certainty of such resolution depends on the achievement of *my* satisfaction. All these can mean only one thing, namely, experience is *my* experience of the world of objects, things, etc., directed by *my* ideas.

Even if we are prepared to grant that all this is our manipulation of Dewey's thought, still there is a difficulty. The nature of knowledge that is obtained by the organism is determined by the nature of the various situations in which the organism is involved. That is, social and moral considerations mould the nature of the idea which results in action. To this extent Dewey is neither an empiricist nor a naturalist but a transcendentalist. Experience is no more merely referential. It goes beyond the bounds of immediate experience and brings about what Dewey calls "non-cognitive satisfaction". If this does not mean that there

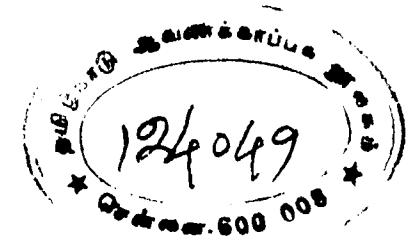
is a way of knowing, if at all it can be characterized as knowing which is not "cognitive" and which is much more satisfactory than cognitive satisfactions, then Dewey makes use of words without taking into consideration their accepted meanings. Then again Dewey says here that knowledge, at least in certain cases, has nothing to do with the future satisfactions arising out of the present. Thus, not all knowledge is instrumental.

The second point in Dewey's philosophy which is to be discussed is very closely allied to the foregoing discussion. It has already been stated earlier that for Dewey to say that a proposition or a judgment is true is to say that it has warranted assertibility resulting from competent and controlled inquiry. No philosopher can dispute this assertion. Every special bit of knowledge is the result of a special competent inquiry. But knowledge is not atomic and disjointed. If this were so, life and experience would be impossible. Hence the knowledge that is implied in the processes of living is the product of competent and *continuous* inquiry. Such knowledge is always being modified and changed as a result of interlocking inquiries in different fields of experience. Thus it follows that what is warranted as true by some special field of inquiry may be later revised or changed in the light of further inquiry. The truth-claim of knowledge is thus unified progressively by varying inquiries. Fiction, imagination, erroneous perception, all these also make a truth-claim. But their truth-claim is either confirmed or rejected by experience. Ideas born out of one cognitive situation will have to be ratified and tested by other types of experience before we can accept their truth-claim. Such verification is a test of truth and does not constitute truth itself. When we say a judgment is true, two questions arise. What constitutes truth or falsity?, and how are these known or tested? The first concerns itself with the nature of truth, and the second gives us the criteria by means of which we arrive at a *certain* knowledge of this truth. The Principle of Verification advocated by Dewey is a method of testing the claim to truth that is implicit in the idea which starts action. Since the idea becomes true or false only in the context of experience, the idea by itself is neither true nor false. Experience does not *make* the idea true or false, it only says *yes* or *no* when the idea makes a claim to truth. This is implicit in all scientific inquiry.

To the Indian logician knowledge has two characteristics. It must be an assured cognition or a firm belief in something. Thus we try to avoid all indefinite, problematic and doubtful hypotheses.

But this can lead to a mere subjective certainty and nothing more. Therefore, secondly, knowledge must be a true cognition of objects. This truth-claim of cognitive knowledge is tested and verified by various means. One of them is a systematic coherence with the totality of experience, not only of the individual but of the present, past, and future experience. Thus we do accept Dewey's theory of truth and error, but that is only part of the way for us.

Dewey's ambition was to be scientific in philosophy because the processes of science were the most successful in practice. Therefore, he could not but get into the fallacious position of saying that what science does not concern itself with does not exist. But that is precisely the function of philosophy. Science, by its very definition need not concern itself with anything other than the discovery and application of universal relations. That is why it is operational in character. Naturally, science is ever changing, progressing towards wider and wider generalizations. What may be true now ceases to be true in the future. If philosophical knowledge is to be moulded on the same lines, then the premises which are held to be true now may turn out to be false later. Under these conditions man can never have any satisfaction. There will be intellectual chaos, each individual maintaining that his experience and operational methodology alone is true. Even Dewey's instrumentalism may become false as competent philosophical inquiry progresses towards a more and more coherent systematic shape.



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