

A PLEA FOR CREATIVE RE--- THINKING **IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

It gives me greatest pleasure to thank the members of the All India Oriental Conference for having elected me to preside over the Religion and Philosophy Section of the XXIIInd Session. It is, I believe, a signal honour for the humble services I had been able to render to the fields of religion and philosophy so far. It encourages me to feel that your indulgence alone has been the cause of this recognition rather than my own contributions.

A distinct landmark has arrived on this Oriental scene. We have been encouraged by our Government to move boldly forward in our researches and studies on the past glory of our religious and philosophical work to world philosophical work to world philosophy. Much unearthing work has gone on and is going on. Rare works have been brought to light. Our Ms are not being pushed into and rushed through the drain but have been able to get accommodation in decent places where dust and white ants do not easily find refuge. The foundation of new Institutes all over the country as well as the stepping up of work in these directions has led to publications also under the guidance of serious student of Indian Philosophy and Religion. Historical approach has led to placing the order of these publications and many discussions have been invaluable in this direction. Critical studies have been no less important but it usually takes on the shape and form of the historical successions and causes and have been valuable in stimulating further enquiry and search for lost links or missing links in our history of darsanas.

A more important field open today is the field of comparative philosophy vis-a – vis Indian philosophies or darsanas. We have not merely the six orthodox (astika, vaidika) but also the several nastika (avaidika) darsanas as expounded by Madhavacharya in his SARVA-DARSANA SAMGRAHA. We are also confronted with the stimulating influence of Western philosophies or rather World philosophies, and we are discerning the identity of views of near-identities or similarities all over the

globe. In a sense we are enabled to go beyond our little territorial grounds. Inward understanding and realization of gaps in thinking and deductions which were slurred over by dogmatic faith has not only helped us to look forward to a new build up in the internal structure of our darsanas but also the world philosophy to be. This needless to warn is a very slippery ground. It is nonetheless valuable in so far as we know that most of the commentaries of the earliest works in each darsana seem to have been written long afterwards. If our most revered texts carefully has facilitated research. In this aspect the new Indological institutes are doing immense necessary work. Though the explanation that most of these commentaries have had a long and unbroken oral transmission is to be taken seriously and not to be lightly brushed aside, yet it is necessary to scrutinize these traditionally received texts which should not be taken as wholly worthy of dependence in any dogmatic spirit or blind faith. Uncontaminated they may be but there seems to be distortion consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, and this is revealed by the fact that these darsanas seem to have developed incoherency and inconsistency. Even an historian of philosophy cannot explain this as due to the dialectical progress of philosophy through criticism.

Undoubtedly logical criticisms coming across darsanas had helped to induce growth and clarification of doctrines as shown by some of the recent publications in the field of Nyaya; the work on Critique of Indian Realism by Prof .D.N. Sastri is a case in point. But such criticisms had not so much the purpose of critical evaluation of the darsanas criticized in order to arrive at Reality or Truth qua such but most often were polemical apologetics. So much so we are face today with the important problem of reconstructing each system as a full blown philosophy. In fairness to each system as a full blown philosophy. In fairness to each system each of them has to be considered to be not just one view of life or just a solution of a set of problems but as whole systematic philosophy equally rational or logically consistent. It is to give credence for its claim, which might have to be modified, or denied after a total enquiry.

It is here that studies by the various institutes have been valuable. The Vedic and subsidiary studies at Hoshiarpur Visvabandhu Institute, the Mithila Institute, the Ganganath Jha Institute, the Institute of Indology Delhi, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bombay, have ensured the steady development of these branches of studies. The interest in the Agama literatures especially of Vaikhanasa and Pancaratra has led to the undertaking of editing and publishing the original texts of these at Madras and Tirupati institutes. Studies in these are bound to throw much light on the ancient traditional modes of thought .

The method of historical presentation has its drawbacks. Firstly the systems are sometimes considered to be arising from one another in an evolutionary thought-process or dialectically. Whilst it might well be so, it is also to be conceded that there could be simultaneous presentations of different systems, mutually conflicting or complementing, but in almost every case thought of as contradictory or oppositional to one another. Thus we do not know the temporal succession of the six systems as such but we do know that they have criticized each other in some of our study of the commentators of each system. Our siddhantas or conclusions seem to emerge from or against the purvapaksas or theses of other systems. Our philosophical as well as religious studies had always presupposed this kind of presentation by criticism. The progress of the different systems seem to have happened by this continuous cross-examination or criticism or dialectic. The richness of the logical and philosophical and theological literatures owes much to this dialogic process.

However the more important aim seems to be that we should somehow discern how these competing systems could be true equally. Attempts have been made to synthesize their different approaches into one grand system., true of the reality. This however has had no definite success owing to the difficulty of bringing all systems under one canopy, though this was attempted in two ways: (i) the first was by means of the Advaitaa metaphysical reality that subsumed the manifold of phenomenality and (ii) the second by means of a relativistic and realistic pluralism of

the Jaina logistics that pleaded for the tolerance of the tolerance of the manyness in a system of Being.

The studies in the phenomenalist view of reality entailed the absorption of the nihilistic views even as the relativistic views tended to absorb the pluralistic views.

The need for an organic view not of the idealistic western philosophy but a bio-analogical metaphysics along with a logic of identity-and –difference was felt but could hardly exist with the patterns of logic inherited from the Nyaya-logistics of mechanical or atomistic conception. It is indeed a fact that Indian thought had hardly grappled with the dynamic logic or discovered a need for a logic that is of the organic and integral. We have a nihilistic logic, a phenomenalist logic, a mechanistic logic, but not a logic of the Organic or the logic of the Infinite.

II

The appraisal of the different and distinct logical systems or rather the discovery of these is very necessary for the future development of logical thought in India. It was rightly remarked that after the exhaustive and indeed meticulous exploitation of the nature of the inference in Navya Navya, there hardly remained much development in Nyaya itself. However the discovery of Aristotle and the modern logics by Indian logicians should help a steady reappraisal of our traditional theories. The stalemate in logical thinking in India today is undoubtedly due to the acceptance without any question of the twofold reality, one which is in tune with the revelation (sruti or agama), and it was assumed that each province is mutually exclusive and nugatory also, and therefore a unitary logic was never mooted or developed. The contradiction between and coexistence of the two logics or rather logic and the alogical was accepted, and somehow the latter was said to prevail over the other. The Nyaya logic of inference and reason was dialectical and useful for vada or debate, though in a limited sense. Even those logicians who did not accept the contradictory nature of the logical and the alogical did not develop a logic that

could embrace both types of thought. This leads us to the profound problems of the relation between thought and thought, thought that proceeds from the intuitive revelational or the a logical ground, and the logical thought propounded by means of language of communication and expression or word. If logos means both thought and word, we have the supreme problem of relationship of unity of thing, thought and word. All of these typify the problem of inter-relationship, for the a logical represents the insufficiency of thing and thought for communication and experience, whereas the logical represents the necessity for all the three though to be sure there are logicians who consider that the problem of relations is only to be confined to the thought and word, whilst others consider that it is a matter of relationship between thing and word with thought thrown in as a symbol. It could be seen that here are hair-splitting problems so long as the nature of Reality is not referred to or even considered. The Mimamsa and vyakarana expositors had all these primary problems to deal with, since Nyaya regarded the problems in the context of things-realities or truths (tattvas) around which alone thoughts and words have been found in practice to constellate or group themselves.

The basic problem is whether thoughts link with words through things or thoughts are things and do not need other things which they symbolize. The question is also whether the words are symbols of things and not mere thoughts and if so what again are thoughts vis a vis things and words.

Western linguistic philosophers recently had undoubtedly brought up these problems for a re-appraisal. Our own methodology of occult explanation notwithstanding it would be necessary to consider whether the realistic approach or the idealistic approach or the symbolic approach would be appropriate, and to which levels of our understanding these three would be applicable. I venture to suggest that our ancient thinkers had proceeded on the basis of trying to link up sound with thought and in respect of a thing. If our apprehension of a thing was in segments our sounds also would register segments or aspects of a thing signified or indicated or denoted. A thing would then gather many sounds according to the number of segments it does possess or is apprehended to possess.

We have also to remember that sounds do refer to uses or functions of a thing which are the individual 'artha'. This too has many aspects, for a thing could have many 'uses' and we are to respect the Buddhist conception of a thing as what it does (arth – kriya- karitaa) which is similar to the test of truth granted by both Nyaya and Ramanuja-Vedanta as vyavaharaguntva.

Further there have been problems posed by the Vaisesika thinkers who emphasize the principle of individual difference and they have also brought before us the concept of relationship between part and whole (avayava-avayavi) and samavaya. I suggest that it might perhaps be pertinent to question or explain the relationship between avayava and avayavi in terms of samavaya. In linguistics, each sound may have a meaning but the whole made of many sounds need not be just the aggregate of the individual meanings but bring out or explode a new meaning. The analogy of water as the composite of hydrogen and oxygen reveals the emergence or explosion of a new substance or meaning (artha). Whatever may be the theory of causality, arambha or vivarta, in this context, the fact remains that there is no necessity for a homogeneous nature of the whole and parts except in an abstract sense of substance. The denial of the theories sometimes proceeds from the necessity to hold to parinama theory in all cases. Regarding theories of anvaitabhidana (the synthetic interpretation of the parts in respect of the whole) and the abhi-hita- anvaya (the analytic apprehension of the parts in the whole) in respect of sound and word and thought and thing. I venture to offer suggestions below to this kind of discussion or procedure. It is again undeniable that sphota (which has been much criticised by Vedanta) is a meaningful concept of insight or intuition or rather explosive illumination of meaning or flash of insight which each sound could give as much as the composite which each sound could give as much as the composite sound could give. And perhaps if we might arrive at the original pulse of meaning and sound which involves the principle of illuminative knowledge that connects both with thing (yathartha). In a sense we may affirm that a real theory of meaning must proceed on the basis of the

analytical as well as the synthetical whilst yet keeping in mind the concept of an illuminative flash either directly or through alalogical suggestive link (linga).

Then enquiry into our ancient thinking and writing undertaken for the purpose of knowing how they had thought and where they were bogged or obstructed by their presuppositions and prejudices and dogmas would reveal the necessity to understand more closely the essentials of intuitive language as contrasted with the abstract intellectual and the pragmatic commercial or dialogic language, or even the language of the socalled common man's colloquialisms, which do not fall either into the category of yoga and rudhi. There is a reason why the Vedic or Sruti language or even the agama – language takes us beyond the common experiences which are utilized to communicate our mundane views and opinions.

It takes us even beyond the materialistic science. This is an aspect that has not been studied with examples clearly. This Sruti language has to be differentiated from the socalled "introspective language" that is receiving attention at the hands of philosophers in the West currently. How far are we enabled to exemplify this in our linguistic gestalts is a matter that awaits consideration at the hands of all scholars interested in this provocative field. The ancients had postulated a three-fold possibility of the adhi-daiva, adyatma and adhi-bhuta interpretation or insight into the highest truth of even our own mundane features or facts. The illuminations of science fall into the last category, whereas the illuminations of psychology fall into the second category and the illuminations of transcendental or divine illuminations of transcendental or divine illuminations fall into the first category, and therefore sphota is a definitive illuminative process from the spiritual levels and in mystical thought these levels are paramount

III

We shall now turn to mystical experience which forms quite a vast field in our oriental research. Indian philosophy mainly is erected on the foundations of deep mystical or religious experiences. They are the core of religious dogma, and a dogma

is true or false by this test of conformity with sruti-anubhava, either historical or personal.

Our ancient studies constantly come under the crucial test of personal mystic experience which is said to be Realisation. Our goal is Realsation, which is fully implemented by liberation in all its forms. Despite all that may be said about the Doctrine of Reason of the Buddha and its strict logical procedures about the causes and consequences,. Ultimately the mystical experience of Nirvana is the test. The attainment of that meant all. It became the Brahman of Buddhism ,and its descriptions are in fact recapitulations of the Vedantic Ultimate or Absolute. This is something that transcends thought but is attained by dhyana or Jhana or Zen, which is the subtlest sense and meaning of our phenomenistic thought.

The necessity at the present time is to read anew the ancient classics in a spirit of reverence for the mystical experience, clothed as they are in realistic or unrealistic logics or language. Though the western savants have shown the way in the naturalistic form in terms more germane to their understanding , I venture to think that we will be induced by our mystical tradition to study them from our true traditional view-point. It is –I think, clear that Dr. Radhakrishnan has led the way as to how one could directly proceed to interpret the Brahma Sutras or the Upanisads or the Dhammapada, freed from dogmatisms as well as supported by the true religio- spiritual or mystical illuminations widely accepted all over the area of mystical universal tradition. Once it is granted that the Brahma Sutra represents a mystico, logical exposition of the Ultimate Universal Existence-- Experience, it is clear that one must be prepared for a re—verification of it in terms of one's own spiritual awareness or revelation of evolution.

Similarly Śrī Aurobindo undertook to write a new exposition on the Vedic Hymns from the mystico—psycho – logical stand –point.

Today we are confronted with apparent inconsistencies and illogical deductions which we try to support by an uncritical historical spirit. What today we call traditional seems to me to be what has survived in our plane of being, for we can see that the deep practitioners of several darsanas have quite a different tradition.

In an assembly of this eminence and scholarship I have tried to put forth some of the most arresting and intriguing problems and trust you will all show me the indulgence to listen and ponder over them. Our future renaissance depends on ourselves and I pray that our scholarship should pay heed to the spiritual demands of higher evolution of man through religion and mystical philosophy which alone is capable of being a Universal healer, capable also of coming to terms with most materialistic speculation.

In offering the above suggestions I have in mind the special concern that philosophers qua philosophers had been having during the past quarter of a century. The problem of reorientation of Indian Philosophy was mooted at the Xth All India Oriental Conference in 1940 at Tirupati. It was again mooted at the Indian Philosophical Congress session at Annamalai University in 1956. The need for reconstruction was recognized but there were dissident thinkers who felt that our present philosophical heritage is quite sufficient for our needs. The fact is that we have either to look at these darsanas in a new way or reconstruct them in the light of increasing research finds or, a third alternative would be how to integrate these as valid eternal solutions to eternal problems which persist simultaneously in different levels of development or evolution of the human mind. Some systems seem to regress, some seem to remain static moving neither way, some promise a progress precisely to the goal of human or spiritual fulfillment. We are in a world of tremendous changes, and our old ways of thinking and living have obviously no relevance; our old molds of thought seem to wither and whine before the onslaught of materialistic developments. However, there is the need for philosophical thinking to survive and if spiritual values do count for anything, survive and if spiritual

values do count for anything, then this new downpour of knowledge and extensity of human domain and civilization demand our renewed thinking on this scale.

Can old wine be poured into new bottles or new wine in old bottles or both? This is a profound problem, with this difference that neither the bottle nor the wine can remain as they are by this infilling.

I believe, like philosophers, Members or the Oriental Conference have a forward duty to the future and not merely on obligation to the past.

The section to which you have elected me president has received sixty papers for discussion which is extremely gratifying. However an analysis of the topics brought forward in the papers shows that as many as 13 papers are devoted to Advaita Vedanta, and only half the number to Nyaya, Mimamsa and Bhagavad Gita and Bhakti (Vaisnava). There is just one paper each for the other darsanas, and none at all for Buddhism and Jainism. There are of course ten papers in respect of religious topics and one on politics.

Thus it reveals that philosophically there is great interest in Advaita whilst religious tendency is keenly slanted towards Bhakti or devotion. The reconciliation of these two postures is one of our main concerns in the future.

I wish all delegates very good discussions and communion of minds which will help the development and growth of these two prongs of spiritual ascent not only in India but also contributing to the growth of a world synthesis in thought, devotion and action.