

“THE AIM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY-AN OVERVIEW”

D. Sahadevudu*

J.Ramesh**

C.Venkateswarulu***

Abstract

Philosophy in general is the intellectual interpretation and construction of reality. Man weaves different theories about it – some comforting him and others explaining his helplessness. To philosophize is the very nature of man. It is only animal that are not metaphysical according to Hegel. To the Indians philosophy is Athmavidya. Salvation is value of values and all other values are subordinate to it. Philosophy to them is a way of life and not a view of life. It originated under the pressure of a practical need arising from the presence of moral and physical evils in life. An escape from these is possible only through a sense of reality. Philosophy is an attempt to seek something permanent and avoid the flux of births and deaths. It helps us not merely to reveal truth but also to increase virtue. It awakens our loyalties. It extends our minds and taps our energies and helps to realise the vision of God. Hence Philosophy is pragmatic. It is saving knowledge and not subtle metaphysics.

Key words: salvation, aim, system, knowledge, devotion.

* Lecturer in History, Govt. College (M), Ananthapuramu-515001. Andhrapradesh, India

** Guest Lecturer in Philosophy, Govt. College (M), Ananthapuramu-515001. Andhrapradesh, India

*** Lecturer in History, M.S.Degree College Gooty-515401.Andhrapradesh (state) India.

1. Introduction:

Religion according to Indian philosophers is a system of education by means of which human beings must train themselves, first to make desirable changes in their own personalities. Every system lays down a suitable course of practical discipline for the attainment of liberation. The good life is a prerequisite of the Godly life. Most systems with the exception of materialism hold that human beings in their unregenerate state cannot attain liberation. The common principle prescribed is detachment. Most men and women love, above all, the pleasures of life of indolence. They are torn by passions and weakened by distractions. Goodness involves onepointedness.

2. The aim of Indian Philosophy:

The term Indian philosophy comprehends the groups of philosophical systems that have originated from the spiritual experience of the sages of ancient India. They are subsequently elaborated into systems of thought and explained in terms of reason and logic. They are called darsanas.

Indian philosophy preserved its spirit through the ages in spite of repeated invasions, social convulsions and frequent upheavals through all the vicissitudes of India's fortune. The spirit of Indian Philosophy has a strange vitality, a strong and sound instinct for life, which has made it Mrityunjaya (triumphant over death).

Tradition divides Indian philosophy into two groups; the Aasthika darsanas and Nastika darsanas. The Aasthika darsanas were termed as Shaddarshanas – Sankya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purvamimamsa, and Uttaramimamsa. All accept Vedas but differ in their ideas Avidya, Maya, Purusha and Jiva. But they have Common concepts on Creation, destroy, disillusion in the World. Even the Nastika darsanas like Buddhism, Jainism and the Charvaka schools do not owe their allegiance to the Vedas, and hence these systems are called Nastika darsanas. In the Indian philosophical ideal is different from that of the west. The Indian system seeks to attain the state of existence called Moksha or liberation. Moksha is the highest good, Parama purushardha. It is the ultimate value. It can be achieved through Bhakti marga, Jnana marga; Karma marga that means liberation can possible only in three routes devotion, knowledge and action. The Indian outlook is synthetic, integrated and concentrated in the attainment of Moksha.

Why should we seek Moksha?

There is a need for the radical termination of the sorrows in the life. All the system begins with a reflective examination of the state of human life and finds in it a good deal of sorrow. Samsara is full of sorrow. Philosophy originated in India under the pressure of a practical need to overcome and destroy the three fold sufferings to which man is heir. It is the master remedy for all the ills of life. We cannot attain Moksha by the mere intellectual study. It requires moral discipline also. It is a religious ideal.

The Katha Upanishad declares that the self cannot be attained by instruction or by intellectual power or even though much hearing. The Mundaka Upanishad reiterates the same verse. The Bruhadaranyaka laments the futility mere intellectual learning. "Brood not over the mass of the words, for that is mere weariness of speech". Intellectual study and reasoning must be accompanied by moral excellence and ethical virtues. No spiritual realisation is possible without a moral sadhana. The Katha Upanishad is emphatic on this point. Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not who is not concentrated in mind, not he whose mind is not composed can reach the self though right knowledge. The importance of ethical life is insisted on in all the systems.

The Upanishads insisted on the necessity of a guru. An illumined teacher teaches a qualified aspirant the methods of realization. "If men care for gold, they must dig; otherwise they must be satisfied with straw. The path to reach Brahman is as sharp as a "razors" edge. The aspirant must have a tranquil mind, complete detachment and a sharp intelligence.

Take per example – Lord Buddha had shown that philosophy should be pragmatic. It should remove the sufferings of man. He never bother about metaphysical subtleties like God, Soul, whether it is mortal or immortal. According to him philosophy purifies none peace alone does.

The ethical philosophy of Buddhism is to avoid the extremes of a life addicted to worldly pleasure and a life of painful asceticism and self mortification. The Buddha did not concern himself with metaphysical controversies. Repudiating the idea of God, he emphasized on moral progress which was independent of any creator of the universe. The essence of Buddhism lies in the realization that life is transient, what transient causes sorrow is, and where sorrow and change prevail, the idea of an immortal or permanent soul is meaningless. Despite this questioning of the existence of an immortal soul, the Buddha seems to have accepted the idea of transmigration.

Buddha encouraged and stimulated each person to develop himself and to work out his own emancipation for man has the power to liberate himself from all bondage through his own personal effort and intelligence. Today we hope with a better understanding of our common humanity and common values. We can say hatred does not cease by hatred, but it ceases by love and compassion.

3. Sadhanas:

The first stage is the life of morality in a society, discharging all duties and refraining from wrong. The path of ceremonial purity cleans the mind without which Moksha is impossible.

The discharge of moral duties “Karma Marga and the leading of a pure life prepares the aspirant’s mind for the message from the illumined teacher. Receiving is Sravana. Reflection upon it is Manana. It is the process of convincing oneself, through reflection upon the truth learnt by Sravana. After Manana the aspirant begins to mediate on the truth in an uninterrupted manner, till he has a direct experience of truth. This is called Nidhi Dyasana. It transforms mediate knowledge into immediate experience.

Spiritual realization is a matter of experience and its truth is self certifying (Swathahsiddha). We cannot have it second hand, for it is intuitive and intellectually realized. Religion is a matter of direct experience (Svanubhuthi). Creeds, Dogmas, Scriptures, Symbols and Institutions of religions are merely its instruments. The sages of India have therefore declared “the real is one, but man calls by many names, imagines it in many ways”.

The ideas of Avidya, Maya, Purusha and Jiva are common to all the systems of Philosophy. They all believe in creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world. They aim at Moksha or the release of the soul from re births. They pointed out that the way to attain Moksha is through Chittasuddhi or purification of mind and Nishkama Karma or disinterested activity.

“Religious feeling must establish itself as a rational way of living. If ever the spirit is to be at home in this world and not merely a prisoner or a fugitive, spiritual foundation must be laid deep and preserved worthily. Religion must express itself in reasonable thought, fruitful action and right social institution.

Life is not a simple geometrical pattern. The essence of life is creativity. It is a living creation of something new, not a dead connection of cause and effect. The inner compulsion which lies behind that which is visible to our eyes is an urge to create, to generate, to make alive, and to bring forth something new out of the hidden treasure of being. We shall never be able to

analyse the sources of creative spirit. If the real is a genuine becoming, then the highest knowledge can only be an insight. Yet there is enough of rationality in this insight.

There is no break in the chain of real connection, though our limited vision may not be able to penetrate to this series of causes and effects. The world is creative activity but a continuous one and a rational one. While the rationality of the world is transparent to the intellect, its mysteriousness can be grasped only by intuition.

To act in a perfectly ethical way we need detachment. Disinterestedness helps us to break through our unregenerate selfhood. This selfhood constitutes the heavy almost opaque substance which cuts off most of the light of reality and distorts what little it lets pass. The Indian system told that renunciation is essential. They insist on the training and regulating the natural instincts of man.

The doctrine of detachment has taken two lines development. Some have laid stress on the negative aspects of renunciation; hence they advocated giving up our worldly activities. This represents the absolute Sanyasin ideal, involving the cessation of our activities. But with the passage of time the negative aspects of Sanyasa has been interpreted afresh by thinkers to whom it means not giving up of all activities; but the performance of all in a spirit of detachment from self regarding purposes.

4. Conclusion:

The subject of philosophy which is not primarily utilitarian in its aim is a great instrument of liberal education. Its aim is one of elevating man above worldliness of making him superior to circumstances of liberating his spirit from the thralldom of material things. Philosophy claims to implant in the minds of those who are of a nature to profit by its teachings and influence a taste for those things which the world cannot give and cannot take away. If properly perused, it arms us against failure, against sorrow and calamity against boredom and discouragement. It may not prepare us for success if we mean by it accumulation of material wealth. But it helps us to love those aims and ideal, the things beyond all price on which the generality of men who aim at success do not set their hearts. To form men is the object of Philosophy.

Ravindranath Tagore said “I love India, not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil, but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of

her great sons – *Sathyam Jnanam, Anantham Brahma*: Brahma is truth, Brahma is wisdom, Brahma is infinite; *Santam, Sivam Advaitam*: Peace is in Brahma, goodness is in Brahma and the unity of all beings. He who is one, who is above all colour distinctions, who dispenses the inherent needs of men of all colours, who comprehends all things from their beginning to the end, let Him unite us to one another with wisdom, which is the wisdom of goodness.”

Philosophy has for its function the ordering of life and the guidance of action. It sits at the helm and directs our course through the changes and chances of the world. When Philosophy is alive, it cannot be remote from the life of the people. The ideas of thinkers are evolved in the process of their life history. We must learn not only to reverence them, but to acquire their spirit.

References:

1. Agarwal M.G., Freedom fighters of India, Vol.3, Isha Books, Delhi, 2008.
2. Basham, A.L. The wonder that was India, Oxford, London, 1967
3. Belvalkar and Ranade, History of Indian Philosophy, Cambridge, Poona, 1927.
4. Chalapati Rao I.V., Ancient wisdom Modern insights, SYRM Trust, Drushya Publications, Secunderabad, 2011.
5. Chatterjee.S. C. & Datta. D. M, 'An Introduction to Indian Philosophy' University of Calcutta, 2008.
6. Keith A.B., Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads, Cambridge, 1925.
7. Radhakrishnan.S The cultural heritage of India, Vol.1, The Ramakrishna Mission, Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1958.
8. Radha Krishnan S. And others (Ed.) History of Philosophy... Eastern and Western Vol.1, George Allen, London, 1952.
9. Radha Krishnan S. Indian Philosophy (2 Vols.) George Allen, London, 1952.
10. Radha Krishnan S. Principal Upanishads (Ed.) George Allen, London, 1953.
11. Sharma. C. D., 'A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy', Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1987.