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Dṛsti

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Message



Problems or successes, they all are the results of our own actions. Karma. The philosophy of action is that no one else is the giver of peace or happiness. One's own karma, one's own actions are responsible to bring forth either happiness or success or whatever. We are really proud of the capability of the editor of "Dristi", (The Vision of Truth) who makes impossible to possible by publishing the departmental journal for the third year with a challenge. I appreciate her efforts and ability. Congratulations to all faculties of Philosophy department. With Wishes.

Reeta Dutta Hazorika

Principal i/c

Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

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From Editor's Desk

"Philosophy to deserve its name is integration of all the knowledge acquired through investigations of the various branches of nature into a coherent world view. The reunion of these two branches of human activity--the speculating integrating, and a creative social - laid the foundation of modern culture and civilization".

Philosophy as the mother of all subjects has big role to play for the society. The present crisis of the modern society is the moral crisis and moral degeneration. Modern mankind may not be able to survive this crisis unless there will be a development towards a higher form of social conscience in a growing number of men and women. Here arises the need of philosophy, as morality is one of the branches of philosophy. Kindness, honesty, truthfulness and on a higher level of sophistication, justice and equality, are moral values as they promote co-operative social existence. These values can be imparted through right education and proper training. Man will be moral if he respects himself and remains loyal to his own conscience. To solve these problems of morality, self consciousness among people should be awakened through right direction. For this we need a philosophical revolution.

This is our third attempt to explore philosophical knowledge through our journal Dristi. This time we tried to integrate other branches of knowledge like politics, mathematics, applied ethics and also life philosophy. I would like thank all the contributors for sharing their thoughts through their writings. My special thanks to our principal Reeta Dutta Hazorika for her moral support and encouragement. At last I would like to thank all my departmental colleagues Sebika Das (HOD), Pinkumani Barman, and Garima Saika and rest of my colleagues.

Karabi Goswami

THE CONCEPT ON MAN IN RADHAKRISHNAN'S THOUGHT

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The concept of man occupies an important position in Radhakrishnan's thought. Radhakrishnan believes in one spiritual reality as the ultimate reality. He also believes that the world is not an unreal appearance. He tries to be consistent with the basic metaphysical standpoint in his account of the concept of man.

In order to understand Radhakrishnan's concept of man, it is necessary to take note of two points. Radhakrishnan is bound to the ancient Indian tradition. He emphasized the ultimate spirituality in the very nature of man. Moreover, Radhakrishnan takes into consideration the demands of his time. He depicts the realistic picture of the present-day condition of man.

Modern civilization with its enormous development in the field of science and technology as well as in every aspect of life has exerted great impact upon the man in the present age. Outwardly, the world is uniform. But, there is not the inner unity of mind and spirit. The life of man becomes artificial. Man lost the zest for life. He lives in a state of anxiety and uncertainty due to the economic, social and political situation of the present age. There is unhappiness and restlessness in the universe. There is even the danger of extinction of human race altogether.¹ Man suffers from 'sickness of spirit'. Hence, we need a 'renewal of faith', 'a renaissance of spiritual values'. Man must not be simply a helpless victim in the hands of world forces. He must be free to master the environment. He must rise above the contradictions of life and attain full spiritual freedom. Man has the determination to go beyond his present life and stand on the truth of his being. According to Radhakrishnan, an integrated development of the different dimension of man leads to the highest fulfillment of man. It is the only remedy for his recovery.

Now, it clearly follows that there are two aspects of man, as has been maintained by Radhakrishnan. Man is unique. The specific way in which the contents are organized

constitutes his uniqueness. Yet, man is one with the whole. Man is a finite-infinite being². Man is human and yet divine. As C.A. Moore puts regarding the view of Radhakrishnan, "Man is essentially a spiritual being, ultimately identical in some way and to some degree with the Absolute and yet man is complex being, belonging to both orders, the infinite and the finite, the divine and the human."³

According to Radhakrishnan, the world is a process. It is a movement with a definite goal. The goal is the spirit. The world passes through the different phases of evolution-matter, life, consciousness and self consciousness which emerge gradually out of the spirit in the world. The different phases are not strictly continuous. Each higher stage includes the lower. Yet, it is something new. Self-consciousness is the latest and highest product in the world. Yet, it is not the last and supreme emergent. The self-conscious being is the human individual. Man is more than matter, life or mind, or all these put together. Man is superior to all living creatures. In his psychophysical organism, man bears the marks of his natural origin. Man has grown out of the physical, vital and animal life into the power of manhood. Man is a reality that embraces many levels of being. He may identify himself with his animal nature, the physical and the physiological, or with the self-conscious reason.⁴ Man is a unity of matter, life, mind and intelligence.⁵ Man is a unity which is more than a sum of its subordinate parts. Man is distinguished from other aspects of nature by what is called organization. Man is an organization which is active as a whole. This organization is teleological. Man as an organized whole can be described as the empirical self. Radhakrishnan gives names to this aspect differently as the empirical man, the physical man, the biological man, the natural man, the bodily individual etc.

But, this aspect though has a reality, must be transcended. It is not the real nature of man. The empirical self is not all. Behind this there is the Infinite self. Man is aware of the limitations of his physical nature. This awareness indicates that there is something over and above the empirical. Man is also spirit. "Man is the inheritor of the spark of the divine."⁶ The reality in man is the spirit in man. The spirit in man is more authentic than anything reflected in the objective world. It is felt, but cannot be seen. It cannot be adequately expressed in words. Man is aware of the spirit that operates in the whole scheme of the cosmic process. Man is also able to observe the presence of the spirit within himself. The spirit is at work in man's trying to transform him and also the rest of the cosmos through him. Man can look forward to the future when the spirit becomes fully manifest in him and he merges into the Absolute.

Thus, we observe that, man is a combination of empirical self or the self as an organized whole and real self or the self as subject. These two are distinguishable, but not separable. Radhakrishnan says, "There is in the self of man, at the very centre of his being, something deeper than the intellect, which is akin to the Supreme."⁷ This is the

spirit. The true nature of man consists in going beyond the physical to the spiritual. But, according to Radhakrishnan, "The realm of spirit is not cut off from the realm of life... The two orders of reality, the transcendent and the empirical, are closely related."⁸

In Radhakrishnan's account of the concept of man, the concepts of freedom, Karma and rebirth become significant. Hence, those concepts need explanation.

One of the most important characters of man is freedom. Freedom constitutes the essence of spirit. Radhakrishnan speaks about 'metaphysical freedom' which is 'spiritual freedom'. He says, "Spiritual freedom is an ultimate, an absolute to which can be surrendered only at the cost of one's soul."⁹ Ordinarily, freedom means freedom of decision or freedom of choice. Freedom as conceived by Radhakrishnan, includes this meaning and yet adds something more to it. Freedom means that man is metaphysically free. By its very nature, man is not determined by any external factors. Man is free to choose his own course of life and action. The future of man depends on man himself.

Radhakrishnan believes in the law of karma. Man has to pass through several past lives. The present stands in organic relation to them. The present life is determined by the past ones. Man's past Karma determines the present life. Hence, the Karma performed in this life will determine the future.

According to Radhakrishnan, Karma and freedom are not incompatible with each other. Radhakrishnan maintains that freedom means self-determination. It means the determination by the whole of the nature of self. Man is determined by the past Karma. But he is free to utilize and subjugate it. Human life is a mixture of necessity and freedom, chance of choice, man can convert necessity to his own use and thus frees himself from necessity. Though the past Karma determines the present, man is free to choose his own course of life and action. The ultimate choice lies in the hand of man. Karma, thus, is not inconsistent with freedom.

Radhakrishnan believes in the reality of the plurality of souls as separate centres of action. The individual souls retain their individuality so long as the cosmic process comes to an end.

The doctrine of the plurality of selves and their Karma leads Radhakrishnan to deal with the problem of rebirth.

Rebirth is a necessary postulate of life. Life is a term in a series. Death is not the end of man. Rebirth is a continuation of life. The individual soul continues to exist even after death in some form or other. Man continues to pass through the alternating periods of birth and death so long as he does not reach his goal. Man cannot exhaust all the potentialities of life in a single life. Man acquires the body in accordance with the tendencies of his own actions. Human life has to retain the individuality till the end of the cosmic process. It must continue to exist even after death. We must accept some possible forms

of life after death.

Radhakrishnan's account of the concept of man will not be complete unless we discuss the destiny of man.

Salvation is the ultimate goal- the destiny of man. It is the reality of his unity with the Divine.¹⁰ The destiny of man is the realization of the spirituality of man. Man becomes a new man altogether as a result of spiritual experience. He has been able to bring about within him both 'a coherence within himself' and 'a harmony with the environment'. Radhakrishnan says, "The spiritualized man is a new genus of man-exhibiting a new quality of life. His self becomes as wide as the world itself, as he feels that the one spirit is present in all minds, lives and bodies."¹¹

Radhakrishnan believes in Jivanmukti. The liberated man is not affected by the world. Even while he lives and moves in the world, he has no attachment for the world or the worldly objects. He works for the redemption of others. The individual realizes his unity with the Divine. But, he is not absorbed by the Divine. Radhakrishnan believes in 'universal salvation' — 'Sarva-mukti'. This 'Sarva-mukti' is the ultimate end, according to Radhakrishnan. All the individuals are destined to be redeemed. The liberated individual works till every man is liberated, till the final goal is reached, till the cosmic process continues. The liberated individual retains his individuality till 'universal salvation' is achieved. 'Universal salvation' is achieved only when the human race as a whole is liberated- only when the redeemed souls become one with the Divine. When the world as such is saved, the time process comes to an end. Time is transcended and the world itself becomes nirvana or mokhsa. The ultimate human destiny is the end of time which may mean the perfection of humanity, where the earth will be full of the knowledge of spirit.¹²

Man can attain his divine destiny by means of wisdom and intuitive awareness. Religion guides man to strive for the truths of the spirit. It is an apprehension of the real. It aims at the attainment of perfection. Ethics leads man towards perfection. It is a prerequisite for the attainment of spiritual destiny. The awareness of a deep ontological unity can be had by means of ethics, religion and philosophy.

Radhakrishnan, in his concept of man emphasizes greatly the spiritual aspect of man. It is true that, he accepts the physical aspect of man. He analyses the existential conditions of man. He gives to the life of man a meaning and purpose. But, he makes it only an aspect of the process of spiritual growth. □

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Teachers' Day Celebration

Gandhi and Roy : A Comparative Study

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M.K.Gandhi and M.N. Roy, the two different personalities preach two different ideologies- Gandhism and Radical Humanism that are the humanistic philosophies. Although, they are humanistic philosophers yet their methods of working and their interpretation of human development are different from one another. Both Gandhi and Roy was Nationalist. M.N.Roy started his revolutionary activity as a nationalist, than as a communist and ended as a creatively active radical humanist. Mahatma Gandhi, who was the father of modern India, regarded as another name for nationalism. According to M.N. Roy, "The two are considered to be identical". "That is why, anybody who wishes to be recognized as an ardent nationalist must call himself a Gandhist".

To Roy himself there are some similarities and also some vital differences in between his ideology of Radicalism and Gandhi's ideology. Roy had commented on Gandhi in most of his writings. The first detailed critical analysis on Gandhi made by M.N. Roy, in his book *India in Transition*, which was written in Moscow in 1921. In his article regarding morality in political practice, he commented on Gandhism that it is a practical philosophy as it lays down codes of conduct and therefore, it must be pragmatically judged. Roy maintained that Gandhism is not utopian; it does not pursue a distant ideal, it is evangelistic like a revealed religion. The prophet delivers his message not through precepts, but by example of his life. That was the reason according to Roy, Gandhi may be remembered in history as one, whose life was his message and on that token, he failed. Because there may be none among the thousands of professed Gandhist who preached the gospel as well as live it. Gandhi had failed to introduce morality in political practice and because of that failure; Gandhism offers no solution of the crisis of modern culture.

To Roy, the core of Gandhism, its fundamental urge, is its hostility to industrialism and modern world. He not only rejected industrialism but also rejected nearly everything

associated with it. One of such examples given by Roy that, the late Mahadev Desai, the Mahatmas secretary, once formed the project of learning French, as he was a good linguist and a man of literary ability, but Mahatma forbade it, because to him learning French was a sinful vanity and waste of time. Even Mahatma did not want us to know English; to him we must use Hindi, which is our own language. At bottom he regards all learning and art as sinful, because they are enjoyable, and because learning is modern. Gandhi was against western civilization. In the preface to the third edition of his book Indian Home Rule he confessed-" I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization..... It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than people are today prepared for". To Gandhi, India's progress, political freedom etc. all is possible if India would discard modern civilization. His quarrel was not with the British government but with the Western Civilization. M.N. Roy disagreed with M.K. Gandhi. He claimed that the ideals of Gandhi's philosophy are practically untenable in the present situation. Gandhi's criticism of modern civilization, that is, capitalist society, is correct, but the remedy he prescribes is not only wrong but also impossible. Because, the remedy prescribed by Gandhi is if India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, swaraj would descend upon India from heaven. To Roy one need not be a sentimental humanitarian, nor a religious fanatic in order to denounce the present order of society in the countries where capitalism rules.

Roy differed from Gandhi, as for Roy, freedom, equality and democracy are impossible if we reject modern technology. These are also impossible without a high level of education. Education is an expensive matter, which a non-industrial society cannot afford. Criticizing orthodox nationalism, in his book, Fragments of a Prisoners Diary Roy mentioned, give freedom to the women as in Europe and America, but don't let them abandon the ideal of Indian womanhood, don't let them to contaminated by the abuse of that freedom, as is the case with the west, abolish the caste system, but guard against the promiscuity of western society; encourage capitalism, but avoid the greediness of western materialism; get rid of religions superstitions and have a rationalist view of life. but don't accept experimental science as only source of human knowledge. The western civilization is not altogether rejected; it is only asked to place itself under the purifying influence of India. Roy claimed that they have no courage to break with the old and embrace the new.

Gandhi wanted to uproot traditional Indian society rather than transform it. He tried to revitalize village as the basic social unit. For this reason, he criticized the socialists for their advocacy of industrialization, which Gandhi equated with the introduction of large-scale machinery and its attendant disruption of India's traditional village based economy. But like the Russian Marxist, Roy felt, any attempt at social reconstruction

based on traditional social units- with their underlying system of customs, values, behavioral patterns and forms of organization was doomed ultimately to failure and in the short run could only succeed in restraining social progress. Thus, he disagreed with Gandhi and not appreciated Gandhi's appeal return to village to the Indian people and his revolutionary potentiality.

M.N. Roy persistently criticized M.K. Gandhi almost from the time he first appeared on the Indian scene. Gandhi was a nationalist, not only in the sense that he wanted to secure India's political independence but also in his attainment to Indian culture and he appealed to Hindu religious values to gain support for nationalist movement. But to Roy Gandhi's style of political leadership is an antithesis to the growth of democratic attitudes, and also the values of subservience, submission and self-abnegation already enriched in Hinduism. Roy characterized Gandhi's fasts as a form of moral coercion, which impedes the development of habits of rational persuasion and his arrogation of complete discretionary power as authoritarian rather than democratic outlook. Again, to Roy Hinduism is a slave ideology and Gandhi is like an ideological jailer who for centuries fetters the Indian mind in the name of spirituality. Roy argued that Gandhi would consign man to the suffocating restrictions imposed by caste system, religious superstition and village life.

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship for the welfare of the society was different from Roy's view. Gandhi held that his object is to reach the heart of landlord and convert them so that they might hold all their private property in trust for their tenants and use it primarily for their welfare. Gandhi's ultimate aim was the co-operation and co-ordination of capital and labour and of the landlord and tenant. The wealthy persons accept it because it makes them appear virtuous and also at the same time protected their ill-gotten gains. This occasional donation to public cause, strengthen their position, giving it moral sanction. Jai Prakash Narayan also characterized it as a mixture of time economic analysis good intentions and ineffective moralizing. To M.N. Roy, this is the association of capitalist class with puritanical morality. The capitalist is cut off from society and this makes him feel guilty. He has often to do things which morality condemns, so he tends to atone for it by mortifying the flesh. He wears coarse or severe clothes, lies on a hard bed, restricts his diet, and so forth, and feels that the moral balance is thereby maintained. He does bad things and makes a lot of money, but after all he does not enjoy himself. This Puritanism has the further advantage that it inspires both the capitalist and his employees to work hard and spend little. Thus this makes possible the accumulation of capital and survival in competitive economy. To Roy this was the reason, because of which Mahatmas teaching had acquired great prestige among the capitalists of India. According to M.N. Roy, Gandhiji's politics was moral politics not rational politics. He did not agree with Gandhiji's

policy of social reform. He thought that Gandhian ideas on society and reforms would make the Indian people a backward nation in the world.

Radicalism of M.N. Roy did not accept this type of puritanical morality. To Roy this concept is a utopia that 'spiritualizes' capitalism. It is as Roy called 'ethical capitalism'. Roy maintained that it is not a part of the 'spiritual genius' of India to abolish capitalism; it is only to 'moralise' or humanize it. Roy's Radicalism did not strive to deny the world the benefit of technology or knowledge. Again, Radicalism had not tied to Capitalist or pre-capitalist social form as Gandhism in its alternative version appeared to be. To Roy Gandhism is restrictive all round it wants to shut mankind in, to enclose it within national frontiers, to deprive it of all that makes life worth living, of knowledge, of art, of frontier". These were the main reasons, according to Roy Radicalism opposed to nationalism. Because their ideology is to open the windows, to let all the winds of the world blow over the land, the art, the literature, the science, the technology of the world, to let people know them and enjoy them and profit from them. Roy held that Gandhism is diseased at the core. It is the product of a pathological mentality, of guilt fear, obsession and self-hatred, but Radicalist ideas are healthy and national. Thus, Roy was highly critical of Gandhism. The very first issue on Gandhi entitled "Science and Superstition" which prompted Gandhi to remark; "Roy was his enemy number one". To Phillip Spratt a radicalist, "Roy's approach to Gandhism seems that of an outsider, an unsympathetic foreigner". For Spratt also Gandhism is a fascist ideology.

However, after Gandhi's death, a new respect for him emerged in Roy's thinking. Although he continued to reject Gandhi's religiosity and nationalism, in evolving his philosophy of Radical Humanism, Roy came closer to Gandhi in his emphasis on human solidarity, the relation of means to end, the necessity of some form of economic and political decentralization and rejection of party politics. Philip Spratt wrote that what changed Roy's attitude towards Gandhi was Gandhi's campaign against the communal massacres, which came at the time of his own final disillusionment with communist political method. Spratt observed the similarity in Roy and Gandhi's mutual opposition to Partition, and common spirit of their response to the communal riots. He remarked that on hearing the news of Gandhi's assassination 'Roy was deeply moved, hence with a new respect for Gandhi showed in his writings'. In two articles of February and April 1948, entitled "The Message of the Martyr" and "Homage to the Martyr" Roy sets forth for the first time the extent of his ideological agreement with Gandhi. Roy realized that Gandhi's revivalist nationalism was neither the essential nor the greatest element in Gandhi's teachings, essentially, Gandhi's message in a moral, humanist, cosmopolitan appeal. Roy was against the nationalism of Gandhi, not his moral and humanist essence message.

Thus, the common pre-occupation of Gandhi and Roy emerges from a similar set of ideological assumptions about the moral nature of men, and the possibility of creating a perfect social order of spiritually free men even as the ideal political leader, they are like a "Karmayogin" type, above the lust for power and occupying a position of pure moral authority. However, there is much in Roy's thought that is not encompassed by Gandhi. Roy's aesthetic humanism, rationalism, and materialism distinguished him not from Gandhi, but from any other tradition of thought in modern India.

Gandhi as a simple person believes on simple style of living. He was against industrial development, which uses science and technology for heavy production. Gandhi's path of utopia was straight and narrow and life in his "Ramrajya" was to be simple, homogeneous and rather austere. Like Rousseau and Tolstoy, he saw in science and technology forces, which not only made life complicated and alien to it but also led to concentration of power and exploitation. However, Roy deeply appreciates science and technology as a tool of development for the benefit of the people.

As a humanist philosopher, man is the centre of all their philosophy. Roy believes in Protagoras dictum 'man is the measure of everything' and Gandhi believes in 'soul force' of man. However, their approaches are different. Different from communism both Roy and Gandhi give much importance on individual freedom. So, man should sacrifice his freedom for the sake of society. Roy and Gandhi give much importance on morality for social development. For Gandhi a perfect society can be existed only the perfection of its members. Similarly, Roy maintains that a moral man can constitute a moral society. Gandhi's ideal of moral freedom which he called 'swaraj', is based on love or 'soul force'. Man for Gandhi is both an individual reality and a communal reality and it is love that binds men into a community. He thus replaces the politics of the sword by morality of the soul power, compulsion by freedom, dictation by inspiration co-ercion by self-correction and governance from without any governance from within. Gandhi believes in the efficiency of non-violence for the socio economic and spiritual salvation of the individual. Again, Roy at the beginning of his revolutionary life believes in violent revolution, but towards the end of his life when he establishes Radical Humanist Movement, his approaches, more on the individual human morality, that based on the revolutionary of man. To Roy all men are rational and therefore moral. Thus, man is potentially moral. Therefore, Roy also gives more importance on the potentiality of man which Gandhi called the 'potential divinity of man'. To Gandhi, this inner goodness of human being can be cultivated. Roy also maintains that the inner rationality of man can be cultivated through education and training.

Thus, both Gandhi and Roy give much importance on individual aspect, but Roy deviating Gandhi concentrate on middle class. Gandhiji opposes the violent way and

prefers non-violent way of non co-operation or 'satyagraha'. He gives much on the 'masses' not the 'classes', but he does not minimize the importance of the individual action. He holds that reform should proceed at both ends. Gandhi believes in the co-ordination and co-operation between capitalist and labour. So to him by changing the heart of the capitalist we can convert them, so that they donate their private property in trust for the welfare of society. However, Roy believes that the middle class attains a great height in intellectual and political considerations. As a part of society, middle class plays an aggressive role. Even to him the decay of capitalism economically ruins the middle classes, so they try to bring a new social order. Thus, for Roy also class is essential for the progress of the society. However, he gives primary importance to individuals. He is against Gandhian way of revolution, and attaches more importance on philosophical revolution than any other revolution for social progress.

While working in the Indian field, Roy has to face the Gandhian ideology, which is strongest in the number of its supporters. As both Gandhi and Roy, belong to same background similarities obviously seen in both of them. Particularly in case of their attitude towards morality, that is, generally absent in western countries. However, Roy's morality is materialistic as it is, connected with reason, which for Roy is a product of evolutionary process; Gandhi's morality is spiritual connected with God. Though morality of Roy is rational, it is not completely above the influence of 'Spirituality', which belongs to Indian tradition in both of them. As a man, Roy has admired Gandhi, but his criticism of Gandhian ideology makes him 'Gandhi's enemy number one'. Roy severely criticized Gandhi's conservative attitude towards modern science and technology and his spiritualized nationalism. Leaning on spiritual superiority of Indian culture, Gandhi spiritualizes nationalism, because for Roy, nationalism is another name of Gandhism. Again, in the name of criticizing western culture as materialist, he rejects modern technology, industrialization and nearly everything that is concerned with modern civilization. No doubt, Gandhi's rejection of modern technology is unacceptable, but Roy's approach towards modernization is not also totally, acceptable. Too much of industrialization is not suitable for country like India, because majority of Indian people involved in agriculture. Roy has also agreed with this point.

Roy criticizes Gandhist or Nationalist view regarding the uniqueness of India and presumably, therefore that India happens to be having a private revolution of her own. As he thought, India as a part of world, India's nationalist revolution is not distinct from other countries revolution. So what is applicable to the world as a whole must be applicable to India with the necessary modification. But Roy is also conscious about the distinctness of Indian social order. Because of that, he formulates a new ideology, which he thought as suitable for Indian situation in which he reconciles modern technology with moral values

for social reconstruction, which is not the mark of western culture. The meeting point of both the personality is that both are indifferent to popularity and power. □

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'Dristi' Inauguration

Making a decision to move on...



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Many people complain to have certain complications in their married life; while some others maintain that life needs a push to get started; so is it wrong to search and wait for a miracle to happen, because this is what life is about. No one chooses life; life chooses him or her. Some regret for the mistakes committed earlier, of course when caught; again some act like nothing has happened, but see the undercurrent which keeps him or her busy hitting the bush around. Again some even escape to answer the basic questions of one's own need when asked. "Every epoch in history is marked by a particular line of conflict and people living in that epoch tend to interpret history in the light of their fragmentary experience. When a new epoch arrives, people are handicapped by their impaired vision. This consciousness is not influenced by the present period, but it is influenced by the past inherited prejudices, memories and our enchantment with an imaginary past. It is not easy to get rid of the old prejudices, habits and feelings associated with the past, and it involves a severe struggle" (In Search of Truth; J. Bhattacharyya from The Sentinel). It is, indeed, a tough task to fulfill all needs of an individual in a life-time because in the meantime new challenges also surface at the time of execution and the functioning of different resolutions taken in the past. "Human decision-making is complex. On our own, our tendency to yield to short-term temptations, and even to addictions, may be too strong for our rational, long-term planning" (Peter Singer's quote from web). In decision making, forming opinions and even in seeking a life partner, information from electronic media also plays a vital role. We notice every day that new information pushes out old. We therefore tend to favour the most recently gained information, and base our decisions (and change our minds) because of this so called "new" information. So the problems remain whether to hold on to or whether to move away from those situations.

It is generally said that if you want to be happy just do what your heart says. However, sometimes following the heart leads to nowhere. Whereas decisions are made

to keep the mind always happy, in many of the cases, in decision making, mind's emotional bonds influence the entire process of it. It is worthwhile to mention at this stage that there must be a good balance between emotion and reason in making decisions so far as conditions of happy life are concerned. Everybody wants to enhance happiness and to decrease miseries. Hence making decisions about life is really a tough task as because there is involvement of one's interest as well as others. J.S. Mill also stated, "The greatest happiness for the greatest number" when he talked about the ethical standard of action. (William Lillie, An Introduction to Ethics, 1955, p-169)

Once we have made an important decision at particular stage of life, it can lead us either to the highest level of success or else can ruin us, leaving our whole life miserable. It has a lifelong impact for which struggling at every step of life becomes imperative. In many cases, our mental state is not at all conducive in decision making process for many short term gains and at the same time, we have to make decisions even for such benefit. At this point arises the urgency as to what do we hold on to. There are certain things which can never be forgotten, there are certain things in life which are like every day fantasies and there are certain things which are bound to hold on leaving us in a painful situation and of course, there are certain things which give us immense pleasure when we remember them. What needs to be held on to and from which we move away is a matter of great concern. However setting a realistic goal also plays a vital role in this case. But what seems to be realistic for one may not be so for another for it is a subjective condition. Our mind is nothing but a cluster of feelings i.e. anger, hatred, love, sympathy, empathy etc. In fact, how our mind works in making a particular decision mostly depends upon trapped belief molds. "Setting a goal on irrational beliefs also makes someone unhappy" (Ariela Lazar, Deceiving Oneself or Self Deceived? On the formation Belief 'under influence'); Mind, Quarterly Review of Philosophy: Vol 108, no 430 1999). So though difficult, moving on imparts a jerk to a new start.

In many times, we need to take a very quick decision for a vital problem which needs a solution urgently but the challenges standing before us make us not only helpless but also lead us to great mental chaos. Moreover, the set of social and family norms is also a major cause of concern in making a firm-minded decision especially in a country like India. Our minds are also in many ways encompassed by pivotal information without considering the actual state of affairs occurring every day in this complex world in forming a decision. We generally complain about a bold decision taken by a counterpart in another part of the world saying that this cannot be the case for us and simply bypass it without considering its deep rooted significance.

"Making a decision is only the beginning of things. When someone makes a decision, he is really driving into a strong current that will carry him to the places he had never

reamed of when he first made the decision" (Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*, p-65). Every worthy decision is a search for the treasure of life- - someone may miss it or someone may achieve it. Those who have fear of suffering can never take any bold decision because they vacillate in making decisions. Moreover, the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering self.

"Opportunities only knock once. The next one may be better or worse, but never the same one. That is why it is crucial to make the right decision at the right time. A right decision at the wrong time is a wrong decision" (Shiv Khera, *You Can Win*, p-4). In this world, those who can accept changes are courageous enough to face the challenges standing before them. It is the rule of the world that to create or to establish something new, one needs to make a strong foundation on the past. In every creation of the world, there is destruction too. Sticking to the age old beliefs and feelings which are stuck in one's mind in making a decision for every forwarding step, requires a sharp razor to cut it out in order to realize the treasure awaiting in one's life. Lessons from the past that had been crossed throughout the journey of life also teaches a lot to make happy and yet tough decisions. As Robert H. Schuller says, *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do*. This can inspire someone for taking such a decision to move on.

Sometimes we know the best thing to do, but fail to do it. "New years' resolutions are often like that. We make resolutions because we know it would be better for us to lose weight, or get fit, or spend more time with our children. The problem is that a resolution is generally easier to break than it is to keep" (Peter Singer's quote from web) and perhaps there is nothing wrong to keep the resolutions as the situation may compel him or her to break it. It also may not mean that it has lost its dignity because at a certain time in the past, it had associated with a situation that had required the taking of such resolutions. On the other hand, "every morning, when someone opens up his eyes to the so called new day", one feels like closing them again, staying in bed, and not getting up. But it can't happen!" (*Adultery*, page 1, Paulo Coelho). This shows that one has to move on, even though one had a great deal of mental block at a particular stage of life. It is because of a secret fear for which everything is changing from one moment to the next, catching one completely unawares.

We have lots of beliefs acquired through some standard factors like social, religious, economic, family or sometimes individual, depending upon particular space-time situations. Strong beliefs usually turn into intentions and henceforth enter into the unfathomable crook of the sensitivity in such a way that we act according to the force of the beliefs. Religious beliefs like believing in God are one kind of such strong beliefs for those who devotedly believe in God. In the same way the belief of getting a soul mate and a vehement search for it is also a strong belief usually for "true" lovers. But in real

sense these situations are like finding mirage instead of water in a desert, in the present day context. Still we are in search of it. This is why we choose to move away from one moment to the next.

Married couples who are also belligerent and accusing each other every day can be a glimpse of the gravity of the problem. Every religious person looks for a permanent entity like a permanent supernatural, all-pervading, omnipotent God with whom we can roam happily in our mental state; and in a relationship we look for a soul mate with whom we really can spend our entire life peacefully. Interestingly, the way of worshipping God has also taken a new form for the changing belief molds. On the other hand, some married couples whom we consider to be happy will depict unromantic, conventional picture of their paired journey.

Changing strong beliefs into workable ones may take a new turn of life if it is a regular practice. In this context, it is worthwhile to refer a famous British Empiricist, John Locke, who advocated against Descartes' view of Innateness. He opined that there is nothing innate and everything that gives the status of permanency is in actuality the process of experiences of every day events; even though it is not the entire theory of John Locke. (Garrett Thomson, *An Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, 1993, p 112-134). In the same way as Coelho states that there is no point asking why life has reserved certain joys or griefs, we just accept them and carry on. □ (Adultery, page-91) □

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World Philosophy Day Celebration

Ancient Indian Political thought and platonic Philosophy : A comparative Study

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To find out the ultimate truth is the philosophy of every discipline. Therefore from the earliest period of time till today thinkers are found to be involved in reawakening organs of perception to attain the higher state of consciousness. The main objective is to find out the ultimate truth - that is wisdom. The early Greek seers called this tradition philosophia - the law of and the search for wisdom. The Greek word 'Philosophy' is translated into English as philosophy. However, contemporary philosophy and other academic disciplines are only fossilized remains of the genuine tradition called philosophy. Though the tradition of the search for wisdom is to be found in pre-Greek culture, such as Egypt and India, the tradition of Philosophia was actually formulated by Plato. He was the first systematic political theorist of west and a study of the western philosophical tradition begun with his master piece the 'Republic'. He was the first to create a body of writing that spanned many areas - art, mathematics, political theory, religion, science, ethics and so on. He was credited for establishing philosophy as a unified and complex discipline and proposing radical solution to the political community and human life. It is interesting to note here that the root of Greek philosopher Plato's metaphysics can be traced to all pervasive Indian Vedic knowledge.

In the article an attempt has been made to examine the common philosophical concepts of ancient Indian Political thought and Platonic philosophy. This type of study can not only help us to know how the Indian philosophy influenced the western thinkers but also can make us conscious for reviving and preserving our own culture, civilization and above all establishing our own identity. Because in India we utilize the Vedas as spiritual adhesive without knowing what the Vedas contain. Whereas in the west many Vedic concept like self rule, bottom up democracy, healthy community life, public welfare service, genuine secularism etc. are revived and are linked with western philosophers like

t. Aquinas, Aristotle, Plato etc. In India from very ancient period of time, the constitutional system depends on the foundation of truth and social sympathy. According to ancient Indian Political thought truth is the fundamental basis of the state.

The Brihadaranyakopanishad identified Dharma with Truth and declared its supreme status. Focussing on aspects of Dharma in the Arthashastra, Kautilya has indicated it as the basis for securing and preserving power over the earth and clearly recognized the supremacy of Dharma. Supremacy of Dharma implies law only is supreme as law and morality sustain the world. Even in the Mahabharata also it is expressed that proper function of the King is the maintenance of the law, not enjoying the luxuries of life. In the Bhishma Parva, Verse-20, Ch.90 of the Mahabharata it is said that - "Law only is supreme to the king who regulates society in fulfillment of the law discharges his function appropriately. In Verse-9 of Chapter-5 in the Ashrama Vasika Parva of the Mahabharata, Bhishma states to Yudhishthira :

The state can only be preserved by Dharma - under the Rule of law.

Thus 'Dharma' or Rule of law was the very basis of ancient Indian politics. These perceptions of the Rule of Law were echoed by ancient thinkers in the west also, e.g. Aristotle had strong support to sovereignty of law.

Plato reiterated this in 'The Laws'. Plato, in his book 'Republic' did not consider law as an essential element of the state, as he did not wish to bind the hands of the philosopher king with the rules of law. But in the later works, the 'Statesman' and the 'Laws', he gave the law its due place. He was of the opinion that since it is difficult to have a real philosopher rule the state in the ideal way, laws are necessary and therefore, Plato sketched out a legal system to help, guide and restrain the imperfect governmental machinery. Thus one common thing exist in between Platonic Philosophy of justice and ancient Indian thought rule of law or dharma. Like Indian philosophy Plato's philosophy also believed in establishing truth as there is nothing above truth. Another aspect of this philosophy of dharma can be compared with Plato's philosophy of justice. According to Plato when everyone will perform the function for which he is best fitted and do not interfere in the affairs of others, justice can be achieved. And this Platonic philosophy of justice was followed in ancient Indian political affairs also. Because in ancient Indian Political thought two important terms 'Dandaniti and Dharma were used to mean what is called justice. Dandaniti implies legal aspect of justice - law and punishment. And justice is nothing but virtuous conduct with dharma. Thus like Plato, the Hindu tradition also linked justice with performance of duties prescribed by Dharma. Rama Rajya in ancient India. Golden age of Gupta period, good government of kings like Harsha Vardhana and Ashoka the Great, the prosperity under rulers like Akbar the Great, the glorious eras of Indian history, these are the offspring of philosophy based upon Dharma.

During the time of Plato the socio-political condition of Athens was in its lowest web. In the name of administration there was nothing except violence, hatred, inequality and destruction. Such a gloomy situation compelled Plato to dream of an ideal state where justice will be the sovereign authority. In other words, a just person will rule the state for common good. He wanted that person to be the most knowledgeable person and having all the good qualities. He called that person as philosopher king. In short, he wanted a philosopher king should rule the ideal state.

Thus Plato's ideal state is meant for and is equally a part of an ideal society. Similarly Kautilya's endeavour to delineate an ideal state craft is also entailed for good living in an ideal society. Here, one interesting thing is that the concept of ideal state as delineated in Republic and in Arthashastra, includes all the major ingredients of a modern welfare state - harmonious, prosperous, stable and morally developed. Therefore, Plato's as well as Kautilya's concept of ideal state can be studied with a global human concern for a better society.

According to some critics, Plato's idea of philosopher king was taken from Bhagavad Gita, where it is said that the ideal society has four divisions - Brahmana (intellectual), Kshatriyas (warriors and administrators), Vaishyas (merchants' and farmers) and Sudras (labourers). In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says that the Brahmanas, the most intelligent men who are interested in and capable of transcendental knowledge and philosophy, should be in the topmost posts, and under their instruction Kshatriyas should work.

Plato's scheme of specialization of different classes of people and division of work among them is more or less similar with that of the ancient Hindu Varna system. Plato's ideal state was composed of three classes- firstly the men of wisdom means the guardians whom he called the Philosopher kings. Secondly the soldiers who are in charge of defence of the state and thirdly the artisans, means the producing class or the working class who carry on the economic activities of the community. The main objective behind this classification is justice. According to Plato a person should perform that activity for which he has knowledge and ability. If on the basis of this principle the whole society is classified and nobody interferes in the affairs of others, then justice can be maintained.

Similarly in ancient Hindu Varna system also there were mainly four varnas- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudras. Originally this varna system was not based on birth. In other words classification of the society was made on the basis of nature of work, not birth.

Plato gave importance not only on social justice, but he also emphasized on producing just human being. He said that like three classes in the ideal state, human soul also contains three elements reason or wisdom, spirit and appetite. For him that individual

is a just person when each one element of his soul does their duties in a balanced manner. Plato thus wanted to establish that justice means each man must discharge his functions in the station of his life. Justice is therefore, the principle of life. The same principle had been followed in Indian society long ago. In the Srimad Bhagavat Gita, four divisions of the society are compared with different parts of the body- the head, arms, the belly and the legs. Just as all the parts of the body co-operate to keep the body fit, in the ideal state all sections of the society co-operate under the leadership of the Brahmanas. Comparatively the head is the most important part of the body, for it gives direction to the other parts of the body. So the ideal state function under the direction of the Brahmanas.

By making comparison between ancient Indian political thought and Platonic political philosophy we may come to the conclusion that the root of Plato's philosophy can be traced to ancient Indian Vedic philosophy. Although It is said that Greece is the centre of philosophical thinking, at the same time it is also true that Philosophical studies done in India at that time influenced the Greek thinkers also. No doubt, time has changed now, but even at present these philosophical concepts have great value in contemporary politics. Today's politics is nothing but struggle for power. But regarding just or proper use of this power no importance is given. Therefore, it is high time for us to revive Vedic philosophy of Dharma or Platonic Philosophy of Justice, which aimed at establishing truth for the welfare of all. Now a days although we talk about good governance, under present circumstances we can not achieve it unless and until we understand its meaning by heart. □

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The Concept of Liberation in Sankaradeva's Philosophy

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Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual. We know that it springs from spiritual disquiet. Spiritualism plays a significant role in Indian tradition. Indian ethics also rooted in spiritualism. The idea of 'purushartha' is the fundamental principle of Indian ethics. The human life is the most suitable among all living creatures to attain the total perfection by pursuing the Caturvarga i.e four purusarthas or noble objects of human life. Viz-Dharma (religious merit), Artha (wealth), Kama (worldly pleasure) and Moksha or Mukti or Liberation.

The term 'liberation' consists of diverse meanings. The word 'liberation' originates from the word 'liberty', 'liberate' and liberate means freedom or release from slavery imprisonment, captivity or any other form of arbitrary control. Again, liberation means the sum of rights and exemptions possessed in common by the people of community, state etc.

Except carvaka systems of Indian philosophy, liberation is the common concept to all systems of Indian philosophy. According to Carvaka Ethics, summum bonum or highest end is nothing other than sensual pleasure. The divergent system of Indian philosophy suggests divergent ways for the attainment of liberation or moksha and suggests different paths for the attainment of liberation as the path of knowledge (Jnana Marga), the path of action (Karma Marga) and the path of devotion (bhakti marga). An aspirant can attain liberation or moksha by fulfilling any one of the above mentioned paths.

Liberation or Moksha is the highest human values of life and considered in isolation from other values of life like the economic (artha), hedonistic (kama) and moral (dharma) values. The Buddhist concept of the highest destiny of man as Nirvana which affords an opportunity to study moksha from a more positive and more intellectual point of view as against the spiritualistic and absolutist approach of the Upanisads. Nirvana is advanced as the solution of the problem of human suffering. The word 'Nirvana' is derived from the

verbal root 'nirvah' which means 'to blow out' or 'to cool down'. The passions (klesa) which lead life towards dukha (sorrow) through their influence (samsrava) are to be cooled down. Nirvana is based on the two premises i.e. there is suffering in life and nirvana is the state of liberation from suffering.

Sankaradeva's concept of liberation: Sankaradeva maintained that liberation of soul is the highest end of life. Moksha or liberation means freedom of the human soul from samsara. He also upholds the annihilation of sins is liberation. His views on moksha and bhakti are to be found in the *Bhakti-ratnakara*, which contains his philosophical reasoning. Sankaradeva is in full agreement with Sankaracharya's advaita mukti regarding the concept of moksha or liberation. According to both Sankara and Sankaradeva, removal of ignorance is the way to liberation.

According to most Indian thinkers including Sankaradeva, liberation is regarded as the highest end of human life and the phenomenal world is full of sufferings. The transitory nature of the world appears to be the cause of profound sorrow for human beings. They believe that death is not the ultimate end of human life. The individual self can attain immortality through liberation. Ignorance is the root cause of bondage. Sankaradeva claims that the individual self, in its true essence, is always free. But due to ignorance, the self appears as bound. According to Sankaradeva, happiness that comes from the material world is not the ultimate end of human beings. Sankaradeva maintains that the individual self is under the suppression of maya which conceals the real happiness of individual or jiva. (*Bhakti-ratnakara*: V-8-9). In its true essence, the jivatman is identical with Paramatman. But due to ignorance the individual self forgets its own identity. Sankaradeva in his '*Nimi-nava-siddha-samavada*' writes as-

Indriyar sange jiva bhunje bisayaka
Atma buli mane mayamaya sariraka
Dhare maha mohe ati hovai jnana sunya
Sakame anek karma kare papa punya
Sehi karmaphala bhunji bhrame samsarata
Nahi anta jivara jatana dukha jata //

(V-110)

[Being ignorant, the jiva along with the sense organs experiences the worldly affairs, acquires papa or vice and punya or virtue according to nature of actions. To reap the fruits of actions one must come to this world for innumerable times till he is finally released. So, ignorance is the root cause of bondage when ignorance is removed, the individual self becomes liberated].

Liberation means freedom from worldly sufferings and attainment of bliss. Sankaradeva admits three kinds of individual consciousness, namely, waking (jagana).

dream (svapna) and dreamless sleep (nidra). (Bhagavata-purana;!!1 Anadipatana-v-66). In dreamless sleep, the sense organs along with ahankara absorb in the atman and the atman remains an witness or saksi. (Nimi-nava-siddha-samavada-V-196). According to Sankaradeva, though the jiva experiences the self in deep sleep, it does not mean liberation. Because at that time also avidya is present. (Nimi-nava-siddha-samavada; V-198). He holds that moksa or liberation is possible only after the destruction of linga-sarira. Sankaradeva writes as-

Mayaye erila linga sarira bhangila
Apunara atma paramatmate thapila
(Kirtanghosa : 1955)

[As he become free from maya, his linga sarira broke away and he had his soul merged in soul supreme].

Thus, rebirth is due to the non-destruction of the linga-sarira. One can attain liberation as soon as he dissociates himself from the linga-sarira. Linga-sarira means accumulation of thoughts acquired in the past lives and also in the present life which survives after death and is the cause of new life till absolute liberation.

Sankaradeva, as an advocate of Neo-Vaishnavism, maintains that without knowledge or jnana, a man can not get liberation. He explains liberation through his theory of knowledge. According to Sankaradeva, moksa or liberation is complete merger with the Absolute or Brahman. It is to become one with the Absolute, ego or the ahankara which is the product of maya should be removed to achieve such a state and then the pure-at-heart sees the Absolute Brahman by removing the illusion of the intellect. Thus, when ego is cut by the weapon of knowledge, absolute bliss prevails at the pure heart and it feels completeness. Jiva does not see his own body and becomes one with Brahman. This is known as atyantikalayo.

Mukti or liberation may be of two types, viz, (1)Jivan-Mukti or liberation attained in this life and (2)Videha mukti absolute liberation from birth and death. Sankaradeva holds that liberation which can be attained in one's own life time is called jivan-mukti. True knowledge destroys all merits and demerits and so in the jivan-mukti man holds his body only through the will of God. According to Sankaradeva, one who attains jivan-mukti need not go beyond the cycle of birth and death.. Because, he is not affected by the power of maya. "The principal vaishnava sects of India viz those of Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Caitanya have not recognised Jivan-mukti, i.e. liberation during life time." (Sarma,S.N.:1996 : 56). But Sankaradeva , like Sankaracharya , an advaitic has recognised both the types of liberation .Sankaradeva writes as-

Drdha bhakti kari chindi moha jari
Karmabandhe bhaila hina

Paya maha daya dekhi brahma maya
Krsnate gailanta lina

(Kirtanghosa-691)

[Damodara Bipra with firm devotion to Krishna, did away with worldly attachment and become free from the fetters of karma. Thus, having supreme attainment, he saw the world as Brahman and got merged with Krishna].

The Bhagavata refers to five types of mukti-salokya, sarsti, samipya, sarupya and sayujya or ekatvam. Sankaradeva holds that according to the ability of the devotee there may be three types of spiritual achievements. They are lina-mukti, baikuntha labha andsaprema bhakti.

There are divergent views regarding the means of liberation. Sankaradeva considers devotion to be the easiest means of liberation that can be accepted by all. According to him , though there are various means of liberation, yet Bhakti is the best for all to get rid of this painful life. He write in his Kirtanghosa as -

Stri sudro karai yadi amata bhakati
Tahata kahiba itojnana mahatmati
Aka bhakti kari padhe yito jnaniloka
Maha suddha huya jnanadipe dekhai moka

(V-1826-27)

[Even if women and sudras offer the devotion, reveal to them its content O, Noble one, the wise who read it with a devotional urge, being highly purified, see Me in light of knowledge].

Sankaradeva does not accept jnana and karma to be totally useless. According to him, jnana is the spontaneous outcome of devotion. There are three ways of God realisation like jnana marga, karma marga and bhakti marga. Among these three ways of God realisation, Sankaradeva declares the way of devotion to be the ultimate way of realising God. As he said -

Jnana karma bhakti kahilo kari bheda
Bhakati pranama pantha dilo parichched
(Bhagavata x1 :141)

Bhakti leads to mukti or liberation. This bhakti is not simple utterance of the names and glories of the Lord Hari or Krishna. It is a complex and gradual process of removing ignorance or avidya. Sankaradeva maintains in his Kirtanghosa , Prahlada explains bhakti as sravana, Kirtana, smarana, archana, padasevana, dasya, sakhitva, bandana and deha arpana. These nine kinds of Visnu bhakti are to be performed. Among the nine forms of bhakti, sravana and Kirtana are regarded as the best forms as they are nessesary requisites for the purification of mind.

Thus, Sankaradeva being bhakti-vadi and believer in nama-dharma, at times he propounds knowledge is the means of liberation. The people without devotion are ignorant. Their knowledge of the world is misleading. They are the victims of illusion. □

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Wall Magazine "VISION"

Gita— A Quest In Satyagraha



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Mahatma Gandhi will always be remembered for his Satyagraha campaigns and his use of non-violence to win self-government for India.

But Gandhi was of the opinion, 'no one is competent to offer Satyagraha unless he has a living faith in God. Bhagwad Gita to which he turned for inspiration is the allegorical description, not of Satyagraha campaign, but of the quest of the human soul for union with Supreme force, God. According to Gandhi, the inspiration taken from Gita was that the outside work that Gandhi did in liberating India and raising the depressed classes is of no more importance than the work of a humble scavenger, while Gandhi himself ceaselessly reiterated that no work is superior or inferior. It was this quest for God that determined Gandhi's every action. He said Truth - is God, Truth did not mean only devotion to material facts for him, what was important was devotion to the Inner Light that the rishis of India and the authors of the Upanishads folded as embodiment of experiences. One important aspect that one finds is that to a large extent, Gita should be understood for proper interpretation of Gandhi's work and message.

Gandhi's publication of Harijan, where his words were almost like weekly tonic - utterly right because no speck of self-pride or incredible supernatural revelation spoil the interior purity, simplicity and courteousness of all that he said or believed. His idea of caste underwent a sea change as his experiences with Truth proceeded and in the end he would agree that a man's proper work was that ordained by his nature not by his father's profession. He opined no work is superior or inferior. There was no work which he considered to be of lesser importance. He believed in the idea of dignity of labour. The importance that one put to one's work gauged where he stood in life. Gita preached in a man's belief to whatever work he was destined for.

Self-government for India was obtained without violence or bloodshed, without any hatred or enmity for the British. Gandhi was cast down by the fact he was not able to instil love and affection which shows he was not able to instil the Gita technique as he wanted in each and every Indian precisely. It was only by fasting that he was able to

purify his mind of depression and regain the equanimity of a rishi. But the very fact of this human weakness and ability in the end to overcome depression or any other forms of negativity, perhaps makes his teaching more helpful than that of the rishis who are said to have dwelt always on high hills of perfect serenity. Gandhi practised what he believed and what he could do, his experiences instilled a truthful aroma to what he preached and that could be one of the many reasons why people accepted and supported his ideologies.

Truth is doubtless, is implied in every chapter of the Gita, but its necessity is never made implicit. Gita was a resultant of the harmony between sub-conscious and unconscious mind and was real because it was part of the collective subconscious which dream life showed to be a fact. Satyagraha is insistence on truth, it is non-violent resistance or civil resistance. It is a truth implying love, firmness which engendered the Indian movement. Satyagraha is the Force which is borne of Truth and love. This unconditional belief proved appreciable because it gave India her freedom from a long period of total exile. The English meaning of 'Satyagraha' 'Passive Resistance' was rejected and Satyagraha gained an individual status by itself.

Gandhi envisioned Satyagraha, as not only a tactics to be used in acute politics struggle but as a universal solvent for justice and harm. The principles of Satyagraha are non-violence, Truth, Non-stealing, chastity, labour, control of the Palate, Fearlessness, equal respect for all religions, economic strategy and freedom from untouchability. He did establish some rules if it had to be successful- no anger, no retaliation, submit to arrest or confiscate of property, no cursing, no insult to National Flag and all should subject themselves to obey the rules and regulations prescribed. Gita did have a transforming effect on Gandhi and was most instrumental in making Gandhi a 'Mahatma'. The four guiding principles mobilized Gandhi's Satyagraha movement. It was Gita which awakened to a more conscious living, living life with a purpose and living for welfare of others. Gandhi's selfless work and experiences along with Christ's teachings, understanding of the New Testament produced deep impressions etched deep into his heart. Gandhi read Gita a number of times for better understanding and proper interpretation. India, weaponless had accepted him (Gandhi) as her leader, one of the stagnant aspects in history, and gave to the world the unprecedented phenomenon of a revolution led by a saint and one who urged war without gun. He did not mouth but acted as if he accepted every word on the Sermon - the Mount Sinai. Here was a face, the world had been completely unaware of. Gandhi faced many obstacles on the path of Satyagraha - the Chauri-chaura incident and Jallianawala bagh massacre but these incidents though disturbed him, did not hinder his progress, infact made him more detrimental. Truth was God to Gandhi. The pursuit of Truth in the individual life can only be the keystone of enduring creative activity and Gandhi did not lack in his own belief. He also sought to realise Truth, and knew to prove and present it to the world he

needed self-confidence which he found in the verses of Gita and he knew to prove this belief he must be ready to back it up with his life and he did it with self confidence and finally the masses accepted him.

Gandhi called the Gita his mother and his spiritual reference book. It had seemed contradictory to many that a scripture that offers the duty to kill is the basis for, non-violence. Gandhi explained that the story is not meant to be taken literally. Its meaning is that in order to reach self-actualization, we must kill what is most dear to us, and shed our personal attachments meaning to extinguish our ego, just as Arjuna was taught to do by Lord Krishna in the battlefield, is the story of our own inner struggle to overcome selfish impulses(fear, anger, greed) which is the struggle from which non-violence springs. Gandhi pointed out that Arjuna is not against killing or principle but only recoils from killing his own relatives. It is not easy to practice Satyagraha unless one is determined for Truth is one of the toughest thing to acquire. The Gita lists Satyagraha and Truth as the first of virtues, affirms the unity of life everywhere and explains in detail of how and why to practice. Gita instils in us a strength to fight against all odds ,just as Gandhi utilised in banishing the English from our country. Gandhi, at no point is found to be wavering or doubting his study of Gita. He does not see it from a religious point of view rather presents his understanding in a very philosophical way in a congenial atmosphere, from a common man's view. Satyagraha has a deep intonation and has a very philosophical interpretation of what Truth is all about. We do really need to thank Bapu for giving us an endearing belief.

It is very difficult to provide any judgemental view of Gandhi's concept, yet it is very easy to interpret that Gita played an important role in his life, understanding and belief. This belief gave us a free India . There is no doubt, Gandhi on his quest for truth found Gita to be inspiring and used it to manifest his principles specially in the freedom movement. Satyagraha, till a few years back had the same ideologies as what we had learnt from the many books written on freedom movement. But modern view has certainly changed keeping with the times and need but the essence is the same. □

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Humanism

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Humanism is an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or super natural matters. It is an attitude of mind which gives primacy to the human individual and recognizes his or her right to live in freedom and with dignity.

The word 'Humanism' is derived from the Latin word 'Humanus', which means a system of thought concerned with human affairs in general. It is an attitude which attaches primary importance to man and his faculties, affairs and aspirations.

In the earlier period the word humanism had a wide and diverse usage. For the Greek and Roman thinkers, it meant reasonable balance of life and social reality. To many others, it simply referred to the study of humanities and polite literature. To others, it led to an understanding of freedom from religious bondage and dogmatism. But to the majority of the humanist thinkers- it simply meant, the study of Man. From this standpoint, humanism can be defined as an attitude of mind which gives primary importance to man and to his faculties. It has an etymological meaning contained in the belief that man is the centre of consideration in all walks of life.

"The Sophists the Epicureans of Greece were perhaps the first humanists of history." They had placed man in the position of supremacy and had maintained that man precedes everything that exists. According to them society itself was the creation of man and the purpose behind all social activity was the welfare of Man. The place of Man was most important for all kinds of activities and ideas considered from the human point of view, this view is regarded as one of the most important views on humanism. From Plato to Protagoras, humanism had to pass through a process of development and change. But the main idea that man must remain the supreme being, was not changed. The trend of thought that we found in the writings of the early humanists predominated for a long time.

In the medieval period, the great humanists Ansel, Abelard, Aquina, Duns Scotus and few others believed in a theocentric approach towards humanism. Accordingly to them, Man, with his complex interests and cultural aspirations, received a large acknowledgement in the speculative scheme. "Though there were differences in the outlook and attitude of these thinkers, but the main strain- to place Man in the centre of all activities was unaffected." 2 In the later period, there were a set of new humanists whose approach became different. In the writings of some of the humanists the place of God was traceable. They considered God as a necessity for the betterment of man and his society. According to them, Man, only as a Member of a society with God, could think of progress. The Christians were leaders in this view of humanism and the Muslim and the Jewish thinkers also supported this view with divinity.

In the early Hindu philosophy, there were unmistakable traces of humanistic ideas. Man as the supreme being has been asserted in a number of instances. Though this idea has been lost in the flood of divine beliefs, yet there was always a struggle between Man and the God to win the first position in society.

The Carvakas can be called as the first humanists in Indian history". For them existence was the first and foremost duty. The humanistic ideas became more prominent in the Buddhist religion. Buddha was the supreme example of a human being. He derived the agreements about the God. Rejecting the necessity of the discussions about the heaven and the life after death, the Buddhists were building a new society, reacting against the Hindu ideas of surrender to super-human power. They asserted the potential powers of the individual as well as the social man.

The humanistic tendencies were also found in the Eastern civilizations. The hope of a better life on the earth has been one of the greatest factors of human civilization. The desire to merge in a greater void after death had always remained a problem which few people either understood or appreciated. This was more visible in a civilization like that of China. The Chinese people believed in the human existence as the foremost problem of the universe. "The Chinese poets, philosophers, thinkers, writers and the rest of them, saga of human life, human problems and human existence".

In the Western culture, the approach of man to Godhood was different. They gave priority to human interest than divine interest. European mankind had to pass through some of the greatest crisis in history only for the sake of the battle between man and God which was not so in the East`.

Europe made tremendous progress on the path of humanism after the 15th century. With the coming of the age of modern science, there was a basic change in European outlook. The coming of mathematics necessitated a different approach. The history man became the history of science. "The kingdom of God was over and the Kingdom of Man

had begun. God who had remained as the most powerful force in the medieval period yielded place to the sovereignty of Man". This was the greatest mental and intellectual revolution in European culture and the beginning of a new kind of civilization.

The place of Descartes is specially important in the history of Humanism. He was one of the first thinkers who realized the need for integrated study of all subjects. Descartes found mathematics as the best subject to analyse the problems of Man and arrive to solutions. He established his famous formula, 'Cogito Ergo-Sum'; which means- I think, therefore, I exist. On the basis of this formula he built up his structures of interference to God and the external world. His way of looking at problems changed the entire outlook of Europe and this was an important development in the evolution of humanistic philosophy.

Another humanist Spinoza, identified God with Nature . Nature was glorified as the most important aspect of universal existence and the place of man was coming through. "It argued that Nature would have no place without Man standing by her side." Nature remained a realm of inexorable and all embracing law only for the knowing and thinking mind.

Immanuel Kant wanted to support the way of Spinoza. According to him, all knowledge was rooted in the self certainty of man's reason. Man had been proclaimed sovereign in the realm of thought and action. Philosophers like Gutlier, Deisma, Buttler and Voltaire emphasized to recognize the sociality of man, Ideas changed from God as reason to Reason as God from faith in the God man to faith in the Man God.

Humanism was conceived as the simplest and plainest philosophic understanding. It had opened a new vista of vision. It awake the continent of Europe from a long slumber of intoxication. Humanism, as a philosophical attribute, has a long and varied history. There were several humanists who advocated different trends of attributes to humanism. "But in all this varied development, one thing was certain that Man must be the sovereign and there should be no dogmatic authority over man's thought and life."

There were fast changes in the humanistic philosophy in the 20th century. It took different lines-pragmatism, existentialism and Marxism ideal was the Schiller's main idea. They believed in humanism as a philosophical attitude which attempts to take human experience as the due to the world of human experience and to take Man on his own merits.

In general, the modern Humanist believe that Humanism can mean two things-

Firstly, it may mean that Man is the supreme value and an end by himself and secondly, Man is all the time outside himself. By projecting and losing himself beyond himself, man makes himself to exist. He himself is able to exist and sustain. There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity.

Humanism, as one of the very controversial and important trend of philosophical ideas, spread over in different countries. Many philosophers did not agree with their basic principles. But there are many who wanted to found the human society and civilization on their principles. There were yet others who brought changes in the philosophy of humanism and remolded it as they liked it best.

The supreme value of Humanism is the freedom of the individual because for it the human individual is an end in himself/herself irrespective of any differences between individuals. It considers all human beings equal and as full confidence in the inherent potentialities and intrinsic worth of each individual. It emphasizes that social life can be made as progressive as the mutually co-operative sensible men and women can make it on the basis of humanist morality and human freedom which is the core of Humanism. Humanism is all out to create and promote all those conditions within and outside social life which are essential for the progressive augmentation and refinement of human freedom. □

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Teachers' Day Celebration

Philosophy of Mathematics Education

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It sounds very interesting when we combine 'Philosophy' and 'Mathematics'. The philosophy of mathematics is the branch of philosophy that studies the philosophical assumptions, foundations, and implications of mathematics.

The 'Philosophy of Mathematics Education' in narrow sense can be applied in interpreting the words 'philosophy' and 'mathematics education'. The term 'philosophy of mathematics education' brings 'philosophy' and 'mathematics' together, foregrounding the philosophy of mathematics. The philosophy of mathematics is undoubtedly an important aspect of philosophy of mathematics education, especially in the way that the philosophy of mathematics impacts on mathematics education. This is part of the missing element that lies with the subject matter of Mathematics. The philosophy of mathematics education need not be a dominant interpretation so much as an area of study, an area of investigation, and hence something with this title can be an exploratory essay into this area. Mathematics education is concerned about the activity or practice of teaching mathematics. So the narrowest sense of 'philosophy of mathematics education' concerns the aim or rationale behind the practice of teaching mathematics. Education is about the desire to learn, not the obligation. The process of learning should be pleasurable, interesting, and helpful. Many philosophers believe that mathematics is not experimentally falsifiable and not a science. In 1930, Gödel's incompleteness theorems persuaded many mathematicians that mathematics can't be reduced to logic alone. Karl Popper concluded that most mathematical theories are hypothetico-deductive like those of Physics and Biology. Pure Mathematics, therefore, turns out to be much closer to the natural sciences whose hypotheses are conjectures than it seemed even recently.

'What is the purpose of teaching and learning mathematics?'- is an important question. Learning and Teaching is a continuous process. Although they can be conceived of separately, in practice a teacher presupposes one or more learners. The aims of teaching mathematics it is important to note that aims, goals, purposes, rationales, etc, do not exist in a vacuum. They belong to people, whether individuals or social groups..

As one of the oldest sciences, and as the paradigm of certain and cumulative knowledge, mathematics and its philosophy seems an unlikely area for controversy. Philosophy of Mathematics Education shows the relation of societal obligation behind the discipline.

Indeed since the teaching of mathematics is a widespread and highly organised social activity, ultimately this aims, goals, purposes, rationales, and so on, need to be related to social groups and society in general. Aims are expressions of values, and thus the educational and social values of society or some part of it are associated in enquiry. So already by considering the narrow meaning of philosophy of mathematics education, the issues of the teaching and learning of mathematics, the underlying aims and rationales of this activity, the roles of the teacher, learner, and mathematics in society and the underlying values of the relevant social groups are implicated.

Different applications of philosophy to mathematics education represent a different focus, and might carry focus on different issues and problems. There are utilitarian bodies of knowledge and applicational activities connecting them, whereas philosophy, mathematics education and other domains of knowledge encompass processes of enquiry and practice, personal knowledge, and as well as published knowledge representations. The teaching of mathematics is an area in which there can be heated and controversial clashes of philosophy or ideologies. However, belief of mathematics education concentrates on the following three questions-

"What are the conceptions of mathematics and mathematical knowledge underlying different learning theories?

"What roles do philosophies of mathematics play in the teaching and learning of mathematics?

"How do they relate to mathematics curriculum, teaching reforms and classroom practice?

Clarity on these questions and finding their answers bring the main philosophy behind Mathematics Education. The various perspectives and every possible approach are discussed, observed thoroughly in the Philosophy study of Mathematics Education.

1. What is Mathematics?
2. How does Mathematics relate to society?
3. Why is learning Mathematics?

4. What is teaching (Mathematics)?
5. What is the status of Mathematics Education as knowledge field?

Various aims of different users of mathematics like industrial trainer aims, technological pragmatist aims, old humanist aims, educator's aims etc. are best understood as part of an overall ideological framework that includes views of knowledge, values, society, human nature as well as education. Mathematics rests on the firm foundations of deductive logic. Among twentieth century perspectives in the philosophy of mathematics, Logicism, Formalism, and to some extent Intuitionism, may be said to be absolutist in this way (Ernest 1991, 1998). Therefore it is very essential to establish the pros and cons of framework of Mathematics Education.

Today, it is need of the hour that, we as educators of Mathematics should keep in mind the values, the ideas and the aims of the subject to impart the real knowledge, concepts of science among the student community because in the words of Travers et al. (1977) "mathematics is useful, mathematics is beautiful, and mathematics disciplines the mind". The role of a teacher is complex and diverse, rather a simple lecturer preparing well in classrooms. The teacher must have the solid background knowledge of mathematics, effective teachers should have good instructional skills to teach, promote, and assist students' effective learning. Teachers are the guiders and facilitators, not transfers, of knowledge. They should motivate students to actively examine and extend their thinking. □

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