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FREEDOM, PROGRESS AND SOCIETY

Essays in Honour of
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PHILOSOPHY FOR LIBERATION*

I

Though it is a truism that all cognitive enterprises, scientific or otherwise, undertaken by professionals are for the sake of the common man, there is a strong tendency among some technical philosophers today both in India and elsewhere to ignore this well-known truth and indulge in a kind of philosophical activity which is nothing but a futile intellectual exercise, profitless and uninspiring. It has been the practice among the classical philosophers in India to say in the beginning itself that the philosophical treatise which they write is intended to help the people overcome their suffering or to attain a goal which is worthy of realization. This healthy practice which was prevalent in the Indian philosophical tradition should not be ignored as nothing more than a pious convention like invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*). On the contrary, it deserves consideration as a pointer to the responsibility of the professional philosopher to society, for whatever he says and does should, by being purposive, be beneficial to the people. A philosophical system, says Vācaspati, is expounded for the sake of the ordinary people who are in need of it and who are, therefore, eligible for it (*loka-vyutpādanārthatvāt śāstrasya, tasyaiva atra adhikārāt*).[1]

Quite a few contemporary Western philosophers hold the view that philosophy is concerned with conceptual analysis as well as the analysis of language with a view to clearing up the philosophical muddles and paradoxes arising as a result of the faulty use of language. They seem to think that it is not the business of philosophy to probe into the nature of man and the world for the sake of understanding the nature of reality and the ordering of life in the light of one's understanding of the nature of

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reality. Their contention is that the philosopher as such is not interested in facts of experience. On the contrary, a philosopher, according to them, has to lay bare the ways in which concepts and speech forms operate for the sake of clearing up conceptual confusions and diagnosing philosophical disorders. The work of analysis has been carried out by these contemporary Western philosophers in two directions—formal logic and language analysis. The study of the basic problems of metaphysics and epistemology is not their *primary* concern, whatever may be the indirect effect of their work on these disciplines through the study of epistemic words such as "know", "perceive", "see", "hear", etc., process words like "run", "travel", etc., achievement words like "win", "arrive", and so on. It looks as if contemporary Western philosophy has moved out of the arena of epistemology and metaphysics in the name of analysis. Nor does it deal with the really important issues in ethics. Contemporary Western analysts who are absorbed in metaethics naively assume that metaethics has no ethical implications and that it is quite possible to discuss metaethics independently of ethics. They indulge in barren verbal discussions whether ethical terms are cognitive or non-cognitive, and so on, completely ignoring the implications of such a discussion so far as practice is concerned. In short, in contemporary Western philosophy, particularly as it is practised in most of the Anglo-American academic citadels, there is the collapse of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics as these disciplines are conventionally understood, though there seems to be the possibility of the re-entry of metaphysics. Some contemporary Indian philosophers, impressed as they are with the so-called revolution wrought by the Western philosophers doing phenomenalistic, physicalistic, and ordinary language analysis, are still under the spell of these philosophers. They are not only the best admirers of what they characterize as "progressive" and "creative" work of these philosophers, but also the worst critics of classical Indian philosophy.

II

There are two approaches to the study of philosophy. The

first one, which may be called humanistic, is directed towards the study of man and the universe, the principles which govern both of them, man's place in the cosmos, the power or the reality which is the source and support of everything we see. We have a glimpse of it in the celebrated "Song of Creation" in the *Ṛg-veda*, X.129. The philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle exemplify this humanistic approach; whatever may be said about God, man, and the world has been dealt with in depth by the philosophies of these two master minds. Working out a full-fledged system of metaphysics as a foundation for the ethical teaching, Spinoza arrived at the conclusion that all human beings are expressions of God and that the endeavour to preserve one's own being demands action for the good of other human beings. The philosophical theism of Rāmānuja integrates God, man, and the world into an organic unity, mapping out man's place in the universe in relation to both God and the world and the responsibilities that man has to bear arising therefrom. I have mentioned only a few philosophers in a suggestive way to illustrate the humanistic approach. The point to be noted here is that a philosopher feels the urge to deal with everything connected with man, with all ultimate problems of thought and practice, and to probe into what is beyond the sensible and the visible world by means of reason supported by intuition wherever necessary. Instead of building a complex philosophical system, one may study philosophical problems in a piecemeal way as a scientist would do. The scientific approach to the study of a problem comprises analysis, generalization through logical reasoning, and verification. Descartes adopted the scientific method when he decided to divide his difficulties, to conduct his thought in order, and to review his conclusions in dealing with philosophical problems. However, the scientific approach did not prevent him from constructing a philosophical system of God, man, and the world. It means that these two approaches to philosophy are not mutually exclusive. But the philosophers who are interested in analysis take up isolated problems in philosophy and analyse them without constructing philosophical systems.

Classical Indian philosophers have adopted both the approaches—humanistic and scientific—to the study of philosophical

problems. All the orthodox schools of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism have not only worked out well-knit philosophical systems, but also have provided sophisticated analyses of problems in logic and epistemology, psychology of human action, and philosophy of language comparable to those found in Western philosophy. They never considered that logic and epistemology, conceptual and language analysis are ends in themselves. However important these areas may be for philosophising, they have to subserve a larger purpose of the common man by answering his questions about life and death, the destiny of man, the nature and source of the world. And these questions can never be dismissed as meaningless and unimportant. For example, Swami Agehananda Bharati holds that questions about life and death are no problems at all and that they are but "cultural urges trying and training our fantasy."[2] According to him, problems are questions that can be solved in principle; and questions that cannot be solved are no problems at all.[3] And these questions, he maintains, cannot be solved either because we do not have tools for solving them or because they are absurd. Swami Agehananda Bharati's argument cannot be accepted. First of all, there is difficulty with regard to what one means by "solution". Does "solution" mean final answer once and for all? Solutions of this kind we do not have even in science. Secondly, there is no justification for dismissing these questions as meaningless or absurd without assigning reason therefor. Thirdly, we do have techniques of analysis of the problem of life and death, which are not transcendent problems. On the contrary, they are problems which man encounters here and now; and they are meaningful. Swami Agehananda Bharati is not alone in holding this view. He has his philosophical cousins in India. To dismiss these problems as meaningless would very much shrink the horizons of both theory and practice and make life bleak and dreary.

III

There are critics who hold the view that Indian philosophy is not philosophy proper. To them, what has come down to us as classical Indian philosophy is a mixture of theology and mys-

ticism; and the bulk of contemporary Indian philosophy which is only exegetical of the classical texts and the commentaries thereon must be labelled, according to them, as theology of the second rate as it is not original and creative like the classical systems. They hold this view on three grounds—methodological, justificatory, and thematic. It is necessary to examine these grounds one by one.

Drawing the distinction between the two words "philosophy" and "*darśana*" on the basis of their etymological meaning, the critics maintain first of all that philosophy in the West and *darśana* of the Indian tradition differ in their methods. Whereas the method of philosophy in the West is critical and discursive, *darśana* of the Indian tradition, according to them, is dogmatic and "enthusiastic". An "enthusiastic" mind, it is said, is one which is "filled with" or "affected by" the doctrines of the tradition, is guided by the instruction of the preceptor, and is overwhelmed by vision.[4] It is, therefore, dogmatic in its approach. Every Indian philosophical school called *darśana* centres round certain doctrines formulated and systematized by the preceptors; and such a system cannot but be authoritative demanding uncritical acceptance. On the contrary, every philosopher in the West, so they argue, examines the problems afresh in a critical way independently of what his predecessors might have said about them; and reason is the guiding principle for him. This criticism is totally unjustified. Though it is true that the words, "philosophy" and "*darśana*", do not convey the same meaning, it does not follow that those who look upon philosophy as *darśana* will be uncritical in their treatment of the problems of life and the views of their predecessors. Nor does the word "philosophy" convey, either etymologically or otherwise, the sense that it is a critical study. Also, critical outlook does not necessarily mean rejection of the views of one's predecessor. The commentarial tradition, whose contribution to the development and enrichment of each school has been extremely profound and valuable, has not been uncritical. Further, the Indian mind has provided an important place for reason in philosophical investigation, pointing out at the same time the limitations of reason. The simple truth is that we cannot explain

everything by means of reason; this, as Walsh says, is a matter of logic, not of how the world is.[5]

Secondly, critics argue that Indian philosophy is not philosophy in the true sense of the term, because it is accepts *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*. While they welcome the inclusion of perception and inference as sources of knowledge, they object to the acceptance of *śruti* as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). They seem to think that what makes Indian philosophy theology and mysticism is the acceptance of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*; and *darśana* minus *śruti* will be philosophy, according to them. This criticism, again, is totally unjustified. It betrays a misconception of the scope and function of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* on the one hand, and the relation of *śruti* to the other *pramāṇas* on the other. There is detailed discussion on this problem in the works of the Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta schools. A brief account of the way in which the Advaitin explains the scope and role of *śruti vis-a-vis* other *pramāṇas* will be helpful to answer the criticism we are now considering.

A *pramāṇa* is accepted as a source of knowledge in so far as what it conveys cannot be known from any other source and also remains uncontradicted. It means that, according to the Advaitin, there are two criteria for a valid cognition (*pramā*) *viz.* novelty and unsublatability (*anadhigatābādhitārtha-viṣayaka-jñānatvam pramātvam*); and that which produces a valid cognition is a *pramāṇa* (*pramā-karaṇam pramāṇam*). There are two points to be borne in mind in respect of the different *pramāṇas* which are accepted as sources of knowledge. First of all, the scope of *pramāṇas* such as perception on the one hand and *śruti* on the other is well-defined. Whereas perception and inference are sources of knowledge of things empirical, *śruti* is authoritative only in respect of what is trans-empirical or super-sensible. The implication is that *śruti* should not be invoked as a source of knowledge with regard to things empirical and that perception and other *pramāṇas* are of no use with regard to what is trans-empirical. The second point to be noted here is that, since there is a clear demarcation between the scope of *śruti* on the one hand and the other *pramāṇas* on the other, there is no possibility of conflict between *śruti* and other *pramāṇas*. The authority

of *śruti* can be rejected only if it can be proved that (1) what it conveys is known through other sources of knowledge; (2) it conveys what is contradicted by other sources of knowledge; (3) what it conveys is doubtful; and (4) it is not informative at all.[6] None of these reasons can be brought in against the authority of *śruti*. In view of a clear demarcation between the scope of *śruti* and that of the remaining *pramāṇas*, it cannot be said that the information conveyed by *śruti* can be obtained through other sources as well. It means that *śruti* can never be shown to be superfluous. Secondly, there will be scope for conflict between one *pramāṇa* and another *pramāṇa*, if both the *pramāṇas* have the same subject matter. Since the subject matter of *śruti* does not fall within the scope of perception and other *pramāṇas*, what *śruti* conveys can never be disproved or contradicted by perception and other sources of knowledge Thirdly, it cannot be said that what *śruti* conveys is doubtful. Doubt, error, and other defects are possible in the case of any information which has human agency as its source. But inasmuch as *śruti* is *apauruṣeya*, what it conveys can never be dismissed as doubtful or erroneous. Lastly, one cannot level the charge that *śruti* is not at all informative. One should have the right frame of mind in order to understand the teaching of *śruti*. It is not without reason that tradition has insisted upon certain requirements to be fulfilled by a person for the right comprehension of the purport of *śruti*; and all these requirements are designed to help a person develop the right frame of mind which is indispensable for comprehending the scriptural teaching. To one who is a mould of clay in the human form *śruti*, says Sureśvara, will not be informative.[7]

I shall now consider the alleged thematic difficulty which stands in the way of calling the *darśanas* of the Indian tradition as philosophy proper. There are critics who hold the view that, since the *darśanas* deal with *mokṣa*, they are not philosophy, and that philosophy in the West does not deal with *mokṣa*. There are two assumptions in this argument, and both of them are questionable. The first assumption is that philosophy as pursued in the West provides the standard for judging whether Indian *darśanas* are philosophy or not. How gratuitous and unjustified this assumption is can be seen if someone, for the sake of argument, proposes the suggestion that philosophy in the West shall be judged on the basis of Indian *darśanas* which provide the model for philosophy. The truth is that it really makes no sense to do this kind of evaluation on the basis of the untenable assumption that the one or the other is the paradigm. There is yet another difficulty. Though philosophy means love of wisdom, there is not one definition of philosophy which is acceptable to the professional philosophers in the West today. There is disagreement among philosophers both with regard to the subject matter and method of philosophy. The conception of philosophy as a critique of science, or as a critique of language, or even as analysis in the most comprehensive sense, is a far cry from the ancient conception of philosophy as knowledge in general about man and the universe. How, then, can one say that Indian *darśanas* are not philosophy proper as if there is one agreed definition or conception of philosophy available in the West?

The second assumption that philosophy in the West does not deal with *mokṣa* is equally untenable. A careful study of Western philosophy will show that the idea of spiritual freedom or liberation which is conveyed by the term "*mokṣa*" is not absent in the West. In the final analysis *mokṣa* means freedom from bondage of the body. What is implied here is that there is some entity, call it soul, or spirit, or self, that gets its freedom from its association with the body, which is bondage. To cite one example from the West, there is an interesting discussion on this problem of freedom from the bondage of the body in Plato's *Phaedo*. Keeping in mind the contrast between philosopher and a lover of the body, Socrates holds the view that the life of a true philosopher is a training for death; that is to say, a philosopher, just because he is not a lover of the body, aims at the liberation from the body for the sake of the highest knowledge. Socrates' argument can be summarised in a series of propositions. (1) A philosopher is engaged in training for dying. (2) He is not a lover of the body as he does not set a high value on the pleasures of food, drink, and sex. (3) He is convinced that the body is a hindrance in his quest after truth, as it makes countless demands upon him, which are not worthy of fulfilment.

(4) So long as he is united to the body, the attainment of knowledge is impossible. (5) While he is alive, he shall come nearest to knowledge, if his association with the body is to the minimum. If this entire argument of Socrates on the need for dissociation from the body is presented to an Indian scholar who has not studied *Phaedo* without revealing to him the source of the argument, he will undoubtedly say that it is from one of the authoritative manuals on Advaita.

It will be of interest in this connection to refer to Daya Krishna's conception of Indian Philosophy. Daya Krishna holds the view that Indian philosophy is philosophy proper and that it is not, therefore, radically different from Western philosophy. His contention is that, if Indian philosophy is treated as philosophy proper, then it can be shown that Indian philosophy has nothing to do with *mokṣa*. His interest in denying its association with *mokṣa* is for the purpose of vindicating that Indian philosophy is not radically different from Western philosophy. He alleges that the classical writers "have created the myth that Indian philosophy is intrinsically and inalienably concerned with spiritual liberation and not with what may be called philosophical problems proper."[8] If Indian philosophy is not concerned with *mokṣa*, then one should, suggests Daya Krishna, not only ask why the *Sūtrakāras* refer to *mokṣa* in their writings, but also wonder how, for example, what is claimed in the *Nyāya-sūtra*, 1.1.1 can be true, for it is impossible for us to accept the teaching that anyone could achieve *mokṣa* through a knowledge of *pramāṇas* and *hetvābhāsas*.

Apart from having the merit of being provocative, Daya Krishna's argument does not appear even to be plausible. First of all, he admits that "*mokṣa* was accepted as the highest value and the ultimate goal of life by the whole of Indian culture."[9] Since philosophy is an expression of the culture of a people, it should not be surprising if the *Sūtrakāras* declare that their works are concerned with *mokṣa*. Secondly, piecemeal consideration of any statement will not be helpful to understand any problem. After quoting the opening aphorism from the *Nyāya-sūtra* Daya Krishna wonders how a knowledge of the sources of knowledge and the logical fallacies will help a person to attain

liberation. Had he considered what the next *sūtra* says, he would have got the answer to the question. The second *sūtra* says: "Final release results from the successive removal of wrong knowledge, defects, activity, birth, suffering, the removal of each later member of the series depending on the removal of the preceding member." The first two *sūtras* taken together suggest that intellectual training and moral discipline are the prerequisites to be gone through for attaining the goal. Thirdly, to say that the Nyāya school, for example, is not concerned with *mokṣa* is anything but truth. The real position is that Indian philosophy is intrinsically concerned with the problem of *mokṣa*, which is a genuine philosophical problem. It is impossible to think of Indian philosophy without the concept of *mokṣa*. The inclusion of *mokṣa* within the subject matter Indian philosophy neither detracts its value nor is detrimental to it.

IV

Though philosophy and religion are distinguishable, they are not separable. This will be obvious if we consider the relation between philosophy and religion. Historically speaking, the relation between philosophy and religion has been very close. Philosophy arose as a reflective criticism of the religious and moral beliefs of man. Just as the modern man holds various kinds of religious and moral beliefs, even so the primitive man entertained all sorts of beliefs. Philosophy begins with man's reflection on his beliefs, both religious and moral, connected with natural and supernatural beings. It means the beginning of religion is also the beginning of philosophy. So long as man lives, he will have some religion or other which will justify the need for the continuance of philosophy as a reflection on his beliefs and practices.

If we examine the history of philosophy, we find that philosophy has developed by performing three different functions —speculation, interpretation, and analysis. It may be that while some philosophers are more interested in speculation, some others take up the work of analysis and interpretation. For example, philosophers both in the East and the West have speculated on the origin of man and the world; and as a result of their

speculation they have built philosophical systems providing a place for man, world and God in the scheme of things. Different philosophical systems such as monism, dualism, and pluralism have a bearing on religion. It is also the case that these systems have been built on the basis of certain religious presuppositions which will become apparent only when we examine the religious tradition of the philosopher who has constructed a philosophical system. Scholars like Karl Jaspers who are competent to speak about the Western philosophical tradition are of the view that the Bible and the Biblical religion have provided the foundation for Western philosophy. It means that philosophy as a speculative enterprise influences religion and is also influenced by it. The strength and grandeur of the Indian *darśanas* lie in the fact that they combine both philosophy and religion. A philosopher who is concerned with the problems of life cannot function *merely* as a technical philosopher analysing terms and concepts, truth functions and argument forms, words and sentences, however important these may be, ignoring the forms of human activity in the spheres of religion, morals, and politics. It means that he will be required to go beyond the boundaries of philosophy and step into religion, ethics, and political philosophy.

Philosophy is both *darśana* and *darśana-śāstra*. *Darśana* means seeing, perception, intuition. Each of these words in the verbal form is transitive pointing to an object. In order to bring out the full significance of the etymological meaning of the word "*darśana*" we have to ask: "seeing of what?" Since the answer to this question is seeing or intuition of truth, *darśana* means *tattva-darśana*. If so, philosophy means the vision of truth, the immediate and direct knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) of the real. Philosophy also means *darśana-śāstra* or *tattva-vicāra* in the sense of a treatise on, or an enquiry into, the truth or the real. The classical writers in the Indian tradition were aware of the semantic distinction between *darśana* and *darśana-śāstra*. Nevertheless, they considered philosophy both as *darśana* and *darśana-śāstra* as it stands for the vision of truth as well as the means thereto. That this mode of explanation is neither unusual nor wrong can be shown by two examples. The word "*pratyakṣa*"

is used in the sense of both immediate knowledge (*pratyakṣa-jñāna*) and that which is instrumental to immediate knowledge (*pratyakṣa-pramākaraṇa*). Śaṅkara explains the word "*upaniṣad*" in the sense of knowledge and also as referring to the book which is meant for the purpose of attaining that knowledge (*upaniṣaditi vidyocyate...tadarthatvād grantho'pi upaniṣat*).[10]

If philosophy means not only knowledge of truth, but also the means thereto, it follows that it is both theory and practice, vision and the *sādhana* therefor. If the practical role that is usually assigned to religion is undertaken by philosophy in the Indian tradition, it is because of the fact that philosophy as such can never be separated from religion. The unity of theory and practice, which has been the ideal of the Indian *darśanas*, has been recommended in modern times by Karl Marx on the basis that the world-view which one has formulated should be integrated with, and followed by, the appropriate modes of action. Deploring that the work of Western philosophers so far has been restricted to the interpretation of the world in various ways, Marx exhorted them to *change* the world. Certainly, the change that Marx had in mind was not only change of the economico-political order of society, but also the change in the perspective of man. Contemporary philosophers like K.C. Bhattacharya, Malkani, Chubb, and others have not been in the wrong when they have explained philosophy both as theory and practice.[11]

V

It is necessary at this stage to justify the claim that Indian philosophy is not only theory, but also practice. The claim of the unity of theory and practice can be justified by considering the relation between value and action. Philosophy has to be man-centred. Every cognitive enterprise is pursued not for its own sake, but for the sake of some end or purpose of man. This is as much true of philosophy as it is of any other cognitive enterprise. It means that philosophy, to be valued and justified, must concern itself with the life-activity of man. If philosophy is related to the life-activity of man, then it has to be value-oriented. A brief explanation will be helpful to understand the relation between life-activity and values.

The life-activity of man which is fully reflective of his cognition, desire, deliberation, and choice comprises the pursuit of four values—*artha* (material goods), *kāma* (pleasure), *dharma* (duty), and *mokṣa* (liberation). Man lives at two levels—organic and hyper-organic. Bodily and economic values belong to the organic level. It may appear, when superficially considered, that man is not different from animals in the pursuit of pleasure. Since not all pleasures are worthy of pursuit, man's pursuit of pleasure is not restricted to, and cannot be explained solely in terms of his life at the organic level. Man cannot be considered to be fully "human" unless his senses have become *human* or refined. It means that his senses should not be subservient to the basic needs alone such as hunger, sleep, and sex. Values of association and fellowship, intellectual and moral, aesthetic and religious values belong to the hyper-organic level of the life of man. All the higher values of life can be brought under *dharma* and *mokṣa*. The Indian *darśanas*, being philosophies of life, take a comprehensive view of man's life comprising individual, social and spiritual aspects of life and consider his entire life as a preparation for the attainment of the final goal of liberation. It is for this reason that we say that the Indian *darśanas* are *moṣka-śāstras*, *i.e.* treatises on liberation. Since philosophy is concerned with the life-activity of man, it is value-oriented.

Value and action are closely related to each other. If the Indian *darśanas* are value-oriented, then they are action-oriented. The "Use Theory of Language" associated with Wittgenstein is based on his view, "Do not ask for the meaning of a word; but look at its usage."[12] In the present context we may reformulate his statement and say: "Do not ask for the value of a person; but look at his action." There is no need to ask a person to make a declaration of his values. He may or may not tell the truth in this regard. However, his action, when closely examined, will reveal the values he cares for and pursues. When a person accepts something as a value, he cannot but be engaged in activities conducive to the attainment of the value in question. To say that something is a value, e.g. charity or non-violence, is to accept it as a value and also to commend it for others; and to accept something as a value is not just for the purpose of talking, but

for the purpose of doing. The logic of value-words, as pointed out by R.M. Hare, should finally result in action. Hare's statement deserves careful consideration. He writes: "The remedy, in fact, for moral stagnation and decay is to learn to use our value-language for the purpose for which it is designed; and this involves not merely a lesson in talking, but a lesson in doing that which we commend; for unless we are prepared to do this we are doing no more than lip-service to a conventional standard."[13] So Indian philosophy which is value-oriented is action-oriented. The oft-repeated claim that Indian philosophy is not only theory, but also practice can be justified only on the basis of the close relation between value and action.

Starting from the basic position that philosophy is man-centred and that it is, therefore, concerned with the life-activity of man, I argued for the justification of the unity of theory and practice by showing the link between value-orientation and action-orientation. The value-orientation of the Indian *darśanas* with all that it implies presupposes a philosophy of man. It is not necessary to go into the details of the doctrine of man which the Indian *darśanas* have developed paying meticulous attention to the constitution of man as well as the nature and significance of his experience at all levels—waking, dream, and deep sleep. One of the salient features of the philosophy of man which the Indian *darśanas* have developed relates to the competence of man to pursue the higher values. Unless it is shown that man, unlike other animals, has the special competence to pursue the higher values, *i.e. dharma* and *mokṣa*, the thesis that Indian philosophy is action-oriented because it is value-oriented, and that it is value-oriented because it is man-centred, will come to nothing.

It was Protagoras, the Sophist, who held the view that man is the measure of all things. Socrates examined this view and rejected it. In spite of Socrates' thorough-going criticism, quite a few subscribe to the Protagorean thesis that "man is the measure of all things." There are two ways in which this statement can be interpreted. According to one interpretation, it means that man, a rational being, is the measure or the standard of everything, because he is capable of reflection and analysis, and as a rational being he can discriminate between truth and falsity,

good and bad, right and wrong. Man alone is endowed with this power of discrimination and judgement, and so he is the measure of all things. This interpretation which emphasizes the preeminence of man among all creatures is acceptable to the Indian mind. There is an account of the creation of the world in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2. 1. 1. From Brahman, the ultimate reality, the different elements, *viz.* ether, air, fire, water, and earth, came into existence; and then herbs and food came into being; and from food, the *Upaniṣad* tells us, man came into existence. When all creatures without any exception are products of food, why is it that man alone among created beings is mentioned by the *Upaniṣad*? Śaṅkara in his commentary on this text of the *Upaniṣad* considers this question and answers it. He says that man alone is mentioned by the *Upaniṣad* because of his preeminence. Man is preeminent among all creatures, because he alone is qualified for knowledge and the performance of religious duties (*karma-jñāna adhikāraḥ*). Why is it that he alone has this competence? Śaṅkara justifies man's competence or eligibility for *jñāna* and *karma* on three grounds.

First of all, he has the *ability* for acquiring knowledge not only of the things of the world, but also of the supreme Being which is the source and support of all beings, since he is equipped with the mind which, being inspired by the Self, is capable of comprehending everything including the highest reality. A text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says: "Only by the mind is it (*i.e.* Brahman) to be perceived."[14] The most wonderful instrument that man is in possession of is the mind. It all depends on the condition of the mind—whether it is controlled and purified or whether it is chaotic and perturbed. A chaotic mind which strays from the right path and wanders among the objects of the world brings disaster to man; but when it is controlled and purified along with the body and the senses, and when it has the benefit of the teachings of the scripture and the guidance of the teacher, it opens the door to liberation.[15] Unlike other creatures, man has the ability to understand scripture and follow it; and scripture is the authority both for the performance of religious duties and for our knowledge of the highest reality.[16]

Secondly, man has the distinctive quality of *desiring* certain

ends as a result of discrimination, deliberation, and choice. Man cognizes something, desires it, and is engaged in activity with a view to fulfil his desire. The sequence of cognition, desire, and action, that is to say, cognition leading to desire, and desire culminating in overt action, is characteristic of man's goal-seeking activity. By virtue of the knowledge he possesses man can discriminate between, what the *Upaniṣad*[17] calls, the pleasant and the good, *preyas* and *śreyas*, and choose that end which is conducive to his liberation. In the words of the *Upaniṣad*, "Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man, pondering over them, discriminates. The wise one chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of the worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant."[18]

Thirdly, when a man exercises his choice on the basis of the knowledge of the objects presented to him, he is not indifferent to the object of his choice. On the contrary, he is earnest about it. He is in search of the right means to realize the end chosen by him. On the basis of his understanding of the means-end continuum he endeavours to adjust the means to the end. So non-indifference to the goal and the means thereto is characteristic of man.

To sum up: man's preeminence among all creatures of the world is due to his eligibility for knowledge and action; and his eligibility for these two is due to his ability, his desire for results, and his conscious involvement in the search for the appropriate means to the attainment of the end.[19] In support of this view Śaṅkara quotes a text of the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*[20] which says: "In man alone is the Self most manifest for he is the best endowed with knowledge. He speaks what he knows; he sees what he knows; he knows what will happen tomorrow; he knows the higher and the lower worlds; he aspires to achieve immortality through perishable things. He is thus endowed (with discrimination) while other beings have consciousness of hunger and thirst only." The Indian *darśanas* hold the view that man alone is capable of pursuing the highest value, *viz. mokṣa*, by the cultivation of virtues such as purity, self-control, dispassion, and non-violence, by the practice of *dharma* and *bhakti*, and by the attainment of the right knowledge of the supreme reality.

VI

In the context of the fast spreading "Theology of Liberation" in the West as well as in India, it is necessary to consider the role of Indian philosophy for the liberation of man. As philosophies of life, the Indian *darśanas* are concerned with the freedom or liberation of man. Influenced by the spiritual orientation of the classical philosophies, the leaders of the Renaissance movements from the beginning of the 19th century clarified, reaffirmed, and vindicated, each in his own way, the spiritual orientation of the classical *darśanas*. The word "spiritual" is allergic to some contemporary technical philosophers in India as well as outside India, though there is nothing absurd, weird, and unearthly about spiritualism as taught in the classical *darśanas*. It is wrong to think that spiritualism is outside the scope of philosophy. Since religion presupposes ethics which forms an integral part of the study of philosophy, there is no reason why spiritualism which is an integral component of religion should not form an integral part of philosophy. Without decrying the Indian spiritualist tradition by studying it superficially from a distance as many contemporary analytical philosophers study metaphysics in a piecemeal way remaining as far away as possible from it, one should try to understand the nature and role of spiritualism in the right perspective against the background of the philosophy of man formulated by the Indian *darśanas*. Discerning scholars who are acquainted with the philosophical tradition of India and its impact on modern and contemporary India and who cannot be accused of any partiality for India hold the view that spiritual life still exists in India, notwithstanding the storms of political agitation which may hide it at the surface. This should not be construed to mean that Indian philosophy is superior to Western philosophy, or that spiritualism is the monopoly of India.

A brief reference may be made to the philosophy of man as formulated by the Indian *darśanas* before analysing the presuppositions of the concept of freedom. The Indian *darśanas* with the exception of Buddhism which is supposed to advocate the no-*ātman* theory hold the view that man is a complex entity consisting of spirit and matter, the self and its psycho-physical vesture. What binds or limits the spiritual principle is the psycho-physical part, what may be called the mind-sense-body adjunct, with which it is associated. This, however, does not mean that the body is something to be despised and ignored. While emphasizing the role and value of the mind-sense-body complex for intellectual training and moral-cum-spiritual discipline, the Indian mind has always subordinated it to the spiritual principle. I cannot think of a better way of explaining the subordination of the body to the self than the one successfully attempted by Rāmānuja whose definition of the body (*śarīra*) has become a *locus classicus*. Rāmānuja says that the body is one which is controlled by the self, which is supported by the self, and which exists to subserve the purpose of the self.[21] The distinction between the spirit and the body, which is an important feature in the philosophy of man as set forth by the *darśanas* is intended not only for the subordination of the latter to the former, but also for the gradual dissociation of the spirit from the body. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*[22] works out a hierarchy of things with the *Puruṣa* or the self at the top and the senses at the bottom. It says: "The sense-objects are higher than the senses; the mind is higher than the sense-objects; but the intellect is higher than the mind; and *Hiraṇyagarbha* is higher than the intellect. The Unmanifest is higher than *Hiraṇyagarbha*. The *Puruṣa* is higher than the Unmanifest. There is nothing higher than the *Puruṣa*, who is the culmination, the highest goal." Like Plato, the Indian *darśanas* recommend the dissociation of the spirit from the body through the cultivation of detachment for achieving liberation.

A little reflection on the presuppositions of the concept of freedom will help us to see that the Indian mind, while placing *mokṣa* or spiritual freedom at the apex of the hierarchy of values, has not ignored or minimized the importance of other values. There are many kinds of freedom—political freedom, economic freedom, religious freedom, and so on. The enumeration of the different kinds of freedom shows that the life-activity of man is many-sided and that the achievement of each one of these freedoms is indispensable for the spiritual perfection he aims at. Just as man should be free to choose his own form of government, to acquire material goods, to profess and practise his religion, and

so on, even so he should be free to seek and abide in the spirit. It means that man demands freedom in his entire life-activity for the pursuit of values ranging from bodily and economic values at one end and spiritual freedom at the other.

The pursuit of values implies the following presuppositions. *First of all*, since man has the competence for the performance of works and the pursuit of knowledge, he is a moral person or a moral agent. He has this competence, because he is in possession of will and reason. In a passage which looks like a paraphrase of Śaṅkara's statement about the special competence of man to which reference was already made, T.H. Green says that "the condition of a moral life is the possession of will and reason."[23] By "will" he means the capacity in him to action as determined by his conception of perfection; and by "reason" he means the capacity in him of conceiving the perfection to be attained by action. Man cannot pursue values of any kind unless he is a moral person, that is to say, unless he is in possession of will and reason. *Secondly*, a moral person is capable of rights. He acquires this capacity for rights by virtue of his membership in society. *Thirdly*, every right is a claim implicit in, and deducible from, the highest good—call it perfection or spiritual freedom—he aims at. *Fourthly*, to say that he is capable of rights is to say that he ought to have them. In the absence of these rights he ceases to be a moral person. Without these rights he cannot pursue *artha* and *kāma*, *dharma* and *mokṣa*. *Fifthly*, a moral person should have the guarantee of justice being rendered to him. Justice in the ethical sense means giving *every* man the indispensable conditions for reaching the goal. It, therefore, implies equality; and equality means equal opportunities to everyone for the fulfilment of man's vocation as a moral being, for the achievement of perfection by himself and others. *Lastly*, the goal which he has conceived through the capacity of reason in him is the same for all.

These presuppositions are implicit in the theory of freedom formulated in the Indian *darśanas* and the Western philosophy of idealism. What is to be noted here is that the theory of freedom as conceived by these philosophies which are spiritualistic in the best sense of the term, considers man in three dimensions—individual, social, and spiritual. The first two dimensions which are inseparable point to the third one as their culmination; and the achievement of the third dimension is grounded on the first two. It means that the Indian *dārśanikas* and the Western idealists are not dealing with empty freedom and abstract individual. Freedom which they advocate is *graduated* as it is related to values which are hierarchically structured. It is fully *positive* as it has a content—be it a material value or a spiritual value—for whose realization it is claimed and exercised, and not just negative in the sense of freedom from something. It may be noted that to accept a material value does not necessarily mean that it has to be treated as an end in itself.

In the course of the discussion of the problem of freedom in Indian philosophy Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya observes that the Indian philosophers have failed to arrive at "a positive conception of freedom adequate for our present requirement."[24] He is thoroughly dissatisfied with the theory of freedom advocated by both the idealists and realists in Indian philosophy, though he admits that the former have worked out "a coherent conception of freedom, *i.e.* a conception in full conformity with their stand in epistemology and ontology."[25] He argues that the idealist conception of freedom is negative on the ground that it undermines the reality of nature, "instead of understanding and thereby mastering it." Advaita, for example, has not undermined the reality of nature or the world. On the contrary, it holds that the world is not as real as the Absolute. The Advaitin is second to none in emphasizing the value and significance of the empirical realm (*vyāvahārika*) in all aspects of our business of life—economic and social, cultural and spiritual. He is very much interested in understanding the world. He does claim to know and understand the world. That is why he sizes up its ontological status *vis-a-vis* that of the Absolute. To put it in the right place in the ontological hierarchy is not to undermine its reality any more than it is when one places bodily and economic values in the right order in the axiological hierarchy. If to ignore a higher value and indulge in a lower one is a moral evil, then to ignore the claim of a higher reality and be submerged in the lower one is metaphysical blindness. It is wrong to think that

we have to understand nature or the world for the purpose of "mastering" it. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya is impressed by the "staggering" progress of the Western science and technology which have enabled men to enjoy "endless mastery over physical nature,"[26] while the best minds of the West in recent times are concerned about the disastrous consequences that have arisen as a result of man's diabolic desire for the conquest of nature. According to him, freedom in the positive sense consists in the mastery over nature; and the prophets of this new vision of freedom, he declares, were Bacon and Descartes, whose views he approvingly quotes.[27] While Bacon thought that "the propagator of man's empire over the universe" would be the benefactor of the human race, Descartes desired that men should become "the masters and possessors of nature." It is a pity that some technical philosophers in India and outside claiming expertise of Indian philosophy exhort Indian philosophers, who are alleged to be in dogmatic slumbers coming under the spell of the tradition of *darśanas*, to become progressive and creative by responding to the fast-developing knowledge made available by Western science and technology, while they are nonchalant to the danger of self-destruction resulting from uncontrolled science and technology of which the recent Bhopal tragedy is a timely warning. Dinesh Mathur, for example, while criticising the philosophy of "transcendence" and "withdrawal" in the old-fashioned way, suggests by way of providing direction to Indian philosophy that it has "to adapt itself to the cumulative growing knowledge made possible by the rise of science and technology."[28] Competent scholars like Henryk Skolimowski tell us that the replacement of the Promethean technology by the Faustian one in the West has become a danger to mankind.[29]

Let us not in the name of science and technology decry the spiritualist tradition of Indian philosophy. Let us not in the name of a new theory of freedom which is vacuous and misconceived throw away a valuable theory of freedom which, by integrating man with society, uplifts him spiritually. Let us not in the name of creativity either ignore the Indian *darśanas* or misinterpret them as it is done in recent times by those who have developed a new love for Indian philosophy.

NOTES

1. See Vācaspati, *Tattva-kaumudi*, commentary on the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, v. 4.
2. Swami Agehananda Bharati, *A Functional Analysis of Indian Thought and its Social Margins* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1964), p. 41.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
5. W.H. Walsh, *Metaphysics* (London: Hutchinson University Library, Second impression, 1966), p. 108.
6. See Sureśvara, *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, 3.34.
7. *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, 3.38.
8. Daya Krishna, "Three Conceptions of Indian Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press), Volume XV, No. 1, January 1965, p. 50.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
10. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 1.1.1.
11. See Rajendra Prasad, "Tradition, Freedom and Philosophical Creativity," in Rama Rao Pappu and Puligandla (ed.), *Indian Philosophy: Past and Future* (Delhi: Motilal, 1982), pp. 291-313, for his criticism of what he calls the ST conception advocated by Radhakrishnan, K. C. Bhattacharyya, and others.
12. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, 1961), §43 : "The meaning of a word is its use in the language."
13. R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, 1952), p. 150.
14. 4.4.19.
15. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 2.21.
16. *Bhagavad-gītā*, 16. 23-24.
17. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.1.
18. *Ibid.*, 1.2.2.
19. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.4.5 explains the causal nexus from "desire" to the "goal" as follows: What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out; and what it works out, it attains."
20. 2.3.2.5.
21. Rāmānuja, *Śrībhāṣya*, 2.1.9.
22. 1.3. 10-11.
23. T.H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (London: Longmans, New impression, 1963), § 6, p. 31.
24. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *What Is Living and What Is Dead in Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1976), p. 564.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 565.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 632.
27. *Ibid.*

28. Dinesh C. Mathur, "Whither Indian Philosophy: A Search for Direction and Suggestions for Reconstruction," in Rama Rao Pappu and Puligandla (ed.), *Indian Philosophy: Past and Future*, p. 325.
29. Henryk Skolimowski, *Technology and Human Destiny* (Madras: Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1980), pp. 99-100.

RAMAKANT SINARI

THE WAY TOWARD MOKṢA

The central assumption of all salvationistic ways is that the human self which is in its everyday conduct united with the empirical world and varying situations in it can withdraw from it and lapse back into a state that is primordial, ineffable, transcendental, and supremely self-assuring. This state may in one sense be called ontological and in another ethical. It has been constantly alluded to in philosophical and religious literature as the translucent dimension of our total existential experience. But one of the reasons why it has not been and for that matter cannot be clearly delineated is that by its very fundamental position it has a breadth, a depth, and an originality inaccessible to ordinary thought and language. There is a certain kind of inward journey one undertakes as one disconnects one's self from its worldly abode, its mundane vicissitudes, and directs it toward its own "roots" as it were. Indeed, there is no terminus to this journey. It is a process open in its search but surely destined to lead one into a realm totally overwhelming, creative, free, and apodeictically certain. Along this process, one figures as an individual in search of one's own identity, one lives with the animation of exploring the meaning of one's own life.

The single design of one's attempt to journey into one's own "inside" is that one is anxious to discover the ultimate reason for one's own existence, for one's being in the world as an ego-*cogito* or *jīva* (the embodied being). In all ontologies and ethical systems in the world there has always been this anxiety to intuit the beyond, the ordinarily unreachable, the very *raison d'etre* of all that *is* and that goes on on the field of human consciousness. Terms such as *Brahman*, Logos, *Nous*, *Tao*, Being, Nothing have been used to indicate that the entire edifice of our empirical consciousness is grounded in a reality absolutely unencompassing, seminal to the vast kaleidoscope of fleeting