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Philosophy as Samdarshana

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Abstract

Lastly philosophy has always been pursued for an all comprehensive insight which is its be-all and end-all. That is why in India it has been identified with Darsanasastra, i.e. the system of insight. But Darsana can also be attained and pursued by some people who are not philosophers. For example, even poets, novelists, scientists and historians have some insight. But their insight is not philosophical. To distinguish the might of philosophers from that of other scholars, artists and scientists, I add the prefix Sam to the word Darsana. I think, the word Samdarshana defines philosophical activity far better than any other word in our vocabulary. Those who coined the word Darsanasastra did not mean that every flash or glimpse is entitled to Darsana. Only those flashes of truth were called Darsanas which were formative of the whole outlook of the person having them. Hence there is a need to redefine philosophy as Samdarshana.

Keywords: Poets, novelists, scientists and historians, scholars

Introduction

The concept of samdarshana

As a student of philosophy for the last thirty five years of my youthful life I have developed a concept of philosophy and followed it seriously in my life and works. For me philosophy is neither a Veda nor a Smriti, it is neither a Purana nor an Upanisad either. Our forefathers have called it Darsane. But I prefer to call it Samdarshana. My reasons for this new nomenclature are the following:

First the word Darsana is ambiguous. It means faith, intuition or sense-perception. So it cannot be equated with Darsana Sastra or Philosophy which includes more than Darsane. It also includes knowledge (Jhana) and conduct (Caritra The Jainas have called Darsana Jnana caritrani as the way of Moksa. This implies that they include Darsana, Jnana and Caritra into their notion of philosophy. Similarly all Vedantins include in Darsane Sastra Darsana (Perception) manana (Reasoning) and nididhyasana (Meditation). The Buddhists also understand by their term abhichara something more than right faith or samyak Darsana. So if we go deeper and thoroughly probe the meaning of Darsanasastra, we find that it should be called Samdarshanena rather than Darsana. The Sanskrit prefix Sam stands for all corrective and supplementary measures that transform Darsane into Darsana Sastra or philosophy.

Secondly, I believe that Samkhya, Mimamsa, Nyaya, Advaita, Vedanta and Abhidharma are the different definitions of philosophy. Each of these definitions stresses a particular perspective on philosophy and surveys the whole field of philosophy from its own point of view. Those who are satisfied with any of these perspectives may continue it and restate it in modern moulds of current language and thought. But their activity will be both critical and reconstructive. As far as they refute the premises of their opponents they are critical and as far as they restate their own point of view they are reconstructive. These activities I include under the concept of Samdarshana. It means perennial Samiksha or review. So philosophy as I take it, is not a view of anything, fact or proposition, it is rather a review of that. So even a modern restatement of Samkhya, nyaya, mimamsa, advaita, vedanta, abhidharma etc. is nothing but Samdarshana. It is a new philosophic activity. Only its source of inspiration, i.e., insight, is the recapturing of a classical insight.

But if some people are not satisfied with any of the above mentioned definitions, they may formulate their own review of the problems that have been discussed by the various philosophers of the world. But Samdarshana is neither criticism nor reconstruction but both. Criticism without reconstruction is as unphilosophical as reconstruction without criticism.

Both are equally useless abstractions. They got their force from a true insight that is samdarshana.

Thirdly: the various philosophical systems of Western Philosophy can also be justified in the light of the definition of Samdarshana, for, each of them, perform the triple functions of insight attainment, criticism and reconstruction. Philosophy spans from love for wisdom to wisdom itself through knowledge, and Vedanta spans from curiosity or wonder (Jijnasa) to the object of wonder (Jijnasya) through the objects of knowledge (Incyā). All the three moments of philosophy are fully preserved in the definition of Samdarshana.

Fourthly: the term Darsana is used in the sense of a philosophical system. It is said that there are many darsanas (Darsanani) and there is no single darsana Sastra as such. Similarly the term philosophy is now being used in the sense of a system only. That is why Prof. Harro says that there are philosophies of science and not the philosophy of science. Similarly we can say that there are only philosophies and not the philosophy, there are only philosophers and there is none who is the philosopher. The age when Aristotle was called the philosopher is long over, it is rather dead. Now no person can be called the philosopher. But this miscellany of philosophies and darsanas indicates that there is the possibility of a new discipline that deals with the fundamental insight or intuition. That discipline may be called Samdarshana. It is darsana or philosophy in the collective sense and it cannot be plural as such. So there are many darsanas but there is only one Samdarshana. There need not be the Samdarshanist, but there is the Samdarshana that is the philosophy as such. The search for it can never be given up. Nor is it a wild goose chase. The various darsanas are simply approximations towards it. It is the universal science that was the dream of Descartes and Leibniz which could not be materialized to this day. Plurality of Darsanas or philosophies, far from being a defect of the samdarshana is the sine qua non of its operation and functioning.

Now let us make a few illustrations of Samdarshana activity. When the positivists stated that the truth of a proposition consists in its verification by sense-experience, they got an all-comprehensive insight. They applied it to other theories of truth on the one hand and to explain the truth of all scientific propositions and theories on the other hand. In this way they performed the triple functions, having an insight into a theory, criticizing other theories and developing their own theory. Analogously, when Existentialists held the existence-procedure essence they performed all the three functions of Samdarshana apropos the theory of existence. So can preserve all our philosophies Eastern or Western if we accept Samdarshana as the definition of philosophy. But Samdarshana is neither positivism nor Existentialism. It is neither rationalism nor empiricism either. It is on the contrary an all-out intuitionism. According to it even rationalists and empiricists, positivists and Existentialists have an intuition of their fundamental theory. To say, for example, that all knowledge begins from experience is not the result of an empirical observation but an insight into the fundamentals of empiricism. So our insight into the fundamental is intuitive knowledge. But this knowledge is not to be identified with instinct. In the hitherto it is not innate. Nor is it imparted from without, from non-origination. It is, on the contrary, acquired or won by a philosopher himself.

The study of philosophical works or doctrines may help it grow. So a teacher may also help but unless the effort is made by the philosopher himself but not times the insight that is the sine qua non himself he cannot have attained there has been distinguished his pursuit. That is why in the former an individual effort is not the letter it is no longer necessary. Similarly the being said that philosophizing is like swimming, he indicated that philosophy requires some struggle or effort which must be intellectual. Furthermore Samdarshana as Leibniz it is not the development of each and every intuition that philosophers had down the ages, but intuitive knowledge itself. In this way it resembles phenomenology and is least interested in showing the existence of the object that it studies. Its subject-matter is only intuition which is the matrix of all truths. So first of all it makes a distinction between true intuitions and false intuitions and has a theory of truth. This is done by the criterion of truth. Truth is the self-evidencing intuition itself that is called Sva prakasa in Indian Philosophy. Even Descartes, Kant and Husserl got an insight into its nature. But Descartes immediately applied it in investigating the nature and existence of its subject and so he deflected it on the side of his dualism. Kant tried to analyse it but he applied the structures of objects to it and hence committed the fallacy of adhyasa. He confused it with understanding and failed to work out the distinction that he himself had made between 'I think' and 'I know'. Husserl has totally left out the description of 'I think'. Husserl bracketed all existence and tried to proceed into its own nature. So far he definitely went beyond Descartes and Kant. But he searched it into essences which are bhava-s. The intuitive knowledge itself was not investigated by him either. That is pure consciousness. He simply believed that all consciousness is intentional. But every act of consciousness is intentional. This consciousness of intentionality itself is not intentional. It is consciousness itself, this insight, therefore, does not exhaust all possibilities of intuitive knowledge and falls down into the ditch of objectivity. Husserl failed to distinguish Sat from bhava, existence from reality or essence and spread the former into a network of the latter. Samdarshana tries to give a complete account of intuitive knowledge.

Again, Indian philosophers, especially Advaita philosophers and Idealist Buddhists have indicated the path to the attainment of philosophic insight and made profound investigations into the nature of Svaprakasa or self-evidencing intuition. Samdarshana endeavours to consolidate them and strip them from their all metaphysical linkages. It aims at sowing the seed through and under the perspective of truth alone. Thus for it is pure epistemology which reviews all other kinds of knowledge and demonstrates that the truth which is found in each of them is directly or indirectly established on the authority of Sva prakasa. Unless a proposition is confirmed by svaprakasa, it is an unassimilated abstract and hence false. Sva prakasa is, therefore, the acid test of both reconstruction and criticism that are better known functions of philosophy than intuition which is the alpha and omega of all philosophy.

Thus I see that Samdarshana has immense possibility. It can restore pure philosophy to its pristine glory, and at the same time give it a new orientation. It can revive each scientific theory and find out its truth and relevance in the context of its own basic point of view. It can successfully compete with the contemporary schools of Phenomenology,

Existentialism, Dialectical Materialism and Analytical philosophy. I, therefore, invite all budding philosophers to accept Samdarshana and develop it in a direction of their own choice.

Society as Lokayana

One of the applications of Samdarshana which I attempted in a few papers of mine is in the field of social theory. The theory of society which I hold is called Lokayana. It is congenial and named so in sharp contrast to Lokayata which is the social philosophy of the materialist schools. Lokayana philosophy further is a form of humanism.

For me society is an organization of individuals who are bound by language, culture and customs. But the ancient Lokayata philosophy and modern utilitarians treated it as a mechanism attaching more importance to individuals than to their natural or structured organizations. But the modern Lokayanas, especially communists are laying more stress on the structural organization that is called Soviet state than on the individuals that constitute it. They have taken in the wood and left out the trees, they have comprehended the order, strengthened it massively and ignored the individuals. So both the schools of Lokayata philosophy have gone astray. They have not tried the fact that is society. Society is an order of individuals so that it is a kinship of persons and hence it implies a set of rules and regulations, customs and festivals, rituals and plays, language and thought patterns.

This order is not less primary and significant than the individuals who belong to it. It is called in our language as Loka which is translated in English as community or people in the collective sense. It is scarcely perceptible at the micro-cosmic level but must clearly be visible at its macrocosmic level which is state or Rajya. There are, undoubtedly, a number of intermediate organizations between loka and rajya and their presence is absolutely necessary for the well-being of society. The order that envelopes the individuals like an aura is revealed in them in concrete reliefs. In fact it touches all the organizations of individuals. Its touch at the lower strata of those organizations is personal and existential and at their higher strata it is humanistic though impersonal. All social organizations are, thus, the development of loka from personal stage to impersonal one or from an existential stage to a humanistic state. Society that is called Samaja in Indian languages, is Loka yann, I. The transformation of an amorphous, though, existential, order into a concrete whole of form and reality. When it is rigorously disrupted it breaks down and hence negates itself. In my opinion the Soviet state has reached this point but the capitalist state is not lagging behind. It is fast approximating the same breaking point.

Lokayana theory, as a school of social philosophy therefore, insists on the preservation of the balance or ecosystem that obtains between the individuals and social order, on the safeguarding of individual freedom as well as the freedom of small social groups that constitute the living cells of the today's politics of society. If all individuals are computerized numbers, they are simply prisoners and their society is reduced to a prison house. Similarly if all social groupings are identified, registered and controlled by a government of the people, they are nothing but the cells of the house. So Lokayana theory advocates that both individuals and their small groups must have equal freedom for their smooth growth and development, for, freedom does not mean only

the freedom of an individual from state control to do what he thinks as right, it also means the freedom of his groups. He must have freedom to form organizations and his groups must have freedom from state control to function without let. If other persons are not free, if small social groups are not free, then the freedom of an individual is not only meaningless but dangerous also, for it may sooner or later, turn homicidal and genocidal.

The Vedic myth of Indra is relevant to modern times. Indra is called Purandara because he destroyed a big puram or city that posed a threat to the existence of village organizations. In modern terms he stood for micro-organizations and micro-level developments and uprooted macro-organizations and macro-level developments. I think, his stand is valid today on the criterion of mass participation and immediacy of the people in the social functions. The people have no participation and immediacy in the formation and functioning of the macro-organizations. Hence they are anti-people and demonic in the end.

But our analysis does not show that there is the existence of a social mind. It firmly holds, on the contrary, that only individuals have a mind. But their mind is not bound by the conditions of their body alone. It is inalienably related to its social milieu as well as to the universal biosphere voices, a spectrum of their visions and a key board of all growth and development. Individual and their groups may go on regrouping and realigning themselves in the way they desire. But there are two conditions of such development. First, regrouping must not be disproportionately massive else it will be harmful to the existence of small groups. Secondly, it should not take the place and role of the whole society or impose itself as the supreme commando upon society. Under those conditions all regroupings are beneficial to the life and growth of society. If they are ever stopped, society becomes dead or closed and moribund and its fundamental functions become inoperative, in open society, therefore, is not only an ideal but also a test of all societies. A society that is not open sooner or later dies out.

But in modern times a great danger is posed by the side of state to the very existence of society. In some countries state has replaced society. In other countries this replacement is about under the name of nationalization, centralization, federalism and integralism. So the state which was cut to its size throughout the history of humankind is now outgrowing society. But Lokayana theory is against this development of state. Accordingly, state is not the whole of society and politics is not the whole of life; it is simply a segment of societal reality and as such it plays a fruitful role in the well-being of society. But when it devours society and becomes a colossus then it needs an Inura for its destruction and re-organization. Anyway, Lokayana theory envisions the global struggle that is going on in the present century between state and society on the one hand and between state and individuals on the other and aims at strengthening the positions of society and the individuals vis-a-vis state.

But Lokayana theory is not brick and mortar conception of society. It goes deeper than it and insists on recognition of the fact that the light of Svaprakasa that is reflected in every individual and order is the self-same light that is reflected in me as an individual. The individuals are not bricks and society is not mortar. The individuals are persons, i.e. subjects reflecting consciousness and society is a group of persons and this consciousness is not only personal but also

inter-personal. Hence it comprehends not only the individuals but also their social order in itself. Society is thus an identity of their interests and purposes, the source of their pathos and ethos. It is, in short, a reality that conserves and consumes every activity of individuals and sets up the ideal of svaraja for itself as well as for them.

Significantly, the idea of svaraja was first mooted in the circles of the Vedic sages who used it in the sense of spiritual freedom or mental equipoise. Only those who attained to self-knowledge could establish their personal rule over themselves, could to Svaret. But later this concept was applied to self-control, economic independence and political independence in its progressive development and inflated significance. Gandhi tried to harmonize all these meanings in his book *Hind Svaraja*. Prof. K.C. Bhattacharya was also impressed by the Vedantic ideal of Svaraja and was stimulated to achieve it in the realm of thought. Our Lokayana theory accords all those formulations of Svaraja, but it adds to them the full svaraja of not only the individuals, the full or complete Svaraja of not only state, but the complete svaraja of the whole or the small social groups at the micro-level organizations. The Gramasvaraja of Gandhiji, the village republics of ancient India and city republics of ancient Greece are as essential for Lokayana theory as the modern republics of France, Germany, U.S.A. and India. But the latter are not the models of societal reality. The former alone will remain its model for they are the nurseries of every thing that is socially good. No macro-level organization can be the nursery of good.

But unfortunately there is a secret marriage of state power and economic power in modern times. Both powers are either integrated or united. In capitalism they are integrated and in communism they are united. But unless this marriage is broken, there is no ray of hope for the Svaraja of society. Lokayana theory has, therefore, to find out a way out of this predicament and exercise social control over state power and money power. But this is a programme of Lokayana praxis which may be postponed for a future presentation of Lokayana theory of politics that develops socialization of state power and money power against uni-nationalization and multi-nationalization.

Conclusion

Another threat to Lokayana is thrown out from the side of colossal economic organizations and the concentration of money power into the hands of a few individuals and groups. They are making tremendous development in the name of industrialization and mechanization. Modern science and technology are helping them grow by leaps and bounds. Consequently the vertical growth of a few individuals and groups is out of all proportions to the horizontal expansion of poverty on the social plane, the fast rising skyscrapers beside ever expanding huts represents a scenario of economic inequality that may burst forth into a volcano and spell the doom of present civilization. Hence Lokayana theory is against those lopsided developments and treats them as the bane of society. It stands for egalitarian order and espouses all measures that reduce economic inequality, curb the growth of capitalism and exercise legitimate control over incomes and expenditures of both individuals and their groups.

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