SAMVADA
A Dialogue between
Two Philosophical Traditions

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SAMVĀDA

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There are bound to be plenty of coincidences amongst great minds. But all of them should not be taken by the wise as being identical.
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PREFACE

This is, perhaps, the first record of a dialogue between philosophers trained in the classical Indian tradition of philosophizing and those trained in the western tradition on a philosophical theme which is both contemporary, and primarily western. That India has had a long tradition of at least two millennia of active philosophizing in the fields of logic, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology and metaphysics is at least vaguely known to the philosophical community in the world today, though many in the west feel hesitant in according it the title of 'philosophy' in their sense of the word. But few, even in India, are aware that the tradition of active philosophizing within the classical frameworks of Indian philosophical thought is not dead, that there are hundreds of living thinkers who still pursue with intellectual vigour and rigour the classical concerns of Indian thought. The reason why philosophers trained in the western traditions of philosophizing and located in the universities built on the western model in this country do not know about these pandits lies primarily in the fact that these scholars carry on their intellectual activity in a language which is generally unknown to persons trained in the western traditions of knowledge. Few people know, in India or elsewhere, that Sanskrit is still the living lingua franca of traditional scholarship in India, that the only language in which intellectual dialogue can be carried on between these persons from different parts of India, which may be as distant from each other as Kashmir and Kerala or Manipur and Gujarat, is Sanskrit and Sanskrit alone, as the only other language they know is their regional language which are as diverse as the regions they belong to. Unlike Latin, therefore, Sanskrit is the living language of traditional scholarship in contemporary India, and if one wants to enter into a dialogue with this tradition, one will have to do so in Sanskrit or have facilities for bilingual translation from Sanskrit into English and vice versa. This, though so obvious when stated, seems to have escaped the notice of everybody till Prof. Rege realized it and took active steps to realize the preconditions of any successful dialogue between the two intellectual traditions which are not only culturally
and civilizaionally far apart, but also do not share a common language through which the conceptual distances could be bridged.

The Rege experiment, of which this is a record, was unique in another respect also. One could perhaps find its halting precursors in the meeting at Tirupati when Prof. K. Satchidananda Murty was its Vice-Chancellor or even in some earlier experiments at Jaipur which had resulted in the publication of a monograph entitled Contemporary Philosophical Problems: Some Classical Indian Perspectives. Yet, none of these had really clicked. They were good while they lasted. But they did not generate that feeling of discovery, enthusiasm and success which the Rege seminar did at Poona. They were, so to say, abortive beginnings which did not lead to any successful fruition. The Rege experiment, on the other hand, led to a series of successive activities each giving rise to another as is the way of all creative activity. In fact, nothing was pre-planned or pre-planned. Rather, each step showed the way for the next—and the next, for the next next. The imaginative support of institutions like the Indian Council of Philosophical Research and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in the beginning and of the Indian Institute of Higher Studies at Sarnath, the Central Institute of Indian Languages at Mysore, the Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyaapeeth at Tirupati, the Adyar Library and Research Centre at Madras and later the Ford Foundation at Delhi have helped the activity continue, diversify and develop in many directions till a stage has been reached where it is not unusual to find Sanskrit pandits taking active part in discussion in seminars devoted to philosophical issues.

The Poona meeting, in fact, had led to a different kind of meeting organized jointly by the Indian Institute of Philosophical Research and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan to think of ways and means of revitalizing the Indian philosophical tradition to which a large number of scholars, both traditional and modern, interested in classical Indian philosophy were invited. After two days of intensive discussion on the subject the meeting recommended, amongst other things, that a Who’s Who of traditional pandits in various fields of knowledge be prepared and that besides organizing the dialogues on various intellectual issues of contemporary relevance, pandits in those areas of traditional philosophy where scholarship was fast declining be invited to suggest how knowledge in these fields may be restored, safeguarded and developed. Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Kashmir Śāivism were indicated as such areas where the work could first begin. Accordingly, meetings of outstanding traditional pandits in the field of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Kashmir Śāivism were held at Sarnath, Tirupati and Srīnagar respectively. The Nyāya meeting at Sarnath had the active organizational and financial support of the Tibetan Institute of Higher Studies and its Director, Prof. S. Rinpoche, who has always gone out of his way to support us in such activities. The meeting on Mīmāṃsā at Tirupati was totally financed by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan whose Director, Dr. Māndan Mishra, was one of the moving spirits behind all these activities and without his enthusiasm and support, not much would have been achieved as he knew practically everyone in the world of traditional scholarship in India and could bridge the gulf between us. The meeting on Kashmir Śāivism had the organizational support of the Department of Sanskrit of the Kashmir University and of other scholars in the town.

In all these meetings, discussion was organized around issues previously formulated and circulated in Sanskrit to the potential participants, the last session always being devoted to the question as to what are the deficiencies in the system as handed down to us and how should we try to develop it further. The very asking of these questions set the mind of the traditional scholars in a different direction. The focus of their attention was, so to say, turned from the past to the future.

These have not been the only spin-offs of the Poona seminar. There have been others, and they are worth mentioning also. One has been the extension of the dialogue to areas other than the strictly philosophical and to traditions other than the Sanskritic. The first was done in the field of linguistics where a dialogue between traditional pandits and modern linguists was held on ‘Current Issues in Linguistics’. The whole thing had the administrative and financial support of the Central Institute of Indian Languages and its dynamic Director, Prof. D. P. Pattanayak, as well as that of the Adyar Library and Research Centre and its well-known scholar-Director, Prof. Kunjunni Raja. The issues were framed in consultation with eminent linguists not only at the Mysore Institute but also those at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Langu-
one looks back and surveys what has been achieved since the pioneering dialogue at Poona—proceedings of which are being presented here, one wonders if all this could really be true. If one further recalls the ethos in which most institutions work in India, one can only wonder at the miracle. How could so many accidents have converged together to facilitate each step further? There are sceptics, as always, who doubt about the worth of the whole enterprise. There are others who believe that it is a movement positively in the wrong direction. For them, there is no need to resurrect the past or to make it alive. Let that which deserves to die, be allowed to die. One hears these sceptics and cynics and strict modernisers and wonders how long the accidents will be allowed to happen, or the miracle last. Perhaps, the publication of the Poona Transcript would silence the doubters—at least the more reasonable ones among them—and herald the beginning of a new cycle of activities even more exciting and fruitful than the first one. At least, it is with this hope that this transcript is placed before the scholarly world.

The rumour about the Rege experiment and the Poona transcript has been there for long. And, many had begun to doubt whether the thing would ever see the light of the day. The story of the transcript and its editing is tortuous and long. But only those would appreciate it who have ever done a similar thing on their own. Transcribing a dialogue when there were no written papers is a difficult enterprise, but imagine the difficulty when the dialogue is in two languages as different from one another as English and Sanskrit and when it is difficult to find persons with equal competence in both, particularly at the level where transcribing from the tapes is concerned. Further, there is not only the problem of two languages, but of two different conceptual structures, two different ways of looking at problems and analysing them—and it is almost impossible to find a person equally at home in both. Arindam was, of course, an exception and we were lucky to have him at Poona and elsewhere. But he was not there for editing. And to make a dialogue transcript readable and yet keep the flavour of the dialogue-atmosphere, is an assignment not easy to achieve. That the combined labour of Prof. M. P. Rege, Prof. R.C. Dwivedi and Dr. Mukund Lath—all very busy persons—were able to achieve this in no small measure was due to their
dedication and commitment to this whole continuing enterprise which would hardly have been feasible without them.

And now that the tapes have been transcribed, and the transcription edition ready for publication, we hope that the publication will prove as inspiring to its readers as the original experiment was to those who participated in it and as fruitful and rich in consequences as the original enterprise has been.

To the late Pt. Badarinath Shukla, the towering pandit of the older generation, this volume is dedicated. Without his inspiration, enthusiasm, affection and guidance little would have been achieved as he was the bridge between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. He was, so to say, the modern amongst the traditional, and the traditional amongst the moderns—and hence the bridge-builder par excellence revered by everybody, acceptable to everybody.

DAYA KRISHNA

INTRODUCTION

For the last two hundred years and more many western and western-trained Indian scholars have devoted themselves to the study of ‘traditional’ Indian philosophical thought. The fruits of their labours are available in the form of translations of classical works into modern European languages, works which attempt to render in these languages the doctrines of the various philosophical schools, *darśanas* or *matas*, scholarly papers and books which try carefully to explicate the basic concepts in terms of which problems were formulated by the different schools and their solutions worked out, and sometimes to trace these concepts to primitive myths and rituals, and works which undertake a critical examination of the developed doctrines of the different schools with a view to bringing out their presuppositions and basic premises, and also exposing the occasional weak links in their internal logic and fallacies in the supporting arguments which mar their claim to truth. Comprehensive histories of Indian philosophy have also been published like the monumental *History of Indian Philosophy* by the late S.N. Dagar. Thus a voluminous exegetical literature has come into existence which has considerably advanced and sharpened our understanding of the Indian philosophical tradition. It has also made Indian philosophical thought for the first time accessible to those readers, western and Indian alike, who lack Sanskrit or have not mastered the peculiar idiom, replete with an abstruse terminology, in which philosophical argumentation was and is carried on in Indian philosophy. We all owe a large debt of gratitude to these scholars.

For most Indian scholars who worked assiduously in this field, Indian philosophy was a part, perhaps the most precious part, of their cultural patrimony which it was their duty to conserve and make available to the world community. That such a task had become necessary for them itself implied that they were no more working from within the Indian philosophical tradition, but had stepped outside it and that however intimate their knowledge of it might be, they were looking at it from an external point of view.

However, a contemporary *Nātyāyika* will fail to understand the talk of preserving the heritage of Indian philosophical thought. He
will be busy expounding the Nyāya doctrine on certain philosophical issues and in the process advancing, if necessary, fresh arguments to defend the Nyāya position against the latest attack on it. He is engaged in philosophical thinking and not in the activity of conserving philosophical heritage. He is addressing, through the shared and time-hallowed medium of Sanskrit, the contemporary adherents of rival schools like Mīmāṃsā or Advaita and also fellow-Naiyāyikas on some common philosophical concerns and what he has to say, if judged to be significant enough by his peers, would become an increment, however small, added to the accumulated stock of philosophical literature in Sanskrit. A western-trained scholar on the other hand, writes not in Sanskrit but in some other language, these days commonly in English. With this change in language, the nature and point of what he is doing suffers a radical change. The medium affects the message. The basic terms in which he articulates his understanding of Indian doctrines inevitably remain western, terms which have originated and crystallized in the course of the development of the western philosophical tradition and the broader cognitive tradition, in the debates and controversies, discoveries and criticism which propelled it. His understanding of the doctrine could be as inward as possible but his statement of it involves his lifting it from the Indian conceptual framework within which it has been developed and shaped and setting it within the western framework. In expounding it he has to translate it. This act of transfer carries with it an implicit criterion of evaluation. The Indian doctrine is significant to the extent that it raised or touched upon or foreshadowed conceptual issues with which the ongoing philosophical debate in the West is concerned, and in tackling them deployed modes of arguments which were similar to those used by western thinkers, leading to parallel epistemological or ontological conclusions. It is the western philosophical tradition which yields the yardstick by which to measure the relevance or importance of Indian thought. The cognitive and practical concerns of western philosophy are taken as central or natural and Indian thought has to prove its worth by establishing that somehow its speculations and conclusions had a direct or at least an indirect bearing on them. In the prevailing circumstances western-trained Indian students of Indian philosophy quite naturally adopted this point of view of looking at Indian philosophy and one of the most thriving areas of philosophical studies in India has been that of ‘comparative philosophy’ which is devoted to exploring similarities between western and Indian doctrines such as Nyāya and realism, Mīmāṃsā and hermeneutics and so forth, and even between the views propounded by major western philosophers and classical Indian philosophers such as Kant and Śaṅkara, or Whitehead and Vācaspatai Mīśra. In the early decades of the century when Absolute Idealism was the reigning philosophy in Britain and to a lesser extent in America, it was to the idealistic Advaita and other varieties of Vedānta that Indian commentators pointed to representative Indian doctrines. Later when the tide of realism and analysis swept the Anglo-Saxon philosophical scene, the emphasis shifted to Nyāya. Still later, when Anglo-Saxon philosophy came to adopt a highly sophisticated and technical idiom as a proper and necessary medium of philosophical discussion, it was to the sophisticated technicalities of Nāyika-Nyāya that Indian commentators turned for something to match it with.

The result of this dominance of the western philosophical tradition has been that the Indian tradition is treated more or less as one which essentially belongs to the past, as one which had its day even though it continues to linger on. It is regarded as a proper object of historical rather than of philosophical interest. The contribution it can make to current philosophical debate can only be indirect. When the doctrines of an Indian philosophical school or an individual thinker are subjected to critical examination, the purpose is not to identify the elements in it which successfully stand scrutiny so as to incorporate them, after necessary elaboration into the corpus of accepted philosophical knowledge. The purpose rather is to ascertain and assess the contribution it makes to the development of Indian philosophical thought. To put the point in Indian terms, Indian philosophical theories were never allowed the role of pārvapakṣa or siddhānta in the western philosophical debate even after they had become accessible. They remained securely embedded in the particular, exclusive context of the Indian tradition.

This phenomenon was quite understandable as far as western philosophers were concerned. The philosophical problems they were engaged in arose from developments in the areas of know-
In their scheme of things had assigned to them was that of repositories of the knowledge of traditional thought. That is to say they were regarded as scholars and not as philosophers. Certainly without their assistance the great Indian classical texts would remain impenetrable to anyone who was not educated in the traditional way. And this was their main use in the eyes of western-trained Indian philosophers. The pandits had kept alive our ancient philosophical tradition in extremely adverse circumstances for which we all owe a great debt of gratitude to them. And they are the best equipped to help in the task of reclaiming traditional Indian philosophy for the benefit of western-trained Indians and westerners. Their aid or collaboration alone made it possible to render this thought in a form which was adjusted to the understanding of this audience.

Traditional pandits, however, had a different conception of their own role. They proudly described themselves as Nyāyikas, Mīmāṃsakas, etc., i.e., as exponents and champions of the philosophical doctrines of a particular school. They regarded it as their proper job, in this capacity, to advance criticism against the tenets of rival schools and the arguments which supported them, and to defend the views of their own school against attacks from others. They would also occasionally be led to reformulate a part of the traditional view for meeting objections raised against them which appeared to be valid. The modifications and innovations which they thus introduced in the body of the traditional doctrine would appear to be slight and insignificant when viewed against the background of the continuity of the essential part of the doctrine over a long stretch of time and hence were likely to be missed.

Another reason why they were often missed was that the Indian philosophical tradition has been largely oral. It has mainly maintained itself and progressed through the medium of live debates and discussions at which pandits came face to face to thrash out philosophical problems, for a śāstrārtha. The corrections and additions to the traditional doctrine on a particular point which these philosophical meets led to, will be incorporated in case they found general acceptance, for the oral exposition of the doctrine which pandit-teachers gave for the benefit of their students. It was only gradually that they found a place in written texts. The written texts themselves were composed from time to time to incorporate
the improvements that had been made in the doctrine of a school over a period of time. They marked stages in the evolution of the doctrine. Western-trained philosophers were cut-off from such philosophical discussions because of their lack of knowledge of Sanskrit and of deep and extensive knowledge of traditional texts. But it is clear that it was in the arena of such meetings that pandits like the late Shri Rajeshvarashtri Dravid or the late Shri Badarinathiji Shukla had proved their extraordinary dialectical prowess and earned their formidable reputations. Their peers respected them primarily as philosophers and not as scholars. But of such towering Indian philosophers western-trained Indian philosophers had no knowledge at all. One cannot say that western-trained Indian philosophers ignored them. They were hardly aware of their existence. As Prof. Daya Krishna has remarked, there was an apartheid separating the two.

There was indeed one area of traditional Indian philosophy which was cultivated by many western-trained Indian philosophers as philosophy and not merely studied from a western historical perspective, that is various forms of Veda. When western-trained Indian philosophers wrote on philosophical problems pertaining to this area, they were clearly stating their own views and arguing for them and not merely presenting an analytical report of the tenets and arguments of an Indian school. But the Indian notion or notions of the spiritual quest and of śādhanā are an integral part of a conceptual scheme which articulates a total form of social and individual life. The concepts of puruṣārtha, dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa, vidhiinśedha, sādhāraṇaśādhanā, cāturvarṇya, etc., are elements in a unified conceptual scheme which defines a view of human nature, the nature of human society, social and individual ideals, and forms of self-realisation based on these views. By and large, western-trained Indian philosophers who tried to develop the spiritual side of Indian philosophy did not similarly attempt to develop the social and moral philosophy, in which it was rooted. They conceived their studies in it, as in Nyāya or Śāmkhya, not as philosophical exercises but as exercises in the history of philosophy.

If this is an unfortunate situation, it must be said in fairness that pandits share the responsibility for it with western-trained philosophers. It was understandable that till the ‘age of discovery,’ the Indian philosophical tradition should have developed in isolation without being influenced by and without responding to currents of thought elsewhere because of the fact of geographical isolation. Even so, one must recognize that this geographical isolation was itself partly the result of the mental isolation into which the Brahmans had retreated owing to pride based on ignorance. They, perhaps, took unduly seriously the boast of the Mahābhārata that in matters of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa what is not here is not to be found elsewhere. Western philosophy of modern times in its creative role, fashioned new ideals of knowledge-designing methods for pursuing them and took serious note of current social and political movements and tried to provide theoretical foundation and justification to their ends, formulating in the process new forms of individual and social morality. This creativity was made possible by the openness of the western mind which was further reinforced by it. By comparison, Indian philosophy gives the impression of moving in a closed circle. The discussions, no doubt, are free, but all the pārṣu-pāksas are given. The arguments which can be advanced in their support or for defending them against possible attacks are well-known. The possible counter-arguments from the side of the siddhānta are also well-rehearsed. One may indeed exercise one’s ingenuity to think of some new arguments but it is not easy to think of a genuinely new argument in a debate when its terms of reference are rigidly set and when it has gone on for a millennium and more. The new argument is much likely to be a variation on an old argument. Discussions of philosophical problems within the traditional Indian framework, therefore, look like mock-discussions. They are like tournaments which provide occasions for display of individual prowess and skill, and victory to the best. But the victory is internal to the tournament and closes it. It makes no difference to the course of real events. In other words, discussions and debates are not expected to result in making an addition to or alteration in the received body of philosophical knowledge. They could only produce improvements in style, not in substance.

Nevertheless this is certainly a mistaken view of the function which the institution of philosophical discussions, śāstrārtha, played in the development of Indian thought. There have been radical innovations in the doctrines of the various schools, the
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most impressive example of which is the rise of the \textit{Nātya-Nyāya} movement and its appreciative reception by other schools. The new concepts undoubtedly must have been tested in philosophical discussions and seen to prevail. But the mistake is pardonable. In any case, the challenge of having to deal with a radically different set of \textit{pūrva-paśa} than those to which it had been accustomed could be expected to have a revitalizing influence on Indian philosophy. It could serve as a severe test of the logical strength and stability of its basic concepts and their potential for creative development.

Since the sixteenth century the western philosophical tradition has undergone a rich and rapid development in diverse directions. It has initiated new ways of thought in many spheres of human experience and activity like the natural sciences, arts and literature, and history, and also responded creatively to the discoveries and achievements which were made in these fields. It has closely interacted with other cognitive and practical activities respecting, at least since Kant, their autonomy but also contributing to their development in a variety of ways. By comparison Indian philosophy, though not stagnant, has developed much more slowly and over a narrower area as it remained wedded to traditional forms of knowledge, traditional social institutions and practices, and forms of spirituality. The only way to revitalize it is to bring it in to the arena of modern, i.e., western thought.

In a way it is already in the arena but only as a passive object of examination and assessment. What is necessary is for it to assume the role of a subject actively criticizing and evaluating western philosophical theories from a perspective yielded by its own philosophical standpoints. \textit{Nātyāyikas}, \textit{Mīmāṃsakas}, \textit{Vaiśeṣikas}, and others must enter the current philosophical debate not merely as witnesses to be subjected to examination and cross-examination but as full participants in it, engaged in its give and take. They will then absorb and assimilate what they have taken, but what they will have taken will be what they have decided to take in the light of their judgement that it was worth taking. And the capacity to absorb and assimilate is a mark of vitality. But while they will be taking they will also be giving, at least offering. Indian schools have developed over centuries through continuous and incisive dialogue with one another. Surely the time has come for them to extend the scope of the dialogue by admitting western philosophical schools to it. The stimulus they will receive thereby will certainly make them develop in unforeseeable directions. Even the internal dialogue between Indian schools will be enriched because it will be mediated by reference to doctrines which are new to them and will raise questions of a kind they had not considered before.

The dialogue, between pandits and philosophers held in Pune from July 11th to the 16th, 1983, the proceedings of which form the main body of this book, was conceived as a modest beginning of an effort in this direction. A brief narrative of what went on behind the scene before the stage was set for it may, perhaps, not be out of place.

I selected Russell’s theory of the nature of proposition as presented in his \textit{Principles of Mathematics} as the subject of the dialogue because it represents something like an attempt to make a new beginning in philosophical analysis by turning one’s back on what has gone on before. I thought that it would therefore be comparatively easier to put the theory across to pandits as its exposition would not demand many references to the tenets and arguments of earlier schools and thinkers, and the points of agreement and disagreement between them. Also Russell’s realistic and analytical approach has an obvious affinity with that of \textit{Nyāya} and \textit{Mīmāṃsā}. The next step was to secure the collaboration of Prof. E.R. Swaminathan, a sound and versatile scholar of the \textit{dārśanas} who was then on the faculty of Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapitha at Tirupati. But for his unstinted co-operation the dialogue could not have taken place. We agreed that the best course for us to take would be for me to prepare a statement in English summarizing the main points made by Russell and formulating the philosophical problems raised by them. He would then translate the statement into Sanskrit for the benefit of those pandits who were unfamiliar with English. (For the English statement and its accurate and elegant Sanskrit translation, see pp. xxxii—xxxiv). I may remark that this probably was the first time when a western philosophical doctrine was presented through the medium of Sanskrit to an audience of pandits.

Armed with the Sanskrit statement I began meeting some of the eminent pandits whom I particularly wanted to get interested in
the project for securing their participation in it. I first met Shri Shrinivas Shastri of Deccan College, Pune, through his disciple Dr. V.N. Jha who was then Reader in Sanskrit in the Department of Sanskrit, Pune University. Dr. Jha has spent several years regularly reading advanced Nyaya-Nyaya texts with Shri Shrinivas Shastri who excels both in Nyaya-Nyaya and Advaita. I had several discussions with Shri Shrinivas Shastri during which I tried to explain to him Russell’s theory of the nature of proposition, its philosophical context and implications, with Dr. Jha functioning both as an interpreter and participant. It was an extremely encouraging experience, I discovered; I must confess to my surprise, that the two pandits could, without much difficulty, acquire an accurate understanding of Russell’s theory and appreciate its philosophical significance. But pandits are professionally trained to tentatively entertain philosophical theories on their own terms for the purpose of working out their philosophical presuppositions and implications. Shri Shrinivas Shastri also agreed with clarity to participate in the dialogue when it would be held. This was an extremely good augury.

I could now make so bold as to visit personally Shri Badarinath Shastri Shukla, the doyen of Naiyiyikas, at Varanasi. When I explained to him the idea of the dialogue I was trying to hold, he entered into its spirit with great enthusiasm, went over the Sanskrit statement with me line by line and at the end promised his total co-operation in this venture. Readers will note that as the dialogue progressed he emerged as the magisterial spokesman of the Indian side and dealt with all the issues as they successively came up with an open mind and incisive logic. He was also kind enough to send me a statement in which he set out his replies to all the questions which had been framed in the Sanskrit statement some of which could not be taken up in the dialogue for want of time.

Another eminent scholar-philosopher who generously put his services at my disposal in organising the event was Prof. K.T. Pandurangi. He introduced me and the idea of the dialogue to many pandits who in addition to being masters of traditional doctrines could enter with zest into philosophical discussion. Prof. K.T. Pandurangi combines the advantage of having studied for many years, the darshanas in a pāṭhaśālā in the traditional way, as well as having a facility in English which enables him to expound lucidly and accurately the more subtle points in Indian doctrines. The group of pandits who came with him from Bangalore made a fruitful contribution to the dialogue. I would like to make a special mention of Dr. D. Prakaladhacharya, a young Mādhyama pandit whose deep and extensive knowledge of traditional theories, clarity and openness of mind and mastery of acute philosophical reasoning came as a reassuring proof that the tradition continues to thrive with undiminished vigour.

I must say that while planning the dialogue and making preparations for it, I had all along heavily depended on and benefited from the advice and support of my old friends Prof. Daya Krishna and Dr. Francine Krishna and their colleagues at Jaipur, who for many years had methodically pursued studies in various areas of Indian thought, adopting a similar approach to it and aiming at similar objectives. It would have been unthinkable for me to hold the dialogue without their participation.

The dialogue had to be bilingual. This meant that scholars who could translate from Sanskrit into English and vice versa had an essential role to play in making it possible. As would be evident, the translations they were required to provide were not merely translations from one language into another but also from one conceptual framework into another. Fortunately there were some scholars present who could successfully discharge this difficult task with aplomb. The participants in the dialogue were all aware of the heavy burden they carried and a debt of gratitude which they owed to them. I would like to especially thank Dr. Arindam Chakravarti in this connection who, as readers will notice, emerged as the principal mediator between the two sides as the dialogue progressed.

What were the concrete, specific philosophical gains which resulted from the dialogue? It will be premature at this stage to try to answer this question because the dialogue has just begun. The issues have barely been joined. The dialogue will have to continue. The problems which have been identified in this phase will have to be pursued at a much deeper level. So also the implications of the tentative solutions which have been suggested to them for other connected problems will have to be carefully explored. But I would like to make two points in this connection. One is that a group of pandits who being as well-versed in Indian
Introduction

darsanas as any in the land are keen to engage western philosophy in a dialogue has been identified. Further from the enthusiasm with which the idea of the project has been received by pandits everywhere, one may guess that the group that is identified is merely a sample representing a much larger population.

The second is a suggestion I would like to make. It will be seen that a large part of the discussion centers on the western concept of proposition. This is a deeply entrenched concept in the western philosophical tradition which Indian theories have managed to do without. To put the matter roughly, for the western tradition the content of knowledge consists of true propositions. With this is connected the thesis that it is the sentence which conveys a unit of meaning or represents a move in the language game. For Indians knowledge is of a thing, albeit not a bare thing but a thing characterised by features or attributes. With this view goes a flexible concept of a sentence so that even a word like (a) 'pot' counts as a sentence. How deep does this difference between the two views go? One can hazard an answer only after the constellations of concepts like 'sentence', 'word', 'meaning', 'knowledge', 'belief', 'truth', etc., as they are interpreted in each of the traditions are examined in depth and detail. It appears to me, therefore that it is in the direction of śabdarbha (knowledge gained by understanding sentences) that the dialogue should continue. This is an area which overlaps epistemology and ontology, as well as formal logic with its formalised syntax and semantics. It is thus central to philosophical inquiry and has been minutely explored by classical Indian thinkers. The recent movements of analytical philosophy and hermeneutics have also progressed in this direction. It is, perhaps, in this area that a dialogue of this kind will be most fruitful and rewarding.

Finally, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Ford Foundation for the financial support they extended to the project and to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research for agreeing to publish the Dialogue as transcribed from the tapes and to Prof. R.C. Dwivedi and Dr. Mukund Lath for help in editing it.

M.P. Rege
प्राचीनकालातील पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकन विभागातील "स्वयं भात-मस्तकातील प्रतीतिः" विमल वर्णांकनात वर्णाश्रमानियां वर्णाश्रमस्थिती वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः। अर्थात् पुनः "पारंपरिक संस्कृत लेखनातील वर्णांकनातील वर्णानुमान वर्णानुमान सस्त्रीप्रतीति: विनाश अतिशय विनाश अविनाशी अविनाशी प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः प्रतीतिः। नामांकन तत्तता विनाशातील वर्णानुमानासाठी प्रतीतिः।
श्रीमदभगवदगीता

प्रकाशमन्त्री

अर्यमिर्थकीय तत्तन्त्र ज्ञानम्

अर्यसिद्धांतिक प्रकाशमन्त्री

धर्मसरस्वती

योगीमा

योगिनिमात्रे

सत्यम्भराये

युरंगन

गौरी

कृष्णम

अम्रातु

दौरानीकीय

कालमेघन्याय

धतुरमोहन

पारशुराम

धीरेन्दु

प्रसन्नरामराज

प्रति

इश्वर

मित्र

अविद्यालय

अविद्यालय}

अविद्यालय
QUESTIONS/ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Russell's Theory of the Structure and Constituents of a Proposition

According to Russell what a sentence expresses is a proposition. Or in other words, the meaning of a sentence is a proposition.

A sentence is composed of words or phrases. For Russell, the meaning of a word or a phrase is always an entity for which it stands or which is indicated by it. Consequently, the proposition which a sentence expresses has for its constituents the entities which are indicated by the words or phrases which compose the sentence.

Thus, take the sentence 'Devadatta is wise'. According to Russell's view the meaning of the proper name 'Devadatta' is the individual Devadatta who is the bearer of the name. Similarly, the meaning of the word 'wise' is the attribute wisdom which is a universal. And the meaning of the sentence 'Devadatta is wise' is the proposition which is expressed by it. And of this proposition, the individual Devadatta and the attribute wisdom are constituents.

This account of the meaning of a word or a phrase and of the meaning of a sentence raises certain questions:

(a) Is the meaning of a word or a phrase the entity for which it stands? What objections can be taken against this account of meaning?

(b) What positive account do Indian logicians/philosophers and grammarians give of the meaning of a word? What, for instance, is the meaning of the proper name 'Devadatta' and of the adjective 'wise'?

(c) According to Russell, given a sentence like 'Socrates is wise' we have to consider three entities which are connected with it, all of which actually exist: (i) the sentence 'Socrates is wise' itself which is an arrangement of words; (ii) the thing or the individual who is the subject of the sentence, or, in other words, the thing or
the individual who is what the sentence is about—in this case, Socrates; (iii) the proposition expressed by the sentence which also, according to Russell, is an entity which exists.

What objections can be taken to the view that there actually exist propositions over and above sentences and the things they are about?

Some of the reasons which have been advanced in support of the view that there exist propositions in addition to sentences and things are as follows:

(i) A proposition by definition is something which is true or false. Now a sentence cannot be described as true or false. Rather it is what a sentence means or expresses that can be correctly said to be true or false. Therefore, a proposition is distinct from a sentence.

(ii) An English sentence and a Sanskrit sentence which is synonymous with it have the same meaning. This common meaning is the proposition which each sentence expresses. Thus the meaning of saying that two sentences are synonymous is that they express one and the same proposition. It is this proposition which can be properly said to be true or false, not the sentence which expresses it.

(iii) Belief, doubt, assumption, etc. may be described as different cognitive attitudes. Now, a cognitive attitude is necessarily directed to something, which may be called its object. The sentence ‘I believe’ taken by itself is incomplete. If someone says ‘I believe’ and stops, it will always be legitimate to ask him ‘What do you believe?’ and what he believes will be the object of his attitude of belief. Now it is contended that the object of a cognitive attitude like belief or doubt is always a proposition. For instance, my belief that the earth is round has for its object the proposition that the earth is round and not the sentence which expresses this proposition. To say that I believe that the earth is round is to say that I regard the proposition expressed by the (English) sentence ‘The earth is round’ to be true. Similarly, to say that I doubt whether it will rain tomorrow means that I do not believe the proposition that it will rain tomorrow to be true or to be false. It is not a sentence which I believe or doubt but the proposition which is expressed by the sentence. Thus it is clear that we have to explicate the object as a cognitive attitude like belief or doubt by means of the concepts proposition and truth. A proposition is true when it corresponds to facts.

What can be said in criticism of this view of the proposition?

What is it that is true or false, according to Indian thinkers? Is it the sentence that is true or false? Or is it jñāna that is true or false? What are the similarities and the differences between the concept of a proposition and the concept of jñāna?

Turning to the question of the constituents of a proposition, one finds that according to Russell, given the proposition expressed by the sentence ‘Socrates is wise’ it is the individual Socrates and the quality wisdom which are its constituents.

What are the objections which can be raised against this view?

How, according to Indian thinkers, is the cognition (jñāna) ‘Socrates is wise’ related to the individual Socrates and to the quality wisdom?

As we have seen, according to Russell, the proposition expressed by a sentence is composed of the meanings of the words and phrases of which the sentence is composed. In order to grasp the proposition which is expressed by a sentence one must grasp the meanings of (the entities denoted by) the words and phrases of which the sentence is composed and the way in which they are inter-connected in it. This view seems to correspond to the abhihāṭānayavāda. Where does this view stand today?

According to Russell, there is a basic distinction between particulars (substances) like Socrates on the one hand and qualities and relations like wisdom or teaching on the other. A substance can occur in a proposition only as that about which something is asserted, that is, only as a subject. The general nature of a proposition is that, in it something is asserted of something. The something about which something is asserted is called the subject. Thus, in the proposition Socrates is wise, the quality wisdom is asserted of the subject Socrates. In the proposition Devadatta teaches Brahmadatta, the relation teaching is asserted of Devadatta and Brahmadatta. This is a proposition with two subjects. Thus, the subject of a proposition is that entity or those entities about which something is asserted. A proposition may have one or more subjects. When a proposition has only one subject, what is asserted of it in the proposition is a quality like wisdom or redness. When a proposition has more
than one subject what is asserted in the proposition is a relation like teaching, (being) taller than, etc.

A quality may occur in a proposition in two ways, or in one of two positions. It may occur in a proposition as what is asserted of a subject, i.e. as a predicate. In the proposition Socrates is wise, the quality wisdom occurs as a predicate. But in the proposition 'wisdom is desirable' it occurs as a subject, as that about which something is asserted. However, according to Russell, a substance like Devadatta can occur in a proposition only as a subject, only as that about which something is asserted. It can never occur as that which is asserted of some subject.

Further, according to Russell, a proposition, in addition to containing a subject and a quality or subjects and a relation, contains an element which he calls assertion. It is this element of assertion which gives unity to a proposition.

We may consider certain questions about this theory of the nature of a proposition:

(a) Is this analysis of a proposition into (i) the subject (or subjects) about which something is asserted; (ii) something which is asserted of the subject(s); and (iii) assertion, acceptable? What can be said in criticism of it?

(b) Russell accords primacy to substances (things) in regard to proposition. While a proposition may be about a quality or a relation, a quality or a relation may also be what is asserted of a substance. But a substance can never be what is asserted of something. It is always something of which something is asserted.

What can be said in criticism of this doctrine of the primacy of substances or things in the context of a proposition? One may consider this question with reference to the Pārvatīmānsā view that action, bhāvanā, is the subject of the assertion made by a sentence.

(c) According to Russell, the constituents of the proposition expressed by the sentence 'Devadatta teaches Brahmādatta' are: (i) Devadatta; (ii) Brahmādatta; (iii) the relation teaching. Similarly, the constituents of the proposition expressed by the sentence 'Rāma kills Rāvana' are: (i) Rāma; (ii) Rāvana; (iii) the relation killing. Thus, for Russell, words and phrases like 'teaches', 'kills' 'is a brother of' which, in a sentence, connect a noun or a proper name with another, always express a relation.

Is the account of the meaning of such words and phrases acceptable? Is it correct to call teaching, killing, relations? Is killing an action or a relation or is it both?

(d) According to Russell, a relation is something which holds between two or more entities. Thus, the relation killing subsists between the two entities Rāma and Rāvana. The relation between (e.g. Tirupati is between Bombay and Madras) subsists among three entities, Tirupati, Bombay and Madras.

Is this notion of a relation subsisting between more than two things acceptable? What can be said in criticism of it?

What is the account given by Indian thinkers of the nature of relation?

According to Russell, a proposition necessarily has unity. The proposition 'Socrates is wise' has, as we have seen, for its constituents, the individual Socrates and the quality wisdom. But the sentence 'Socrates is wise' does not merely present a list of these constituents. If I say 'Socrates wisdom', I have merely given a list of these two constituents. But I have not uttered a sentence which expresses a proposition. As noted earlier, each of the words or phrases of which a sentence is composed stands for an entity which is a constituent of the proposition which the sentence expresses. However, a proposition is not merely an assemblage of these constituents but something in which they are unified. Now, according to Russell, it is the act of assertion which combines these constituents into a unity which the proposition is. The act of assertion asserts (that constituent of the proposition which is) a quality of (that constituent of the proposition which is) its subject; or it asserts (that constituent of proposition which is) a relation of (those constituents of it which are) its subjects. In the first case what the proposition states is that the quality characterizes the subject. In the latter case it states that the relation holds between its subjects. And it is for this reason that a proposition is not a mere list of entities, but a unity of them.

Now, according to Russell, it is the verb in its proper grammatical form which occurs in a sentence—like the verb 'teaches' in the sentence 'Devadatta teaches Brahmādatta'—that performs this act of assertion and it is this element in the proposition which gives it its unity. Therefore, a verb which occurs in a sentence expressing a proposition performs two functions: it stands for a
certain relation—the verb ‘teaches’ expresses the relation *teaching*—and secondly it expresses an act of assertion because of which the relation gets connected with the subjects of the proposition so that the constituents of the proposition get unified.

An example may help. Russell draws a contrast between ‘Devadatta died’ which is a sentence expressing a proposition and ‘Devadatta’s death’ which is not a sentence but a noun-phrase. The latter does not express a proposition but merely stands for an event about which a proposition may be asserted. If one says ‘Devadatta died’ one asserts a proposition which is either true or false. If one says ‘Devadatta’s death’ one has merely referred to an event and not said anything which is true or false. And according to Russell, the difference between the meanings of these two expressions is entirely due to the presence of a verb, viz. ‘died’ in one and its absence in the other.

What can be said in criticism of the view of the role of the verb in a sentence and its connection with the act of assertion in a proposition.

The sentence ‘Socrates is wise’ contains the verb ‘is’. Now according to Russell’s doctrine that every verb in a sentence performs two functions, it expresses a relation and by asserting the relation of the subjects connects it with them, the verb ‘is’ in this sentence must also express a relation. The question then arises: what is the relation which the verb ‘is’ expresses? The only two constituents of the proposition expressed by the sentence ‘Socrates is wise’ are Socrates and *wisdom*; and Socrates is the subject of which *wisdom* is asserted. And obviously *wisdom* is a quality and not a relation. Russell in order to save his doctrine that every verb expresses a relation describes *wisdom* as a monadic, i.e., one-term relation, as distinguished from *teaching* which is a two-term relation. But even if wisdom is taken as a monadic relation, it is a relation not expressed by the verb ‘is’ but by the adjective ‘wise’.

The other role of the verb ‘is’ in the above sentence is to relate wisdom to Socrates. But there is no constituent in the proposition expressed by this sentence which can be said to perform this job. The only two constituents in it are Socrates and *wisdom*. We must then say that in this proposition *wisdom* of itself gets connected with Socrates. *Wisdom* is such an entity that it of itself can get connected with Socrates. Similarly, in the proposition expressed by the sentence ‘Devadatta teaches Brahmādatta’ the relation *teaching* is such that it of itself, gets connected with Devadatta and Brahmādatta. What happens then to the role of the verb namely that of connecting the constituents into a unity?

Do Indian thinkers maintain that what a sentence expresses is a unity? What account do they give of this unity? What is the role of the verb in regard to this unity?
Questions/Issues for Discussion

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Questions/Issues for Discussion

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A DIALOGUE

Śrīnivāsa Sāstrī: Learned ladies and gentlemen: Let me tell you about the issue we are going to discuss today. Russell has argued that words refer to entities that have an external existence. But our understanding of the matter is different. We believe that words such as ghaṣṭa refer to an entity qualified by the universal ghaṣṭa-hood. In other words, the word ghaṣṭa means something that exists in a form of its own (svarūpaṇa). Let me confess, however, that I am not sure what Russell means by 'external existence': can it really be equated with the notion of bāhyārtha that we have? I am not sure. Like one blind man led by another blind man I am entirely in the dark. I request the philosophers to dip into western modes of thought to give us a clearer idea of what Russell has in mind. We would like to know from you, sirs, whether a word according to Russell denotes something that has an external existence, or does it refer to an entity existing in its own form, qualified by a universal.

We have in our midst many eastern pandits. They too will present their views. We shall then have to face the task of deciding what is right and what is not. We have gathered here to engage in an encounter of ideas. Ours will be a discussion between those who are seeking the truth. We are not aiming at mere sophistry or winning an argument.

Sūtā, when she wanted to teach something to Rāma, never said, 'I want to teach you.' She said, 'I want to remind you of something you know. I too would like to remind you of something you know. In expressing your views, do not try to impose it on others. Do not hold on to your views dogmatically; yet do not give them up if they can withstand the force of all the counter-arguments aimed at them. You are free to express any view that you think fit. But whether the view be that of a great ācārya or a renowned sage, you must be prepared to support it with sound arguments; since what we propose to hold here is an exchange of ideas, wherein views will be put to the test of reasoning.

I would also like to say to you something about my being chosen as the chairperson. In ancient times a chairperson had to be a very versatile person. In a yajña, the priest called Brahmā was the chairperson; he supervised the whole proceedings. He was expected to possess a thorough knowledge (about the yajña as a whole). But what do the priests do in a yajña today? There is no well-versed Brahmā found anywhere. So what they do is to put up a small mound made of grass and call it an all-knowing Brahmā. I am a chairperson of a similar kind. I know little and my status is only symbolic. I have nothing to say or to do. I will listen to your arguments and your conclusions and sum them up for you—this will be my sole function. Now let the western philosophers expound Russell's purport in saying that a word expresses an external entity. And let the eastern pandits propose their own views. I invite you to respond to the issue.

Bhat: Any logico-epistemic analysis of language has also to take in view the corresponding analysis of knowledge and reality. In fact, language only communicates what is available to us in knowledge and knowledge is nothing, but to use a metaphorical expression, a revelation of reality; and therefore ultimately for understanding the meaning of language we have to go back to reality, of course, via knowledge. Now the concept of entity with which we are at present grappling has to be located somewhere in reality. And when we talk of an entity we should not always mean something which is in the external world or is physical in character. Here we can with profit analyse the Nyāya concept of padārtha which not only stands for positive entities but also negative ones, for abhāva also is a padārtha. Further, padārtha not only stands for tangible entities but also for abstract ones, not only the substantives but also the adjectives, and therefore we have a list of seven padārthas beginning with dravya. So by entity we may in fact mean all those things which have āstītva. Even abhāva has āstītva as when we say 'Bhūtāle ghaṣṭa nāsti'. So āstītva can be regarded as one of the necessary conditions for anything to be designated as entity. And then, whatever has āstītva must be given to us in knowledge. Then only can we use the word 'āstītva'. Therefore the