

A study of Indian philosophy: As a disseminator of global peace and harmony

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Abstract: *The objective of this paper is to show how Indian philosophy comprises the sense of global peace and harmony, including its indigenous parts like epistemology, cosmology, ontology, ethics etc. The scope of this research paper will be confined to the basic postulates of six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy i.e. Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mimāṃsā and Vedānta philosophy.*

Peace and harmony are the indispensable aspect of each and every individual to make the life worth living on this globe. Where peace brings internal calmness and enables a person to realize one's own nature, harmony enables a person to feel the same thing about others what he feels or experiences for himself. This sense of understanding makes one sensible and more vigilant to one's duties.

Though, the whole Indian philosophy concentrates more on the ontological aspect to know the ultimate reality, yet it declares that its main goal is to attain the eternal peace by knowing the ultimate reality through its ontological and epistemological aspects. Thus, in Indian philosophy, true knowledge has been one of the most compatible instruments to know the true nature of ultimate reality and to get established in peace forever. Here, an effort has been made to show the contribution of Indian philosophy to explore inner peace and harmony in the world through valid means of knowing the truth.

The central idea of Indian philosophy has been the human beings and their life. It will be very congruous to say that Indian philosophy is not only a philosophy but it is a philosophy of life. "The concept of man" is a well known and celebrated book, written by Dr. P.T. Raju. In the forward of this book, Dr. Radhakrishnan has expressed the same view. He says clearly that a true philosophy is philosophy of life. So, to contemplate and write on the concept of man is a highest category of philosophical activity¹. The purpose of Indian philosophy comprises of both type of prosperity and peace i.e. *laukika* and *ādhyātmika unnati*. And to achieve this, it focuses more on knowledge because according to Indian philosophy, all the miseries, conflict and disturbances are due to ignorance. When one becomes free from ignorance, automatically he gets rid of all type of suffering. Ignorance is the cause of all the differences and disturbances.

It is noteworthy that in Indian philosophy the sense of global peace and harmony lies in the very concept of liberation. There are many synonyms for the word 'liberation', as *Mokṣa, Apavarga, Niḥśreyas, Nirvāṇa, Kaivalya, Parampada* etc.

¹ Ramji Singh, "Darsan ka prayojana", *Bharatiya Darshanika Chintan*, Akhil Bharatiya Darsan Parisad & new Bharatiya book corporation, 2005.

Though, in Indian philosophical systems, there are nine prominent schools of thoughts. In these nine schools, six are regarded as orthodox or *āstika* Indian philosophy and three are regarded as heterodox. They are also named as *vaidika* and *avaidika* philosophy respectively on the basis of accepting and refuting the validity of the Vedas.

Here, only six systems of *vaidika* Indian philosophy have been brought in to consideration in the context of global peace and harmony.

In ascending order, according to their richness of thought, six *āstika* Indian philosophies are *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Mimāṃsā* and *Vedānta* philosophy.

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools:

Both systems of philosophy are treated equally like twins as they both agree with each other's principles. *Nyāya* has accepted *Vaiśeṣika's* ontology and *Vaiśeṣika* accepted *Nyāya's* epistemology, though in the very beginning there were only two means of knowledge in *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy, perception and inference. Because of their likeness of thought, here, they have been brought together.

According to *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* systems, reality can be known through language and it can be enumerated in words also. They use the terminology '*Padārtha*' for the reality. According to them, whatever is the '*artha*' (element or object) can be known by the '*pada*' (word). All the realities have abstract common property (*sādharmya*) of nameability, knowability and communicability.

*Ṣaṅṅāmapī padārthānāmastitvābhidheyatvajyeyatvāni.*²

According to *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* systems, knowing the reality in its own nature along with the discerning factors among them is the cause of emancipation.³ This emancipation liberates us from every kind of sorrow and suffering. In Indian philosophy, *dharma* is a very prominent factor. *Maharṣi kaṇāda* starts *Vaiśeṣika* sutra with the concept of *dharma*. *Athāto dharmam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* (let us discuss about the dharma)⁴

Later he defines *dharma*: *Yato abhyudayaniḥśreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmah* (the cause of worldly pleasure and spiritual welfare is the dharma)⁵. *Tadvachanād āmnāyasya prāmānyam*. The *Vedas* are valid because they always tell about the *dharma*.⁶ Further, he propounds the means to achieve the *dharma*:

Dravyagūṇakarmasāmānyaviśeṣasamavāyānām *padārthānām*
sādharmyavaidharmyābhyām tatvajnānānīḥśreyasādhigamaḥ. The proper knowledge of these categories is essential to arrive at the true knowledge and it is through true knowledge that one can attain the summum bonam of life.⁷

In *Vaiśeṣika Sutra*, in the second part of the 6th chapter, *Kaṇāda* emphasizes on the right way of living and condemns the violent behaviour of the individual.⁸ *Ichhādveṣapurvikā dharmādharmapravṛttiḥ. Tatsaṃyogo vibhāgaḥ. ātmakarmasu mokṣovyākhyātaḥ*.

In *Nyāya* system also, liberation is defined as: *tadatyantavimokṣo'pavargaḥ*⁹.

² Praśastapādabhāṣya, sādharmyavaidharmyaprakaraṇa.p.18.

³ Tadabhāve saṃyogābhāvaḥ prādurbhāvaśca mokṣaḥ. V.S. 5/2/18.

⁴ V.S.1/1/1.

⁵ V.S. 1/1/2.

⁶ V.S.1/1/3.

⁷ V.S.1/1/4.

⁸ V.S. 6/2/14;15;16.

Absolute freedom from suffering is liberation.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools:

In *Sāṃkhya* system, one celebrated text of this school (*Sāṃkhyakārika*) starts its subject telling the way of getting rid of the sorrows that are mainly threefold: *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidāivika* and *ādhibhautika*.¹⁰ This school says that all type of sorrows and pain can be wiped away by knowing the reality in its nature.

Yoga conveys the same message by forcing on the implementation aspect. It is said that *Sāṃkhya* is a theory and *Yoga* is a practice. *Sāṃkhya* is a thought and *Yoga* is the action form of the same thought.

In today's life, *Yoga* is helping people to make their life livable by soothing and calming their inner sense. The theory of *Astānga Yoga* fully conveys the message of sound and serene life for each individual.

Mīmāṃsā school:

Mīmāṃsā school deals with the temporal reality more than the abstract one. Physical aspect of the life is more important in this philosophy. They focus on the worldly pleasure and happiness.

Yajñā, *svarga*, *adṛst* etc. are the factors that play the more prominent part in human life. In *Mīmāṃsā*, the theory behind *Yajñā* and *Adṛst* is very logical and scientific. If we try to introspect the pedagogy of *Yajñā*, we find that their intension behind the performing *Yajñā* was replete with the sense of welfare of the world. The main conflict in the world is due to wealth and prestige, *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy inspires men to achieve these worldly pleasures through right action as per ordained by the Vedas. It inculcates the sense of righteous and unrighteous doings and their good and bad respective results in human beings. It conveys the worldly prosperity without harming other individual. *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy is more convincing in spreading the message of global peace and harmony.

Vedānta School:

Though there are so many sub divisions in this school like *Dvaita*, *Vishistādvaita*, *Dvaitādvaita* and *Advaita*, yet we try to find out one common thought in all affiliated thoughts of this system; and as far as main and very basic principle of all the thoughts is concerned there is no difficulty to figure it out. The main preaching of *Vedānta* school is that all are the part of one principle consciousness. So no one is different from other. Thus it fills the sense of interconnectedness among each individual. When a person sees none, different from him, all the tumult and conflicts cease there. In *Advaita Vedānta* School, liberation (*mokṣa*) is defined as:

*Prayoanam tu tadaikyaprameyagatājnānanivṛttiḥ svarūpānandāvāptiśca..*¹¹

Conclusion:

In Indian philosophy, the metaphor of knowledge is not 'power', but 'purification'¹². *Gītā* says: *Na hi jnānena sadṛśam pavitramiha vidyate*¹³. Truly, there is nothing so

⁹ N.S. 1/1/22.

¹⁰ Dukhtrayābhighātājijñāsātadapaghātake hetau. Dṛste sāpārthā chennaikātatyantato abhāvāt. Sāṃkhyakārika, 1.

¹¹ Vedāntasāra. P.76

¹² Kapoor Kapil, "Sanskrit and the Civilization crisis", published by *IGNCA*, 2012, p.6

purifying in this world as knowledge. In the next verse in the *Gita*, the result of knowledge is depicted: *jñānam labddhvā parām śāntimacireṇādhiḡacchati*. After attaining knowledge, one perceives supreme peace. True knowledge purifies oneself as well as others. Here, as the ultimate goal, knowledge has been emphasized again and again because it is the knowledge that promotes *dharma* and it is *dharma* that promotes the general welfare of mankind. Thus, *dharma* and *jñāna* are interconnected. On the other side, in Indian philosophy ignorance has been condemned because it is ignorance that promotes suffering (*Duḡkha*) and *Duḡkha* promotes conflict and tumult in society. Thus, it is established that Indian philosophy favors knowledge most because it is the knowledge that enables mankind for the realization of the four ends of life: *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (material things), *kāma* (worldly desire), *mokṡa* (emancipation from all these things).

As a student of Indian philosophy, it has been my observation that each and every philosophical system has accepted the importance of every existence equally. Every entity is purposeful. Nothing is in vain in this universe. All Indian philosophical systems accept the existence of *ātman* as well as its all pervasiveness. *Atman* is *vibhu* i.e. ubiquitous ‘the locus of the conjunction of every corporeal substance’.¹⁴ As the *ātman* pervades everywhere because of its *vibhu* nature, then it should also be regarded as truth that every entity has potency of being conscious. Where there are enough instruments for it, it manifests also. Consciousness is the nature of or we can say the synonym of *ātman*. Even modern physics has also proved by its two slit theory and experiment that every particle is conscious¹⁵. So understanding this deep, subtle and secret mysterious reality in its true nature is the demand of hour, because only then we’ll be able to behave sensitively and interact effectively with our environment. Thus, knowing the ultimate reality in its true nature is the only way to bring peace and harmony in the world as knowledge makes us vigilant, sensitive and wise enough to live in the world in a harmonious and peaceful way.

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¹³ Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, 4/38-39.

¹⁴ Sarvamūrtadravyasaṡyogitvam vibhutvam.

¹⁵ The source of my this statement is many lectures on Science, organized in SCSS, J.N.U. and B.H.U.

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