

The Influence Of Religion

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ABSTRACT

It is a recognised fact that philosophy very often in an outgrowth of religion. It is particularly true of some of the prominent systems of Indian thought, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Vaisnavism, Śāktism and Saivism. Saivism, as the very word indicates, is an outgrowth of the Religion, which recognised Śiva to be the highest God. This God is referred to in the Vedic passages by various names such as Sambhava, Mayobhava, Sankara, Mayaskara, Śiva and Rudra etc. This God, Śiva, has been discovered to be the object of worship in the hoary past in India in the finds of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, which are recognised to be the earliest archaeological finds of this country. Saivism is even now one of the great living religions. Some of the biggest religious monuments are dedicated to Śiva.

Religion leads to philosophy, and philosophy that grows out of religion may still employ the words, commonly used in the religious literature, giving them new meanings and interpreting the religious myths and beliefs philosophically. as has been done by the two eminent systems of thought, Saivism and Vaisnavism: or it may completely cut itself off from religion and become purely speculative, as has been done by rationalism in the West.

Saivism has not cut itself off from religion. In the Agamic literature, on which the Saiva Philosophy is based, there are generally four sections in each Agama, (I) Vidya (II) Kriya (III) Yoga and (IV) Caryas. The first deals with the categories and other purely philosophical matters. The second is occupied with various forms of spiritual initiation and the soupsaying tune. And because the self-resilisation is not possible without Toga, therefore, the third discusses different types of Toga. But the practice of Toga is not possible without maintaining the highest ethical standard. The fourth, therefore, gives the rules of conduct. Saivism is thus, not concerned with pure speculative thought. It is a synthesis of religion, philosophy and ethics.

If we take for instance, the *Vimarsini* of Abhinavagupta and the *Bhaskari* of Bhaskara Rāṇa, we find that they assert the view that religion presents the same Ultimate Reality mythically as philosophy establishes rationally and Yoga reveals immediately. As a concrete instance we may take the benedictory verse at the beginning of the *Kriyadhikara*, with which the preface volume begins. Here Abhinavagupta gives a popular and figurative presentation of the abstruse Saiva philosophical doctrine of *Kriyasakti*. Here he uses the word *Gauripati*, which in the content of religion is used for the mythical God Śiva, as the husband of Gauri, and gives it philosophical meaning. This fact is clearly pointed out by Bhaskara in his commentary. It may be stated here by the way that the benedictory verse or verses, which Abhinava puts at the beginning of each chapter of his *Vimarsini*, are of great importance in as much as therein he states the subject-matter of the chapter briefly, clearly and poetically. This practice is followed by Bhaskara also in his commentary. These are popular and figurative presentations of the abstruse philosophical doctrine.

In fact, if we study the *isvara* Pratyabhijñā carefully, we find that it is concerned with nothing more than the philosophical presentation of the general religious conception of the God, as omniscient and omnipotent, in the light of the monistic philosophy. For, the *Maheśvara*, with the exposition of the Saiva conception of which the work is concerned, is represented to be such in the very first verse of the work, '*Kartari jñātari*' etc. The Saiva conception of omniscience and omnipotence of the *Maheśvara* is different from a verbally similar conception of the God of the *Naiyayika*. In the latter case the *Īśvara* is not free (*Svatantra*); because He depends upon the atoms for the creation of the world. Further, the *Nyaya* conception is based upon the pluralistic philosophy. But in the former case He is free and the conception is based upon the monistic philosophy.

Maheśvara, the Absolute Mind:

In the Saiva metaphysics of Kashmir, the Ultimate Metaphysical Principle is technically called *Maheśvara*. And in contrast to the Brahman of the Vedāntin, which is referred to in the neuter gender, the Saivas refer to the *Maheśvara* in the masculine. 'He' is not only Self-luminous (*Prakāśamaya*) like the Brahman of the Vedāntin, and, therefore, *Santa* (passive) (?) but also self-conscious and free (*Vimarśamaya*). The implication of the affix '*maya*' in the present context is similar to that of the Vedāntin, when he talks of the Brahman as '*Anandamaya*'.

Prakāśa and Vimarśa are inseparable. There is no self-luminosity without self-consciousness and vice versa. The two expressions simply present an analytical view of the same Ultimate Reality. This Reality, because it is self-luminous and self-conscious, is spoken of as the Universal Mind or Self, The Reality, in the words of the Saiva, is "Prakāśa-vimarśa-maya". In the context of metaphysics, to put the idea metaphorically, the Reality is like a mirror, capable of producing the multiplicity of its own affections. Just as a mirror remains really unaffected by the reflections which are cast in it by external objects, so the Reality remains really unaffected by the appearances, the Abhāsas, which it manifests, which proceed from it as do the thoughts, ideas, or mental images from an individual mind. But the distinction between the Reality, the Universal Mirror, and an ordinary looking-glass is that (I) while the latter is not aware of its 'being', does not know that it is, is not self-conscious, the former is; and (II) while the latter depends for its affections on the external, the former is perfectly independent of everything external. Its affections spring from it as do the ideas from the individual mind. It means that the Reality is the Mind and the universe is nothing but the thought of the Universal Mind. The universe is a reflection on the Universal Mirror. The Prakāśa is the mirror and the power of awareness of the 'Being' is the Vimarśa.

In the context of epistemology, it means that the Reality is self-shining and self-conscious. It means that the Reality is the Universal Self-consciousness; that it is the presupposition of every experience and assertion and denial.

It is admitted that every determinate experience, that an individual subject has, is due to an affection of the individual mind by an external object through senses and to the determinate reaction of the mind on the data, supplied through the senses. The Saiva admits that the aspect of the individual that receives the affections of the external object, whereon the external objects are reflected, is the 'Prakāśa' and is identical with the Universal 'Prakāśa'; and that the aspect of the individual, that determinately reacts on what is reflected on it, is the 'Vimarśa' and is identical with the 'Universal Vimarśa'. "The Universal and the individual are essentially identical", is an assertion that the Saiva makes in common with the Vedantin. And because it is an acknowledged fact that the individual mind is the presupposition of all experiences, a fact that has been admitted even in the West by such an eminent thinker as Descartes; and because the individual is identical with the Universal; the Saiva, therefore, holds that the Universal Mind as 'Prakāśa' and 'Vimarśa' is the presupposition of all experiences.

Epistemically 'Prakāśa' also means that the object of experience is essentially 'Prakāśa' i. e. of the nature of 'idea'. For, if the object be admitted to be different from 'Prakāśa', essentially opposite to 'Prakāśa' i. e., 'Aprakāśa'; if it be not the essential nature of the object to shine; if 'not to shine' were the essential nature of the object, it would never shine in experience; because the essential nature of a thing does not change and if it changes, it cannot be admitted to be its essential nature.

The Saiva rejects the view of the dualists and the pluralists, who hold that though it is not the essential nature of the object to shine, yet it is made to shine by the means of right knowledge, 'Pramana'. For, he asserts that the essential nature of which is 'not to shine', can never be made to shine. Thus, he asserts that everything is essentially 'Prakāśa' and claims to be a Mahādvaitavādin.

From the mystical point of view also the Reality is the same. It is self-shining and self-conscious. The Saiva admits that in the perfect emancipation (Pūrṇamokṣa) there is no negation of self-consciousness. For, that would mean reduction to the state of the insentience jadyāpatti. In fact, this is the chief point of difference between the Saiva and the Vedantin. For while the Vedantin admits the Brahman to be self-shining only (Cinmātra) and without self-consciousness (Nirvimarśa) and accordingly he holds the Brahman to be Śānta and the liberation to be the identity with the Brahman and, therefore, a state of negation of self-consciousness: the Saiva admits self-consciousness to persist even in the final emancipation; because he holds the Reality, into which the appearance merges, to be not only self-shining but also self-conscious,

He, however, asserts the Reality and the final emancipation to be immediacy (Nirvikalpa). His assertion is made the basis of the conception of immediacy (Vikalpa), which may be stated as follows:

Determinacy consists (I) in unifying a multiplicity into a unity, as when a person combines a number of simple percepts into a complex whole; (II) in contra-distinguishing the object of cognition "this" from "not this"; (III) in interpreting a stimulus in a variety of ways and in accepting one interpretation to be correct and rejecting others as incorrect. Thus, determinacy in all cases is dependent on the consciousness of multiplicity either for unification or for consciousness of distinction. Therefore, in the absence of consciousness of multiplicity, determinacy is not possible. Since in the transcendental Self-consciousness, there is nothing to be contra-distinguished from the Self, as there is no 'not-being' from which 'being' is to be distinguished, it cannot be spoken of as determinate consciousness.

The Saivas admit, like the Vedantin, that the individual mind is identical with the Universal. Their conception of the macrocosm is based on a very careful study of the microcosm. They hold that what is true in the case of the individual self is equally so in that of the Universal. Accordingly, they maintain that the entire universe is a manifestation of the Universal Mind exactly as the world of imagination is that of the individual and that the universe is related to the Universal Mind exactly as ideas are related to the individual.

Thus, the conception of the Ultimate Reality as Prakāśa-vimarśamaya, self-luminous and self-conscious, is not only what the metaphysical reasoning lends to, but also what the mystic experience in the indeterminate

(nirvikalpa) Samādhi, from which a yogin rises either automatically (Svatovyuttiṣṭhate) or is awakened by another (parabodhitah), reveals. It is also the presupposition of all volitional, cognitive and conscious-physical acts at the empirical level. The distinctive conception of the Ultimate Reality in the metaphysical context, according to Kashmir Saivas, is, therefore, "The Free Will" (Svatantra Iccha).

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