By M. HIRIYANNA

POPULAR ESSAYS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

THE QUEST AFTER PERFECTION

ART EXPERIENCE

SANSKRIT STUDIES

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES-I

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES-II

THE MISSION OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
M. HIRIYANNA

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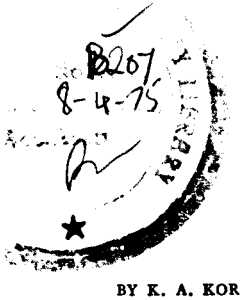

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is the seventh collection of essays of the late Prof. M. Hiriyanna. The papers included here are being published for the first time.

It may be noted that a couple of essays have not had the benefit of revision by the Professor. Whether he would have published the papers in the same from as has been done now is more than one can surmise. The publishers have, however, ventured to bring them to light for the Professor's writings, valuable that they are, should in their opinion, not be lost to the public.

Some of the marginal notes left by the Professor in his typescripts have been included as footnotes. Words enclosed within square brackets have been added by the editor.

Our grateful thanks are due to the Professor's daughter for permitting this publication ; to Sri G. Hanumantha Rao, M.A., late of the Department of Philosophy, University of Mysore, for having gone through the papers before they were passed on to the press; and to the authorities of the Wesley Press who have executed the work neatly and within a very short time.

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THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY

It is quite a commonplace now to be told that one science after another has branched off from philosophy and that when the others still included in it similarly start on their independent courses, there will be nothing left of philosophy; or, if there be anything, it will be all religion. The purpose of this paper is to consider the implication of this statement, viz., that philosophy has no individuality of its own and that it can be eventually resolved into science, or science and religion. We shall first consider the relation of philosophy to religion; but before doing so, it is necessary to set forth briefly what constitutes the distinguishing features of religion.

The most striking characteristic of religion is the formulation of an ideal, which is the highest that man can think of. The significance of an ideal is that efforts should persistently be made to realise it in one's own experience. Hence to determine how the ideal is to be realised becomes as much the concern of religion as the formulation of it. But this ideal, generally speaking, has reference to another world; and it is believed that it can be fully attained only after death. This view may be the outcome of a conviction that man, as he is here, is too far removed from the ideal to be able to completely accomplish it in this life. But whatever the reason for it may be, all religion involves a belief in the supernatural in some form or other. It therefore usually has recourse to direct revelation by some beneficent Being to justify its position. In the train of such a belief follow many dogmas, like the immortality of the soul, the soul's independence of the physical organism with which it is associated, and so forth.

Let us now consider the aim of philosophy in the light of what we have said about the distinctive features of religion. Philosophy also seeks after the formulation of a supreme

THE MISSION OF PHILOSOPHY

THE value of philosophy is sometimes called in question as no system, so far devised, has met with universal acceptance. System after system has been elaborated in the course of history; but no finality, it is said, has been reached in regard to any of its major problems. Granting that the charge is well founded, it does not follow that the pursuit of philosophy should, *for ever*, be abandoned. But, however that may be, there is the fact that the tendency to philosophise is natural to man, and that it cannot therefore be suppressed. Even the critic, in denying the worth of philosophy, does so on the basis of some view he takes of life and the world as a whole. Indeed, it seems that we can neither think nor act cogently without holding some view of the universe, either explicitly or implicitly. The question thus is not whether we should or should not dispense with philosophy, but whether any change is necessary in our view of what we should expect from it and whether the way in which we pursue its study is adapted to secure that end for us.

What may be the explanation of this tendency to philosophise which is irrepressible? We may get a clue to it by inquiring into its origin. Some say that philosophy begins with wonder; others, that it starts from curiosity. Both alike imply ignorance as their background. 'Wonder', it has been said, 'is the effect of novelty or ignorance'. The instinct of curiosity, again, is called into play when our apprehension of anything in which we are interested is imperfect. Wonder and curiosity accordingly signify partial knowledge; and they prompt us to secure further and more satisfying information about the object or objects under notice. Or, to state the same in general terms, the aim of philosophy is to dispel our ignorance (*avidyā*) about the world, as Indians have all along maintained. This ignorance, as just indicated, stands for partial knowledge

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DUTY

THE problem of duty is a very complicated one; and all that I propose to do now is to consider one aspect of it, viz., whether duty is a means to the attainment of an end or is an end in itself. We know that each of these views has been held by some philosopher or other both in India and in Europe. In Western philosophy, for example, the latter view is conspicuously associated with the name of Kant while the former is advocated by many eminent thinkers like Butler and Green. The general tendency now is to prefer the first theory, viz., that duty is a means to an end, in spite of the diversity of views that prevails regarding the nature of that end. It seems to me that the second theory is much nearer the truth and that, with a slight reinterpretation of it in the light of the first, it can be taken to give us the exact truth in regard to that aspect of duty with which we are now concerned. My purpose in this paper is to indicate what this reinterpretation is. I shall start with a brief examination of the nature of duty according to this theory, selecting Kant's formulation as typical of it; but neither in examining it nor in finding out the kind of emendation it requires, shall I invoke the support of any metaphysical doctrine. In fact, my present aim is to see whether a fairly satisfactory solution of our problem cannot be reached on purely empirical grounds and without making Ethics a mere pendant to Metaphysics.

Kant holds that for a deed to acquire moral worth, it should not be done from inclination; and he means by this, as he explains it later in his *Fundamental Principles*, that the action should not be regarded by the agent as a means to anything else. The categorical imperative, he writes, is that which represents an action as necessary of itself without reference to another end. It seems perfectly right to hold that morality should not have anything to do with

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

RELIGION, to judge from all it claims to be, should put an end to every form of hate; but unfortunately in practice it not only does not eliminate hate in other spheres of life but itself becomes an additional means of engendering it. The histories of nations—both Eastern and Western—provide so many instances of this strange irony of militant faiths that we need not stop to illustrate it. Śaṁkara who calls our attention pointedly in one of his works to religious intolerance ascribes it to the character of the doctrines which particular religions teach.[1] Intolerance in the field of religion, as in other fields, is eventually due to the self-love which characterises man; and it may therefore appear wrong to blame religion for it. Śaṁkara does not deny this. He only means that by the kind of truth for which it stands, a religion may lend a helping hand to it. There is no religion indeed which does not inculcate love for others as a duty, even though they be our enemies. But, according to Śaṁkara, it will not do for any religion to stop at presenting the necessity for toleration as one truth along with other truths of religion; it must also see that there is nothing in what it teaches which makes for intolerance even indirectly. That is, it must so transform the substance of its teaching that toleration flows from it quite naturally, and that it comes to be viewed as a living expression of the *whole* of that teaching. That, for Śaṁkara, is an important test of true religion; and he draws from it a support for his own monistic creed which by asserting the unity of all that is, strikes at the very root of the source of intolerance, viz., distinction. It is not, of course, meant that belief in a monistic doctrine necessarily prevents a man from quarrelling with his neighbour; but, at the same time, it is clear that it does supply a fresh baṣis for the tolerant spirit which

[1] Com. on Gaudapāda's *Kārikā*, iii. 17.

THE IDEAL OF LIFE

THE relation between philosophy and life has been the subject-matter of an agelong controversy. Plato, for example, taught that the two were intimately related; but his pupil, Aristotle, differed from him completely. Mediaeval thought generally sided with Plato in this respect, and recognised that philosophy cannot be indifferent to the problems of life. But owing to the rise of science, with its emphasis on theory, the controversy has since been revived; and great modern thinkers, like Bradley and Russell, who differ from one another in almost every other respect, agree in questioning the legitimacy of so relating theory and practice. But the opposite view is not altogether unrepresented now; and there are, at least, a few who consider that there can be no better truth about ultimate things than the one that helps us to live rightly. Even among ancient Indian thinkers who, as a rule, attached little value to thought that found no expression in practice, there were some like the early Mīmāṁsakas who repudiated such necessary connection between life and ultimate philosophic knowledge. I propose to say a few words on this controversy; but I shall, in doing so, restrict myself to one aspect of the question, viz., the relation between philosophy and the ideal of life, which is the most important of the practical problems. If either of them depend upon or presuppose the other, we may safely deny the thesis that they are not related; and I shall begin by asking whether the determination of the nature of this ideal or its achievement is in any way dependent upon philosophy.

It seems, at first sight, that the answer to this question should be in the negative, for we find that mankind has pursued other means to the ideal end, viz., art and morality from a time when it had not even dreamt of conscious philosophising. We shall accordingly try to discover whether either of them is fitted by itself to serve as the goal of life.

EMPIRICAL ETHICS

THE problem of Ethics is generally investigated in close relation to Metaphysics. It was not only ancient thinkers like Plato who thought it necessary to do so; even in modern times the same opinion has been held by many. The adoption of this course means going far beyond the range of direct moral experience and arrive at diverse solutions of the ethical problem, as in the case of the metaphysical, none of which will command the assent of all alike. While the need for differing systems in metaphysics is perhaps inevitable, the same does not seem to be the case in Ethics; and it therefore behoves us, in the interests of practical conduct, to try to avoid, if possible, parallel theories in it. Their existence, even though it may not definitely refute a particular theory, is sufficient to throw doubt upon its correctness and thus weaken its utility in the conduct of life. 'If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, we may not be very ready to go forth to battle'. Here also, as in Logic, a purely empirical method may, by itself, lead to a complete solution of the ethical problem. If, however, it fails to do so, we may seek the aid of Metaphysics. We shall then know at what stage of the investigation and for what purpose we seek its aid.

I

It is admitted by all that moral behaviour is a distinguishing feature of man; and it may therefore suffice for Ethics to take into account his nature and not concern itself with that of the whole of existence, which is what is meant by basing it on Metaphysics. It is not denied that a knowledge of the whole of reality, if we could have it, may have its own bearing on Ethics, but only that it does not seem necessary to seek in it for the direct source of our moral conception. Now all moral deeds in that they are deliberately

'THE WORLD AS IDEA'

It will be best to treat of this topic in three stages:

(1) We start necessarily with our private presentations, which are subjective occurrences; and the world, so far as we know it in this stage, is a mere idea—an individual possession.

(2) Out of these presentations, we construct a more or less systematic whole, and we thereafter understand in its light the presentations which we may have at any moment. It is at this stage that we can speak of a 'world', which signifies an intelligible whole. Its construction is necessitated by the nature of the mind, which strives to think consistently. This world is still subjective, in that it exists in the medium of our mind; but there emerges now an important distinction between man and the lower animals which, broadly speaking, have only a stream of presentations like the one mentioned above.

(3) The strange fact about these many constructions, which take place in all, is that they correspond; and they correspond more and more as man advances in thought. This correspondence enables us to construct a permanent order of objects, which is the world we ordinarily mean when we use that word. It is the same for all at the same moment, and for any one at different times. I make no difference, for example, between the wall in front of me and the wall behind me. If it is the same for all, then obviously it cannot depend upon any *one* of us. That is, things act and react upon one another; and our consciousness by its presence can make no difference to them. It also is in individual consciousness; if it were altogether outside, we could never know that there was such a world. Even what we call 'outside' is presented to us in the medium of our consciousness; and we ourselves, it should be added, are included in this presented panorama. We make a mistake

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