



RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN HINDUISM

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ABSTRACT:

Religion is the science of soul. Morality and ethics have their foundation on religion. Religion played an important part in the lives of the Indians from the earliest times. It assumed numerous forms in relation to different groups of people associated with them. Religious ideas, thoughts and practices differed among these groups, and transformations and developments took place in the various religious forms in course of time. Religion in India was never static in character but was driven by an inherent dynamic strength. Every system of philosophy in India is a quest for Truth, which is one and the same, always and everywhere. The modes of approach differ, logic varies, but the purpose remains the same – trying to reach that Truth.

KEYWORDS:

RELIGION, HINDU, ṚIṢI.

INTRODUCTION:

Religion, in its truest sense of *adhyātmavidyā*, has been the basis of *Hindu* culture. Vivekananda has an interesting description of *Hindu*:

He does everything in a religious manner. He eats religiously; he sleeps religiously, he rise in the morning religiously, he does good things religiously; and he also does bad things religiously!

According to him, religion is not just belief in certain dogmas or observing some rituals but realizing the divinity that is already there in every one of us. Whatever helps us to manifest this latent divinity is also religion. As already pointed out, it is this that has been termed '*adhyātmavidyā*' or the science of the Self within. Indian spirituality is deeply rooted in ancient philosophical and religious traditions of the land. Philosophy arose in India as an enquiry into the mystery of life and existence. Indian sages called Rishis or 'seers', developed special techniques of transcending the sense and the ordinary mind, collectively called yoga. With the help of these techniques, they delved deep into the depths of consciousness and discovered important truths about the true nature of human being and the universe.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is theoretical in nature. The study used primary and secondary source of data. Method followed in this study was content analysis. Various sacred books of Hindus were analysed and shorted to trace out valuable information. Infamous writings of many renowned scholars were also taken into analysis. Then shorted information were synthesised to reach a meaningful conclusion.

DISCUSSION:

The *adhyātmavidyā* has two aspects like as Darśanas and the Yogas This *adhyātmavidyā* has two aspects, theory and practice. Theoretical speculations have led to the evolution of several schools of philosophy. The practical application of their finding has led to the formation of several systems of *sādhanās* or spiritual exercises, generally called 'yogas.'

The well-known schools of Hindu philosophy are six. Hence the name 'saḍa-darśanas (saḍ-a= six; darśana= philosophy). They are: *Nyāya* of Gautama, *Vaiśeṣika* of *kaṇāda*, *Sāṃkhya* of Kapila, Yoga of *Patañjali*, *Mīmāṃsā* of jaimini, and Vedanta of *Bādarāyana*.

The *Nyāya* system of Gautama and the *Vaiśeṣika* system of *kaṇāda* envisage creation by *Paramātmān* (God) out of *anūs* (atoms) which are eternal. The shape of things is directly related to the *adrṣṭa* (unseen deserts) of the *jīvas* (individual souls) left over unredeemed from the previous cycle of creation. Combination of these atoms causes creation and their disintegration result in the dissolution of this universe. The *jīva* has got into the bondage of transmigration due to ignorance of its real nature as an eternal entity different from the body, the senses and the mind. He attains *mokṣa* or liberation (a state of absolute negation of all pain and suffering) through *tattvajñāna* (knowledge of the realities) by listening (*śravaṇa*) to the truths mentioned in the scriptures, by reflecting on the same (manana) and by meditation on his true nature (*nididhyāsana*).

The *Sāṃkhya* system of Kapila and the yoga system of *Patañjali* are complementary to each other. They advance the theory that *prakṛti* (the fundamental matrix of matter) evolves into this universe in the presence of the *puruṣas* (the individual souls) who act as catalytic agents. In fact, the whole process of creation is for the benefit of the *puruṣas*, for their spiritual upliftment, resulting finally

in their emancipation. The *pañcabūtas* (the five elements like earth, water and fire) are evolutes of this *prakṛti*. The universe is a permutation and combination of these. Though essentially detached from *prakṛti*, the *puruṣa* involves him in bondage by getting attached to it and its products. This leads to repeated transmigration. Detachment from it through *viveka-khyāti* (discrimination and wisdom) aide by the eight steps of Yoga leads him finally to emancipation.

The *Mīmāṃsā* system of jaimini advocates the theory that *prakṛti* or nature evolves by itself into this universe, impelled by the *prārabdha* karma (actions done by the individual souls in the previous lives and about to be fructified) of the *jīvas*. Their liberation (described as total cessation of pain and suffering) is achieved by strictly following all the directions give in the *mīmāṃsā* works with regard to karmas (Vedic rituals and other actions).

According to the Vedanta system of *Bādarāyaṇa* (also known as *Vyāsa*), Brahman, the Absolute, projects this universe out of Itself, sustains it and withdraws it into Itself in each cycle of creations. It is something akin to a web coming out of a spider's mouth or sparks emitted out of fire. Hence everything that exists is really *Brahman* and there is nothing that is not *Brahman*. The *jīva* gets liberated through *jñāna* (knowledge of his real nature) and *bhakti* (devotion to Brahman), regaining his original state of infinite bliss.

Coming to Yoga, the practical aspect, there are four of them: *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, *jñānayoga* and *Rājayoga*. All these yogas cleanse the mind and make it so pure that the atman within (Self or God) is automatically revealed. If *Karmayoga* advocates the performance of all ordained action with a desire less and selfless attitude, *Bhaktiyoga* teaches devotion to God and attaining him through his grace. *Jñānayoga* advises constant reflection and meditation on the true nature of oneself as the atman, ultimately resulting in its experience. *Rājayoga* (based mainly on *patañjali's* Yoga system) prescribes an eightfold path leading finally to *Samadhi* or super-conscious experience of the Self within.

It should be specially stressed here that all these philosophical speculations and practical spiritual disciplines are based almost entirely on the basic scriptures of Hinduism, viz. The *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and allied works.

These works, while dealing with philosophical principal or modes of spiritual practice, have also vigorously stressed the need for inculcating *sāmānya-dharmas* or certain basic moral and ethical values in one's life, to refine oneself and to create social harmony. Both of these conduce to quick spiritual progress. They are: *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *dāna* (giving gifts to deserving persons), *ksānti* (forbearance), *dama* (control of passions), *śama* (inner peace), *akārpanya* (not demeaning oneself), *śauca* (purity) and *tapas* (austerity).

While stressing *mokṣa* as the ultimate goal of human life, the scriptures advocating *adhyātmavidyā* have not forgotten the legitimate desire and aspiration of the average human beings. They are: *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (instinctive desires of the flesh). However, these can be earned and enjoyed only when they are in conformity with *dharma* (righteousness) and do not transgress it. What *dharma* is and what it is not, can be known only though the holy of life is never omitted from such lists. These four together — *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*- are called *puruṣārthas* (the four ends of life desired by all human beings).

One of the most important things repeatedly stressed in our religio-philosophical works is that no progress is ever possible in any field of life — much less in the field of *adhyātmavidyā*—without the active help and guidance of the guru or teacher. A thorough knowledge of the religious works, practical experience, a sinless life and a loving concern for the welfare of the disciple are the qualifications expected of a guru. Humility, eagerness and earnestness to learn, and devoted service to the guru are the desired qualities in a *śiṣya* or a disciple. When the disciple advances to great heights in religio- spiritual life, he is required to pass on that knowledge to worthy disciples thus keeping alive a great tradition for the benefit of humankind.

CONCLUSION:

From all this we can easily understand that the basic scriptures of Hinduism - of all hues and views - never ignored the social aspects of life even while constantly stressing the ultimate spiritual goal, and this is a very significant contribution to the development of our culture.

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