Philosophy: An Indian Point of View

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Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS), Pehowa (Kurukshetra)-136128 (HARYANA)
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Preface

The Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS) Pehowa (Kurukshetra) celebrates World Philosophy Day every year via events or publication etc. This time we invited original, scholarly, and unpublished short articles/ideas from research scholars, teachers and academicians on the given sub-themes like Nature of Philosophy, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic, Aesthetics, Social Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Environmental Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Indian Psychology, Dalit Studies, Women Studies, Philosophical Counseling, Yoga and Mental Health, Philosophical Systems and Research Methods etc. We received several entries related to this call for paper. In this collection we are going to publish some selected entries.

My sincere thanks are to all those well-wishers who directly and indirectly help us in our initiatives. I would like to thank the extremely helpful crew of Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS) and the members of Milestone Education Society (Regd.) Pehowa (Kurukshetra) for their valuable suggestions and positive assistance towards CPPIS works.

Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal

30th November, 2020
Table of Contents:

1. Three Practical Exercises from Indian Philosophy for a “better life”: Charu Thapliyal
2. Identity Crisis through the Concept of Kaivalya: Kalyani Dash
3. The Concept of Non-Violence in Jaina Philosophy: Krishna Paswan
4. Basic Treatises on the Theory of Sphota : Maheshwar Mishra
5. *Ekānta to Kaivlya*: An Advaita Vedantic Approach towards Liberation: Sheel Kamal Chaurasia
6. Philosophy Through Sci-fi: Netflix’s The 100 As A Thought Experiment On God: Sugandhaa Pandey
7. Contributors
1. Three Practical Exercises from Indian Philosophy for a “better life”

Charu Thapliyal

The idea of a ‘good life’ is one which philosophers have been chasing for centuries. It seems a utopia in the modern world where every year brings with it a new natural catastrophe, a global financial upheaval, news of terrorism, global warming or some other event which causes us to think whether such a ‘good life’ is even possible in this day and age. It makes me wonder whether the idea of a ‘good life’ should be replaced by the idea of a ‘better life’, one that is better tomorrow than the day that went by. In seeking such a better life rather than the idealistic ‘good life’ one might be better able to look realistically at, adapt with and overcome any unprecedented challenges thrown their way.

The year 2020 is going down forever in human history as one that made us rethink about the human condition. For a philosopher it seemed like this was the year we had been preparing for academically all these years. Questions about life, death, equality, morality, distribution of goods, ethics, physical and mental health etc. crossed every single person’s mind during lockdown. Days of solitude gave us ample time to think about how we can make our situation better as we took each day at a time. We all looked inside to seek a ‘better life’ once the lockdown would be over.

People often ask me what drew me to philosophy in the first place and my answer is that at a certain point in life like everyone else I had questions which my parents or teachers did not have answers to. What is life? What is death? How should one live? What happens after death? Why were people treated unequally if they were created equal? etc. and philosophy texts gave me hope that an answer existed out there somewhere if only I could connect with another like-minded thinker who pondered on it.

Philosophy has the notorious reputation of hiding its gems of wisdom underneath layers of obscure texts, ideas, words and semantics. The ability to give tools and methodologies to combat situations which cause a disruption in our daily life and it is the job of the philosopher to extract them from sometimes obscure texts. The inaccessibility of the text is partly due to the fact that the major philosophical texts which are popular now were written in ancient Greek, ancient Chinese or Sanskrit and are inaccessible to the public.
mind because of the archaic language as well as the cultural and anachronistic dissonance. BUT, this is where Practical Philosophy comes in and where professionals like me who have spent years studying the ins and outs of the discipline can help.

Everyone does philosophy whether they know that is what they are doing or not. A child may ask, ‘what happened to grandma, she was really sick and we never get to see her anymore’, to which a parent might reply ‘she became a star’. Such a response while sufficient at a certain age might start to seem unsatisfactory to the child after one point in her life as she begins look deeper into and question grandma’s disappearance. Ethics, metaphysics, morality, art, value, gender, politics, ontology, epistemology are there in the public mind even if an understanding of these discussions under specific terms is not there. What Socrates did in the aghora or the marketplace is what everyone did around the dinner table this lockdown albeit with lesser technical terms and academic texts by their side.

I too had my thoughts drawn toward finding tools and techniques to live a better life this lockdown. Taking a look at the current human condition urged me to find solutions to our feelings of loneliness, fear, and hopelessness in Indian Philosophy which can be thought of as practical solutions to a ‘better life’ in the face of despair and doubt.

**Dhyan – Meditation**

Indian Philosophy is the birth place of treatises on dhyan. Most major Indian Philosophical traditions encourage meditation in some form. Including meditation as a tool for a better life seemed only right since the mind is a very powerful tool and is constantly at work it’s very important to give it rest. As long as there is a mind it will be a monkey jumping from branch to branch as it jumps from thought to thought, and till that day meditation will be useful for the seeker of mental peace. A quick search on the internet will give numerous links to studies, popular articles, books, courses and academies which promote meditation as a time-tested and approved tool to help set motivation and intention for the day, reduce anxiety, stay present in the now along with numerous physical as well as mental benefits.

In the Indian Philosophical Tradition Upanishadic texts, Buddhist texts and Jain texts all point out to meditation as a means of going within. The most popular philosophical tradition which seems to have put the word meditation on the world map is the Yoga
tradition. With Dhyan as the seventh anga of the ashtanga marg popular usage of the term has caught the public eye. There are as many ways of practising meditation as there are traditions which advocate it. It seems imperative in times of mental or physical disruption as was the case with the COVID-19 lockdown that every person involve meditation in their daily routine to be better able to handle these disruptions in a calmer manner.

**Swadhaya – Study of the Self through Reading Books**

*Swadhyay* in simplistic terms means studying the self through reading books. It is traditionally suggested to read spiritual or philosophical literature in the philosophical traditions but this can be extended to reading and learning from fiction as well. Reading helps us empathize with the struggles, triumphs and emotions of the 'other' and that in turn opens our mind to new vistas of experiencing similar situation.

In Indian Philosophy this idea of Swadhyay is most prominently seen in Jain Philosophy as well as Vedic texts. The idea that literature can make us emotionally and physically strong in western philosophy goes back to Plato who said that the muses gave us the arts not for "mindless pleasure" but "as an aid to bringing our soul-circuit, when it has got out of tune, into order and harmony with itself".

During COVID-19 the first thing we bonded over as a nation was Ramayana, Mahabharata? Although we as a nation experienced them in the form of a television series but they were first and foremost books! Setting aside a certain time of the day to peruse literature, ranging from fiction to non-fiction, biographies to memoirs, philosophical or religious literature can help one to learn from the experiences shared through the eyes of the narrator in that book.

**Sajjan Sangayta - bonding with like-minded people.**

Buddhist Philosophy has given us the word ‘sangha’ which is used in common language today as a community. If there as anything that COVID-19 taught us it was that one cannot overemphasize the importance of community especially in troubling times. The advent of the internet meant that fortunately we were not as alone as people who had been inflicted with pandemics in the centuries before us. It gave us a means to create writing groups, meditation groups, reading groups, news groups, positivity groups, yoga groups and all kinds of support systems which one needed during the lockdown.
The word sajjan translates to a gentleman or one possessing the gentlemanly qualities. Through the use of sajjan sangatya a sangha of such sajjan can be formed as a support group to share experiences with and learn from in times where solitary contemplation or meditation and books don’t help anymore.

The very fact that these solutions may look simple and familiar is because philosophy is already in our everyday parlance even if we are aware of it or not. It is the task of public philosophers now to bring these concepts out of obscurity and into the public eye.

**SOURCES:**

- Ran Lahav, *Stepping out of Plato’s Cave* (USA, Loyev Books, 2016), Kindle Edition
Identity Crisis through the Concept of Kaivalya
Kalyani Dash

Abstract:
A person identifies himself with a set of characteristics or habits. These characteristics however, are not the true form of the Soul or Puruṣa according to the Sāṁkhya-Yoga schools. The characteristics one identifies himself with is nothing but saṁskāra or “impressions” left by one’s own actions or others’ actions. The formations of saṁskāras depends on how the citta fluctuates. These fluctuations or modifications of citta are called vṛttis. The vṛttis can leave bad impressions or good impressions. It depends on which impression prevails that determines the character of a person. However, too much saṁskāras on one’s citta hinders the ability of rational judgment and clouds the perception of an individual in such a way that their true identity remains an unknowable phenomena to them. Isolation from societal and material influences becomes important in order to know the true form of one’s soul and to pursue one’s real identity.

Introduction:
The fluctuating of citta and modifying itself into various vṛttis is nothing evil or bad. It is normal for ordinary human beings as this is how Prakṛti works. Citta is also constituted of the three guṇas – sattva, rajas and tamas, with sattva as the dominating trait. The problem arises when the citta gets tangled up in lots of saṁskāras. Each incident, accident and experience leaves its mark on us. Whether it’s something we did, or someone else did to us, there is always an impression left behind on our minds. However, when too many impressions get chaotic, and the mind becomes unable to rationally sort it out, it brings sufferings to us.
Consider the following scenario: a boy, around ten years old, whose academic intelligence is below average, is constantly subjected to negative criticisms from his surroundings. His parents are disappointed with him. His teachers claim that he has no future and that he should stop making his parents suffer. His friends see him as an idiot. What can we assume about the impact of these criticisms on that boy? What type of
personality will that boy develop? What role does this toxic atmosphere play in shaping the boy’s identity? Let’s take the mind of this boy to be the surface of a lake, the bottom of the lake being the boy’s true identity, the negative criticisms as the stones and pebbles thrown at the lake and the ripples created on the surface of the lake because of the pebbles, as the reactions of the boy. It is possible to look at the bottom of the lake only when the lake is calm. When pebbles are thrown into the lake, it creates ripples on the surface which ultimately dies down but what remains is the impression of it. [1] The ridiculing may stop after a point but what will affect the boy is the impressions that are left by those insults.

Naturally, the boy’s citta will be disturbed by the constant criticisms and he would feel lost. On one hand he would fight the outer criticisms, and on the other hand, he would try to convince himself that the claims being made about him are false. But, why are those criticisms affecting him in the first place? It is because the citta gets manipulated by outer influences and modifies itself into vṛttis. This is the work of vṛttis that convince the citta to identify itself with characterizations that the vṛttis project.

**The Consequences:**

If the negative impressions prevail, it results in the domination of tamas on the citta and there will be two kinds of consequences – repulsion and to surrender. When a mind gets influenced by too much negative impressions, one way it finds to overcome its sufferings is through reacting in the opposite manner of whatever criticism is thrown at him. For instance, the boy in the previous example, if were told to study properly because he is stupid, would refuse to study in order to mark its identity distinct from what others think of him. Of course this course of action will only concretize others’ view of him – that he is indeed stupid. But, the boy will feel a false sense of accomplishment because he thinks he is refuting others in his own way. This will further damage his citta because, due to his rebellious actions, he would become even more prominent target of negative criticisms.

Second consequence will be, to surrender to the negative influences. To surrender means, one will ‘numb’ himself in order to protect himself from further mental harm. The boy would simply stop reacting to peoples’ negative comments about him. This course of action is completely different from isolating oneself from others’ influences. The boy’s action here doesn’t mean he will be unaffected by the negativities; it simply means he
would suffer in silence. He will accept, rather, will be convinced that he is indeed an idiot and that, there is no future for him. This kind of thinking seriously distorts one’s sense of identity as it causes self-doubt, self-loathing and low self-esteem, which eventually results in depression and identity crisis on a very personal level. Meaning, one will struggle to find their grounding and discover their true potential as their mind would be scattered. [2]

In Swami Vivekananda’s commentary of Patanjali Yoga Sūtras, it is clearly mentioned:

“Duḥkhadaurmanasyāṅgamejayatvaśvāsapraśvāsā vikṣepasahabhuvah”

Which means, when the citta is scattered, it results is duḥkha (suffering), daumanasya (depression), angamejayatva (losing control over limbs and other body parts) and śvāsapraśvāsā (difficulty in breathing).

One way to calm the citta lies in how we behave towards other people. Feelings of maitrī (friendship), karuṇā (compassion) and muditā (joy) helps in neutralizing the ill effects of the negative impressions on the mind. [3] However, these measures can only be taken from an external agent. For example, I can try to heal the boy from the previous example by means of friendship, compassion and joy. By this action, there will be new vṛttis that will leave a positive impression. But, efforts must be made from an individual perspective in pursuit of one’s true identity.

Ahaṁkāra and Asmitā:

On an individual level one is required to shift his sense of “I” from ahaṁkāra to asmitā. Ahaṁkāra refers to the egoism that is qualified with the three guṇas and manifests in various vṛttis. When I say “I am powerful”, it’s my ahaṁkāra that gets attached with the quality of being powerful. Ahaṁkāra always comes with some sort of qualities or attributes attached to itself. “I am sad” is also the identification of ahaṁkāra. The fact that I identify myself a woman is also my ahaṁkāra. Asmitā (also known as unqualified ego), on the other hand, is the pure form of individualization. It is just the “I-ness”. Asmitā is only “I exist”. What am I? Who am I? Where do I belong? These are the characterizations of ahaṁkāra. Asmitā is not concerned with what I like or dislike. It’s simply the realization of “I” as an independent entity that is devoid of any qualities or attributes.
According to Yoga, the asmitā sense of self comes as a result of vairāgya or “non-attachment” from the material temptations. However, realization of asmitā is not the ultimate goal of a human being. The ultimate goal is kaivalya – the realization that the individual minds we see around us are nothing but the results of identification with asmitā. The Puruṣa is kevala or the “only” reality and pure consciousness. Asmitā is indeed unqualified ego, but it is still a material experience. In the realization of “I-ness”, there is still the presence of “I” which will eventually manifest itself in “I am” and various other vṛttis. Because we are still trapped in the material characterization of “I”, we still see actions as “evil”, “good” and “mixed”. [4] This is because, we act with a particular intention. Good karmas are done with good intentions and bad karmas with bad intentions. When we go beyond the “I”, and realize this truth my meditation, it results in anāśaya or lack of intentions. When there is no intention behind an act, it cannot bear any results. When there are no results, the tendencies to work with certain expectations and the feelings of happiness or sorrow born out of it cease to exist.

It is then that the citta starts inclining towards kaivalya. As a result, the vision gets clear, the veil drops from our eyes and we see things the way they are. For the one who perceives everything completely and clearly as they are, the guṇas stop the series of transformations among themselves. The cessation of transformation of the three guṇas among themselves becomes the cause of qualities that lack intentions or motives. The outcomes of these qualities which have zero intentions associated with them is known as the state of kaivalya [5] – complete isolation and detachment from worldly influences that trick the citta into identifying itself as something which it is not.

**Conclusion:**

The concept of kaivalya is a crucial need of the present time. With little to no exposure to spirituality, people of the present having no means of being inward, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem are gaining the status of “normal” cases around the world. Of course it is not right to blame or ridicule the people who are actually suffering from these mental diseases, but at the same time, normalizing the disease itself creates a comfort of “it is not a big deal”. In reality, having your mind turn against you is the greatest tragedy that can happen to you. Talks and ideas of “taking a break” from the mundane routine and “going for a vacation” to avoid the stress of daily life is nothing but a desperate attempt to escape
from mental distress. These actions of course, do not hold any moral value, so they can’t be subjected to being right or wrong. It is just not sufficient.

Mental peace is the first step to the ability of making rational decisions. One’s sense of identity is linked with what decisions he makes. If the citta is in scatters, it cannot discern properly between right and wrong. Human beings need to look inward, without getting influenced by others’ opinions, to truly know who they are. If we don’t want to end up like the boy from the previous example, or if we want to get out of the pit that the boy has fallen into, it is important that we calm the surface of the lake of our self by being in ekānta, keep our cittas ekāgra (collected and concentrated) and start guiding our cittas towards kaivalya.

Notes and Bibliography:

1. This particular example was explained by Swami Vivekananda.
2. The thirtieth sūtra from “Samādhi Pāda” of Patanjali Yoga Sūtra states: “Vyādhisatyānasamśayapramādālasyaāviratibhrāntidarśanālabdhabhūmikatvān nav asthitatvāṁ cittavikṣepāṁ antarāyāḥ” It means, vyādhi (illness), satyāna (act of delaying), samśaya (doubt), pramāda (negligence), ālasya (laziness), avirati (inability to not cling to sensory temptations), bhrānti darśana (hallucination), albdha bhūmikatva (inability to gain grounding) and anavasthitatva (unsteadiness) are the antarāyāḥ or “obstacles” that are responsible for cittavikṣepa (scattering of mind).
3. The thirty-third sūtra from “Samādhi Pāda” of Patanjali Yoga Sūtra states: “Maitrīkaruṇāmuditopekṣāṇāṁ sukhaduḥkhaṁyāpūpyaviṣayāṇāṁ bhāvanātaḥcīprasādanam”
4. Seventh sūtra of “Kaivalya Pāda” from Patanjali Yoga Sūtra: “Karmaśukklākrṣṇaṁ yoginah trividhāṁ itareśāṁ” For a yogī, karma are not asukla (not bright) or akrṣna (not dark). But for ordinary human beings, actions are either dark, bright or gray.
5. Thirty-third *sūtra* of “Kaivalya Pāda” from *Patanjali Yoga Sūtra*:

“*Puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpapraṭisṭhā vā citiṣhaktih iti*”
The Concept of Non-Violence in Jaina Philosophy

Krishna Paswan

Abstract

Non-violence (ahiṃsā) has been considered as the highest virtue and recommended by the Indian teachers of morality and religion. The Gītā, Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, and Hindu, Islam, Christian traditions as well as Jainism and Buddhist traditions have formulated various theoretical bases for its practice. The concept of non-violence is not a new concept. In Vedic ritual or in Kurukṣetra war we saw that violence is also an unavoidable part of this sanction. However, it is non-violence and not violence which has been considered as an ideal trait. Ahiṃsā is considered as an essential dharma. Nevertheless, ahiṃsā, in its more unmixed form is found in other literatures of Indian tradition and culture. The richness of Indian culture is chiefly the result of its three ancient systems of religion and philosophy, namely, the Vedas, the Jaina and the Buddhist. Author tries to explore the very notion of non-violence in Jaina philosophy and religion.

The word ‘Jainism’ is derived from ‘Jina’ which means ‘conqueror’, one who has conquered his passions and desires. The Jaina believes in 24Tīrthaṅkaras. According to Jaina tradition Rṣabhadeva was the first and Mahāvīra was the last prophet, was a contemporary of Buddha. He was born in 599 B. C. and died in 527 B. C. “Mahāvīra, the last prophet, cannot be regarded as the founder of Jainism, because even before him, Jaina teachings were existent. But Mahāvīra gave a new orientation to that faith and for all practical purposes, modern Jainism may be rightly regarded as a result of his teachings. His predecessor, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkaras, Pārshanātha is also a historical personage who lived in the eighth or ninth century B. C.”

The word ahiṃsā has been translated into English by various writers as non-killing, non-injury, non-hatred, harmlessness, inoffensiveness, non-cruelty, non-
aggression, tenderness, innocence, good will and love. In Indian context also, “ahiṁsā” has been used in many different senses. A few samples may be noted. In Jainism for instance, ahiṁsā is frequently used as a technical term, hence there is hardly sufficient reason to refer to a number of non-technical affiliated terms. Jainism assigns the greatest importance to the principle of ahiṁsā in life. The doctrine of ahiṁsā is not explained in other religion as systematically and comprehensively as in Jainism.

Although is ahiṁsā referred to in almost all the religions of the world, we find unchallenged acceptance of ahiṁsā only in Jainism. In fact ahiṁsā forms the bedrock of the entire system of Jaina philosophy. It is the supreme ethical principal (parama dharma) and the foremost virtue. The whole matrix of Jaina conduct is woven around this noble principle. It is the basis of existence of life as well as sanity on this earth.

The doctrine of ahiṁsā, is central to Jainism, no religion has laid greater emphasis on it than this creed. The most important contribution of Jainism in the socio-cultural field is the doctrine of ahiṁsā. Jainism preached the doctrine of ahiṁsā in a more extreme from than Buddhism, but it produced no emasculating effects upon its followers.

According to Jainism, the highest good of the society is the highest good of individual. It stands for absolute and eternal happiness for all living beings. Jainism interprets non-violence in an extremely comprehensive sense. It attributes soul to all sentient creatures. It holds that plants, air, water and minerals, too have soul. Jainism believes that, non-violence means abstaining from all thought, speech and action that can provoke discord and conflict. Ahiṁsā is the principal religious idea of Jainism. The ethics of this religion is based on the doctrine of non-violence. Ahiṁsā in Jainism is a fundamental principle forming the cornerstone of its ethics and doctrine. The term ‘ahiṁsā’ means non-violence, non-injury, or absence of desire to harm any life forms. The Jaina concept of ahiṁsā is quite different from the concept of non-violence found in other philosophies. In other religious traditions violence is usually associated with causing harm to others. On the other hand, in Jainism violence refers primarily to injuring one’s own self-behaviour which inhibits the souls own ability to attain mokṣa or liberation. At the same time it also means violence to others because it is this tendency to harm others that ultimately harms own soul. Furthermore, the Jaina have extended the
concept of *ahiṁsā* not only to human but also animals, plants, micro-organisms and all beings having live or live potential. All life is sacred and everyone has a right to live fearlessly to its maximum potential. The living beings do not have any fear from those who have taken the vow of *ahiṁsā*. According to Jainism, protection of life, also known as *abhayadānam* is the supreme charity that a person can make.

The fundamental creed of Jainism is non-violence as the highest ethical virtue. In order to understand this fully, it is necessary to take note of the metaphysical aspect of the system. According to Jainism the universe consist of two ultimate realities, namely the living and the non-living. Each living organism, of which there exists an infinite number in the universe, possesses a soul which is eternal and retains its individuality forever.

As a practical religion Jainism has laid stress on the observance of five main and seven supplementary vows by its followers in all stages of life. The five vows of Jainas correspond to the five restraints (*yama*) of the Yoga system. These vows have broadly been divided into two groups: some vows are meant for the lay-man or householders called small vows or *aṇuvrata*, the others, for the ascetics or the homeless mendicants called great vows or *mahāvrata*. In another words there are two classes: house holders and monks. “House-holder should observe small vows (*aṇuvrata*) and monks should observe great vows (*mahāvrata*). Great vows are total abstention from sins.”

“A lay-man is required to observe twelve vows, namely, five *aṇuvrata*, three *guṇavrata* and four *śikṣāvrata*. Of them the *aṇuvratas*, are the fundamental or the primary vows, while the *guṇavratas* and *śikṣāvrata* are the supplementary to the *aṇuvratas*;” The five vows are non-injury (*ahiṁsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), sex-restraint (*brahmachārya*) and non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts (*aparigraha*).

The vows of *ahiṁsā* and it has been convincingly shown that the remaining four main vows, abstention from falsehood, abstention from stealing, abstention from unchastely and abstention from worldly attachment, are nothing but the details of the vows of *ahiṁsā* and seven *śilavrata*, i.e., supplementary vows consisting of three *guṇavratas* i.e., multiplicative vows and four *śikṣā-vrata* i.e., disciplinary vows are more manifestations of the vows of *ahiṁsā* in one form or another. Further, with a view of
giving strength to the practice of the vow of *ahiṁsā*, the followers are recommended: (i) to cultivate ten kinds of dharma i.e., noble virtues, (ii) to contemplate on the twelve kinds of *anupeksā*, i.e., meditations, (iii) to attempt of conquering twenty two kinds of *parishahas* i.e., sufferings and (iv) to observe the six kinds of *bahyatapa* i.e., external austerities and the six kinds of *abhyantara tapa* i.e., internal austerities. Furthermore, along with making the vow of *ahiṁsā* very comprehensive and all inclusive in character and scope, extreme carefulness in the actual practice of *ahiṁsā* has also been strongly advocated and with this end in view the Jaina scriptures have particularly laid down the five kinds of *atichara* i.e., transgressions, of each of the twelve vows and have specifically enjoined upon the house-holders to avoid these *aticharas* so as to make the practice of *ahiṁsā* as faultless as possible. Now, it is not possible for the house-holders to observe these vows completely or perfectly. A Jaina layman, on account of his household and occupational compulsions, is unable to adhere to the five major vows of ascetics. He observes *aṇuvratas* or minor vows which although are similar to the major vows of the ascetics are observed with a lesser severity. It is difficult to avoid some violence by the lay person to a single sensed immobile being in the process of occupation, cooking, self-defence etc. That is why vows not to kill without a necessary purpose and determined intention, a moving sentient being, when it is innocent. Tying up injury, mutilating, burdening with heavy load and depriving from food and drinks any animals or human being with mind polluted by anger and other passions are the five *aticāra* or transgressions of the vow of *ahiṁsā*. However, it is to be understood that ultimately, there is limited spiritual progress and not emancipation unless the major vows are adhered to.

“Ahiṁsā as an *aṇuvrata* means abstention from gross violence. Violence or *hiṁsā* means any injury committed through speech or body or mind to any being or to cause others to commit such injuries, or to approve of the commitment of such injuries by others. Non-violence to any animal- higher or lower- is always commendable. But as total non-violence is not possible for the house holders, they are all advised to refrain from gross violence or *sthūlahiṁsā*, which means taking the life of higher animals or committing any injury to them, or causing other to do so or to approve of such injuries committed by others. This is to be distinguished from *sūkṣma hiṁsā* or subtle violence-
which means taking the life of lower animals also or committing any injury to them, or to cause others to do so, or do approve of such acts. By ‘higher animals’ the Jaina understand being endowed with more than one sense-organ. A layman is for bidden to take the life of such beings or to commit any injury to them. Accordingly, meat eating is strictly prohibited, as it involves the killing of higher animals.”

It is held that each of these vows is to be observed with great purity, care and zeal. House-holders should not kill animals. They should not tell agreeable lies under the influences of affections, infatuation and other emotions. They should not make use of others’ property without permission, even when it is deserted by the owner. They should not commit adultery. They should be chaste in their married life. They should put a voluntary limit upon their possessions. These are the five small vows or anuvratas.

On another side, ahiṁsā is formalized into Jaina doctrine as the major vows or mahāvrata of the ascetics. The ascetics are required to perform the five mahāvrata or great vows by complete abstention from five sins of violence, falsehood, stealing, copulation and possession, through the three-fold ways of action, commanding and consenting to, by the triple agency of the mind, body and speech. “Monks should not kill or injure any kind of life. They should not indulge in falsehood in thought, word and deed. They should not covet others’ possessions under any circumstances. They should completely extirpate their attachments to object of enjoyment. They should totally abstain from indulgence in sex-thoughts, sex-words and sex-acts. They should not possess any property, and accept any gift except what is absolutely necessary for bare subsistence. They should observe the vows with the utmost rigor and vigilance.”

Jain monks or nuns must rank among the most ‘non-violent’ people in the world. A Jain ascetic in expected to uphold the vow of mahāvrata to the highest standard, even at the cost of his own life. The other four major vows - truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy - are in fact extension of the first vow of complete non-violence. According to Amṛtacandra Sūri:

“All sins like falsehood, theft, attachment and immorality are forms of violence, which destroy the purity of the soul. They have been separately enumerated only to facilitate their understanding.” (Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya 4.42)
Ahimsa is the most important of all the vows. By it, the killings of all kinds of animals- mobile and immobile, gross and subtle and giving pain to them are totally prohibited for the ascetics. In reality, the Jainas say that passion is the real cause of sin and that even without killing an animal or giving pains to it, one may accumulate sin by mere possessing a passionate attitude.

In order that this vow is properly observed a monk is required to be cautious in his movement, speech and thought and in handling things, food and drink. As a part of this vow, a Jaina ascetic is to follow the vow of rātri-bhajana-viramaṇa or abstinence from taking food at night. It is argued that there are innumerable small creatures that are invisible at night even when there is light and that such creatures may be killed in the act of cooking and taking food, which is an act of violence.

For the maintenance of these mahāvrata, equanimity of the mind is regarded as highly essential. And as an aid to equanimity, the Jain ascetics are to cultivate maitrī or friendship for all living beings, pramoda or appreciation for the superiors, karunā or compassion for the afflicted and madhyastha or indifference for the unruly.

The practices of ahimsa are not possible without the cultivation of certain other allied virtues cultivated to remove or at least reduce the causes of strife and consequent destruction. Malevolent speech, greed, for property and undesirable sex relations are the most outstanding and patent causes of enmity amongst men. Hence, “the spirit of ahimsa has to be reinforced by sincerity, charity and truthfulness in speech (Satya), non-stealing (Achaurya), chastity (Brahmacharya) and limitations of one’s worldly belonging strictly in accidence with one’s own essential requirements (Apigraha). These four along with ahimsa constitute the vows of Jaina layman as well as Jaina monk- for the monk in their relaxed or modified form so as to make them consistent with his other duties.”

While Jainism enjoins observance of total non-violence by the ascetics, it is often argued that the man is constantly obliged to engage in destructive activities of eating, drinking, breathing and surviving in order to support his body. According to Jainism, life is omnipresent with infinite beings including micro-organisms pervading each and every part of universe. Hence, it may still be possible to avoid killing of gross animals, but it is impossible to avoid killing of subtle micro-organisms in air and water, plant life and
various types of insects that may be crushed by walking. It would thus appear that the continual livelihood of destroying living organisms would create an inexcusable burden on the ascetics trying to follow the Jaina path of total renunciation and non-violence.

At this juncture, it will be appropriate to see how Jainism has incorporated the doctrine of *ahiṁsā* into philosophy and made a unique gift to the world. The philosophical concept of *anekāntavāda* is closely associated to the concept of *ahiṁsā*. *Anekāntavāda* constitutes the philosophical idea of Jainism which means the reality should be looked at from many points of view. Peace and tolerance are, thus, inherent in Jainism. Under such circumstances, Mahāvīra’s teachings, and in particular two of its core elements, the principle of *ahiṁsā* and philosophy of *anekānta*, appear to have universal relevance as well as great practical significance. *Anekāntavāda* or *Syādvāda* also called *Saptabhāṅgē-naya* is the theory of relativity of knowledge. Reality has infinite aspects. They are all relative and no one can claim that he knows all the aspects. One can know only some of these aspects, the partial truth. The theory of *Syādvāda* made people aware that their judgments are relative, conditional and limited. This theory allows others right to hold a different view then our own. The Jainas narrate the old story of the six blind men and the elephant. The blind who touched the different parts of the elephant tries to describe the elephant on the basis of the part touched by each one of them. Thus the man who caught hold of the ear said that elephant was like a country-made fan; the person touched the leg felt that the elephant was like a pillar; one who touched the tail said, it was like a rope; the person who touched the side and said, the elephant was like wall, so and so forth. Thus, the man who judges anything without considering different aspect of reality can claim only partial truth. This view makes Jainism open minded in its attitude towards other faiths, philosophies and living beings. To me, this is the highest form of *ahiṁsā*.

While the Jaina ascetics observe non-violence, it is not possible to avoid violence completely. Violence is described as a fact of life in some *Dharmaśāstras*. There is no being in the world who is purely non-violent. “The god Prajāpati created all creatures in two categories: some are violent (*hiṁsra*) others, non-violent (*ahiṁsra*); some are gentle (*mṛdu*), others cruel (*krūra*); some follow dharma and other *adharma*; some follow truth (*ṛta*), others falsehood (*anvta*).”

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Absolute abstention from injury to all forms of life is not possible. So Jainism distinguishes various kinds of injury according to the mental attitude of the person committing it; for it is the intention that causes sin. It is conceded that a good deal of injury to life is involved even in the daily duties of an ordinary man, such as walking, cooking, washing and similar pursuits. The various operations of agriculture and industry also cause the destruction of life. The use of violence is not forbidden and in fact, justified in the case of the householder leading a worldly life in the defence of one’s life honour or country.

References:

2. *Indian Philosophy*, p 253
4. Ibid. p 105-106
5. Ibid. p 253
6. Ibid. p 113
7. *Jaina Tradition in Indian Thought*, p 334
8. *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, p 50

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4.

Basic Treatises on the Theory of Sphota

Maheshwar Mishra

The theory of sphota is propounded chiefly in the grammatical school of Indian philosophy. About Sphota is technically emerged from the root 'sphut' which reveals the meaning to open or unfold is also interpreted as developed by itself.¹

The origin of the concept of Sphota is attributed to Sphotayana Rishi who is referred by the great grammarian Panini.² Nagesh Bhatta also refers his name in his treatise 'Sphotavada'.³

The great grammarian Bhartrihari provided the basic insights the Sphota theory who interpreted Sphota as 'real-word' or 'logos' which is the 'Bearer of meaning'. Mandan Mishra has systematized Bhartrihari's thinking in his Tratise 'Sphotasiddhi'. Mandan made an important contribution in his statement that the Sphota is an empirical entity that can be directly perceived by the sense organs. The Sphotasiddhi of Mandan Mishra was edited and translated by K.A Subramania Iyer. It is almost obvious that the basic treatises on the theory of Sphota were introduced after Bhartrihari. The 'Sphotasiddhi' is treated to be the most important treatise on the theory of Sphota. A commentary on Sphotasiddhi was written by (Rishiputra) Paramesvara II who flourished in early 15th century. His commentary was presented by K.A Subramania Iyer which is known as Gopalika. It provides more details on the basic treatise. The next treatise on the theory of Sphota is 'Sphotatattvanirupana' of Shesha Krishna who belonged to a celebrated family of grammarians in Banaras. He flourished later half of the 16th century. His work is small consisting of only nineteen stanzas with the authors own commentary. Its aim is to present the doctrine in its classical form.

The 'Sphotasiddhi' of Bharata Mishra is an important treatise on theory of Sphota which emerge in later half of the 17th century. Bharata Mishra makes a clear-cut statement (not found in Bharatrhari or Mandana) that it is the sounds (Dhvani) and not the phonemes (Varna) (though he does not say how he differentiates the two) that manifest the Sphota. His most original contributions are in reconciling the theories of Sphota as universal (Jati) and of Sphota as individual (Vyakti), and of Sphota as inner mental word (Antahsabda).
The universal theory takes division to be real and belonging to the individuals, the individual theory regards it as superimposed, really belonging to the manifesters. The influence of Mandan Mishra is almost evident not the title of the work but also in many arguments. The originality of the writer can be deducted in the methodology. The work is divided into three sections; perception, meaning and Vedic authority. There is another work the theory of Sphota known as Sphotasiddhīṇayaavicāra by an unknown author. It presents arguments for and against Sphota with a title originality. It is considerable influenced by the Sphotasiddhi Bharata Mishra in a limited sense. It has been edited by T. Ganapati Shastri. The object of the work is to establish the superphonemic language principle (Varnebhyo Vyatirekena Sbdatattvam) on the strength of direct perfection, presumption (Arthapatti, the difficulty of explaining otherwise how understand meanings) and scripture (agama).

Of all great grammarians of the 16th to 18th century perhaps none is more important for philosophical contribution than Nagesha Bhatta. His work on the theory of Sphota is Sphotavāda which is treated to be an independent work by him. According to him the founder of the theory was Sphotayana as mentioned by Panini. This tradition is unknown to Bhartrihari who considers Audumbaryana as the propounded of the theory. The summary of the book reveals that there are eight kinds of Sphota, Varna Sphotapada Sphota Vakya Sphota, Varna Jati Sphota, Pada Jati Sphota, Vakya Sphota Akhandapada Sphota and Akhandavakya Sphota. Of all the eight fold division it is Akhanda Sphota which alone represents Sphota. Bhattacharya, Gaurinath, A study in the dialectics of Sphota, journal of the departmental of letters, vol-XXIX, 1937, V.I, P.90.

The theory of Sphota propounded by the Indian grammarians has been subjected to criticism by various schools of thought, particularly the Naiyayikas and the Mimanasakas. The Naiyayikas do not recognize word as eternal. The gist of the argument lies in the fact that sound has both a beginning and an end. A sound is produced when there is contact between two things. Thus all words are produced by some kind of contact and have a beginning. Hence there are not eternal but transient.

The Mimansa theory of eternity of words does not mean that all words of or sentences are eternal. It means the eternity of letters which are indivisible and constitute the permanent basis of all words.
The Vedantins also reject the concept as an unnecessary hypothesis. The Sphotavada has been criticized by Kumarila Bhatta in his Slokavartika. But the concept of Sphota finds Support from Mandana Mishra in his Sphotasiddhi.

The great merit of Sphotavada lies in the fact. The minute discussion on the subject various philosophers on the different schools can open fresh avenues for thinking in the field of linguistic analysis even modern age.

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2. Astadhyayi 1.1.68
3. Sphotavada, 1
4. Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophy, Vol-V Harold G. Coward and K. Kunjunni Raja, Page-231
5. Ibid, Page-235
6. Trends of linguistic Analysis in Indian Philosophy, Prof-Hari Mohan Jha, Page-19
Ekānta to Kaivlya: An Advaita Vedantic Approach towards Liberation

Sheel Kamal Chaurasia

Abstract

According to the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta for liberation isolation is must. Isolation is to be observed at all the levels of our personality. Kaivalya or liberation is defined by eternal peace, bliss, satisfaction, perfection, complacency, immortality and cessation of all the bondages of birth, death, disease and old age. It is the highest achievement of human life or the summum-bonum therefore requires the highest kind of renunciation. All the Advaita Vedantic texts talk about refraining bad company, worldly people, worldly affairs or thoughts and mundane activities as a means to achieve it. Without isolation the seeker will never have the required peace of mind, serenity, calmness, composition, detachment and leisure to think over the nature of true Self which is beyond the senses, mind, time, space and causality. Worldly activities require a doer which is identified to the body, mind, senses, and relatives to interact with the world. However for liberation we have to drop all our identification of me and mine. The paper tries to study the importance of seclusion or isolation for Kaivalya, i.e. liberation.

Introduction

According to the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta the knowledge of identity of Brahman and Self is required for liberation. This can be done in three steps viz. listening to Upaniṣad from a scripturally versed and realized seer, reflection over these Vedantic thoughts and contemplation on the assimilated ideas of the Upaniṣad. However, these cannot be observed without isolation and hence isolation is very essential for liberation. Isolation has to be practiced at all the levels of our personality. This isolation is defined by the abandoning of the worldly thoughts and returning to the thought process that
focuses on the eternal Self. Mind is alone called to be the cause of bondage and liberation. If it is fickle on account of being attached to the worldly objects, it is cause of bondage. However, if the same mind on account of discrimination becomes detached then it becomes cause of liberation. Till the mind is identified to the world and involved in the worldly affairs it can never think about the nature of Self. Without detaching ourselves from the external world there can be no time or interest to think about the nature of Self. For liberation we have to draw the mind from the world and focus it on our true Self. This has been described as the ultimate goal of all the spiritual disciplines. Swāmī Vivekānanda also observes- each soul is potentially divine and the purpose of all the spiritual practices is to discover this divinity. The causes of worldly interactions are ignorance, desires and actions to fulfil them. This chain has to be broken at some point of time in human life otherwise we can never return back. It is strange that the worldly objects are momentary, perishable, full of miseries, and most of the time painful to achieve still almost all the world is after them. Due to ignorance one thinks that they can satisfy us. We erroneously think and harbour this belief that the worldly objects have happiness and they can one day satisfy us forever. Until this ignorance is not subsided the endeavours in the world for the objects of the world won’t end. Hence, seers like Śaṅkara advise us to ponder over the transient and painful nature of the world. It requires honest and relentless effort keeping subside everything unnecessary to achieve the highest spiritual end.

**Preliminary requirements of Isolation**

The first essential requirement on the path of liberation is discrimination. Discrimination is the quality of intellect to differentiate primarily between eternal and perishable objects. There is nothing in this world that remains forever. Even platinum, the least reactive metal, and diamond the hardest matter, destroys after a period of time. This discursive understanding could be extended to right and wrong, good and bad, healthy and non-healthy and legitimate and illegitimate things in the world. Seekers moving on the path of liberation must firmly try to discard the sensuous pleasures and worldly achievements because they are momentary and source of miseries. However, they should fulfil their duties and requirements while refraining from sensuous activity as far as possible. There
is a difference between keeping dispassion from inside still not renouncing anything in
the world and just madly attached to the world. It should be noted that renunciation is
prescribed for the monks and ascetics. The householders are told to perform their actions
in a detached spirit taking the results of actions as fruit from lord and not repenting or
joying for loss and gains. This detachment also helps a seeker of truth to control their
senses and mind. It helps them to bear the pains and pleasures of the world in a detached
spirit. Form meditation, isolation and higher practices, discrimination and detachment are
must. A person without these qualities would not have a feeling to give up. Technically
these preliminary requirements are called the Sādhana-Catuṣṭaya.

**Essence of Isolation**

Isolation in clear terms actually means to realize and get established in this truth that
there is nothing else than Self. Self is the only existence and everything that appears in
the world is manifestation of this self. Each and every being is expression of one Self.
The goal of life is to return back to this realization from the state of ignorance where the
person experience pain and pleasure out of identification with body and mind etc. The
*Bhagavadgītā* commands the seeker to stay in isolation and meditate on the nature of
changeless Self. This isolation is at all the levels of personality beginning from the body
that should avoid contact with others; mind has to refrain from other thought processes
and direct itself towards self. The senses are utilized only for the survival and spiritual
practices. No external enjoyments of any kind whatsoever are to be entertained as it
dissipates the spiritual powers and the power of mediation. The malefic effects of other
bad auras are disastrous at all the levels hence, it better to be Socrates dissatisfied that a
pig satisfied. Lord Rāma in the *Rāma-Gītā* in the famous *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, also has
told that the seeker of Self-realization should move into isolation, detach his senses from
objects of enjoyment, control his inner-conscience and should get established in his true
self without depending on anything from outside.
Consequence of Isolation

This isolation when strictly practised increases the concentration, focus, discrimination and reflection of the seeker. It helps him to meditate on the higher realities and discard the attraction to the momentary objects of the world. Since the seeker is not realized hence final clarity of detachment has still not there in the seeker. However, abandoning the company of people and external activities helps the seeker to maintain a level of detachment which is subservient to the practices of mediation, listening to the Upaniṣad, reflection on Vedanta and contemplation on the similar arguments. The significance of this is realization of the nature of Self which is beyond the time, space and causality. The subtlety and purity of the mind which is defined by it introvert nature, easily fixing in a desired field, understanding the depth of the Upaniṣadic thoughts and ecstasy are the mature outcomes of isolation. In worldly sense also if one wants to avoid unnecessary clash, confrontation, and betrayal, he is advised to avoid all sorts of wrong company and contacts.

Critical Remarks

Nowadays isolation is equated to mental disease, public phobia, lack of confidence, immaturity, and shyness etc. People who are not able to face the truth or public and are in some sense wrong in their mental structure and therefore they try to avoid crowd and stay alone. Life is meaningless without company of friends, colleagues, relatives and similar minded people. Then there are criminals, vulgar and lazy people who prefer isolation as it doesn’t disturb their malpractices and sinister designs. Then, staying alone is not an easy task especially for mentally weak and disturbed people. Prolong isolation may result in development of several mental diseases like public phobia, lack of maturity and understanding of public behaviour. There could be even suicidal tendencies and other anxieties if someone stays in isolation for longer periods of time.

However, these criticisms that have been levelled against the people who love isolation don’t apply on the research scientists, scholars, seekers and seers who always prefer isolation. Isolation and research only results in remarkable discoveries, inventions
and research outcomes. We all know whether it was Upaniṣad or our vast Sanskrit literature like the Mahābhārata etc. all were the results of isolation. Unless one has leisure, space and peace of mind to think, correlate and analyse their ideas and observations, how new discoveries or hidden facts could be unearthed. In the worldly sense also we definitely require isolation to carry on our researches both inside and outside. Without concentration, focus and contemplation these activities often become fruitless. In addition everyone doesn’t have the ability or will power to ignore the external distractions. Thus isolation and realization go hand in hand. Before isolation one must be ready with his preliminary requirements; and ones it is fit time to do so then they should detach one from all the external activities and pass on in seclusion.

Conclusion

Thus, from the above analysis I conclude that isolation is most essential step for the seekers of truth, researchers and aspirants who want to achieve some tangible and remarkable results. For the seeker of enlightenment it is must and should be observed till they get the final result. Isolation helps in self-realization and discovery of one’s hidden potentials. This isolation is mature result of preliminary requirement like the power of discrimination, detachment, self-control and burning desire for liberation. All our scriptures like the Bhagavadgītā, Upaniṣad and Rāmāyaṇa etc. prescribe isolation. Isolation should not be confused with mental sickness or public phobia. Great works and realizations are mature results of isolation. Isolation helps in concentration, reflection, contemplation and analysis of the ones thoughts towards a desired end. And therefore it is absolutely necessary for the seekers of truth to observe isolation at some part of their life when it is suitable for them.

Notes:

i. Brahmasindu Upaniṣad verse 2
ii. Bhaja-Govindam 28, 29
iii. Bhagavadgītā 5/22
iv. Ibid, ¾
v. *Vivekacūḍāmani* 18
vi. *Bhagavadgītā* 6/10
vii. *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa* 7/5/46
viii. *Bhagavadgītā* 2/59
ix. *Mahābhārata* was written at Badrinatha and the Upaniṣad were usually experienced and written in the forests.

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6. Philosophy Through Sci-fi: Netflix’s The 100 As A Thought Experiment On God
Sugandhaa Pandey

Abstract

When evaluating films from the perspective of philosophy (Christopher Falzon, Philosophy Through Film, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy), two approaches can be taken. Either a commentary from the perspective of aesthetics can be made with reflections on questions such as - Is film a form of art? On the other hand, the perspective of film as illustration of philosophical theories can be taken into account. I write this paper considering that ‘film is a form of art’ is a true statement and go on to illustrate how different philosophical theories and philosophical questions regarding God surface and/or are resolved in Netflix’s The 100, as its plot thickens. My approach assumes that science fiction, films, and philosophy are bedfellows to produce deliberations on existence of God and myriad cognate concepts like moksa, good and evil, faith versus belief, etc in reference with Indian philosophy.

Keywords: philosophy-film, God, science fiction, The 100.

There is a famous Hindi adage - “Sāhitya samāja kā darpana hai” i.e., literature is society’s mirror. Today, the forms in which literature exists has extended to cinematic productions of films, television and web series. Philosophy through films¹ (here, sci-fi) essentially seeks to investigate films as thought experiments where films are used as a medium of illustration for philosophical theories.

¹ The word ‘film’ is used here in the broadest sense to include cinema, tv series and web series.
Netflix’s science fiction series, The 100, is story of a hundred children who are sent back on Earth, hundred years post nuclear holocaust. Entire Earth was destroyed by an artificial intelligence, A.L.I.E. whose core command was to make life better for mankind. When A.L.I.E. understood that humans were headed down a path of self-destruction, she speeds up the destruction so that humans can start-over early. Since then, whatever of humanity that survived in the United Ark Federation is seen struggling to save themselves from complete extinction. While this scenario is a great way to evaluate Thomas Hobbes’ statement - “In a state of nature, Life is poor, solitary, nasty brutish, and short”, questions related to ethics of technology, mind-body dualism, and Śāntideva’s Utilitarianism\(^2\), the scope of this paper restricts itself to evaluating questions related to God.

**Thought Experiment On God**

We have allowed an anthropomorphic conception of God because, it’s easier to relate with an eternal being who looks like us and has all our positive attributes maximised in Him. Contrary to this belief, the conception of God in The 100 is that of a judge. He is a higher, alien life-form that evaluates the actions of humans by testing a representative of humanity, and passes His judgement with the consequences that bear upon the entire human race. In a way, this answers the main epistemological conundrum related to God in philosophy - Can God be known?, which gives way to two main queries -

1. Does God exist? Yes.
2. Then how does one account for free will of humans? God did not construct a deterministic universe for humans. Their actions are their own and they shall be judged for the choices they make.

This concept espoused in The 100 feels nearer to theology, its idea of doom’s day, heaven and hell. However, it does not really give us a proof for existence of God. The 100’s God isn’t the prime mover, the first cause, the necessary being, the absolute being,

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\(^2\) Śāntideva was an 8th century Indian philosopher. Eons before Jeremy Bentham, he articulated the following phrase - “stop all the present and future pain and suffering of all sentient beings, and bring about all present and future pleasure and happiness.” See Charles Goodman, Śāntideva, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016.
and the grand designer; rather He only facilitates transcendence. All the traditional arguments regarding existence of God fail because, The 100 does not actually begin at the beginning and practices Buddha’s Noble Silence\(^3\) on such topics. However, it coaxes its viewers to question - What is God like? The 100 depicts God as energy or, in simpler terms, a consciousness who reads your mind and takes the corporeal form of someone you love. It draws parallels with Śamkarāchārya’s conception of Brahman (sans māyā) which is both saguna and nirguna. It draws parallels with Rāmanujāchārya’s Viśistaādvaita Vedānta’s stages of liberation\(^4\) -

1. Salokya - The philosophy of qualified monism suggests that one is promoted to the planet of God after they attain liberation. A slightly different version is advanced by The 100 - one is not promoted to the planet of God rather, one becomes technologically advanced to figure out the scientific code of the destination.

2. Samipya - According to qualified monism, one comes closer to God in the next step as His associate. On the contrary, in The 100, this step occurs simultaneously with the previous step, and one comes closer to God but only as a test-taker.

3. Sayijya - Qualified monism suggests this as the last of the 5 stages of liberation. According to The 100, once the test is successfully passed, the test-taker becomes one with God. But, qualified monism suggest that the stages of sarupya (attaining four-handed form as God) and sarsti (attaining opulences like God) are prior to sayijya. The 100 doesn’t attach value to these steps as their God is essentially nirguna who chooses to become saguna.

Theories about God in The 100 lie in a middle path between Buddhism and Vedānta. The 100’s God, unlike Advait Vedanta’s brahman, doesn’t employ tools (māyā) to deceive humans about reality, and neither does it explicitly tells anything about reality (Buddha’s Silence). To pass the test that He gives one does not require a mere possession of the

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\(^3\) Noble Silence is a term appropriated to Gautama Buddha for his responses about the question of reality, especially the fourteen unanswerable questions (avyākṛta prasna).

\(^4\) Vedanta upholds the Jhāña Mārga to attain liberation which is also furthered by The 100. However, the kind of knowledge (jhāna) one needs to attain is different. Vedanta speaks of an all-round development, including moral development. On the other hand, The 100 speaks only of scientific advancements and questions related to moral development are considered only as a consequence of failing the final test.
jm āna of Vedānta or Buddhism, rather one’s actions ought to be guided by it. This where transcendence of The 100 finds semblance with the concept of moksa.

The discussion on God takes an interesting turn in The 100 as the artificial intelligence, A.L.I.E, creates a City of Light which is essentially a mind universe where there is no death, no misery, only happiness. This idea corresponds to the idea of heaven (svarga) as believed by Early Mimāmsakas. However, the background of A.L.I.E. convincing humankind to join her city is the prime example of a selfish god who will go to immoral extents to fulfil a single goal. Although this idea aligns with saguna brahman, it also reflects that such a god cannot be the God.

Further, The 100 conclusively proves that the trait of immortality alone doesn’t make one God. It has been illustrated with references to the Primes on Sanctum. The mind-drives\(^5\) that granted the Primes resurrection and immortality only prove that any sufficiently advanced technology can be mistaken for magic, here God.

**The Problem Of Good And Evil**

Perceived as a part of antagonistic duality, the problem of good and evil is a necessary implication of existence of God and free-will. The 100’s God solves the conundrum of the simultaneous existence of good and evil. Like a judge who sits in the court cannot do anything about the good or evil actions of criminal until a case is filed, similarly, The 100’s God cannot react to good or evil unless its the Judgement Day. However, this gives way to discussions about the problem of good and evil in another form. One person gets to take the test to decide the fate of entire humanity. Unlike the real world, democratic elections do not take place in The 100 to choose this person. In fact, ‘might is right’ is the rule that leads to two characters to finally take the test. This leads us to question - If that one person is evil then, do all the good people also suffer with death? Conversely, if a good person takes the test, do all the evil people get the benefit of it and transcend?

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\(^5\) Deep discussion on mind-drives is a part of discussion on mind-body dualism which is not the subject matter of this paper.
Further, what qualities entail the understanding of ‘good’ and ‘evil’? In the series, Clarke commits certain actions to save her Ark-family by committing genocide. It was essentially an act of utilitarianism - maximising pleasure (here, pleasure of life) for maximum number of people. She makes similar difficult choices time and again. But, when she finally takes the test she fails because her bad actions must bear consequences. In contrast, Raven Reyes, another character on the show knowingly sent four people to their death to stop a nuclear reactor from meltdown. An act committed owing to cowardice, as accepted by Raven herself, and following the same principles of utilitarianism, yet she is granted transcendence. So, the question that remains is: which quality(s) balances the scale of good and evil - the count of people dead, or the count of people saved, or the motives behind an action, or is there some other ‘X’ factor?

**Faith versus Belief**

Whenever a discussion pertaining to theology is ongoing, faith and belief cannot be ignored. In my opinion, Indian philosophical discussions are dominated by faith. All schools provide a logical set of arguments to either have or not have faith in myriad conceptions of God. Belief comes into play with respect to the eternality and truthfulness of the words of the Vedas.

The discussion on faith and belief in The 100 is not about a logical set of arguments. This mysterious relation between faith and belief is guided by personal bonds and relationships - the stronger the relationship between two people, the stronger is their faith and belief in each other. For example, Clarke Griffin had faith in the opinions of her tribe and ascribed no value to the what ‘others’ said because it is a matter of ‘who’ you want to believe.
Closing Thoughts

If philosophy was only about reaching the right answers and formulating logical theories, then The 100 would have failed the test. Fortunately, philosophy is also about asking the right questions and igniting curiosity. In this endeavour, The 100 has passed the test. The 100 stands true to the Socratic dictum - “an unexamined life is not worth living”. Science fiction and philosophy aren’t odd bedfellows. On the contrary, the former initiates amateurs in the field of latter by offering insightful, immersive, and imaginative examples that allow philosophy to enter daily life in a manner that extricates it from abstruse and stymied introductions.
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The Positive Philosophy

“If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it.” - Margaret Fuller

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