ARGUMENTATION IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

B.R. Shantha Kumari

Reader, Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University,

Pondicherry 605 014

ABSTRACT

Classical Indian philosophers declared that the supreme truth – Brahman - transcends the senses, and the mind, and that due to its ineffability it cannot be captured by language *(yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha)*. Having recognized these limitations, to liberate those in bondage, classical Indian philosophers yet involved themselves in philosophical debates (fully aware of the fact that philosophical pursuits which engage and nourish the intellect are insufficient to redeem the soul from the bondage of transmigratory existence caused by ignorance and ensure it salvation) through the commentarial tradition involving criticism of opposing philosophical views and defending one's own; thereby resulting in their inestimably valuable contribution to the classics of Indian philosophy and scriptural lore.

The aim of Indian philosophers is to lead steadily a human being - a rational animal, and a fallen angel - from where one is towards the transcendental reality, gradually divinizing one through what one can see and feel, and not prematurely impress upon one something indescribably awesome which one cannot grasp as the highest reality. Hence their emphasis is on praxis as delineated in scripture, right understanding, and knowledge before one undertakes the socio-ethico - philosophico-religious practices to translate a theoretical truth into a lived-experience. This is the aim, meaning, and methodology of all those aspects of Indian philosophy and its emphasis on scripture which has been condemned as dogmatic, irrational, superstitious, non-argumentative, tender-headed, poetic, unscientific, anti-scientific, etc., by the critics and modern intellectuals which draws attention for an early attitudinal rewarding revision and an authentic apodictic actualization of truth.

The paper is a detailed examination of the tools and techniques employed by the classical Indian philosophers showing how the adoption of the Nyāya-method of philosophizing has converted the classics of Indian philosophy which are soteriological in nature into texts which are rigorously philosophical; against the background of the western criticisms of Indian philosophy, and Matilal's reply to them in his *Perception* to highlight the argumentative nature of Indian philosophy.

ARGUMENTATION IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

To those favorably disposed towards Western philosophy and ignorant about Indian philosophy, the word "Indian philosophy" projects before the mind many misconceptions that it is dogmatic, other-worldly, world-negating, etc. According to Matilal, modern Western philosophers encounter the problem of opaqueness in the case of the speculative metaphysics of classical Indian philosophy, which they find difficult to penetrate because the sophisticated methodology wielded in the Indian classics has been discarded as unnecessary detail resulting in projecting metaphysical concepts (pertaining to the philosophical trend prevalent during ancient times) out of context. Since epistemology is the justification of metaphysics, which in turn determines ethics and axiology; it is necessary to understand and examine epistemology before studying metaphysics and axiology. For e.g., the Cārvāka declares that there is no soul, God, Heaven, etc., because these cannot be known through perception (*pratyakṣa*) the only means of knowledge *(pramāṇa)* admitted by the Cārvāka. Therefore, Cārvāka ethics is hedonistic emphasizing eat, drink, and be merry; no avoidance of hell, no attainment of heaven or liberation in its axiology as the goal of life. This is the implication of the Indian philosophical dictum "*mānādhī nā meyasiddhih*", i.e. the knowledge of an object (*prameya*) is determined by an appropriate means of its knowledge (*pramāṇa).*

One of the earliest critics of Indian philosophy is David Hume, who in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religions* after analyzing

different conceptions of God ridicules the 18th century Upaniṣadic Indian concept comparing Brahman/God with a spider which produces cobwebs out of itself, and questions how the Almighty God – the creator of this variegated universe can be equated with a silly spider. The next critic is John Locke, at the end of the 17th century who in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* humorously and sarcastically remarks that the primitive Indian philosophers thought that the earth was upheld by an elephant, which in turn was supported by a tortoise from below, etc. The most recent critic is Antony Flew (1974), who in his *An Introduction to Western Philosophy* professes that there is no rigorous philosophy east of the Suez Canal. The most widespread general misconception about Indian philosophy is that it is mystical and non-argumentative – to put in mild terms, it is poetic; and at worst, dogmatic.

To reply to the above criticisms and defend Indian philosophy, Matilal points out that nowhere in the classics of Indian philosophy can we find the out-of-context quoted elephant–tortoise story proffered as a philosophical explanation as the earth's support. Similarly, it was Locke's ignorance of Indian philosophy texts which were unavailable to him during his time translated in Western languages, e.g. Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāsya* (c.AD 400), Praśasthapāda's *Padārtha-dharmasangraha* (c. AD 500), etc., which conceptualize substance (*dravya*) as the substratum(*adhiṣṭhāna*) in which qualities(*guṇas*) inhere; that made him mock at and derive Indian philosophy. But Antony Flew's misunderstanding cannot be condoned because he did not face these disadvantages - due to technological and scientific progress, and research in philology and indology, Indian philosophy texts were available in Western languages.

Adopting a "diagonal approach" which is a synthesis of the history of philosophy and a critical examination of concepts, Matilal converts the history of philosophy considered as "a 'graveyard' of dead ideas" (in Jaakko Hintikka's terminology)[1] into an attractive flower-garden. It is commonly believed that the philosophy of the ancients and

the 20th century philosophers are entirely different, and that any attempt to interpret ancient philosophical concepts in modern Western philosophical terminology is useless and non-productive. Matilal acknowledges that although the aims of the ancient and modern philosophers are different yet there are several issues discussed in classical Indian philosophy which have contemporary relevance. Matilal, therefore, identifies the problem of knowledge and its characteristics, factors affecting perception, status of the external world, etc., and discusses these from the standpoint of the schools of classical Indian philosophy, e.g. Nyāya, Mimāmsa, Sautrāntika- and Yogācāra-Buddhism etc., because the issues analyzed and the conclusions arrived at by them are similar to those put forward by the Cartesian epistemologists and modern analytic philosophers.

ARGUMENTATION IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy and culture of a country are the indices representing the heights scaled in the psychological and sociological evolution, and the achievements of its people. Philosophy described as: a vision of truth (*darśana*), in Indian philosophy; and love of wisdom, in Western philosophy; is a discipline discussing perennial questions [about the categories constituting the philosophical triangle – Reality/God/Truth - Brahman; world (*jagat*), souls (*jīvas*); the nature of these; and their inter-relation.

The whole of Indian philosophy rests on scripture (*śruti*), reasoning (*yukti*), and experience (*anubhūti*). Three broad areas can be discerned in Indian philosophy as in Western philosophy – epistemology (*pramāṇa -vicāra*), metaphysics (*tattva-vicāra),* and ethics (*sādhana- vicāra).* "Epistemology" in Western philosophy denotes philosophical activity, which is preoccupied with an inquiry into and examination of knowledge, methods of reasoning, criteria of knowledge, and formulating a rigorous theory of error and knowledge. The aims and activities of the ancient Indian philosophers and epistemologists - *pramāṇa -theorists* - in the words of Matilal, too have been the same. "It is not

surprising that both in India and in the West the pursuit of knowledge has been intimately connected with the pursuit of truth or reality (sometimes called the divinity)."[2]

Philosophy is an intellectual quest - it can be atheistic, or theistic; and religion is revealed in scripture – it can be dogmatic, or rational. Philosophy and religion are two entirely different phenomena. The methodology of philosophy is logic and reasoning, whereas that of religion is faith and devotion. But the uniqueness of Indian philosophy is that it is a harmonious blend of philosophy and religion. In India, (except Cārvāka), every philosophy is religious, and every religion has its own philosophy. Classical Indian philosophers regarded and applied philosophy as an aid to religious life. Religion is a search for the Supreme truth, and the purpose of philosophy is to clarify the nature of that truth. All philosophizing that did not have any significance for life was disfavored and denounced as examining a crow's teeth (*kāka-danta parīkṣa*).

Indian philosophy classifies all knowledge under four branches: (1) logic and metaphysics (*ānvīkṣiki*), (2) scripture (*trayī*), (3) trade and commerce (*vārtā*), and (4) statecraft and political thought (*dandanīti*). The very fact that Indian philosophy makes a clear distinction between *ānvīkṣikī* and *trayī* , shows that Indian philosophy recognizes the difference between philosophy *(ānvīkṣikī)* and soteriology (*adhyātma-vidyā*) discussed in he *Vedas*. *Adhyātma-vidyā* expounds the highest and mystic knowledge (*parā -vidyā*) of the Self. It is a science of liberation *(mokṣa-śāstra)*.

Stipulating the criteria, Indian philosophy states that a *śāstra* is a systematic and scientific study. Any branch of knowledge to be called a *śāstra* has to fulfill 4 conditions (*anubandha-catuṣṭaya)* - state the proof (*pramāṇa)* indicate the subject matter (*viṣaya*); stipulate the qualifications of the eligible competent to study it (*adhikārin*); and reveal the fruit of the study (*phala*). In the case of Indian philosophy, the *pramāṇa* is scripture *(śruti)*, the *viṣaya* are the categories of the philosophical triangle, the *adhikārin* differs according to the prerequisites of the school, and the *phala* is liberation – *mokṣa*.

According to Matilal, the *darśanas* of classical India, in spite of their soteriological nature, fully satisfy the demands of academic philosophy because the acceptance of a *pramāṇa*-doctrine and the application of the Nyāya method have transformed soteriological works into philosophical classics. The 16 linguistic categories of Nyāya are: [A] (1) *pramāṇa* : means of knowledge which has a dual function - it is not only the cause/source but also the because/justification of that knowledge; (2) *prameya*: objects of knowledge which constitute the subject matter (*viṣaya*) of inquiry (*vicāra*) and evaluation; (3) *saṁśaya*: doubt that initiates and sustains inquiry; (4) *prayojana*: is the use/fruit/practical value served by the inquiry because if such exercise did not have any value for the investigator, the inquirer would not have undertaken the inquiry to begin with; (5) *dṛṣṭānta*: states the inseparable relation between the middle term (*hetu/dharma/ linga*) and the major term/predicate (*sādhya*) illustrated by a similar instance, for example "Wherever there is smoke, there is fire; e.g. *yajña-śāla*", (6) *siddhānta*: theses/ established standpoint , (7) *avayava*: limbs of an argument which can be 3 or 5 membered; e.g. (a) *pratijñā* – hypotheses: "This hill has fire."(b) *hetu* – reason: "Because it has smoke.", (c) *dṛṣṭānta* – "Wherever there is smoke, there is fire; e.g. *yajña-śāla*."; (d) *upanaya* – application: "This hill has smoke."; and (e) *nigamana* – conclusion: "Therefore, this hill has fire."; (8) *tarka* – indirect proof, and (9) *nirṇaya* - conclusion constituting the prerequisites for debate (*Nyāya-purvānga*); and [B] the following being the different kinds of debate and the criteria for their classification. (1) *vāda* – debate. *Vāda* is of 2 kinds: hostile (*vigṛhya*); and friendly (*sandhaya-sambhāṣa*). A friendly debate takes place between two equal scholars / students – teacher, and is aimed at gaining new knowledge or establishing truth. It has a single theme, argued for and against by the proponent and the opponent respectively. No dubious arguments/tricks are employed to win the argument. Victory and defeat are possible in this argument but because it is a friendly debate there is no consequent enmity generated between the individuals who are committed to truth and values; (2) *jalpa* – wrangling. Victory is the aim of the argument, e.g. lawyers pleading for

their clients in the court. False evidence, dubious arguments, etc., are employed to confuse and silence the opponent through one's ingenuity and shrewdness. There is scope for enmity before engaging in, while involved in, and after the debate. Just because a person wins the argument, it does not mean that that person is right because false reasons and tricks can be employed, to prove the guilty as innocent and the innocent as guilty; (3) *vitandā* – cavilling. This argument involves only refuting the opponents' views without ever stating one's own views; (4) *hetvābhāsa* – fallacies of reasoning; (5) *chala* – double meaning: e.g. "The boy is having *navakambala*, i.e. 9 blankets / new blanket.", (6) *jāti* – wrong argument: e.g." The sky-lotus is fragrant because it is like any other lotus growing in the pond.", (7) and *nigrahasthāna* – grounds for defeat in the argument, e.g. acknowledging the opponent's views, compromising on one's standpoint, inability to establish one's own views, getting confused by the opponent's arguments, etc.

All these have been discussed in detail and are taught to the students – not to be wielded as weapons of offense to deceive others, but to be employed as weapons of defense to protect one's own standpoint, and not be deceived by a crafty debater.

Indian philosophy admits two kinds of knowledge: (1) higher knowledge (*para-jñāna*), which is intuitive and experiential knowledge of the Self; and (2) lower knowledge (*apara-jñāna*), which includes all knowledge got through the senses and the mind, and is theoretical in nature. According to Indian philosophy, all lower knowledge is subservient to, and a means to the attainment of the higher knowledge. Expect the Cārvāka, all schools of Indian philosophy - the orthodox (*āstika*) and the heterodox (*nāstika*) traditions commonly agree that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the cause of bondage (*bandha*), and that knowledge (*jñāna*) is the means to liberation (*mokṣa*); although they disagree about the nature of such knowledge, and its role – directly or indirectly responsible for liberation. For example, Dvaita stipulates that knowledge of the jiva as dependent on Brahman is the means, whereas Advaita declares that it is

knowledge of the jīva's essential identity with Brahman that ensures liberation. Dvaita upholds that knowledge of the jīva's dependence on Brahman is indirectly helpful for liberation, whereas Advaita proclaims that knowledge of the jīva's essential identity with Brahman is the direct means to liberation.

The epistemology of Indian philosophy makes a very important distinction between cognition (*jñāna*) and knowledge (*pramā*). While all knowledge is necessarily cognition, all cognitions are not knowledge. Cognition is a weak word which can be characterized as doubtful-cognition (*saṁśaya-jñāna*), erroneous-cognition (*viparyaya-jñāna*), and valid-cognition (*samyag-jñāna*). "Valid-cognition" is synonymous with "knowledge"; and "invalid knowledge" is a self-contradiction in terms because what is "invalid" cannot be called "knowledge", and what is "knowledge" has to be necessarily true. "Valid-knowledge" is a tautology because "knowledge" itself implies that it is a "valid-cognition"; hence, the word "valid" is superfluous (because "valid knowledge when analyzed will mean "valid valid-cognition").

To get knowledge of the nature, number, and inter-relation of the varied philosophical categories, the *pramāṇa-theorists* commonly employ different means of knowledge – *pramāṇa-* (because the objects to be known are many) - elaborately discussed in their epistemology. A *pramāṇa* is defined as a special source of knowledge (*asādhāraṇam kāraṇam pramāṇam*). It functions as a means of valid-cognition / knowledge (*pramākraṇm pramāṇam*). For example:

1. Cārvāka admits only one *pramāṇa* – perception (*pratyakṣa*);
2. Vaiśeṣika admits two *pramāṇa* – perception, and inference (*anumāna*);
3. Jainism, Buddhism, Dvaita, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, etc., admit 3 *pramāṇa* – perception, inference, and scripture (*śabda*);
4. Nyāya admits 4 *pramāṇas* – perception, inference, scripture, and comparison (*upamāna*);

5. Prbhakara-Mimāmsakas admit 5 *pramāṇas* – perception, inference, scripture, comparison, and postulation (*arthāpatti*); and
6. Bhātta-Mimāmsakas and Advaita admit 6 *pramāṇa* – perception, inference, scripture, comparison, and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*).

Pratyakṣa is a rational analysis and discussion of perception which examines the issues and concepts of knowledge, factors influencing perception, stages in perception, nature and role of the senses and the mind in perception, validity of knowledge and its criteria, error, theory of error, is validity: extrinsic, or intrinsic, how do I know that I know, etc. Perception is defined in Nyāya, as knowledge got through the contact of the senses with their object of knowing (*indriyārtha sannikarśa janyam jñānam pratyakṣam*). Nyāya admits nine kinds of knowledge – six kinds of ordinary perception (*laukika-pratyakṣa*) mediated by the five senses and the mind, and three kinds of extra-ordinary perception (*alaukika-pratyakṣa*) *sāmānya-lakṣana pratyāsatti* for knowing the universals, *jñāna-lakṣana pratyāsatti* for getting knowledge through association, and *yogaja-pratyakṣa* or yogic perception involving clairvoyance, telepathy, etc.

Anumāna is based on *vyāpti*, i.e. the inseparable relation (*vyāpti*) between the middle-term (*hetu*) and the major-term (*sādhya*) of Aristotlelian logic. *Vyāpti* is a blend of induction and deduction. Therefore, in Indian philosophy inferential knowledge has both logical truth and material truth. *Anumāna* critical examines the methods of establishing *vyāpti;* the 3 and 5 membered-syllogism constituted of the hypothesis (*pratijñā*), reason (*hetu*), statement of *vyāpti* and an example (*udhāraṇa*), application (*upanaya*), and conclusion (*nigamana*); different kinds of *anvaya-vyatireka;* fallacies of reasoning (*hetvābhāsa*) resulting because of erroneous middle-term. Fallacies due to pseudo-reasons are of 5 kinds: (1) fallacy due to unestablished middle (*asiddha*) – this is of 3 kinds: (a) *svarkpsiddha* - unestablished with regard to

itself, e.g. "The soul is eternal, because it is perceived, like a jar."; (b) *śrayasiddha* - unestablished with regard to locus/ abode, e.g. "The sky-lotus is fragrant, because it is also a lotus, like any other lotus growing in a pond."; and, (c) *vyāpyatvāsiddha* – unestablished in respect of its concomitance/invariable relationship is of 2 kinds: (i) fallacy due to absence of evidence, e.g. "Whatever exists is momentary."; and (ii) fallacy due to presence of adventitious condition (*upādhi*); e.g. "Slaying in sacrifice is a sin, because it is also a slaying, like any other slaying outside the sacrifice."; (2) fallacy due to contradictory middle (*viruddha*) – e.g. "Matter is eternal, because it is produced, like time."; (3) fallacy due to straying middle (*anaikāntika / savyabhicāra*) – is of 3 kinds: (a) fallacy due to ordinary strayer (*sādhārana*), e.g. "Sound is eternal, because it is knowable, like a pot."; and (b) fallacy due to uncommon (*asādhāraṇa*) strayer, e.g. "Earth is eternal, because it has smell."; and (c) fallacy due to non-conclusive strayer (*anupasamhārin*), e.g. "All things are non-eternal because they are knowable."; (4) fallacy due to equal and opposite reasons (*prakaraṇasama / satpratipakṣa*) – e.g. "World is real, because it is perceived, e.g. pot.", and "World is illusory, because it is perceived, e.g. rope-snake."; and (5) fallacy due to stultified reason (*bādhita / kltyaypadiṣ ta*) – e.g. "Fire is not hot, because it is a substance, like water."

Śabda includes Śruti, *smrti*, and *āptavkya*. It examines the conditions for the meaningful combination of words; kinds of meaning – primary (*mukhyārtha*) and secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇārtha* – exclusive implication called *jahal-lakṣaṇa*, non-exclusive implication called *ajahal-lakṣaṇa*, and exclusive non-exclusive implication called *jahad-ajahal lakṣaṇa*); meaning on the basis of similarity (*guṇa-vṛ tti*); the six criteria (*ṣad-tātparya linga*) to identify the primary meaning of a text; kinds and classification of sentences - injunctions, existential-judgments, identity-judgments; word and sentence-meaning (*vākyārtha*); stages in and methods of interpreting scripture; etc. Except the Cārvāka who admits only perception and rejects all other means of knowledge; the *āstika* and the *nāstika* schools – Jainism and Buddhism (which substitute the scripture

of their own schools in the place of the *Vedas* rejected by them) - admit *śabda* as a *pramāṇa*. Therefore, although primary importance is accorded to scripture, reason is required to unravel the purport (*tātparya*) of scripture which has to be transformed from theoretical knowledge to experiential knowledge, for attaining liberation.

Comparison (*upamāna*), postulation (*arthāpatti*) and non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*) are alternate means of knowledge which cannot be reduced to perception, inference, or verbal testimony by applying the principle of parsimony (*lāghava*) because they give new knowledge that cannot be got through perception, inference, or verbal testimony, according to the Bhāttas and the Advaitins.

The *pramāṇa*-theorists then specified the criteria for knowledge – practical value (*artha-kriyā kāritva*) in the case of Buddhism; correspondence with the object of knowledge (*yathārtha*), according to Nyāya; coherence (*samvāda*), according to Sānkhya; and non-contradiction (*abādhitatva*) and novelty (*anadhigatatva*), according to Advaita.

The *pramāṇa -theorists* also delineated the nature, and demarcated the scope of the functions of the *pramāṇas (pramāṇa vyavastha*). Advaita makes a clear bifurcation among the *pramāṇa*, based on their nature and scope –*Śruti*, discoursing on transcendental categories, on the one hand; and all the other 5 *pramāṇas* admitted by it, examining only sensory empirical phenomena, on the other hand. According to Advaita, *Śruti* is a *pramāṇa* which is super-human is origin (*apauruṣeya*); and, therefore, free from doubt (*saṁśaya*) and error (*viparyaya*). Hence, *Śruti* alone was accorded trans-empirical validity (*pāramārthika-prāmaṇya*). Moreover, the categories it deals with cannot be perceived by the senses and the mind; and the knowledge - *jiva brahma aikya jñāna* – got through *Śruti* is new, which cannot be got through perception or other *pramāṇas* dealing with merely empirical phenomena, and, therefore, having only empirical validity (*vyāvahārika-pramāṇya*).

There are 2 aspects of a *prama* : (1) origination (*utpatti),* (2) function (*vyāpāra*). Śruti is dependent on *pratyakṣa* only for its origination; but once it comes into existence, it does its function independently of perception, and other *pramāṇas*. Harmoniously synthesizing reason (*yukti*) and revelation (Śruti), Advaita stipulates logic and reasoning which are in conformity with scripture (*Śrutyānugrhītatarka*). *Śrutyānugrhītatarka* is logic which: (1) is based on scripture; (2) is dependent on scripture; and (3) clarifies the meaning of scripture. Since the metaphysical categories are transcendental, and cannot be captured by the senses, mind, or language; the emphasis on *śruti* is only methodological, *viz.* to guide the wayward intellect which would otherwise get lost in the dense jungle of scripture and become a prey of the tiger called bad logic (*kutarka*), says Swami Vidyāraṇya in his *Pañcadaśi,* and to chanelize reasoning along the right tract so that intellect consummates in intuition. The emphasis in Advaita on adhering to scripture is only methodological; and similar to the insistence placed on applying accepted theories and formulae, and the findings of experts in the field of the sciences.

A chaste woman reveals her body only to her husband. Similarly, according to Sureśvara, Śruti reveals knowledge only to the *adhikārin* (*adhikāriṇah pramitijanako vedah);* to the others it is meaningless just as daylight is darkness to the owl (*ullūka – niśānyāya*). By "*adhikārin*" is meant one, acquainted with the tradition (*paramparā*) and possessing ethical and spiritual qualifications stipulated by the school concerned taken up for examination and evaluation. At the outset, Advaita mocked at as *māyāvāda* stipulates the prerequisites to be possessed by one eligible (*adhikārin*) to pursue and attain truth. The first stage of the Advaita- programme for liberation, insists on being equipped with the mental, physical, and ethical qualities that facilitate the attainment of the intuitive Self–knowledge. The first prerequisite is discrimination (*viveka*) - this implies that one who is intelligent, and can rationally discriminate and isolate the eternal from the non-eternal, the real from the illusory, the good from the pleasing, etc., alone is qualified to undertake Self-inquiry

(*ātma-vicāra*). The next prerequisite is dispassion (*vairāgya*). This implies that unless the seeker of truth is dissatisfied with all that is empirical, sensuous and heavenly pleasures, one will remain content with these and not probe the reality behind these or their real nature.

According to Advaita, knowledge is *apauruṣa-tantra*, i.e. dependent on a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa -tantra*), and the presence of the object of knowledge (*vastu-tantra*). Hence, the seeker of truth should be equipped with defect-free senses and mind because these can distort the perception of truth; example jaundiced eye sees everything as yellow, and a psychologically conditioned mind conjures imaginary phenomena. Therefore, Advaita emphasizes the cultivation and possession of sense-control (*Śama*), mind-control (*dama*), fortitude (*titikṣā*), withdrawal (*uparati*), faith (*Śraddhā*) in the teachings of scripture and the Guru, and one pointed concentration (*samādhāna*) so that the instruments of knowledge do not create disturbances / distortions but facilitate the apprehension of truth. According to Advaita, the Self – which has to be known, is already existent (*siddha*); what is required is only an appropriate mental-mode called "*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*" for its intuition. The possession of these above mentioned qualities make one an integrated and cultured person. But what distinguishes a seeker of truth (*mumukṣu*), is the intense (*tīvra*) desire to be free permanently from the miseries characterizing empirical and transmigratory existence.

The second stage of the Advaita-programme for liberation involves the triple discipline: guided study of texts (*Śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*), and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). *Śravaṇa* eliminates doubts about the real teaching of scripture (*pramāṇagata-sandeha*) through guided study of texts with the Guru. This involves *pada-Śodhana* and *padārtha-Śodhana* aimed at identifying and isolating the Self from the not-self through different kinds of *anvaya-vyatireka : drg-dṛśyā, gama-apayi, anuvṛtta-vyāvṛtta, sākṣi-sākṣya,* etc.; primary (*mukhyārtha*) and secondary meaning (*lakṣaṇārtha*), meaning on the basis of similarity (*guṇa-vṛtti*), stages in the interpretation

of scripture, the application of the six criteria (*ṣad-tātparya linga*) to identify the purport, etc. *Manana* eliminates rationally *prameyagata-sandeha*, i.e. doubts about the jiva's identity with Brahman. It gives conviction that the other views are untenable and that the Advaita view alone is satisfactory. *Nididhyāsana* eliminates any lingering doubt and erroneous view, and confers one-pointed concentration (*ekāgratā*), which is indispensable for the attainment of Self-knowledge. All these stages involve logic and rigorous reasoning.

Advaita is wonderful blend of radical empiricism in its epistemology; and idealism in its metaphysics because it postulates the ideal of *mokṣa* as the goal of life; skepticism because its epistemology is highly self-critical admitting three levels of reality on the basis that whatever is perceived, exists; pragmatic in its inquiry because it upholds that philosophical investigation must be fruitful/useful for life and not aimless idle inquiry, and thereafter investing *śruti* which is super-human in origin (*apauruṣeya*) with trans-empirical validity (*pāramārthika-prāmāṇya*) and the other five means of knowledge with empirical-validity (*vyāvahārika-prāmāṇya*) only; phenomenology because it examines phenomena and analyzes human experience to identify consciousness as the condition for the possibility of experience – argument, assertion, and actualization.

Classical Indian philosophers declared that the supreme truth – Brahman - transcends the senses, and the mind, and that due to its ineffability it cannot be captured by language (*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*). For e.g. Buddha's silence, and Śankara's *Bhaja-Govindam* says "*nahi, nahi, rakṣati dukṛñjkaraṇe*." The nourishment of the intellect is necessary, but it is not sufficient to liberate consciousness."[3] Having recognized these limitations, to liberate those in bondage, classical Indian philosophers yet involved themselves in philosophical debates (fully aware of the fact that philosophical pursuits which engage and nourish the intellect are insufficient to redeem the soul from the bondage of transmigratory existence (*samsāra*) caused by

ignorance and ensure it salvation) through the commentarial tradition involving criticism of opposing philosophical views and defending one's own; thereby resulting in their inestimably valuable contribution to the classics of Indian philosophy and scriptural lore. Much of the verbal warfare may appear to be mere quibbling to an individual who is skeptical about philosophical pursuits. But it nevertheless reveals, according to Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, the intellectual virility and subtle argumentative skill of the Indian philosophers. The followers of Śankara have put forward elaborate arguments in independent works in some of which e.g. *Tattvapradī pikā* or *Citsukhī*, *Advaita-siddhi, Khaṇdana-khaṇda-khādya*, "logical skill and dialectical subtlety attain heights scarcely reached by the most profound treatises of this kind in the West."[4]

According to Ben Ami cited by Matilal, the human mind is an indomitable organ, and one who is a genius cannot keep it idle for long because the impatient mind seizes whatever opportunity comes by to express itself creatively (e.g. an accomplished singer or tabla-player will keep humming tunes or make gestures as if playing on a tabla). Similarly, in the case of the Indian philosophers, according to Matilal, once the realized seers "tasted the forbidden pleasure of philosophical argumentation, their fall from the paradise of mysticism and non-reason was complete". Philosophical activity sustains the intellect, while religious exercises nourish the soul; and engaging in both these activities was considered as not incompatible or anti-thetical to the other.[5]

According to Indian philosophy, three things are difficult to obtain except through God's grace – human birth (*manuṣyatvam*), hankering after liberation (*mumukṣutvam*), and association with the realized (*mahāpuruṣa-samāśraya*). The aim of Indian philosophers is to steadily lead a human being - a rational and a social animal, and a fallen angel - from where one is towards the transcendental reality, gradually divinizing one through what one can see and feel, and not prematurely impress upon one something indescribable awesome which one cannot grasp as the highest reality. Hence their emphasis on faith in scripture, the

Self-realized, one's Guru, praxis as delineated in scripture, right understanding, and knowledge before one undertakes the socio-ethico-philosophico-religious practices to translate a theoretical truth into a lived-experience. This is the aim, meaning, and methodology of all those aspects of Indian philosophy and its emphasis on scripture which has been condemned as dogmatic, irrational, superstitious, non-argumentative, tender-headed, poetic, unscientific, anti-scientific, etc., by the critics and modern intellectuals which draws attention for an early rewarding revision of one's attitude for an apodictic authentic actualization of truth.

Indian philosophy evokes ardent admiration to vehement denunciation; with it we can acclaim and agree or denounce and differ but the impressive and eternal Indian philosophy never leaves where we were. Says Dr. Radhakrishnan, about Advaita, "its austere intellectualism, its remorseless logic which marches on indifferent to the hopes and beliefs of man, its relative freedom from theological obsessions, make it a great example of a purely philosophical scheme."[6]

NOTES

1. B.K. Matilal, *Perception – An Essay On Classical Indian Theories of*
   Knowledge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, pp.2
2. *Ibid.*, p.22
3. *Ibid.*, p.18
4. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Gaudapāda*, p.3
5. B.K. Matilal, *op. cit.*, p. 18
6. *Ibid.*, p.22
7. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.445