



Loving Creator, His Creation and Evil in Indian Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

All existing religions and philosophical schools have accepted that the world was created by some super natural being or God. He is loving creator. But why in this world man has to face so much suffering? Why living beings are facing pain, sorrow, and suffering or so called Evil.

KEYWORDS

Creator, World, Pain, Sorrow, Suffering.

Wonderful world is not causeless, it must have a cause. Cārvāka views hold that the material elements namely earth, water, fire and air produced the world. All existing religions and philosophical schools have accepted that the world was created by some super natural being or God. Most of us, we common people also have belief in God as the main cause of the universe. He is loving creator. But the question is, if the creator of the world is so loving then why in this world man has to face so much suffering? Why living beings are facing pain, sorrow, and suffering or so called Evil.

According to the Vedānta philosophy evil is not opposite or contrary to good. Evil is the product of our ignorance about the nature of truth.¹ The Indian philosophy has laid stress on the ecological level or closer relation between man and nature. This is possible only by observing moral regulations. This closeness or more specifically one-ness with nature will bring more and more happiness to the mankind. This view is not exclusive to Hinduism but of all other Indian religions. Buddha also laid stress on 'Aṣṭāṅgika-mārga' for minimizing evil.²

No great concern for presence of evil has been shown in all classical and medieval Indian philosophy. But evil certainly has been the overwhelming problem for the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain philosophies. It has been connected, in general, with birth and existence. Evil appears there as a practical problem. As the life is full of sufferings, the world the world is there considered as evil. A pertinent question naturally arises regarding the creation of the universe, in other words, who created the world or what is the reason behind our bondage. Hindu or Indian philosophy has laid more stress on the question of life and death or how one can escape the cycle of birth and death.

Eminent Indian philosophers viz. Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Aurobindo have dealt with the problem. Aurobindo argued that God contains the principle of karma. God dispenses rewards and punishment but always with an eye on the individual's former deeds. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are of the view that God causes the soul to act but the question arises whether God may force me to act in a certain way? Both of them accept that God always act with regard to any former efforts in a previous life, i.e. the condition of the soul is determined by former efforts. This causes either favourable or unfavourable circumstances in our present lives. Naiyāyikas have in mind when they say that God controls and directs the principle of Karma.

Aurobindo, however, comes closer to the view of vedāntist Madhava, whose doctrine of divine grace seems to stand outside the principles of Karma and the Vedic tradition He plac-

es the soul or Ātma outside the reach of Karma and places the powerful Ātma, the soul outside the reach of Karma. The all-powerful Ātma or divine controller stands between the soul and Karma. Thereby he saves the autonomy of the soul along with the omnipotence of the Divine.³

The law of Karma is a principle, as regarded by the Indians as an unseen (adṛiṣṭa) principle which wholly sway over the material atoms and bring about objects and events with moral principle. Just as the Gods of the Veda were subject to Rta so also, from its very appearance in the Brahmins, the impersonal, super-human and super divine character of Karmas became widely accepted and well-known. The Indian philosophers, in most cases have conceived the theory of rebirth and Karma. The evil, they consider, as the outcome of Karma in our previous life. Liberation from the cycle of life and death may liberate the individuals from the occurrences of evil or from all good and evil contrary to this view the mysticism, or Māyāvāda propounded by Śaṅkara says the evil is not real, in other words, an illusion. As long as there is evolution Māyā is necessarily there, for it is the principle of dynamism and individuation. That is why the world, the Samsāra, is known as Māyā i.e. is not something evil but something which has to be experienced- Bhoga- for the eventful emancipation of soul from the ignorance or Avidya. According to Vedānta, the so called contradictions, discords and evil were never such, were never real.⁴

In spite of the different view contained in the Hindu theological doctrines the question was whether or not Brahma (God) created the world. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja gave affirmative answers. Those who were opposed to this view and claimed that God cannot be the cause of the world, because creation involves motives or purposes and if Brahma has either He is imperfect. The contradictory views present a situation of dilemma: either God had a purpose or he didn't have a motive or not. If He had a purpose then he desired some goal. But if he desired something, then he was lacking something. But if He lacked something then He is not perfect. This view contradicts the omniscience thesis, omnipotence thesis and the Ethical thesis that God is all good. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, however, are of the view that if it were to be conceived that this endeavour of the Highest self is useful to itself because of its desire, then such supposition would contradict the spiritual statement about the Highest self being always quite contented.⁵ If on the other hand, one was to conceive no such purpose (behind the endeavour) one would have to concede that (in such a case) there would not be any such endeavour.

A third view about the creation of the world or samsāra by God is the concept of Līlā. In other words, the Līlā prompts

creation out of sheer joy. It is the outcome of God's sportive nature. It amounts to saying that while evil exists in the creation, it is not due to His creation. He did not really create the Samsāra. The creation is a kind of playful overflowing of His joyful self. This indicates that the evil in the world is not from God He did not create it. The creation has been possible because of His joyful nature. Rāmānuja speaks to the Līlā situation with an entertaining example: we see in ordinary life how some great king, ruling the earth with its seven dīpas (Islands) and possessing perfect strength, valour and so on, has a game at balls or the like, from no other motive than to amuse himself. Śāṅkara uses the example of breathing. It is not act of will but follows simply the Law of its own nature.⁶

The Upaniṣads abound in re-birth doctrine and the necessary elements of Samsāra. In Upaniṣads we come across the concept of Nirguṇa and Saḡuṇa Brahma. The exponent of Nirguṇa concept considers Brahma as all pervading, all powerful, Devoid of any shape or desire He is all good. In other words He is Nirākāra (without any form) and Nirbika (without any desire) though He is full of consciousness, He is not the creator. According to Śāṅkara, "only truth is Brahma and all other things or elements are unreal or illusion or Māyā."⁷

Opposed to this view of singular goodness are the believers of Saḡuṇa Brahma. They are of the view that Brahma possesses all conceivable properties arguing that God is the creator (Brahmā), the preserver (Viṣṇu) and destroyer (Maheś).⁸ One of the Indian Darśanas which can be mentioned in our discussion is the Sāṁkhya Darśan. The Sāṁkhya system of philosophy is a metaphysical dualism holding that there are two kinds of basically ultimate stuffs viz. Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The former is referred to as spirit. The spirit is isolated, natural and inactive. Prakṛti is referred to as primal nature or matter and from it evolves the entire universe or nature. From the union of the spirit with Prakṛti the insentient evaluate (prakṛti) appears as if sentient, and similarly from the activity really belonging to the attributes (the Guṇas of the evaluate) the spirit which is neutral as if it was active. The spirit while in union with nature believes the three kinds of pain, (internal, external and divine sources of pain) the constituents of nature to be his own and from this (the self-imposed bond) he seeks liberation and isolation.⁹

The singular goodness of God or Puruṣa can be theoretically attacked by those who maintain that unlike Nirguṇa Brahma, the Saḡuṇa Brahma possesses evil as well as good characteristics. One of the sources for this argument is the Bhagavad Gītā. It has been observed in Gītā, that everything comes from God both good and bad and as such it is not possible to deny that evil also comes from God. In Gītā, Lord Krishna says, the nature of goodness, passion or darkness, know that all of them come from Me alone.

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