

## Chapter Three:

### Bradley on Motion

In the second chapter, we critically discussed the arguments offered by Zeno. The dialectic of Zeno has a close similarity with the arguments of Francis Herbert Bradley which would be evident in this chapter. Bradley (1846-1924), born in Clapham of Surrey, is famous among the British Idealists and becomes best known for his Metaphysics. Bradley's metaphysical view is unique; it has its own intrinsic value. Here, we are concerned about his view regarding motion.

We know his metaphysical thought from his most famous writing '*Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*' (1893), which discusses many

important aspects of his philosophy of Absolute Idealism. He describes the ways in which appearance is inseparable from reality and explains what this means for our understanding of the universe. This writing is divided into two books, viz. '*Appearance*' and '*Reality*'. The aim of the first book '*Appearance*', is destructive and has twelve chapters, viz., 'Primary and Secondary Qualities', 'Substantive and Adjective', 'Relation and Quality', 'Space and Time', 'Motion and Change and Its Perception', 'Causation', 'Activity', 'Things', 'The Meanings of Self', 'The Reality of Self', 'Phenomenalism' and 'Things in Themselves'. We know from this book that through the ideas of cause, motion, change, self, space, time, thing etc. we try to understand the universe but when we try to think of their implications, we fall into contradictions. In this book he criticises the intellect and the world of experience and reaches at paradoxical conclusions so acutely that he

is called the 'Zeno of modern philosophy'. The second book '*Reality*' is long and its aim is to provide a positive account of the Absolute-the ultimate, unconditioned reality as it is in itself. It has fifteen chapters, viz., 'The General Nature of Reality', 'The General Nature of Reality (*cont.*)', 'Thought and Reality', 'Error', 'Evil', 'Temporal and Spatial Appearance', 'The This and The Mine', 'Recapitulation', 'Solipsism', 'Nature', 'Body and Soul', 'Degrees of Truth and Reality', 'Goodness', 'The Absolute and Its Appearances' and 'Ultimate Doubts'.

Bradley tries to show that those concepts of common sense, through which we usually understand the world, lead us to contradictions. He argues that if secondary qualities are appearances then primary qualities cannot stand by themselves; as a matter of fact, materialism, as a theory of reality, ceases to be tenable.

Therefore, the reality of things, in terms of qualities, becomes incoherent.

If we take a statement, e.g., 'a human being is rational, intelligent and bipad animal', we find that the reality of the statement cannot be just a plurality of qualities in a relation. If we think so, we will be led to say that P is being related to Q means either that P is P or P is other than P. It is not easy to discuss about qualities without relations or to discuss about them as having them. Qualities can be shown both, to make their relations and to be made by them; while relations can be shown to be nothing or it gives rise to an infinite regress. Bradley claims that space and time must be both, more than relations and yet a set of relations, there is nothing left to the notion of things as such. Therefore, discussion relating to primary or secondary qualities, relations, space and

time, causation, motion etc. must therefore belong to the world of appearance.

Chapter III of the book '*Appearance*', entitled '*Relation and Quality*', caused great controversy. According to Bradley, all finite things and all aspects of the universe which we try to grasp, are riddled with contradictions and are, therefore, appearances. The very nature of relation indicates that, it essentially involves contradiction and therefore, unintelligible. For him, relations are unintelligible either with or without qualities (terms) and likewise, qualities are unintelligible either with or without relations. Thus, qualities cannot exist without relations and relations cannot exist without qualities. An attempt to separate qualities and relations is to reaffirm a relation between them, which is self-contradictory. New relations are required to link the relation with each of its terms - "*The links are united by a link, and this bond of*

*union is a link which also has two ends, and these require each a fresh link to connect them with the old.*"<sup>1</sup>

An infinite chain of relations is required to link any two qualities. Since this is unintelligible, he argues that "*A relational way of terms and relations – must give appearance and not truth. It is a makeshift a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary but in the end most indefensible.*"<sup>2</sup>

It is the fact that the absolute cannot be described as having a degree of truth, because it is perfect truth. An idea is real insofar as it does not contradict itself and agrees with reality and is false insofar as it disagrees with reality. Truth and falsehood are aspects of reality. On the other hand, appearances may be true or false but they have a degree of reality. Appearances depend for their existence upon absolute reality and are, therefore,

impossible without reality. All appearances can be experienced as a unity in absolute reality. Bradley argues that there are degrees of possibility and contingency as well as there are degrees of truth in the world of appearance.

This third chapter of his book is very much important. For, by the same arguments Bradley establishes his thesis that concepts like space, time, motion, change etc. are full of self-contradictions. Let us now concentrate upon Bradley's view regarding motion.

In chapter V, entitled '*Motion and Change and its perception*', Bradley explains the impossibility of motion by arguing that motion implies that a moving thing is in two places at the same time. These places are successive, but the thing moved must be one and also the time is one. Hence, it is not possible for the same thing to

be in two places at the same time, i.e., motion is not possible. He argues that the problem of change underlies that of motion. Change points out to the confliction between the one and the many, the differences and the identity, the adjectives and the thing, the qualities and the relations. Change must be change of something and contains diversity. If an object changes, then it is either in time or out of time. Now, if it is out of time, then it is timeless object, but it's various successive states, e.g., object1, object 2, object 3 etc. are in time. For him, relation presupposes quality and quality presupposes relation. Change is a quality. He emphasises that if any relation between an object and its successive states, is not accepted, then the object does not change. If a relation is accepted between them, it is not possible for timeless object to be related to a succession of that object in time. Now, if it is assumed that the object is in time, the problem

arises as whether it itself has or has not duration. If it has duration, then it falls apart into its successive states and therefore, change does not occur. As change implies diversity or a succession of before and after, the non-acceptance of the duration of any object in time, implies no change at all.

Indeed, to be in motion, it is required that an object should change and for change there must be present two characters at once, i.e., a successive diversity and one time (not divisible). Change consists in the union of these two aspects. In asserting that an object is different at different times, we bring this diversity into relation with that object's qualitative identity symmetrically. But in spite of this, still, the identity of that object, in some sort of relation with diverse moments and varying states, is not what we understand by change. Change occurs when the

oneness of a quality, i.e., the unity of duration, is in temporal relation with the diversity.

Bradley concludes that change has no reality, it is not possible upon any hypothesis, it is only an appearance and accordingly motion is not acceptable. In this regard, it can be said that the use of the word 'appearance' often leads us to grasp the distinction between the absolute and the appearances, but actually, in every case we know only the absolute and an 'appearance' is nothing but the manner in which the absolute appears to us.

Bertrand Russell, a great fan of Bradley, becomes the most serious critic of Bradley in later years. The logic-based approach of Russell and the Analytics is highly influenced by Bradley and there are close ties between the two approaches. Bradley's philosophy itself is

both highly logical and highly informal. In later years, metalogicians like Godel, Church and Turing discover that Bradley recognized many of the limitations.

Moore and Russell reject Bradley's doctrine of internal relations and most philosophers today would agree with this criticism. Bradley, most famous for his book *'Appearance and Reality'*, defines what is ultimately real as what is wholly unconditioned or independent. In other words, what is real must be complete and self-sufficient. Bradley also thinks that the relations a thing stands in, e.g., being to the left of something else, are internal to it, i.e., grounded in its intrinsic properties and therefore, inseparable from those properties. It follows from these two views that the subjects of relations considered in themselves, are incomplete and dependent and therefore, ultimately unreal. For instance, if a chair is to the left of the desk and if the relation 'being to the left of' is internal

to the chair, then, being to the left of the desk contributes to the identity or being of the chair just as being six feet tall and being brown too. Consequently, it is not unconditioned or independent, since its identity is bound up with that of the desk. Since the truly real is independent, it follows that the chair is not truly real. This sort of argument can be given for every object that we could conceivably encounter in experience: everything stands in some relation or other to something else, thus everything is partially dependent on something else for its identity; but since it is dependent, it is not truly real. Bradley thinks that the only thing truly real is the whole network of interrelated objects that constitutes what we might call 'the whole world'. Thus he embraces a species of monism: the doctrine that, despite appearances to the contrary, no plurality of substances exists and that only one thing exists: the whole. What prevents us from

apprehending this, he believes, is our tendency to confuse the limited reality of things in our experience with the unconditioned reality of the whole, the Absolute or One. Hence, Bradley is unsympathetic to the activity of analysis, for by breaking wholes into parts it disguises rather than reveals the nature of reality.

In the early twentieth century a philosophical debate took place between F. H. Bradley and Bertrand Russell concerning a range of connected issues of apparently technical significance: the nature and unity of the proposition, the proper account of truth, and the status of relations. The historical outcome was momentous: the demise of the philosophical movement known as British Idealism and its eventual replacement by the various forms of analytic philosophy. Since then, a conception of this debate and its rights and wrongs become entrenched in English-language philosophy.

The early Russell, who is familiar with Bradley's work through his teachers at Cambridge, is only partly sympathetic to F. H. Bradley's views. Russell accepts the doctrine that relations are internal but, unlike Bradley, he does not deny that there is a plurality of things or subjects. Thus Russell's holism, e.g., his view of the interconnectedness of the sciences, does not require the denial of plurality or the rejection of analysis as a falsification of reality, both of which doctrines are antithetic to him early on.

Russell complains that Bradley tries to reduce metaphysics to mere logic. But Bradley's working recognises any possibility as an existing thing. If it is grasped that logic and mathematics are capable of describing any possibility, then, indeed metaphysics becomes merely logic and mathematics.

A criticism that may be made of Bradley's Absolute Idealism is that it assumes that reality must be in harmony with itself. This may be a questionable assumption and it is possible that disharmony and disunity are as much a part of reality as harmony and unity.

Another criticism that may be made of Bradley's philosophy is that it has a very negative view of metaphysical reality. For him, motion is merely an appearance of the absolute as well as space and time. He declares that reality is unchanging.

It is claimed that there is some inconsistency between the implications for self, space and time, and so on of Bradley's account of predication as identity (*'Appearance and Reality'*, Book I), which he rejects in his *Logic* and his account of degrees of reality in Book II. Moreover, his concept of the absolute itself is not clearly

defined, being described only in terms of transformed appearances. Real cannot be known except through appearance. Bradley admits that any notion of truth which excludes any of the possible worlds from reality is inconsistent. Though Bradley is not the first one for holding this basic argument as we know the view of the ancient Greek philosopher Parmenides but Bradley's argument is much more sophisticated than that of Parmenides.

Bradley's metaphysical arguments basically depend upon relations and qualities. An Analytic philosopher like Russell, strongly opposes Bradley's view and believes in an absolutely real world of experience. Russell sees categorical judgements not in merely subject-predicate terms but as relational structures. Russell and Moore interpret the doctrine in terms of the word 'internal'. Russell's sense of the word 'internal', i.e., reducibility to

qualities, shows Bradley's doctrine as non-comprehensive and rejects the subject-predicate account of judgment; while Moore's sense of 'internal', i.e., holding relations necessarily, shows it comprehensive. In 'Appearance and Reality', Bradley's application with this word 'internal' to relations not always has connection with the doctrine of internality except Chapter III in his book. It is natural that Bradley rejects the reality of external relations, though to interpret this as a commitment to the doctrine of internality is not logically inevitable.

Bradley argues that neither external nor internal relations, nor yet their terms, are real. For him, if a relation is a further kind of real thing along with its terms, then, a further relation would be required to relate it to its terms and so on ad infinitum. He thinks 'real' as a technical term. Like Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza, Bradley realises that to be real is to be an individual substance and

therefore, to deny the reality of relations is to deny their independent existence. A thinker may claim that the denial of the reality of relations amounts to the assertion that all relational judgments are false. But for Bradley, no ordinary judgment is ever perfectly true; truth admits degrees. A perfect truth is one which do not abstract from reality and identical with the whole of reality. For him, *"The Absolute is not many; there is no independent reals"*.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, various objects are related in various ways to each other. These objects and relations are real and atomic, not reducible to anything else. But Bradley claims that relations are not atomic, not real in themselves. For him, a relational structure is static and objects connected by relations are illusory.

Indeed, relations exist only insofar as the objects within the relational structure get manipulated, used or processed to form such relations. Bradley argues that we need a second relation to connect the first relation to the objects it supposedly connected. But then the second relation is another object and we need a third relation and so on, ad infinitum. This is called Bradley's Regress which is a variation on the ancient Eleatic paradoxes of Parmenides and Zeno. Bradley's Regress is applied to relational structures rather than objects in space-time continūm.

Bradley's views on relations are both highly controversial and central to his thought. Commentators of different grounds have not found it easy to defend him. In 'An Introduction to Bradley's Metaphysics', C.D. Broad comments that "*Charity bids us avert our eyes from the*

*pitiabile spectacle of a great philosopher using an argument which would disgrace a child or a savage.*"<sup>4</sup>

In '*Appearance and Reality*', Bradley reduces the whole phenomenal world with its things and selves, its orders of space, time, motion and causation, to a mass of incoherence. Mr. Wollheim, the writer of the '*Review of F. H. Bradley*', criticises his doctrine of negation and his view of the contradictory as the sum of the contraries. Wollheim disagrees with Bradley at every major point, e.g., logic, metaphysics, knowledge, ethics and truth. For Wollheim, Bradley's philosophy is more negative than has been commonly supposed and says that "*We have the sense in studying it that it is built on a series of denials, of negatives, of rejections.*"<sup>5</sup>

Bradley's strict monism ultimately precludes any relations at all, but this can be understood as the

intensification of internal relations. Certainly it is quite distant from any theory of external relations. Whitehead's theory of prehension is a pluralistic version of internal relations, the many being held apart in that some of the terms are held apart by external relations. For him, reality itself admits of degrees, a phenomenon being the less real the more it is just a fragmentary aspect of the whole. He thinks all judgments to be defective in that representation can proceed only on the basis of separating in thought what is not separate in reality.

From the above discussion, it can be noted that there are two assumptions of Bradley which are as follows: (1): *It can be said that, if the process itself is one state then the moments are parts of it and they can be related in time to one another, otherwise they cannot be related and ultimately the object remains same through a period of any length and is not changed.*

This Process-Production Assumption of Bradley is not always acceptable. It will be clear if we take a biological instance, e.g., the process of an embryo within its mother's womb. Though, there are various moments in the process of embryo within its mother's womb, the process and the production(the baby) is not same. The embryo comes out as a new born baby which is different in its characteristics.

(2): *To unite two objects into a relation, a process of abstraction is required; without abstraction there is nothing to connect two related objects.*

This assumption is, however, unwarranted- this can be solved by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika point of view. If we concentrate on the Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Inherence (Samavāya), we find that Samavāya refers to the inseparable relation (ayutasiddha) between substances.

Kanāda says that Samavāya is the relation between the cause and the effect. Prasastapāda defines the concept of Samavāya more accurately by saying it as the relationship that exists between those substances or objects which cannot be separated. The Vaiśeṣika School of Philosophy states that even the smallest perceptible matter is composed of the finite structure atoms and atoms are the indivisible and eternal reality of all substances. Here, the relation between the substance and its atoms, is Samavāya, substance and its atoms cannot exist without each-other. No direct connection through the relation of Samavāya is possible between the objects which are connected through it. If we take an instance for example, we can find that the motion of the sun inheres in the sun and is connected with the sun alone. It is distinct from the relation of conjunction (Samjoga), i.e., the temporary relation between two objects, e.g., the relation between a branch of a tree and a

bird. The objects connected through the relation of Samavāya are inseparable, they are related in such a way that nothing can separate them. The relation between the container and the contents, between cause and its effect, between red rose and its redness, between cloths and threads, between the whole and its parts is Samavāya. The objects in these instances are inseparable and cannot thought without each-other and therefore, process of abstraction is not applicable here to connect them.

We find that the views of Zeno and Bradley regarding motion, can be criticised with reasonable arguments. Now, to get a solution in this issue, we shall discuss the view of Nāgārjuna.

## Notes:

1. *'Appearance and Reality'*: F. H. Bradley: Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1893: 2nd ed. 1897: p.27.
2. Ibid: p.27.
3. *'Appearance and Reality'*: F. H. Bradley: Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1897: p.99.
4. *'An Introduction to Bradley's Metaphysics'*: W. J. Mander: Clarendon Press Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc.: New York: 1994. P.92.
5. *'Review of F. H. Bradley: Richard Wollheim: Penguin Books Ltd.:1959'*: Brand Blanshard: Philosophy 36:138: Oct.1961:p.372-374.