

C H A P T E R - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Section-I Philosophy and Psychology as interrelated disciplines

As to the origin of Existentialism, Mary Warnock writes, " we may be content to use the term ' Existentialism' to cover a kind of philosophical activity which flourished on the continent especially in the 1940s and 1950s, which can be shown to have certain common interests, common ancestry and common presuppositions, and which is now sufficiently clearly a matter of history to make a general survey worth undertaking. " ¹ But as a matter of fact Existentialism had its origin long before, as it was founded by the Danish Philosopher Søren Kierkegaard who was born in 1813 and died in 1855. It seems that Warnock here refers to the origin of Phenomenological Existentialism, that is, generally regarded as the proper type of Existentialism as enunciated by Philosophers like Heidegger (1889- 1976) and Sartre (1905 - 1980). It is generally accepted that Kierkegaard is the real founder of the Existentialist movement while Nietzsche (1844-1900) may be regarded as the founder of the atheistic trend of Existentialist thought. The existentialists, like the Analytical philosophers and Logical Positivists wanted to add something new to the domain of Philosophy,

and have expressed many views on the nature of the world and human life ; such as, being, freedom, God, human being and its relation with other beings in the world, death, dread (anguish), nausea, abandonment, sexuality etc. of which some are Philosophical and some Psychological. In existentialism, we see Philosophy and Psychology to have their place side by side , and from this it seems that the existentialists do not belong to that group who think that Psychology can and ought to be studied in complete separation from Philosophy. They took philosophy and psychology as inter-related disciplines and for this reason, they did not leave aside psychology while discussing their philosophical views.

Now it is necessary to consider whether Philosophy and Psychology are inter-related disciplines or not. There was also a time when Psychology was looked upon merely as a branch of philosophy. The relation between Philosophy and Psychology, then, was looked upon as the same as between Philosophy and its other branches. But modern Psychologists put forward the claim that Psychology should be treated separately from Philosophy. Before entering into the arguments of the modern Psychologists in support of their view, let us first see what Psychology means. The word 'Psychology ' has been derived from the Greek words 'psyche', which means the soul, and 'Logos' referring to Science. So the derivative

meaning of the word 'Psychology' is the Science of the Soul. Taking this sense into consideration, the ancient Philosophers discussed the nature of soul, the relation of soul and matter, God and his relation to soul, immortality of soul, re-birth, relation of body with soul etc. and brought all these under the subject matter of Psychology. They defined psychology as the Science of the soul.

Ancient Greek Philosophers like plato and Aristotle admitted the existence of soul, though they differed about the nature of soul.

² Even the modern Psychologists like Stout, ³ Mc. Dougall ⁴ etc.

think that though the question whether there is some separate mental entity besides the mental processes, is not the question of psychology, yet we must admit the hypothesis of mind in order to make psychology possible. We can easily imagine mind and body as separate entities, but in reality they are inseparable. It is absurd to think of the acting human body without the existence of mind in it, or the existence of mind minus body. The term ' Psychology ' also refers to 'mind ' as the subject-matter of psychology. 'Psychology' without ' Psyche ' is meaningless. Though the mind or soul is not sensible, yet we can know mind through its activities, i.e. thinking, feeling and willing. So we can say that Psychology is the study of the mental processes or of the processes of the mind which thinks and feels through the via-media of body and

tries to achieve some end. Now the question is : are Philosophy and Psychology inter-related disciplines ?

Modern Psychologists answer negatively. They opine that Psychology can be studied as a branch of natural science and they claim to place it by the side of Physics, Chemistry, Botany etc. They also think that the relation between Philosophy and Psychology is exactly the same as that of Philosophy to these other sciences. According to them, Psychology as a natural science should deal with with study of mental processes only with a view to discovering the laws of their combination and development and should not make use of any explanatory hypothesis regarding the ultimate nature of these processes or of mind. To discuss about the ultimate nature of soul or mind is the task of Philosophy, not of Psychology. Philosophy must not dictate to Psychology with regard to its method, aim and content.

This attitude of the majority of modern Psychologists has its stand on the following grounds :

FIRSTLY , they argue that if with the help of the data supplied by observation and experiment, it is possible to lay down with accuracy and precision the universal laws underlying phenomena in all departments of the physical world, there is no reason why such laws can not also be formulated with regard to the activities

of living organisms, mental states and processes. The introduction of experimental methods in Psychology with brilliant success has added strength to the demand that Psychology should be completely separated from Philosophy.

SECONDLY , the increasing knowledge of the structure of the nervous system including the brain and of the functions performed by its different parts has led to the discovery of a close relationship between mental life and its Physiological basis. As a result, it has been possible to study mental processes in close co-relation to Physiological processes with the help of the exact methods employed in Science: It is, therefore, contended that a Psychologist can be completely indifferent to questions concerning the ultimate nature of mind and mind-body relation which may be reserved for the metaphysician. In this connection, we may refer to Swāmi Abhedānanda's view about modern Psychology. Swāmi Abhedānanda, in his book, ' True Psychology', says that modern Psychology (western) teaches Psychology, " not in the sense of science of the psyche or soul, out in the sense of Physiological origin and ordering of the mind." According to him, modern psychology is not true psychology, " True Psychology recognizes the existence of body, mind and soul. But the modern Physiological Psychology admits the existence of body only and nothing else"⁵

Now before considering the arguments of the modern Psychologists it is necessary to discuss the relationship between Philosophy and other branches of natural science .

Metaphysics is an enquiry into the ultimate nature of the universe as a whole. A science deals with a particular section of the universe. A Scientist does not enter into the facts belonging to the other fields of enquiry. It is not his business to determine the ultimate nature of the universe as a whole. Again, every science has its special methods for the purpose of carrying on its investigations. So long as a science confines its investigations strictly within its own limits, the necessity of examining the ultimate validity of the assumptions which it makes does not arise. But there arises a stage in the development of every science when such an examination has to be undertaken, and it can be undertaken only by metaphysics. When it is found that the categories used in one science come in conflict with those made in another, there arise some problems which necessarily lead to some metaphysical questions. Hence it is quite clear that the different branches of natural science can not be altogether separated from metaphysics. They must be related to the latter.

Psychologists also find it necessary to make certain assumptions regarding the subject-matter of their study. Thus

the Faculty Psychologists believe that the various forms of experiences which a person has are nothing but the activities performed by different faculties belonging to the soul.

The Associationists like Hume, Berkeley, Mill, Bain etc assume that mind is nothing but a stream of ideas and all mental life is to be explained by reference to the action of ideas on one another.

According to the Neo-realists like Holt, Margin, Perry, Russell, Alexander etc. ideas, thoughts, perceptions etc. of which mind is supposed to be composed and which are regarded as bits of consciousness, are identical with the objects of the physical world.

Again, the Behaviourists like Watson deny the necessity of using such term as 'mind', 'consciousness' or any term which refers to mind or Consciousness. To them mind is nothing but the sum-total of the re-actions made by nervous system in response to stimuli operating on it. They try to explain all the behaviours of human being with the formula, $S \rightarrow R$ (stimulus \rightarrow Response). According to Watson, '.....The time seems to have come when Psychology must discard all reference to consciousness, when

it need no longer delude itself into thinking that it is making mental states the object of observation'.
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He goes further and says, 'It is possible to write a psychology, to define it as the "Science of behaviour", and never go back on the definition ; never to use the terms consciousness, mental states, mind, will, imagery and the like It can be done in terms of stimulus and response, in terms of habit formation and the like.....'⁶ It is metaphysics which can examine these hypotheses or notions concerning mind and to test the ultimate validity of these assumptions made in connection with its nature and activities. Psychology must also, therefore, be related to metaphysics.

That Psychology can not be separated from Philosophy becomes evident, when we consider the nature of meaning. The essential nature of consciousness consists in referring to or meaning something. A conscious process is not merely something that simply occurs, but points to something outside it. It is because our thought processes have meanings that there is for us a common objective world. If there were no consciousness there would be no such thing as meaning. Thus Psychology as the Science of consciousness and Philosophy having meaning as its

subject-matter are inseparably related.

Thinking is a mental process. A Psychologist can only give us a causal explanation of why we actually think as we do. When we think, we feel that the movement of thought is impelled by an immanent necessity. Psychology which claims to be a merely descriptive science gives us an account of thought which must be defective since it does not take this aspect of thinking process into account. So Psychology can never be thought of as an experimental natural science in the strict sense unless the particular metaphysical hypothesis with regard to the nature of mind is true, and in making that admission he implicitly becomes a metaphysician.

Thus psychology is dependent upon philosophy in a special sense. Philosophy must have the right to undertake a critical examination of the methods employed in Psychological investigations, to point out the limitations under which they are to work.

But if Psychology is dependent upon Philosophy from one point of view, Philosophy also is dependent upon Psychology from another point of view. It we are to have knowledge of reality at all, we must depend upon experience and that experience must be as broadbased as possible. Mental states and processes are

not merely important in themselves but they are also important, because it is only through them that we can come into contact with the external world. When we try to understand the meanings of space, time, matter, causality etc, we find that a particular mental process is essential by which they come to be known. Psychology studies these processes and an accurate study of these processes throw much light on the ultimate nature of mind.

Man is endowed with the power of thinking. With the help of this thinking faculty, he tries to evaluate the objective validity of the ideals of truth, morality and beauty. The way in which we actually think or act or feel, is, in most cases, influenced by these ideals, and accordingly, there grows up the philosophy of Logic, the philosophy of Ethics or the Philosophy of Aesthetics or the philosophy of Art. Now Psychology as a science studies the mental processes like thinking, feeling and willing. An accurate study of these processes enriches philosophy by giving important data or materials, and with the help of these materials the onward march of philosophy continues in different directions.

We can therefore, say that Philosophy also is dependent upon psychology for much of its materials. So

Philosophy and Psychology are inter-related disciplines.

But we should not forget that while philosophy has to build

on Psychology and the results of Psychological research,

it must necessarily pass beyond psychology.

Section-II Claims of Intellect and Intuition as
a source of knowledge of Reality.

Metaphysics, which is an integral part of Philosophy starts with the reflective distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality'. The distinction between things as they appear to us and things as they are in themselves, between 'phenomena' and 'noumena' seems inevitable. Since reality may be different from what it appears to be, the question that naturally agitates our mind is : have we no means of knowing reality or is the knowledge of 'Things-in-themselves', i.e. super-sensuous noumena possible ?

In answer to this question we are to discuss first the different sources of knowledge and then to judge the legitimacy of their claims as the sources of the knowledge of reality.

The different theories of the sources of knowledge are Empiricism, Rationalism, Criticism, Intuitionism etc.

Taken strictly, Empiricism is the theory which holds that all human knowledge comes from sense-experience. There are no innate ideas in our mind, and that whatever can not be verified by sense experience is unreal. To the empiricists

the method of philosophy is inductive. With the help of generalisation from particular facts of experience we get the knowledge of universal truths, even the law of causation, the law of Identity, the law of contradiction etc. The materials of knowledge are sensations and reflections. From sensation we get the knowledge of the external world and by reflection we get the knowledge of our different mental states. The Empiricists admit that sense-experience can not give us the knowledge of general concept and universal truth. It is through generalisation from particular observed facts that we get the knowledge of them. Hence, if philosophy is to give us true knowledge about facts, it must be based on sense-experience.

In the history of western Philosophy the Sophists like Protagoras, Gorgeas etc. of ancient Greece are called Empiricists, and as modern Empiricists the names of Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Hume etc. are note-worthy.

Philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz etc. regard reason as the source of knowledge. They are called Rationalists because they accept reason instead of experience as the source of Philosophical knowledge. Both the Empiricists and the Rationalists are opposed to authority.

in the sphere of philosophical study. For both, the aim of philosophy is the attainment of a system of universal and necessary principles which are logically inter-related. But while the empiricists believe that philosophy can attain its object with the help of sense-experience only, the Rationalists deny this and hold that Philosophy must be based on thought or reason alone. Hence if philosophy is to give us certain and universal knowledge, it must be based on such principles as are self-evident and are absolutely certain. Thought or reason has in it some such self-evident and necessary principles. These are natural to or inherent in reason. They are innate or apriori truths which lie implicit in the mind from our birth and prior to all experience. Philosophy must start from such self-evident and a priori truths, and pass from these to others which necessarily follow from them. So the method of Philosophy is deductive.

The difficulties of Empiricism and Rationalism led Kant, the great German Philosopher, to formulate another theory, namely ' Criticism'. This method tries to find out by analysis the conditions which make knowledge possible. True knowledge consists of two characteristics-

universality and necessity. But from experience we never get necessity and universality. According to Kant, there are some apriori elements of human knowledge and these elements are true of all minds. Space, time, causality, substantiality etc. are such forms and ideas or categories which govern all knowledge because they are inherent in the mind of all rational beings like us. The Characteristics of true knowledge universality and necessity, can only be explained with the help of these apriori elements.

According to Kant, knowledge is a joint product of experience and reason. Experiences supply the data or materials of knowledge in the form of sensations. These are interpreted by the mind through the application of the apriori forms and categories of space, time, substance, causality etc. It is in this way that we get the knowledge of the external world existing in space and time. But the world which we know can not be regarded as real in the strict sense. It is rather a world which we construct out of the materials supplied by sensations and by application of the form and categories supplied by mind. That is why, Kant says, 'Understanding makes

What we know is not reality as it is in-itself, but as it appears through our senses and the categories of our mind or understanding. We can not know anything except through sense-intuition and the categories. Therefore, according to this theory, we can never know Reality or things-in-themselves, although the reason in us may be under the necessity of thinking of them. Our knowledge is limited to the world of phenomena or appearances and Reality remains for us 'unknown and unknowable'.⁸ Beyond phenomena there are, no doubt, the noumena as the sources of sensation. But neither Science nor Philosophy enables us to know what they are.

Henry Bergson, the famous French Philosopher, advocates Intuitionism as a theory of the source of Philosophical knowledge. He maintains that the veil between our mind and Reality which is supposed to keep them apart for all times is of our own making. Our failure to get a glimpse of the nature of Reality is the dependence of Philosophers on the traditional methods of Philosophizing.

Bergson is essentially an anti-intellectualist. He holds that conceptual knowledge can never give us an insight

into the nature of Reality. Concepts are only substitutes for immediacy. However clear, definite and precise the concepts may be, like most substitutes they fall short of their originals. If we depend solely or mainly on concepts for our knowledge of the real nature of the world, we are bound to be disappointed. Does it mean that we have to adopt an agnostic attitude towards Reality and declare that it is unknowable ? Not necessarily, says Bergson. There is another way of coming into contact with Reality, and it is directly or immediately apprehending Reality as it is in-itself. This is the famous Bergsonian method of Intuition. By 'Intuition' Bergson understands 'A kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible'.⁹ It is an act which we perform frequently. For example, when we plunge ourselves in the depths of our own experience, we feel ourselves most intimately within our own life, that is to say, we intuit ourselves. When I intuit myself in this way I get a direct or immediate insight into myself. The barrier between 'I' as the knower and 'me' as the known

disappears, and the two become one. This direct insight into myself is not mediated by intellectual categories. This can not be even called knowledge because there is no distinction between subject and object, between subject and predicate, between substance and attributes, cause and effect etc. Bergson thinks that by constant practice and concentration of effort we can perform this act of intuition and apply it to the so-called external world also. It is possible to have a direct and immediate apprehension i.e. intuition of the external world just as it is possible to have such an apprehension of our self. The dynamic reality which appears to us as a world of finite things with fixed boundary lines is called 'Elan Vital' or the ceaseless flux of life by Bergson. Therefore, it is not by thought that cuts up the moving flow of Reality into static concepts and ideas, but only by sinking deep into our inmost being, and by being one with it, we shall have an immediate experience of this basic flow of life within us. Without this "intellectual sympathy" we can have no metaphysical knowledge in the true sense.

Intuition is a power of consciousness near and more intimate to the knowledge by identity. It, however, is likely to be misinterpreted and mixed with other mental elements. There are various types of Intuition proper to different levels, vital, physical and mental. Bergson's intuition is typical of vital level. Bergson says, " By intuition I mean instinct that becomes disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and enlarging it indefinitely".¹⁰

For the ancient Indian thinkers Philosophy is a direct experience or realization of absolute truth and Reality (Darśana) and not merely a matter of intellectual understanding of or theoretical speculation about truth and Reality. They think that philosophy must be based on the experiences of the self within and the world outside us. These experiences may be either the normal experiences of ordinary men or the intuitive experiences of saints, seers and prophets.

Among the Indian systems of Philosophy the Cārvāka, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya take ordinary experience as the

basis of philosophy. But the systems like the Buddha, the Jaina, the Mimāṃsā and the Vedānta hold that from ordinary experience we can not form any correct idea of ultimate reality. In these matters we must depend on the intuitions of seers and saints who have a direct realization of such things and whose experiences have been preserved for us in the scriptures. Hence, study of these scriptures (Śravana) initiates a student of Philosophy to the search of ultimate truth.

The second step in Philosophical study, according to the ancient Indian Philosophers, is reasoning or rational understanding (manana). Here it is advised to examine thoroughly all experiences including the teachings of the scriptures and see for oneself whether there is any contradiction in the teachings of the scriptures. A rational and critical study of all experiences is thus necessary for the attainment of philosophical knowledge.

But the realization of Philosophical truths does not come by way of reasoning alone. By means of criticism and reasoning we can find out the errors in our experiences,

and in the ideas and concepts based on them. But by mere reasoning we can neither know the truth nor realize it. For the realization of philosophical truths all Indian thinkers, excepting the Cārvākas, recommend moral purification, contemplation (nididhyāsana) and concentration (Yoga) as the necessary means. To them, these constitute the most important part of the method of philosophy. All proofs that have so far been given by philosophers in support of the truths of Philosophy like God, self, immortality, freedom etc. leave us as unconvinced as ever. What is necessary is a direct experience of these truths. And this must be attained by constant contemplation of these truths. The truths of philosophy can not be verified in sense-experience, nor can we prove them scientifically. The only way in which they can be known by us is rational reflection on and constant contemplation of them. K.C. Bhattacharyya has truly said, 'Metaphysics, or more generally, philosophy, is not only actual knowledge, but is not even literal thought; and yet its contents are contemplated as true in the faith that is only by such contemplation that absolute truth can be known'.¹¹

S E C T I O N- III

A combined approach as found in Bergson
and in Existentialism.

Intellect and intuition, as faculties of knowledge, cannot be discarded outright. In Indian Philosophy, we see that the necessity of both intellect and intuition has been strongly recommended as a combined method of knowing the Reality. The necessity of both has been admitted also by Dr.S.Radhakrishnan when he says,"..... no intuitive experience can be the basis of a philosophical truth unless intellect endorses it, and that it is only if we make intuition intellectual that there is any chance of communicating our intuitions to others"¹². In Bergsonian Philosophy also we see that his 'intellectual sympathy' does not exclude intellect as a faculty of knowledge, though he is the Chief exponent of Intuitionism. The introduction of Intuitionism in his philosophy is no doubt the starting point of a revolution in an age of apotheosis of reason and it is by this method that he wins a credit no less than any great thinker of the world. Bergson defines intuition as " a kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself

within the object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible"¹³. This definition makes intuition a fabrication of intelligence, a part and parcel of it. Here intuition is confined to the intellectual domain. His other definitions of intuition as 'intellectual expansion' or 'intellectual auscultation' also prove that he desires to distinguish intellect and intuition not as separate faculties of knowledge but distinct within the same faculty. In one of his books he also tells us about the co-operation between faith and reason, intuition and intellect. As he remarks, "dialectic is necessary to put intuition to the proof, necessary also in order that intuition should break into concepts and so be propagated to other men"¹⁴. From this remark it is clear that he admits the co-operation of intellect and intuition though their functions are different the one theoretical and the other practical. Intuition has nothing to do with material problems, so it is non-practical, whereas intelligence is practical in the sense that intelligence is constituted to act mechanically on matter which has no access to the problems of life. The flow of life is the flow of intuition and the inverted flow resulting in the production

of matter is tackled by practical intelligence. So we see that Bergson admits intuition and intelligence as the two faculties of knowledge, one giving us the knowledge of the flow of life and the other affording us the knowledge of matter. Bergson thinks that intelligence occupies an intermediate status keeping instinct on one side and intuition on the other. Intelligence, he says, is the "only road leading from the infra-intellectual to the supra-intellectual"¹⁵ That is to say, instinctive knowledge may be developed into intuitive one and the path of progress runs through the reign of intelligence.

We, therefore, see that though anti-intellectualist, Bergson is not true to his Intuitionism of which he is so eloquent. In fact, Bergson knew that without reason or intellect no intuitive philosophy is possible. That is why, this truth finds its expression in his definition of 'Intuition' where he says, it is a kind of 'Intellectual sympathy'. So, it is clear that Bergson's Intuitionism is not pure Intuitionism, rather it is a combined method of intellect and Intuition.

This combined approach is found in Existentialism also .

Existentialism is generally supposed to be the Philosophy of emotions and actions. But it is also a philosophy of intellect or reason, because an analysis of human existence and emotional attitudes to life and society as undertaken by the Existentialists, is not possible without the exercise of the intellectual or rational faculty. However, the Existentialists make use of reason for explaining what they understand by existence ; but that is a part of philosophical activity, and they do not hold that reason is necessarily a source of knowledge.

The Existentialists have expressed their views regarding human being, its relation with other beings in the world, freedom of will, causation, the nature of the world as a whole, existence etc. They give arguments in support of their views and try to refute the theories held by others and are thus not quite faithful to their creed of irrationalism. At the same time they put forward the claim that their fundamental doctrines are based on intuition or direct insight. Besides, being confronted by the world, the Existentialists give us accounts of their subjective feelings and emotions like dread, anguish, nausea,

loneliness, abandonment etc. They have described these subjective feelings and emotions, and this might not have been possible without the exercise of intellect or reason as a Philosophical activity. Although as an existentialist Kierkegaard bases his philosophy upon feeling and intuition as a way of realization of truth as subjectivity, he is not antagonistic to reason, but he dis-approves abstract Idealism which gives absolute authority to pure reason. He maintains a harmony between reason and feeling or imagination and says that they should be unified in simultaneity. As he says, " Science.....are unified in existence" ¹⁶

He does not deprecate thought or reason, but says that reason should be tinged with feeling or emotion, reason should be emotional, so to say. A reason, that is, totally dissociated from feeling and emotion is a bad reason, that is, not reason proper. As he says, " And just as it is an as bad as losing his reason". Reason must be concrete, not abstract, i.e. it must recognize the emotional aspect of existence, otherwise it becomes a misnomer, having no connection with human life and existence.