

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 6 | Issue 6

2023

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A Comparative Analysis of Indian and Western Political and Philosophical Thoughts with Respect to the Concepts of State of Nature and Self – Consciousness

S. RAM SIVANU¹

ABSTRACT

Philosophy is considered as one of the basic discipline of almost every branch of social sciences. We can see traces of philosophy in politics, history, economics, geography, psychology and even science. Philosophy was considered to be logical only if it fitted with science. Philosophy was considered largely as a product of westerners till the early or late 18th century. But, then it was started to be considered that not only philosophy but every subject had its base even from Asian background which pre – existed western thoughts. It is to be noted that on a parallel path Asian philosophy was much developed even centuries before the dawn of Western philosophy during various Western renaissance period. Some of them are Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Kanada, Mahavira and many more. Indian Philosophical arena consisted of various ancient such texts including the Vedas, Upanishads, Advaita, Vedanta and many more. The Indian philosophy can be considered as one of the widest in application and it was applied in real life to some extent. In this paper I would like to do a comparative analysis of two concepts from Indian Philosophy. In this notion first I would like to give a comparison between the philosophical aspect of Matsyanyaya and state of nature according to European philosophers with an essence of polity, then comparison between Hegelian views and the Indian Advaita – Vedanta thought in a complete philosophical sense. Through these observations I would like to establish a connection between these theories and analyse them from a perspective of a student and a researcher. Finally, I would like to give my conclusions and my observations.

Keywords: *Matsyanyayamudbhavayati, Self – Consciousness, Geist, Absolute Idea, Supreme Consciousness, Brahman.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this modern world we study various subjects. We learn about hundreds of subjects and its further developing diversifications, as there is no end to human endeavour and as long as

¹ Author is a student at VIT School of Law, India.

researches progress, development of new studies would continue. But, some subjects are considered as basic structure for various subjects. We regard these as fundamental subjects and some of those fundamental subjects are Science, Arithmetic, language, art, history, business etc., Out of which philosophy is a very important subject as political science itself was derived from philosophy. Other subjects like epistemology (philosophy of knowledge and truth), metaphysics (philosophy of reality and being), logic (philosophy of arguments and reasoning) and axiology (philosophy of aesthetics and ethics) and many more. Even as mentioned political thoughts are considered philosophy and a great proof to that statement is that we often regard Plato, Aristotle and Socrates one of the greatest political thinkers as “philosophers” and we minimally use the word “Political thinker” for them.

Such a great subject has such great philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, T.H. Green and many others. The philosophers, I have mentioned are mostly European. Many of such European Philosophers thought that Asian continent lacks in such philosophical thought and conscience. But, it is to be noted that Asian continent had a parallel line of philosophical running along. Some of these philosophical thoughts are in practice still now in various parts of this world including Confucianism in parts of East Asia and even Yoga, a philosophical physical practice to integrate Mind and Soul has spread to various parts of the globe. Out of this Asian philosophy, Indian philosophy is shining as a precious gem out of many other precious teachings. In this paper, I would like to do a comparative analysis of two western theories and two Indian theories respectively. First, I would like to do a comparative analysis of the ancient Indian concept of Matsyanyaya and state of nature according to European scholars in a background of “political” philosophy. Next, secondly I would like to compare and analyse the ideas of Hegel on self – consciousness and the Advaita – Vedanta philosophy of India. In both these cases we can notice that Indian philosophy is much older than the Western. Finally, I would like to give my conclusions and observations on my analysis. I hope that I would be able to make the reader understand how Indian philosophy was more advanced than the Western philosophy which developed almost centuries after the Westerners started to formulate their thoughts.

I would like to dedicate this paper to my professors, Dr. Kunaljeet Roy and Dr. O.B. Roopesh whose lectures and interactions motivated me to take on this task.

II. MATSYA NYAYA AND STATE OF NATURE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN SCHOLARS

Our Ancient Indian political thought had various distinct ideas and one of such idea is Matsyanyaya. Before entering into the realm of “Matsyanyaya”, I would like to explain

regarding the European concept of state of nature. State of Nature is a situation that is assumed by scholars to be the situation that pre – existed before the advent of the society. Such State of Nature explanations and theories are found in the prime areas of the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke. Out of them I would like to analyse Hobbes then compare him with Kautilya and then views of other people like Aristotle and Charles Darwin.

Thomas Hobbes, (1588 – 1679) was an English philosopher, scientist, and historian, best known for his political philosophy, which was discussed in his established work, *Leviathan* (1651). In this work Hobbes established his famous social contract theory according to which at the dawn of humans, men lived in a state of nature which posed a danger to his life so for protection he entered into a social contract with a stronger person by sacrificing their rights in order to protect them in return.

According to him State of Nature is a situation or time period when everyone on this world are equal and everyone had access to every resource and the status of “ownership” was not identified and because of that protection of such resources for an individual was not possible. To quote him “Nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another.... For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself”². To analyse his statement men were actually not equal in terms of strengths and weaknesses and the strong one tended to overpower the weak and the weak one sighting only sinister ways to defeat the strong uses them to secure his position. This is how, the state of nature worked. Eventhough men are considered equal and should anyone else deny this superiority or claim equality, the only way to decide the question would be by battle, since there is neither an agreed standard of value nor an agreed judge³. Hobbes thus asks to kill the strongest by secret contrivances.

Because of such violent and conflict filled nature of living, Hobbes concludes in his view that in state of nature always men will be in a state of war as “Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withaland which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent

² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter XIII, Page 76.

³ Chaitali Ghosh, Page 53 of Chapter III Hobbes and the individual (PhD Dissertation submitted to University of Calcutta).

death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”⁴. We can interpret from this statement of him that man is always in constant danger for life because of which a man’s life is expected to be short and violent and not long or not in a way atleast short and enjoyable. Also, he says such a state of war leads to no development to mankind and thus bears no fruit to him. According to him man was selfish in this state of nature because man was always envying on other’s property so as to get himself more. He described man as a very lowliest creature to portray the state of nature as a dangerous state of living eventhough it guaranteed men unlimited liberty. So, in order to escape and avoid such a situation and to protect ourselves we enter into a system of social contract to protect not only our interests but, also the interests of the minority who are weak.

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), the great Greek philosopher in his prime work, *Politics*, says that “It is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without state is either a bad man or above humanity: he is like the ‘Tribeless, lawless and heartless one’,”⁵. The situation which Aristotle refers to while explaining about a man without state is actually the state of nature in crux. Similar to the writings of Hobbes where he mentioned humans are “brutish” and “selfish”, here Aristotle, mentions it as “Tribeless, lawless and heartless”. Moreover he mentions that state is a creation of nature whereby which he establishes state as an organic entity, and thus by virtue of it refers to the society that Hobbes has mentioned as “state of nature in an indirect way.

Now, I am going to discuss regarding the theory of *Matsyanyaya*. To explain the etymology of the term, “*Matsya*” means fish and “*Nyaya*” means justice. Chanakya or Kautilya (375 BCE – 283 BCE) is an Indian political thinker, scholar, philosopher and economist. He is considered as the teacher of the first Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. Chanakya is known for two of his works which are *Arthashastra* and *Neeti Shastra* respectively. In his work *Arthashastra*, Chanakya explains about the theory of *Matsya Nyaya*. The Etymology of the term “*Arthashastra*” comes from a combination of two Sanskrit terms called “*Artha*” meaning wealth and “*Shastra*” meaning Science.

So, *Arthashastra* is regarded as science of wealth. *Matsyanyayamudbhavayati* is a concept where there is a pretext which is a real life phenomenon that the large fishes eat up the small fishes. In his *Arthashastra* Kautilya mentions that “But when the law of punishment is kept in abeyance, it gives rise to such disorder as is implied in the proverb of fishes

⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter XIII, Page 78.

⁵ Aristotle, (translated by Benjamin Jowett), *Politics*, Part II, Book I, Page 5.

(*matsyanyayamudbhavayati*); for in the absence of a magistrate (*dandadharabhava*), the strong will swallow the weak; but under his protection, the weak resist the strong”⁶. So, as per his thoughts, when a king is going to be lenient or the punishment is going to be not enforced, then Matsyanyaya would take place by which the strongest will start to exploit and dominate the weaker section. This can be noted as an Indian state of nature. While Hobbes said that to avoid state of nature we entered Social Contract, Kautilya speaks about what possibility may lead to such a state of nature and potential danger. He also states that such a Matsyanyaya is nothing but an anarchy because of which everyone will have a threat to their life and property. This leads us to another serious connection of the theory of survival of the fittest as enunciated by Charles Darwin in his book *On the Origin of Species* in which he says that only those species that are adaptable to change will survive and emerge as the fittest. If we connect this preposition with Matsyanyaya, we can deduct that only those who are stronger are going to survive and not the weaker or “small fishes” as per Matsyanyaya. This was illustrated by Chanakya to show that a king should not allow such Matsyanyaya to be entertained in his kingdom and the foremost duty of the king is to protect not only the big fishes but, also the smaller fishes. Also, this illustrates the king should be ruthless towards anarchy builds again a connection between the ideas of Italian political thinker Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), who in his magnum opus *Prince* says that “war is just when there’s no alternative and arms are sacred when they are your only hope”⁷ and such a situation arises during anarchy.

The means of secret contrivances that Hobbes asks to use in a state of nature, was also actually given by Kautilya. Kautilya says that if a king is not able to defeat another in war because of his own weakness, then he may choose some secret contrivances to defeat that king. *Arthashastra*, book – IV, consists completely of such secret contrivances and dedicated to this topic. To quote him “IN order to protect the institution of the four castes, such measures as are treated of in secret science shall be applied against the wicked”⁸. In this chapter Chanakya speaks about various kinds of poisons and the way to create them using the mixture of various kinds of plants and animal waste and dead remains of various animals. He also details about the impacts of each poison and at what time after prescribing such poison one will die. He ranges it from immediate death to slow poisoning by which one may die after a month of such prescription. Then, he goes on to say about the poisons or other ill – medications which may lead to the partial paralysis or any other disability like blindness or deafness. Further, he also

⁶ Kautilya, (translated in English by R. Shamasastri), Page 15, Chapter IV, Book I Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*.

⁷ Niccolò Machiavelli, (translated and introduced by Tim Parks), Page 103, Chapter 26, *The Prince*.

⁸ Kautilya, (translated in English by R. Shamasastri), Page 584 of Chapter I, Book – IV, Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*.

mentions who must be giving those poisons to enemies. He says that the Mlechchas or Avarnas or the outcaste people should work as a spy in disguise of a lunatic or a dwarf in order to outsmart the enemy. Next he speaks about the black magic and other tantras or spiritual practices and procedures through which one can defeat the enemy where he speaks about using human skulls as an ingredient. Finally he speaks about the remedies for such poisons and other injuries. In a way apart from being a Political Strategist he has also been an experimentalist in the arena of Botany which is proved by his vast knowledge of Human and Animal Anatomy and reactions of Human body and medicinal and poisonous herbs.

Thus, even though Kautilya's ideas are much relatable to that of Hobbes on this concept of State of Nature, still we can see that there is no such mentioning. Kautilya's idea on Matsyanyaya and Hobbes idea on State of Nature can be seen in both the view points that both the scholars wanted the humankind to escape from such a situation. Even though the basic background in both these cases are similar and relatable, it is to mention that both the theories perspective changes where, Kautilya speaks about possible anarchical establishment against the king, which a king may defeat and on another side we can see that Hobbes asking the individual to enter into social contract to escape himself from the evil and brutish life in state of nature.

III. IDEAS OF HEGEL ON SELF – CONSCIOUSNESS AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF ADVAITA AND VEDANTA

The first analysis was partly based on polity and philosophy. Whereas now, I am going to analyse a complete philosophical idea in nature by comparatively analyzing the ideas of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel on self-consciousness and the Indian philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta. First, I would like to analyse the philosophy of Hegel.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831) was born on 27th August, 1770 in Stuttgart, Germany. He was an avid reader from childhood and used to read the Bible, Shakespearean Literature and ancient Greek philosophy with interest. He graduated from Tubingen Seminary in theology in 1793. Languages he knew were German, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French and English. In 1801, he was appointed as a professor at University of Jena where he lectured on Logic and Metaphysics. In 1802 he authored his first book titled "The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's systems of Philosophy". His magnum opus "Phenomenology of Mind" was published by him in 1805. In 1808 he was appointed as the headmaster of a Gymnasium (The term "gymnasium", which originally denoted a sports facility in ancient Greece, came into use in Germany in the early 16th century for grammar schools and Latin schools, primarily those whose offerings exceeded the normal educational objectives or curriculum) in

Nuremberg, a post which he held till 1816. He applied his theory that he enunciated in his book phenomenology of Mind in this gymnasium. From 1816 to 1818 he taught at University of Heidelberg and then he accepted the offer to chair the Department of Philosophy at University of Berlin where he worked till his death in 1831. The discussion of Hegel's philosophy arises on the basis of three of works and they are Phenomenology of Mind, Science of Logic and Philosophy of Right. Hegel bases much of his philosophical arguments on the arguments of Immanuel Kant another German Philosopher. Hegel's philosophy centered on the concept that this world consisted of various contradictory things in nature including subject and object of knowledge, mind and nature, self and other etc., Hegel tried to interpret them into a comprehensive, rational unified component which he called the "absolute idea". He tries to find this missing link between these contradictions. He said in order to know and experience this absolute idea one should be able to attain self – consciousness, which one can obtain by following dialectics. This we can consider as a nut shell of his philosophy.

To understand Hegel, we need to know Kant's philosophy from whom Hegelian thought further developed. Immanuel Kant was one of the prominent German Philosophers before the advent of Hegel. In his work "The Critique of Pure Reason", Kant gave his own interpretation of the universe. By his own findings he declared that the Universe is divided into two realities called "noumena" and phenomenon". He called noumenon as the "thing in itself" (Ding an Sich) or "things in themselves" (Dinge an Sich). Noumena are all the things which we get by our experiences both physical and mental. It is more of a direct answer to a question that is been asked. Phenomenon is those things which appear us to be in perception and through which we actually ponder deep into things. This phenomenon is divided into two by Kant which he calls one as sensation which arises because of the experiences that one gets and the another is the subjective apparatus which causes us various types of diverse manifold thinking and thoughts because of such a sensation or experience. Noumenon is the philosophical unity between all the things in this world. Phenomenon on the other hand is our perceptions on the universe. He says it is difficult to find out the noumenon because a normal or average human life always follows only the phenomenon and not Noumenon as most of the time he always has only his own perception of a thing. We cannot determine the thing in itself or the reality or Noumenon as they are not in space and time and only our thoughts or phenomenon are in time and space.

Hegel criticized Kant as he thought that the view of Kant that knowing the fundamental truth Noumena is impossible is wrong and Hegel conveyed that "thing in itself" can be found by 'being – in – itself'. Hegel is on the view that to be in itself one should develop his self – consciousness. But, such self – consciousness can be achieved only if it is acknowledged by

others and by entering another individual's self – consciousness.

Hegel states that the Universe or world consists of various contradictory elements. Such contradictory elements exist in pairs. He explains about three kinds of such contradictions and they are :

- a) Being : Strikingly right opposites pairs in a way it should be related to one another but, should have nothing to do with it. Example : Being Nothing and Quantity or Quality. One gives that there is nothing and other gives the thought that it has some characteristic.
- b) Essence : The opposites should imply one another. Example : Inner and Outer.
- c) Notion : It is a highly sophisticated form of contradiction like Universality and Particularity.

Hegel says that to know the existence of this common thread running through such contradictory elements leads to absolute idea. Hegel insists on this absolute idea probably as a substitute to God. According to Hegel even History will become meaningless when we attain this absolute idea as the goal of history itself is to emphasise on freedom of the spirit of “Geist”. When this ultimate freedom or absolute idea is achieved then there is no need for such a History.

Hegel says that this common thread or his absolute idea can be experienced only if one develops self – consciousness. This self – consciousness as per him must be developed through Dialectics. The English word 'dialectic' is derived from two Greek words, 'Dia' and 'Legien' which mean, discourse, debate, discussion and so on⁹. Dialectics is a process where, a subject matter is divided into two as he believes that no subject matter can be made understandable to humans unless it is expressed in two extremes. One end will be the thesis and another end antithesis or the opposite of the notion. The debate of reality between the two is resolved by synthesis. It is a deductive method by which according to Hegel one can achieve the reality or self – consciousness. According to Hegel the Thesis is “Abstract”, the Antithesis is “negative” and synthesis is “concrete”. According to Hegel himself “It is in this dialectic as it is here understood, that is, in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative, that speculative thought consists”¹⁰.

Thus, Hegel's philosophy asks us to follow his dialectical method to attain self – consciousness and thus leading us to find the missing link between contradictions of universe to know absolute truth. This absolute truth, is we replace it for God, then we get another premise that is Hegel

⁹ K. Dhirendra Ramsiej, Page 2 of Chapter V, Thought and Reality : A critical study of Hegel, (PhD Dissertation submitted to North – Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya).

¹⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Page 21, Introduction to General Notion of Logic, Science of Logic.

monotheistic.

The Indian Philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta were first written almost, centuries before birth of Hegel dated from 400 – 450 AD. Vedanta is one of the six schools of Hindu Indian philosophy including Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa. Today, Uttara Mimamsa is considered as Vedanta. The etymology of the word Vedanta is “Veda” meaning knowledge (possible reference to the four Vedas Rig, Yajur, Sama, Atharvana) and “Anta” meaning “end”. Vedanta is generally referred to as the parts of Upanishads which actually consists of this philosophy. Advaita is one of the prominent school of Vedanta philosophy which includes Advaita, Dwaita, Akshar – Purushottam Darshan, Shuddhadvaita, Achitya – Bheda – Abheda and Vitishtadwaita. The term Advaita is derived from two Sanskrit terms “a” meaning non and “dvaita” dualism.

Basically, Advaita philosophy was based on the concept of one and absolute God. Vedanta in sense is also related to Bhagavad Gita as Gita itself was a replication of Chandogya Upanishad. Chandogya Upanishad is one of the most important Upanishad in which actually the doctrine of Vedanta is planted. The Vedanta is actually based on the fundamental idea that the Universe first had a single Supreme Being (similar to the absolute idea of Hegel) from where beings sprang upon. This was upheld by Advaita philosophy and its prime follower Adhi Shankaracharya. I would like to explain the theory of self – consciousness and the idea similar to absolute idea of Hegel which is actually another version of monotheism or Hegel’s substitute for God with the help of excerpts from Bhagavad Gita, Chandogya Upanishad and literature of Shankaracharya.

So, let us start with Bhagavad Gita. A verse in Bhagavad Gita says “I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know”¹¹. As we have noted in Kant’s division of universe here we can see a similar division as phenomena and numinous. Further in another verse, Krishna says “Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies”¹². The eight elements mentioned in Gita is nothing but, the contradictory elements that Hegel mentions that makes up the entire universe. The terms mind and intelligence, intelligence and false ego are all such contradictory things that Hegel mentions in his philosophy. Further Lord Krishna says that it is he who the superior energy that consists of all the beings who exploit the natural resources. Thus, Krishna in this verse

¹¹ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 439, Chapter VII, The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

¹² A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 443, Chapter VII, The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

implicates the idea of the “Absolute Idea” as put forward by Hegel. As far as Bhagavad Gita is concerned, the Absolute Truth is the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and this is confirmed in every step. In this verse, in particular, it is stressed that the Absolute Truth is a person¹³. Katha Upanishad also further states that “He is the prime eternal among all eternals. He is the supreme living entity of all living entities, and He alone is maintaining all life. One cannot do anything without intelligence, and Krishna also says that He is the root of all intelligence. Unless a person is intelligent he cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna”¹⁴.

Further verse 15 Chapter 2 Valli 1 of Katha or Katho Upanishad states that “As pure water poured into pure water becomes the same only, so becomes the Atman of the thinker (sage) who knows this, (Unity of the Atman)”. Thus Katha Upanishad, also establishes the similar view of Hegel where he says that an individual’s self – consciousness achieves its desired results only if it is acknowledged by other self – consciousnesses. Here, Atman can be interpreted as the self – consciousness that Hegel is trying to communicate. The Bhagavad Gita says that “The real form of this tree (absolute idea of Hegel or absolute truth as mentioned in Gita) cannot be perceived in this world. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is. But with determination one must cut down this strongly rooted tree with the weapon of detachment. Thereafter, one must seek that place from which, having gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything began and from whom everything has extended since time immemorial¹⁵.

Adhi Shankaracharya (788 AD to 877 AD) is an Indian philosopher, saint and Vedic scholar. He belonged to the Advaita school of Vedanta which was actually started by his Adi Guru or his teacher Govinda Bhagavadpada’s guru, Gaudapada. Shankaracharya was born in Kalady and he is known to have went all over present India and Nepal on foot taking pilgrimages to different shrines and spreading his thought of Advaita and debating on various scholars supporting Advaita. In his works, Shankaracharya, works talked about the concepts of self – consciousness in a detailed manner.

Adhi Shankaracharya in his work “Nirvana Shatakam” spoke about such self - consciousness in a detailed way and it is considered as one of his early works. Nirvana Shatakam was considered as the reply that Shankaracharya gave to his guru Govinda Bhagavadpada when he asked the question “Who are you?”. A young Shankaracharya replied it in six stanzas. In this work, Shankaracharya says Neither am I the Mind, nor the Intelligence or Ego, Neither am I the

¹³ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 449, Chapter VII, The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

¹⁵ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 846, Chapter XV, The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

organs of Hearing (Ears), nor that of Tasting (Tongue), Smelling (Nose) or Seeing (Eyes), Neither am I the Sky, nor the Earth, Neither the Fire nor the Air, I am the Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness; I am Shiva, I am Shiva, The Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness". In this statement Shankaracharya tells about various contradictory factors that Hegel says and finally we can analyse that such contradictory factors can be linked by knowing that "I am Shiva" or "I am God". Which means that Shankaracharya actually through his Advaita establishes everyone is God by which the contradictions can be linked by a common thread thus, finally achieving the absolute idea or truth.

Further, this can be also analysed in the verses of Chandogya Upanishad which says :

- Ekam EvA dviteeyam (There is one without two (brahman))
- EkO devaH sarva bhUtAntarAtma (One consciousness in all the hearts)
- ekA bAshA bhUtakAruNya rUpa (One shining as form of divine mercy)
- ekam lakshyam sAmarasyam samEsham (One aim, to achieve equality among all)
- Ekam sarvam chittamAnanda pUrnam (One as ALL and as complete and eternal bliss).

This verses actually establishes that God resides within everyone and even says that consciousness resides within everyone. This can be noted as that self – consciousness is something which is not that much complicated as seen in Hegel's version but, it is simplified in a nutshell by the Indian philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta. The treatises of Vedanta and Advaita actually talks about achieving of such self – consciousness with the help of recognizing everyone as God and manifesting of God within everyone. An episode that happened in Shankaracharya's life itself is a testimony to that premise. Once, when Shankaracharya was in Kashi or Varanasi walking in one of the ghats of the holy city with his disciples, a Chandala or a person from lower caste or outcaste approached or went almost nearby Shankaracharya. The Chandala was also accompanied by four dogs and almost touched Shankaracharya. Shankaracharya when asks him to move away as Shankaracharya himself belonged to Brahmin caste. When asked to do so the Chandala responded "What shall I move ? My body of common clay or my soul of all pervading Consciousness ?". Hearing this Shankaracharya saw the vision of Lord Shiva in Chandala, thereby he replied that since, the Chandala has views oneness in every being, he considers the Chandala as his Guru. He also recognized that the four dogs are the four dogs.

By this instance, we can also identify that not only Hegel's self – consciousness and oneness in contradictory things was actually interpreted centuries before him but, even the concept of a

premature ‘equality’ was also established. This viewing of God in every being concept of Advaita as enunciated by Shankaracharya is actually an advanced version of what Hegel actually tries to explain. While Hegel says that one can know the absolute idea by attaining self – consciousness and for such procedure one need to follow dialectical method, actually Advaita and Shankaracharya says that by knowing that the “Absolute truth” or God exists within everyone is itself leads to self – consciousness and by further meditation by linking soul to mind one can achieve the supreme state of self – consciousness. Hegel asks us to find out where is the absolute idea but, Advaita gave the straight answer that absolute idea of Hegel which is supreme consciousness as per Indian philosophy rests within all and Brahman or Brahmin is not one who is a Brahmin by birth but, only by understanding this Truth. Whoever, understands this truth let it be anyone of any caste or religion, he is a “Brahman”. Bhagavad Gita says that “ The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]”¹⁶. Also, further it is stated in Chapter XVIII that “The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy”¹⁷. Further it is mentioned that all paths to religion surrenders me so one must renunciate all paths to religion and worship and surrender to the Supreme Lord.

Thus, the Indian philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta consisting of Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and teaching of Shankaracharya are not only actually similar to philosophy of Hegel and even Immanuel Kant. But, more advanced than him. Actually Hegel gave us the tip of the logic but, here the Indian philosophy gave the whole solution and path itself.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Indian philosophy is much more advanced than what we recognize as the Western Philosophy. The theory of Matsyanyaya actually gives us a striking resemblance to what most people refer to as “State of Nature”. Not only the theory of Matsyanyaya actually is similar to the European concept but, is an advanced level as the scholars has never ever gave any hint on how can the weak survive in such a state. Eventhough Hobbes suggested some secret contrivances, Kautilya actually listed out such various procedures for the survival of the weakest in such a state. Matsyanyaya is not only related with state of nature but, also related to the survival of the fittest theory as Kautilya actually lists out this procedure to break this theory for the weakest to succeed technically. Coming to Hegel’s concept on self – consciousness, he

¹⁶ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 353, Chapter V, The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

¹⁷ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Page 1003, Chapter XVIII The Bhagavad Gita as it is.

actually gives us a very highly complicated theory to achieve consciousness, while the Indian philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta actually gives us an easier route to achieve such consciousness. While Hegel gives us a question and asks us to search the path and solution, the Vedanta and Advaita gives us the key and solution with a path to follow to achieve such consciousness. Moreover, the Indian philosophy of Advaita and Vedanta actually gave us a form of primitive equality by which we have to follow in order to achieve such self – consciousness. In fact Vedanta, Advaita and Bhagavad Gita actually motivates us to see everyone in equal way (Samarasyam) in order to achieve or attain the state of supreme consciousness that Hegel wants us to achieve. By these we can thus understand that Indian Philosophy was not the oldest than Western philosophy but, also more advanced in understanding and reasoning.

Thus, I would like to conclude by saying that the Indian philosophy is much more advanced than what we hail such as the Western philosophy. If a crux or a small drop is given by Western scholars then such a thing is actually expanded and given in a way that it covers practicality, thesis, antithesis and procedural knowledge of such a subject by the Indian philosophy. The examples of Matsyanyaya and teachings of Advaita and Vedanta are the testimonies for this statement as we can see the essence of state of nature noted by Hobbes, survival of the fittest given by Darwin and Herbert Spencer in Matsyanyaya of Kautilya and the essence of the theories of self – consciousness and absolute idea of Hegel in the Indian philosophy concerning with Vedanta and its branch Advaita with other treatises like the Upanishads, writings of Shankaracharya and Bhagavad Gita. But, in order to judge these theories in practical applicability, we must put history on trial to understand its applications.

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