



## Concept of Theoretic Consciousness in the Philosophy of K. C. BHATTACHARYYA

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### ABSTRACT

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This paper is an attempt to explore, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's concept of Theoretic Consciousness. K. C. Bhattacharyya was an outstanding philosopher in India; his philosophical thought was deeply influenced by classical Indian Vedanta and Jainism, as well as by the study of Kant. He wanted to know that how mind, life, or consciousness creates a material universe. His view about the notion of theoretical consciousness is unique. In his observation, Bhattacharyya finds that Philosophy is thinking at all but only speakable. Theoretic consciousness has just a "believe content" but it has not a "mean content". For him, philosophy is the expression of theoretic consciousness. By distinguished literal or empirical thought and symbolistic thought he enables to demarcate the field of philosophy from that of science. Also, Bhattacharyya wanted to explain the concept of Theoretic consciousness by referring to four grades of theoretic consciousness. He has given us a new orientation of the Traditional Indian Philosophy. This paper primarily explains the notion of theoretic consciousness. While doing the study both Descriptive and Analytic Method of Research is used.

Keywords:

Theoretic Consciousness, Philosophy, Thinking, Speakable, Believe Content.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

K. C. Bhattacharyya is a very critical contemporary Indian thinker of modern times, noted for his phenomenological persuasion and expressive, analytical style of writing. K. C. Bhattacharyya was considered a Neo-vedantine in Contemporary Indian Philosophy. He was occupying a very prominent place in the history of Contemporary Indian Philosophy, because he has given us the new orientation of the Traditional Indian Philosophy, particularly of the Advaita Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, and Jaina Philosophy.

In his paper, "The Concept of Philosophy" K. C. Bhattacharyya mentions the concept of Theoretic Consciousness. K. C. Bhattacharyya holds that philosophy is not thinking but only speaking. He maintains that Theoretic consciousness is at its minimum the understanding of a speakable. There are four grades of Theoretic Consciousness, according to K. C. Bhattacharyya, such as Empirical thought, Objective thought, Subjective or Spiritual thought, and Transcendental thought.

This paper is basically introduced to you the concept of Theoretic consciousness in K. C. Bhattacharyya Philosophy.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The primary aim of this seminar paper is to understand the concept of Theoretic Consciousness, which attempts to focus following details:

1. To explain the Concept of Theoretic Consciousness.
2. Four grades of theoretic consciousness.

## **METHOD OF THE STUDY**

In the study we used both Analytical and Descriptive method. After selection of the research problem, both primary and secondary sources of data collection are adopted.



## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

K. C. Bhattacharyya is one of the great synthetic personalities of modern Indian philosophy. According to him, philosophy is theoretic thinking which is neither actual knowledge nor a literal thought.

Generally, it is believed that philosophy is an attempt to construct a worldview. Philosophy has to analyze the nature of the world in order to discover the real and unreal aspects of the world. But K. C. Bhattacharyya believes that it is not an essential function of philosophy to construct a synthetic view of the world. According to him, judgments of philosophy are not factual, but philosophy deals with self-subsistent objects, the real subject, and the true being.

According to K. C. Bhattacharyya, philosophy is theoretical thinking, which differs from literal thinking. In distinction from literal thought, he speaks of these as 'symbolistic thought' and also, he distinguishes the sub-grades of pure objective, subjective and transcendental thought. Bhattacharyya differs between science and philosophy in the sense of literal and symbolic thinking or in the sense of 'thought' and 'speaking'. The literal knowledge belongs to science, but the self-existent reality, with which philosophy deals, has no depends upon the individual mind, they are only symbolically thinkable. Therefore, a critical appreciation of the distinction and relation between thinking and speaking, as conceived by him, is worth understanding.

Hence, for K. C. Bhattacharyya, the study of philosophy is the understanding of the speakable only. Philosophy presents the beliefs that are speakable. To speak is to formulate a belief, and it is the understanding of what can be spoken that constitutes the theoretic consciousness. Such understanding may not be knowledge but it involves beliefs in something as knows or to be known.



Theoretic consciousness is theoretic because it is conceived beyond its expressions, it is theoretic also because it has just a 'believed content' and not a 'meant content', K.C. Bhattacharyya defines it, 'Theoretic Consciousness, at its minimum, is the understanding of a speakable'. At this level the speakable does not have a meaning content, it has only believed content.

According to Bhattacharyya, all forms of theoretic consciousness involving the understanding of speakable are sometimes called thought. "What is spoken must be in the first instance believed". This can be illustrating with the help of an example, and an example is that Bhattacharyya himself has used, the example of 'square circle'. A square circle is neither believed nor disbelieved. It does not even have a spoken content. Even when it is spoken that it is spoken almost as if it has not been spoken. Therefore, it cannot form a part of theoretic consciousness, which is speakable, has a 'believed content'. For example, even a lie will form a part of theoretic consciousness, because though it is a lie, but when it is spoken it has content that is believed when a lie is spoken it gives out a suggestion of something of the type of 'believe me', and it is understanding of that spoken content that forms a part of theoretic consciousness.

Such understanding may not be knowledge but it involves belief in something as known or to be known. Knowledge is an explicit awareness of an actual or possible state of affairs, but in theoretic consciousness the awareness is not explicit, on the other hand over and above its belief, it somehow gives the impression of unknowingness also. Therefore, Bhattacharyya says that theoretic consciousness involves not the knowing, but the understanding of the speakable.

#### **FOUR GRADES OF THEORETIC CONSCIOUSNESS**

All forms of Theoretic Consciousness as involving the understanding of the speakable



are understood as aspect of thought. There are may be four forms of thought of which one is literal thought and others are symbolic. Consequently, it is said that there are four grades of Theoretic Consciousness. They are as follows –

1. Empirical thought
2. Objective thought
3. Subjective thought
4. Transcendental thought

1. Empirical thought: Empirical thought is the theoretic consciousness of content involving reference to an object. This reference is not superficial or causal; it is this reference that constitutes its meaning. It is an awareness of content that is either perceived or imagined to be perceived and this reference to the object forms a part of the meaning of the content.

2. Objective thought: There is content that is objective but has no necessary reference to sense perception and the consciousness of such content may be called pure objective thought. Meaning thereby this consciousness is also objective like empirical thought but the difference between these two is that in empirical thought there is no reference to the subject but in objective consciousness, there is the reference of an object as related to the subject. Therefore, empirical consciousness understands the object as fact, while objective consciousness understands it not as a fact but as self-subsistent.

3. Subjective or Spiritual thought: This consciousness has no reference to the objective, it is purely subjective. It does not have any content that is contemplated in the objective attitude; the content here is thought of or grasped in the subjective attitude, that is, in an enjoying consciousness. In spiritual although the content is called



reality.

4. Transcendental thought: Transcendental thought is the consciousness of content that is neither objective nor subjective, it somehow transcends their distinction. Therefore, the content of transcendental consciousness is transcendental and is called the truth.

Therefore, empirical thought concerned with factual knowledge or object without referring to the subject. Pure objective thought is a concern with the object with referring of the subject. Subjective or spiritual thought is purely one form of the subject. Transcendental thought is a concern with truth.

According to K. C. Bhattacharyya, philosophy is not concerned with empirical consciousness, but philosophy is concerned with the last three grades of theoretic consciousness, i.e. pure objective thought, subjective thought, and transcendental thought. Empirical thought is literal thought it deals with fact; therefore, its content is the concern of science only. On the other hand, the content of the last three grades of theoretic consciousness is the forms the subject matter of philosophy. So there is a marked distinction between science and philosophy. In science, the facts are studied without reference to the subject but in philosophy, everything is studied with reference to the subject.

Theoretic consciousness is embodied in science and philosophy. Science alone speaks in genuine judgments, the content of which is fact intelligible without reference to speaking and is alone actually known and literally thought. Philosophy deals with contents that are not literally thinkable and are not actually known but are believed as demanding to be known without being thought. Such contents are understood as self-subsistent object, real subject and transcendental truth. So, accordingly three grades of



philosophy which are based on the last three grades of theoretic consciousness. They are as follows -

1. Philosophy of Object
2. Philosophy of Subject or Spirit
3. Philosophy of Absolute or Truth

1. Philosophy of Object: The philosophy of objects as the study of the self-subsistence of an object includes metaphysics, logic, empirical, psychology, and axiology. Metaphysics deals with the nature of the self-subsistence of the object and logic deal with the form of objects. Therefore logic depends upon metaphysics and metaphysics depends upon intuitive experience. Philosophy of object emphasis the subjective experience of the object. Metaphysics and logic are considered as the subject matter of philosophy of object.

2. Philosophy of Subject: Metaphysics elaborate the concept or the form of the pure object with the subject. It shows that no metaphysical concept is intelligible without reference to the subject or the spirit. But the reality can only realize, enjoyingly understood not by an objective attitude, objective relation between a subject and object can give us a content which is self-sufficient or self-subsistent. This is an enjoyable activity of the subject and this is what forms the subject matter of the philosophy of spirit. This enjoying consciousness has always reference to I. The study of all content enjoyed in, explicit reference to the subject 'I' may be called the philosophy of the spirit.

3. Philosophy of the Absolute or Truth: The philosophy of spirit leads to the philosophy of absolute or truth. In the spiritual consciousness along with the awareness of the over-personal self is the identity of the philosophy of the absolute. There is an



enjoying consciousness of 'I am not'. It is the denial of 'I'. For K. C. Bhattacharyya, the content of this consciousness is truth i.e. of the absolute. The absolute has a positive character, which is expressible by the negation of the self. For K. C. Bhattacharyya the consciousness of truth as what is believed but not understood either in the objective or in the subjective attitude as not literally speakable at all. But speakable only in the purely symbolist way in extra-religious or transcendental consciousness. (K.C. Bhattacharyya Studies in Philosophy, vol. II).

Thus, the three stages of philosophy are not entirely different from each other; on the other hand, the inner logic of each step pushes us forward to the next. Therefore, the philosophical judgments form a continuous and progressive series, in which the negation of the previous stage leads to the next, till the final stage is reached which is beyond negation.

## **CONCLUSION**

From an unbiased study of the subject matter, we may conclude,

K. C. Bhattacharyya considers that philosophy is theoretical thinking, which is differing from literal thinking. For K. C. Bhattacharyya the study of philosophy is the understanding of the speakable only. Philosophy presents beliefs, and it is the understanding of what can be spoken that constitutes the theoretic consciousness. Theoretic consciousness is at its minimum understanding of a speakable. For him philosophy is form of theoretic consciousness involving the understanding of a speakable. It does not deal with objects as fact but as self-subsistent realities.

Moreover, Bhattacharyya's idea of thinking is different from that of Kant. For Kant "the self is thinkable, though unknowable". But for Bhattacharyya it is unthinkable but knowable. Kant admits "the extension of thought- forms and categories beyond



experience, though, for him, this is illegitimate and does not yield knowledge". Bhattacharyya holds that such non-empirical use of forms of thought is not thinking proper, but only symbolizing what is unthinkable by verbal forms of thinking.

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