DOES *PRĀMĀṆYA* MEAN TRUTH?

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In what follows I shall argue that the theory of the *pramāṇas* and related matters, regularly accounted by scholars as constituting the Indian theory of knowledge and truth, is not that at all, but rather the theory of the function of cognitive elements in the context of purposive activity. I am not contending that Indian thought has no theory of knowledge and truth at all. I am suggesting that epistemology becomes relevant to philosophy in a rather different way when viewed from the Indian perspective than it does when viewed from ours. In particular I contend that the translating of Sanskrit terms such as *prāmāṇya* as "truth", and of *jñāna* as "knowledge", given the standard meanings of "truth" and "knowledge" in Western philosophies, hides the proper assessment of Indian epistemological thought.

To show this I try to show show how Indian terms of the sort mentioned (*pramāṇa, jñāna,* etc.) should be viewed as expressing concepts other than those they are usually taken to express. The account I shall use is provided by Stephen C. Pepper in his handy work *A Digest of Purposive Values.*[1] My technique in this preliminary section will be to excerpt from Pepper's text, indicating wherever suggestive Sanskrit terminology which seems to me to parallel Pepper's English.

Here is what Pepper tells us. "Purposive behavior (*karman, kriyā*) is docile or modifiable adaptive behavior. There are two main forms of purposive behavior ... one, ... appetition (*upādāna*), the other aversion (*hāna*) ... Since most of us are more familiar with the form of an appetition, let us start with this."

"Suppose we begin by getting in mind a good example of an appetition. An aviator afloat on a raft after his plane has been destroyed begins to feel the pangs of hunger. He looks about the raft for signs of anything edible, and sees none, but finds in a package a line and hook for trolling. This gives him the thought that he might catch a fish. For safety's sake he attaches one end of the line to a rope on the raft; then he pays out the line into the sea, and jerks it from time to time, and pulls it in and throws

it out afresh, hoping to attract a fish. His efforts are successful, and a large fish bites. He pulls in his wriggling catch, stuns it with a blow so that it cannot escape, takes it off the hook, carves it up with his knife, and eats it til his hunger is satisfied."

"... A cursory glance at acts of this type shows, as the general structure, a governing propensity (samskāra, vāsanā, kāma) controlling a series of subordinate acts toward the attainment of a goal (artha) ..."

"The governing propensity is in some way the source of the dynamics' whole appetitive structure, and in some way determines the goal in advance. The subordinate acts ... are brought in by the dynamics of the governing propensity to bridge the gap between the organism in its present need and the goal which will satisfy the need. These acts are not determined ahead in the structure of the organism ... The subordinate acts have to be discovered. They may be correct (pramā) or incorrect (viparyaya, bhrānti, mithyā). Their correctness lies in their propensity to lead to the goal on the attainment of which the appetition terminates ... The governing propensity is, accordingly, the dynamic center of the system."

"... The way the system operates is that somehow the governing propensity contains a forward reference to the goal, which then governs the anticipatory references to all the subordinate goals of the subordinate acts ... Some writers identify the forward reference with a cognitive anticipation, others with a need demanding quiescence. On close examination ... it is quite clear that in what is generally regarded as the typical appetitive act both a cognitive anticipatory reference and a demanding need are present. The latter, moreover, controls the former ..."

"It appears, then, that the governing propensity of the aviator's appetition to catch a fish contained two distinct factors: a need, and an anticipation ... Let us call the first the drive (rāga, prayatna) and the second the anticipatory set (jñāna). These factors determine ... corresponding divisions in the goal. Let us call the goal of a drive its quiescence pattern and the goal of an anticipatory set its goal object (artha)."

"Innate appetitive drives (such as hunger, thirst, sex and the like) are characterized by three important traits: (1) they have distinctive patterns of action, which we shall call impulse patterns (e.g., stomach contractions in the case of hunger); (2) they have generally, and probably always, certain innate readinesses (salivating, etc.) which are acts preparatory to the attainment of the goal... (3) they have certain conditions of quiescence ... which may also be called consummatory acts. The quiescence pattern for hunger is eating food, filling the stomach, and digesting ... They are, accordingly, causal properties of the drive ... The quiescence pattern is ...

a property of the appetitive drive that demands, whenever it is initiated, this specific pattern of activity in the organism for its termination ..."

"The appetitive drive has a steady reference to its quiescence pattern in terms of its positive conditions of quiescence which are a property of the drive itself ... This reference is not a cognitive reference ... The references of an anticipatory set (*jñāna*), however, are cognitive. An anticipatory set is a set of cognitive references directed upon an object which is expected to produce the quiescence pattern or consummatory act. This object is the goal of the anticipatory set and so we name it the goal object (*artha*) ... In the example of the aviator, ... a fish was his goal object, and the idea of a fish readily at hand was the anticipatory set of his governing propensity which controlled the whole sequence of acts that followed."

"It is a trait of an anticipatory set that it may be true or false, correct (*pramā*) or incorrect (*viparyaya*, etc.) depending on whether the goal object in fact does or does not produce the quiescence pattern of the drive ... An anticipatory set is accordingly the sort of thing that we generally call an idea, a conception, a judgment, or a hypothesis ... Meaning as cognitive reference is in any psychological context an anticipatory set."

"Now, the function of an anticipatory set in an appetition is to mediate between the drive and its quiescence pattern. It is, consequently, what is often called a mediating judgment or a value judgment ... If at any time he (the aviator) had ceased to believe or anticipate that a fish could satisfy his hunger, he would at once have stopped acting along that line of subordinate acts."

"Because in its function an anticipatory set is definitely a judgment (*jñāna, mānasika karman*), we must not fall into the notion that it is verbal expression (*śabda, vācika karman*) ... It is rather in the nature of a set of readinesses to act. We may possibly think of them as a pattern of open nerve paths ..."

"Accordingly, a verbal judgment is ordinarily an expression for an anticipatory set. It would be the exception rather than the rule that a verbal expression could be identified with an anticipatory set. Ordinarily, I suggest, a verbal judgment is a little purposive act of its own, having as its goal the equating of the customary references of words (*śabdārtha*) with the active references of an anticipatory set (*jñeyārtha*). The set is the 'thought' or the 'idea' as we say, and we try to find the words to express it ..."

"In order to attain his goal object (the fish), the shipwrecked aviator went through a succession of acts, each as a means to the next, until the

goal object was attained. These acts we call subordinate acts. Each such act has its own anticipatory set and its own goal object ... The subordinate acts ... bridge the gap (between governing propensity and quiescence pattern). The gap is actually bridged when an anticipatory set is actively in commerce with its goal object — when, that is, its references turn into active manipulation of the object ... "

"Since ... these anticipatory sets are value judgments, active commerce with their goal objects in the expectation that the superordinate goal object will then be available constitutes a verification of these judgments ... Since a value judgment is cognitively verified by the attainment of its superordinate goal object, this suggests that the attainment of a superordinate goal object constitutes the quiescence pattern of the drive for the attainment of the subordinate goal object. This fact, in turn, suggests that the superordinate anticipatory set functions as the drive for its subordinate anticipatory set."[2]

Pepper goes on[3] to talk about three kinds of purposive value — affective, conative and achievement values. I do not find that the Indians classify in this way. However, there are in Indian writings explanations of their terminology which make it clear that the term *sukha* regularly suggests satisfaction, i.e. in Pepper's terminology quiescence of a drive, and that the term *duḥkha* regularly suggests frustration, dissatisfaction occasioned by an unquiesced drive. Thus these Sanskrit terms can be said to relate to "achievement" values. They also, to be sure, relate to affective values, since pleasure regularly accompanies satisfaction and pain regularly accompanies frustration.

Now I contend that Indian talk about the *pramāṇas* can best be understood in the context of a theory of purposive action of Pepper's sort. An immediate outcome of such an understanding is that standard translations of key Sanskrit terms must be revised, since those translations have stemmed from a different understanding. Let us consider some of the terms mentioned above.

Artha is usually translated "object" or "thing" in epistemic contexts, a translation suggesting that what is so called must be an actual entity. But it is well known that the term *artha* means "purposive goal" in value contexts, as in the familiar expression *puruṣārtha*, meaning human goals. On my proposal we shall regularly translate and understand *artha* to mean

2   Ibid., pp. 2-23.
3   Ibid., pp. 49-50.

a goal object of some purposive activity, whether actual or possible. The question of such an object's actual existence is not to be decided merely by reference to the connotations of this term; an *artha* may or may not really exist from some ultimate standpoint. The criterion for the application of the word is a thing's potentiality for playing the role of a goal object in a Pepperian type of analysis.

It is instructive to note, in addition, that *artha* in the context of semantics is rendered as "meaning." However, it turns out that the meaning of a word or a sentence, in the sense of its *artha*, is not the proposition or statement or state of affairs described, but rather the *object*, the entity toward which the cognition expressed by a the word or sentence is intentionally directed. Thus not only is the meaning of a cognitive act directed toward a goal object of the purposive activity occasioning it, but a parallel analysis is appropriate for the meaning of a linguistic or speech act. In this way we discover the univocal meaning of the term *artha* throughout the various contexts in which the word is employed. The discovery contrasts with the standard explanations of the meaning of the word, which take it as the most equivocal word in the Sanskrit language, meaning "thing" or "meaning" or "purpose" or "value" or ...

The fundamental epistemic term in Sanskrit is *jñāna*. Though cognate with and usually translated as "knowledge", it is in fact used to indicate any cognitive awareness whatever. It ranges over all kinds of awarenesses which have contents, covering doubtings, supposings, believings, sensings, inferrings and a host of other cognitive acts that English has words for. For our purposes we pick out a few basic ones that Sanskrit has words for. We may distinguish between awarenesses which consider their contents (*viṣaya*) under a description (these are called *savikalpakajñāna*) from those which do not (*nirvikalpakajñāna*). By "under a description" no essential connection with linguistic expression is intended; a *savikalpakajñāna* presents its content, a purposive object, as qualified in some manner or other.

Within the sphere of *savikalpakajñāna*s we can further distinguish those awarenesses which involve conviction or belief (*niścaya*) about their contents' being potential purposive objects of satisfaction for the motivating drive of the cognizer from those which merely entertain their contents as, say, objects of doubt (*saṃśaya*) or uncertainty (*anadhyavasāya*). It is *niścaya* awarenesses that are the major concern of Indian philosophers, although one also finds discussion of the other modes of awareness as well.

We come now to concepts formulated characteristically in term of *pramā* and its derivatives, terms such as *pramāṇa, prameya* and *prāmāṇya*. The foregoing Pepperian exploration has been necessary in order to locate the place of these notions within the overall purposive context which, it is contended here, constitutes their proper abode. *Pramā* is frequently translated as "knowledge", which in Western philosophical usage is regularly understood as justified true belief. Now a *pramā* must be a believing, a *niścaya jñāna*, since it is held to be an awareness on which purposive action can be successfully predicated. That is, it must be an awareness involving conviction, though it should be emphasized that this believing which is a *niścayajñāna* is an episodic state, not a disposition to assent (which is how belief is frequently analyzed in Western thought).

In addition to being an awareness involving conviction, what else must a *pramā* be? It must have *prāmāṇya*, which is usually translated as "truth." However, this is a mistranslation insofar as it invokes for English-speaking readers and hearers a connotation of correspondence with reality. Rather, for Sanskrit usage an awareness has *prāmāṇya* just if it cognizes its content − the goal object of its drive − in a fashion which produces − or would produce if followed out − quiescence of that drive. Whether this relation of the content of an awareness to satisfaction of a drive only occurs when the content corresponds to a real object, or whether it doesn't, is not pertinent to the *meaning* of the term *prāmāṇya*. It is a question that can be raised, to be sure, but however it may be answered does not affect the appropriateness of using the term *prāmāṇya* when the satisfaction-relation is believed to obtain.

Indian philosophers examine which sorts of awarenesses regularly produce satisfaction of drives. Those types of awareness which do so are termed *pramāṇas*, instruments of satisfactory or workable awareness (*pramā*). Each philosophical system in India has its preferred list of kinds and numbers of *pramāṇas* − perception, inference and verbal testimony are the most frequent occurrents in such lists. *Pramāṇas* are neither causes nor justifiers of truth, as is so often supposed: rather, they are the kinds of awarenesses which regularly function in the cognitive identification of objects of successful purposive action.

Those objects which need to be investigated and understood so that drives may be satisfied are termed *prameyas*.

Awarenesses that are not *pramās*, not workable convictions, are naturally enough termed *apramās*. This rubric covers the entire complement of the class of workable convictions, every awareness which is not a *pramā*. Thus doubtings, supposings, etc., as well as convictions

which turn out not to lead to satisfactions of their drives, are lumped together as *apramā*. Indian terminology for *niścaya savikalpaka jñāna* which is not workable, i.e., for believings not productive of satisfaction, is varied: *viparyaya, bhrānti, mithyājñāna* are some of the Sanskrit words applied to such awarenesses.

Indian theories of meaning include various views concerning the relations between language and thought. This is not the place to review all the differences. However, it is not surprising to find, in Indian philosophy as in pragmatism, that there is a tendency toward a speech-act view of language and its meaning. And just as we find there a tendency to view awareness as a mental activity, so there is also a tendency to view language as vocal activity, the activity of communicating our awarenesses. Whether thinking precedes language or the two go together is an issue between, e.g., the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiyākaraṇas or Grammarian philosophers. But generally speaking, language is viewed as an activity in India, and analyses which emanate from that understanding are likely to illuminate Indian thought on language more than analyses which start from different assumptions, e.g., of a formalistic nature (language as poor copy of ideal logical form) found in contemporary Western linguistic science.

My account so far strongly suggests that in Indian thought there is a "pragmatist theory of knowledge and truth" at work. There are allegedly decisive objections against such a basis for epistemology. Do those objections tell against the Indian account sketched above?

The apparent force of most, if not all, of the objections to the pragmatist theory of truth that I am acquainted with derives from the assumption, implicit in the formulation of those objections, that "true" *means* "corresponding to reality". Given that assumption, the "pragmatist theory of truth" becomes highly dubious, whether that theory is regarded as a theory about the criterion or about the nature of truth.

The reading of the pragmatist theory as a theory about the *criterion* of truth is open to an apparently conclusive objection. Nicholas Rescher calls it the "Wheel Argument" or *diallelus*. The argument is simple and classic. Rescher translates from Montaigne, who presented it succinctly:

> "To adjudicate (between the true and the false) among the appearances of things we need to have a distinguishing method; to validate this method we need to have a justifying argument; but to validate this justifying argument we need the very method at issue. And there we are, going round on the wheel."[4]

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4   Nichals Rescher, *Methodological Pragmatism* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1977), p. 17.

This proves, according to Rescher, "that our operative standard of factual truth cannot be validated by somehow exhibiting directly that it does indeed accomplish properly its intended work of truth-determination ... there simply is no *direct* way of checking the adequacy of an inquiry procedure ..."[5]

On the other hand, if the pragmatist theory of truth is a theory to the effect that the *nature* of truth is the satisfaction of purposes when truths are believed (as contrasted to the frustration of purposes when falsehoods are believed), and if the assumption referred to above is made, viz., that truths are those judgments which correspond with reality, then the pragmatist theory appears flatly mistaken. For there is no reason why satisfaction of purposes should regularly coincide with correspondence to reality. They are different features. As Bertrand Russell puts it, "Is it not obvious that there is a translation in my mind from seeing that the belief is useful to actually holding that the belief is true?" Examination of that transition leads to the conclusion that truth and workability do not in any obvious way coincide and that if the former is the nature of truth the latter cannot be. Rescher demonstrates the disparity between utility and truth convincingly by providing simple cases where a person will be more likely to fail to satisfy his purposes if he believes what is true than if he believes what is false.[6]

These arguments, however, lose all their force against a type of pragmatism which finds the *meaning* of our awareness in their workability and not in their truth-conditions. That the meaningfulness of our thoughts is a function of the conditions under which they are true or false, i.e., under which they correspond to reality or not, is powerful in both Western common sense and contemporary Western philosophy. But it is an assumption, an assumption about a metaphysical issue on which no assumptions need to be made at the level of practical affairs. My suggestion is that, whatever needs to be said about Indian common sense, the correspondence assumption should not be imposed on the meanings of the terminology that Indian philosophers use. And when that assumption does not figure there, the sorts of arguments reviewed above, which involve that assumption, fail against the Indian version of pragmatism.

5   Ibid.
6   Ibid., Chapter Four, especially p. 48 ff.

I do not for a moment wish to suggest that Indian epistemologists are not concerned with what reality is, what exists. That is precisely what they are concerned with. What I am saying is that, rather than beg the question in favor of a realist answer (e.g., that what exists is a mind-independent world with a structure capable of corresponding to human cognitive judgments), it raises the issue in a vocabulary which is itself ontologically neutral.

There is a clear advantage to this stance, one which must bulk large for those acquainted with the history of "modern" Western philosophy and its difficulties with the epistemological skeptic. Given the correspondence assumption, the skeptic has a field day. His question is simply this: what justifies the correspondence assumption that there is a reality to correspond to or fail to correspond to? And this seems terribly damaging precisely because the Westerner's entire program of justifying anything is implicitly in terms of truth, and so rests on the correspondence assumption. The meaningfulness of the terminology in which the Westerner speaks of knowledge, truth and justification is already imbued with the correspondence assumption, so that if the skeptic cannot be answered there is no knowledge at.all, for "knowledge" must be knowledge of the reality to which our ideas correspond.

Without the correspondence assumption the skeptic's question cannot be raised, at least not in the form just mentioned. What is pragmatically correct is by nature what works, satisfies our drives. And that a specific awareness works is shown precisely by the quiescence of one's drive through acquisition or avoidance of the objects cognized, whatever their ontological status. Not making the correspondence or any other ontological assumption, we haven't got the language yet even to raise the question of whether an object is real or unreal, of whether an awareness is true or false.

Such an ontology-free approach to epistemology is sometimes defended pigheadedly in the contemporary philosophical scene. Karl Popper puts the idea in the following way: "No theory of knowledge should attempt to explain why we are successful in our attempts to explain things."[7] But, as Rescher complains, this "does not represent a rationally comfortable position", since "a theory of knowledge that cannot explain — nay deems inexplicable — why our ventures at knowledge-acquisition are as successful as to all appearances they seem to be is *ipso facto* seriously

7   Quoted in Rescher, ibid., p. 93.

deficient."[8] Rescher thinks one needs a Kantian metaphysical deduction to validate the operation of our methods of inquiry, a "metaphysical rationalization of our epistemological procedures". That is, he proposes following Kant in asking, in effect, what must the world be like in order that our purposes are satisfied". That is one way of attempting to generate ontological questions and answers using an apparently ontologically neutral language. But it is not entirely ontologically neutral, since it seems to assume that the world is there to be like something or other.

The Indian philosophers, by contrast, ask a question which is generally and completely neutral. What the Indian asks is: given that *pramās* are those awarenesses that satisfy our purposes and *apramās* are those that don't, *why* do the former and not the latter satisfy our puroses? This question is broader than Rescher's. It may invite an attempt to sketch the structure of the world which must be assumed to be the correct account if we are to have the experiences of satisfaction that we do have. This approach, that of the realist, will look to a mind-independent world seeking to find an account of its nature and structure that will provide a convincing account of how the world must be consonant with our experiences. Such an approach is, I believe, to be found in the Indian systems of Nyāya-Vaiśesika and Pūrvamīmāmsā, as well as in Jainism and Abhidharma Buddhism.

That approach invites a reintroduction of skepticism, however, since it has still to be shown why we should suppose such an independent world exists. So these systems appear to face the problem of justification, with the Wheel Argument flaunting their efforts. For how can it be shown that an account of the structure of reality is the only one consonant with our experiences without assuming that account as its own criterion of validity? *Ex hypothesi*, the appeal to workableness, etc. will not generate any metaphysical certainties; ontological matters are not within the purview of the meaning of such terms. Therefore the assumption that the world contains real entities with a structure somehow matching the objects of our cognitive experiences must be just that, an assumption, and it seems to be an assumption without any hope of support. So the skeptic wins again.

But the broader Indian question provides room for appeal to an alternative source of justification that lies in the nature of the drives which motivate action, in the normative ordering of those drives. What we find

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8 Ibid., p. 93.

through experiences is two things: (1) that some quiescence patterns are more satisfying than others, and (2) that no positive quiescence pattern is entirely satisfying, since there always remain other drives as yet unsatisfied and so productive of frustration. The first point suggests that drives can be ordered in terms of the quality of their satisfaction. The second suggests that the ultimate human aim both is and ought to be the complete and final quiescence of all drives.

The first point is frequently enough made in Western thought, although its significance is nowadays hidden behind a kind of skepticism about values known as noncognitivism or nonnaturalism. The noncognitivist skeptic, when faced with a claim that certain drives or purposes are of greater value than others (or rather, that their satisfactions are qualitatively orderable), challenges the proponent of that claim to vindicate it, pointing out that the claimer cannot appeal to experience since values are not facts and *"de gustibus non disputandum est"*. This skepticism is misplaced. The normative ordering of drives, and the values implicit in their satisfaction, are in principle justifiable as facts. Their justification comes in terms of such criteria of rational satisfactoriness as those to which Rescher appeals when he complains about Popper's truncated epistemology that it "does not represent a rationally comfortable position." What is held to be rationally uncomfortable about Popper's epistemology is that it is incomplete, inadequate; it fails to explain experiences for which we are driven to request an explanation. Rational satisfactoriness implies commitment to certain methodological values — to the preferability of explanations of greater adequacy (they explain *more*), of consistency (inconsistent explanations don't explain *at all*), of accuracy (in a sense which does not require correspondence but does require that the *explanans* be *germane* to the *explanandum*), of greater economy or power (less primitives explaining more experiences).[9]

The experiences whose explanation requires an ordering of values include those which cause our admiration for those who sacrifice so that others may succeed, our contempt for those who cheat, our preference for long-term positive satisfactions of a moderate sort in comparison with short-term highs and lows, our conviction that harming others unnecessarily is wrong, and so on. These experiences are inconsistent with the value-skeptic's position that any quiescence or satisfaction is as good or as

9   For a remarkable discussion of these methodological norms and an insight into how they work cf. Nelson Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1951; Bobbs-Merrill, 1966; D. Reidel, 1977), especially Part One.

bad as any other. Such a skepticism is analogous to a parallel sort with respect to sense-experience, by a skeptic who would say that appearance is reality, that if one sees red then one ought to conclude that the thing is really red, though we all know perfectly well that people who acted on that basis would be completely uncritical in their account of how things behave and fail constantly in their reactions to their environment. The sense-skeptic's position is inadequate, inaccurate, inconsistent and without power; likewise the value-skeptic's.

It is true that men have found it woefully difficult to arrive at a basis for ordering values that satisfies these methodological requirements. But one must not conclude from that difficulty that there is no such ordering rationally called for by our drives. If the higher norms tend to arise from the social context in which human beings interact with one another, which is what many moral philosophers have concluded, then that context provides a broader base for value-ordering. If satisfaction of passions turns out in general to be fleeting and productive of more frustration, while quiescence of drives arising from concerns for the long-term well-being of oneself and others produces longer-term satisfactions and less immediate frustrations, then (other things being equal) that suggests an ordering in which the latter drives are to be ranked more worthy of quiescence than the former.

Such an ordering of values is promulgated over the centuries as a cornerstone of traditional Indian thought. The familiar *trivarga* — the three human aims of *artha*, *kāma* and *dharma*, with the latter considered higher than the other two — constitutes a hieriarchy of values which is grounded in the experiences of human beings and justified by those groundings together with the methodological requirements mentioned above.

Suppose that there is a hierarchy of values, of drives — how does that help us with respect to the problem of justifying an ontology? It does so because there is a selection process generated by acknowledgement of the hierarchy of values, a process by which certain candidates for ontological priority are preferred to other candidates. If interpersonal values are ranked higher than material ones, say, then concepts implicit in the formulation of those higher-ranked values also come to play a fundamental role in ontology, come to constitute the categories or primitives of one's metaphysical system. In India, the result of the recognition of *dharma* as supreme value had its natural outcome in the ontology of Pūrvamīmāṃsā, in which human action is the fundamental ontological principle. A physicalistic world-view is one which ranks manipulation of physical and physiological factors as the source of highest value. Of course,

these assessments are highly oversimplified. We are talking always about a complex set of interrelated norms involving all the features of our experience, and the resulting metaphysics will eventually, if it is to be rationally acceptable, have to find a place within it for those features which are not projections of highly-valued norms but nevertheless have to be accommodated. Thus reluctantly the physicalist wrestles with consciousness, morality and other features of experience not easily encompassed in physical categories; likewise, the Mīmāṃsaka wrestles with that side of experience which does not easily fit under the rubric of action or activity.

So it is understandable that different ontologies correspond to different hierarchies of values, and they find their source of justification there. An ontology is a "version" (to use Nelson Goodman's term[10]) which adopts certain concepts as primitive or categorial, concepts whose choice has been dictated by recognition of a certain ranking of types of satisfaction, of quiescence patterns, and of the drives which involve them. To convince a philosopher that his ontology is mistaken requires convincing him that his value-ordering is misguided. This is not a matter of taste. Quite the reverse; it involves the deepest and broadest possible assessment of how the values found in our experience hang together. Its justification, though, is ultimately in terms of the experienced satisfactions of inquirers. Accuracy, adequacy, consistency and economy are themselves justified because it has been found that purposive activity which proceeds on the basis of anticipatory sets embedded in networks of notions answering to these methodological norms are more likely to be successful, i.e., to produce quiescence of drives and thus satisfaction, than purposive activity undertaken on a different basis.

What is real, then, is what has a place in a scheme generated by a hierarchy of values. A world or version is relative to that hierarchy. It follows that if some hierarchy can be justified as being the most satisfactory basis for purposive activity, that hierarchy is the one that generates the really real, the highest reality. The Sanskrit term here is, suggestively, *paramārtha*, the highest purposive value or goal object, from which is derived the adjective *pāramārthika*, used to characterize that ontological principle or set of principles which constitutes *paramārthasat*, the highest reality. And what is "true", ultimately, is precisely these principles and the version they generate; it is that which is *satya*, "true", and whose appreciation is termed *vidyā*, understanding or knowledge. We have now

10   Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1978), pp. 2 *et seq.*

found a natural home for the expressions of epistemology ("true", "know", etc.) though we have not yet established what their proper designata are, since it has not yet been determined how to identify this highest reality or truth.

The key to that discovery, as conceived in Indian philosophy, is to reflect on the point that the ultimate criterion which grounds any ontology is satisfaction, and that satisfaction derives from quiescence of drives. The paradox about satisfaction is that it never comes unmixed with frustration. We are always driven by a multiplicity of drives and so, no matter how obsessively we pursue quiescence of some of them, the rest remain unsatisfied. Indeed, more than that, our situation is such that in the very process of achieving quiescence of some drives we generate more drives which will require future quiescence. Positive activity (*pravṛtti*) is undertaken relative to one drive out of many. The thought then arises: is it possible to quiesce *all* our drives? That would be *ultimate* satisfaction, satisfaction unmixed with frustration. Surely that must be − if indeed feasible − the highest value in the hierarchy. And indeed, it is so conceived in Indian thought. That highest values is liberation (*mokṣa, nirvāṇa*), the fourth and most supreme of the *puruṣārthas*.

Since all values are fundamentally achievement values stemming from quiescence of drives, it is clear that without changing that understanding of values liberation, complete quiescence of drives, *must* be the highest value, since upon its achievement no drives will remain to be quiesced which might generate other values higher than liberation. And thus we can now answer the question as to which is the final ontology, the highest reality: it is that version or world whose fundamental concepts arise from the ultimate value of liberation. Just how that is to be fleshed out is precisely the issue among the various *darśanas* or "views" of the several classical systems of Indian philosophy.

Notice that "correspondence" does not play a fundamental role in arriving at the above account of reality, although a looser relationship does, that of the concepts of the correct view somehow *fitting* the features of the ultimate purpose, liberation. This fittingness, however, is I think just the "germaneness" implicit in the methodological requirement of accuracy mentioned above.[11] In short, then, nothing in this account makes it necessary that realism (the view that there is a world of structured entities

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11 Goodman, in *The Structure of Appearance*, op. cit., Chapter One, explains how accuracy can be understood without presuming prior knowledge of reality.

independent of our thinking) constitute or be entailed by the correct metaphysical account. On the other hand, nothing precludes that being so either. The point is, we now have a context in which to make sense of the question "is realism correct or not?", a context in which the skeptical challenge is no longer of any consequence since we now understand how to answer it, since no unjustified *a priori* assumptions have been made about any ontological theses being antecedently required.

This, then, is my suggestion as to what Indian philosophy is all about. The theory of the *pramāṇas* and related matters, usually counted by scholars as constituting Indian epistemology, should, if this approach is right, be relocated to a more fundamental though less exalted position. *Pramāṇa* theory is the study of the practical meanings of cognitive activity, but it does not have to do with truth and knowledge, as it has been supposed to by those who have rendered its terminology into Western languages. That there are deep-seated merits in this way of seeing the justification process should perhaps bring philosophers, who because of insufficient exposure tend to discount Indian philosophy as without any message for our times, to reconsider — or to decide to consider for the first time — what the classical Indian thinkers had to say on these and related issues.