CHAPTER III

NATURE AND ROLE OF THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY

(a) Introduction

In this chapter we first discuss the relationship between theoretical philosophy on the one hand and mankind's intuition of a framework of goals on the other; this discussion is with a view to examine whether the goal-orientation of Indian philosophy adversely affects its rational character. We take a clue from Bhartṛhari's understanding of the relationship between tradition and reason, which provides an insight into the relationship that theoretical philosophy bears to intuitions regarding its direction, indeed, an insight into the essential character of philosophy in the Indian context.

It is proposed to argue here that, according to the Indian understanding, theory gains a certain direction from the intuited framework of goals in which it operates, that without this direction, it might lead to confusion. It will be argued, also, that this intuited framework of goals would be little more than an empty phrase, devoid of content and significance, if it were not for its theoretical elaboration
and support. Thus, we find, there is a relationship of mutual dependence between reason and intuition, between theoretical philosophy on the one hand and the intuited framework of goals, which reason seeks to explain and justify, on the other.

Certain implications of this understanding of the relationship between reason and intuition will also be examined in this chapter. And this will be followed by a consideration of the role of theoretical philosophy in the explanation and justification of the ultimate goal.

This chapter includes, also, a brief discussion on the function and formulation of theory as understood in the Indian context. Here we refer to some contemporary reactions to the modern Western understanding of Thought or theory as largely independent of everything else. This is intended to serve as an example of internal criticism which, though fundamental, fails to break out of the very constraints which led to the distortion of theory in the modern period. This helps also in formulating the Indian perspective in contrast to its modern Western counterpart.

(b) Reason and Intuition : Their Interrelationship

We now take up for consideration the question whether the goal-orientation of Indian philosophy does not adversely
affect its rationality and its philosophical character. For this purpose we first examine the nature of the relationship between reason and intuition; later in section (c) we shall be discussing the implications of this relationship for a proper understanding of Thought or theory in the Indian context.

(i) The Indian Conception of Philosophy:

The acceptance of mokṣa as the ultimate goal of life, we have seen, may very well be understood as the acceptance of a framework of interrelated goals in which philosophy is to function. Now, this framework is both a presupposition and a striking reality. It is a presupposition in so far as it is, as it were, taken for granted without proof and as a paradigm. It is a reality on at least three counts: (a) it is that in terms of which everything else is to be assessed for its reality and significance; (b) it is not left as a mere assumption; as already pointed out, it is explained as a possible and valid goal; and (c) it is not merely a question of intuitional experience or of theoretical consistency; rather it is a matter of practical consistency as worked out in the life of the realized person, the sthitaprajña, of whom we have a number
of illustrations, such as Ramana Maharshi and Gandhi, even in our own times.

There is, thus, much sense and significance in the way in which philosophy is conceived in India. And, yet, the feeling is likely to linger that Indian thought suffers in its philosophical character on account of its goal-orientation, on account of the acceptance of a framework of goals which is to determine the direction of philosophical thinking. One might ask, for instance, whether the goal itself is not something which lies in the province of religion rather than of philosophy, whether this goal-orientation does not altogether blur the distinction between philosophy and religion, between reason and faith. As, in this understanding, theoretical philosophy is to function, along with intuitive experience and concrete life, within the framework of an acceptance of authority, one might ask whether this does not affect the autonomy of reason.

Is it not, in other words, abdication of reason to accept a framework of goals as a directive principle, when the ultimate justification of the framework requires the acceptance of authority (śabda) which properly belongs to the religious domain?
As a first step towards an answer to this question we may have to question the all too familiar distinction between religion and philosophy in terms of the contrast between reason and dogma. The rational-dogmatic distinction is not a final and foolproof one; it is even doubtful whether it is properly drawn. Moreover, this distinction which is applicable, to a certain extent, to the modern Western context, need not be of assistance in understanding and appreciating the Indian scenario.

Without going into the question of the exact relationship between philosophy and religion, without also attempting immediately to spell out the interrelationship between religion, morality and spirituality, one might just note here that there is a certain speciality about the Indian philosophical systems which does not permit us to describe them as philosophies or religions in the same sense in which these terms are used in the West. One could perhaps say that the thought of Sāmkhya, for instance, is neither moral, nor religious, nor philosophical if one kept to the understanding of these in terms of Western thought. And yet, one could say that it is all of these at once, and that therefore it is preeminently spiritual, if one took into account not the technical definitions of
these but the functions they perform.

One might then say that the Sankhya is moral thought; but it is so only in part. It does not concern itself only with what one ought to do; it is concerned also with what one ought to be, the spiritual aspect. What one ought to do and what one ought to be are not independent of each other; in fact, each is a necessary condition for the other. In fact, this is how we understood the relationship between dharma and mokṣa in the last chapter.

In so far as spirituality is an element of religion, this thought is also religious. But in so far as religion is a matter of belief in God, or in a book, or a prophet, or even a definite metaphysical point of view, it is not religious. Because, the spiritual element is related not merely to the metaphysics of the Samkhya system; it is also related to the metaphysics of other systems such as the Nyāya, the Advaita, etc.

Can such a thought be philosophical? Once again, this thought, though not only that, is philosophical. The Sāmkhya account, for instance, articulates the intellectual
structure of matter, life, mind, intellect, etc. thereby providing a theory of the self and an understanding of the relationship between morality and spirituality. This account, in other words, establishes the existence and nature of the self, the realization of which in direct knowledge and conduct is the supreme goal. This could be looked upon as giving us the necessary conditions of the possibility of discrimination between Purusa and Prakriti, between the self and the nonself, involving matter, life, mind and intellect/discrimination, morality and spirituality, and their interrelations. This is probably the kind of account that Kant himself was in search of.

Now, therefore, unless one wants to impose the Western categories on the Indian philosophical systems at any cost, one shall not describe these as philosophical as distinct from religious, or vice versa. And one shall not say, merely on this account, that there is neither philosophy nor religion, nor moral theory in Indian thought. Especially when one is dealing with such different traditions as the Indian and the modern Western, one ought to avoid a legalistic and definitional approach.

If one is to unravel the unique feature of the Indian approach vis a vis its modern Western counterpart,
it becomes necessary that one is cautious in the use of categories which do not always fit properly the Indian perspective. Nor should one be bound by such apparently neat distinctions as the one between philosophy and religion. If only one were to take Buddhism seriously, one would have no difficulty to see the need to liberate oneself from the hold these Western categories have on our thinking faculty.

If one might for a while loosen this hold on oneself of the Western categories and distinctions, one can also see, more clearly, how even modern Western philosophy is not without its commitment to a goal. One might indeed, say that every philosophy, whether Indian or Western, ancient or modern, has some goal or the other, implicit if not explicit. The goal might be understood in terms of individual freedom, or of social justice, or of some kind of transcendence of these and kindred things, or of a commitment to or communion with God.

Thus, for instance, God, eminently a topic of religion, is not without His due place even in the modern philosophies of the West. It may not be impossible to describe a vast portion of modern Western philosophy as an
examination of the question how man and Nature are to be understood in relation to God. This also points to the inadequacy of the understanding which apportions all considerations regarding the ultimate goal to the field of religion thereby virtually keeping such concerns out of the purview of philosophy proper. Could one really say that Plato's wonder was philosophical but not religious, or that the Buddha's desire for liberation was religious but not philosophical? Possibly not.

(ii) Bhartrhari's Treatment of Tradition and Reason:

Having thus cleared at least a part of the mist hovering over the topic of our discussion, let us briefly consider the consequences of philosophy admitting of intuitions about man's ultimate goal, the consequences of thus 'limiting' the scope of philosophy by an acceptance of a framework of goals. This may be conveniently examined with reference to Bhartrhari's treatment of intuition, reason and their relationship in the Vākyapadīya.¹

Bhartrhari discusses the issues as one between 'tradition and 'reason'. For him tradition or āgama is not merely a matter of history; it is sanātana, eternal. Even if it is destroyed, it will be the same truths that
will be discovered by human beings who seriously consider the business of living. This 'tradition' is therefore roughly the same as what we have termed the framework of goals and/or values.

One must note here that, in this understanding, history itself is conceived differently from the way in which it is often understood. What is the idea of history implied in the understanding that tradition is the repository of intuited eternal truths? This may be found instantiated in the Ramayana and Mahabharata which are called \textit{itihāsas}. They constitute history, not so much because they contain a record of facts and events, as because these 'facts' and events' purport to present the concrete working out of ideas and principles of living regarded as necessary to impart meaning and significance to life.

'Tradition which is regarded as sanatana is, then, 'history' in the sense that it is how man acts when he is serious about life and its possibilities. It is not merely a record of what has happened; it is also that which, being in the nature and reach of man, had to happen, and will continue to happen forever. For, the essential thing about this 'tradition' is, as we have termed it here, the intuition of a certain framework of goals/values.
In so far as this is what Bhartrhari means by 'tradition', let us say that the human goals of dharma, artha, kāma and moksha, in a certain interrelationship, form a matrix and this constitutes the essence of this 'tradition'. One might then say that 'reason functions within the framework of these goals, and works out how best to achieve these goals or how best to help achieve them; for, according to Bhartrhari, reason functions within the framework of tradition.²

It might be argued here that this is really abdication of reason. It might, for instance, be asked: should not the framework of values by itself a matter for reason to decide? Of course, it could be. But in so far as that can be so, the approach of Bhartrhari, it might be said from the modern point of view, is fundamentally irrational.

But, according to Bhartrhari, without a framework, reason will lack direction, and this will be a source of confusion.³ This kind of confusion is possibly present in Kant's attempt to find the interrelationship between the different critiques, between sciences, morality, aesthetics and religion. Also, it may be said to be present in the linguistic analytical discussion of the form of life where the question of the interrelationship between these forms
is virtually left out of consideration thereby rendering this approach highly inadequate. For instance, the question whether the form of life articulated by science is compatible with that articulated by religion. It is this sort of thing that Bhartṛhari is referring to when he says that without the framework of tradition reason will lack direction and be a source of confusion.

But this raises the question: Is the choice, ultimately, between irrationality and confusion? For, acceptance of a framework of goals in which reason is to function, it seems, amounts to irrationality; and the non-acceptance of such a framework is destined to lead to confusion. Or perhaps, could it not be that 'tradition' that is, intuitions about the framework of values, and reason are not antithetical but are complementary? Could we not reverse the Kantian dictum 'Intuitions without concepts are blind and concepts without intuitions are empty' and say that intuition without reason working it out into a system of doctrines would lack content, and reason without intuition of a framework of goals would lack direction?

The purpose of the foregoing brief discussion has been to point out that the issue of the relationship between reason and intuition is not a closed one, that a fresh look
at it can be of some help in understanding Indian thought. Thus, it is not necessary to suppose that they are essentially opposed to each other; rather, instances of their opposition may have to be understood in the background of a complex relationship between them. If each of these is a limiting factor for the other, each is at the same time a condition for the very possibility and significance of the other factor.

Nor is it necessary to suppose that there is a predominance of reason in Western philosophy while in the Indian context intuition is predominant. In fact, it is possible to argue that in both the traditions, Indian and Western, reason and intuition have their respective roles to play. This does not, however, rule out the possibility of a significant difference between the Indian and modern Western philosophies. Rather, it rules out just a particular understanding of their difference.

The difference between the Indian and modern Western philosophies could, indeed, be in the manner in which the relationship between reason and intuition is understood. Thus, one might say that there is reason and there is also intuition in both these philosophies, and yet they are not really the same in the two contexts; because, when their relationship
is differently conceived, what is apparently the same could really be different. If, for instance, reason and intuition are regarded as independent of each other, as it seems to be the tendency of the modern West, then that reason and that intuition will not be of the same nature as when these are conceived as inherently related to and mutually dependent on each other.

If, thus, the relationship between reason and intuition could be conceived in more ways than one, and if it is possibly in this that the Indian and modern Western philosophies differ, then the characterization of these in terms, respectively, of acceptance of authority and autonomy of reason, does not bring out the whole truth about the matter. While these characterizations suggest that Indian philosophy as a whole does not measure upto the standard set by its modern Western counterpart, the truth could very well be that these are essentially different ways of philosophizing such that their comparison, lest it become odious, should take this difference into account; it could also be that what has so often been regarded as the paradigm of philosophical thinking is a matter of mere groping.

To decide which of these is possibly true, one will have to go into the issue in considerable depth and detail.
And it is outside the scope of this dissertation which only aims at suggesting a possible view of the nature of these two philosophies with a view to discuss its implications for comparative studies. Suffice it here, therefore, to say that if one were to take seriously the suggestion in Bhartrhari regarding the manner in which reason and intuition are related in the Indian context, it would open up a whole new vista for comparative philosophers to fruitfully inter and interrelate philosophies and religions from the two dominant cultures which, as a matter of fact, exist in India side by side today.

To conclude, the kind of goal-orientation that Indian philosophical systems exhibit does not amount to a negation of their philosophical character; rather, this orientation may be necessary for the systems to have philosophical significance. Without going into an examination of the very important issue of philosophical significance for the reason cited just above, one might here try to bring out some of the implications of the above understanding of the goal orientation of Indian philosophy. The light this is expected to throw on the nature of Indian and modern Western philosophies might as well suggest certain criteria to decide this issue of philosophical significance.
(c) Some Implications

We shall now examine some implications of taking Bhartrhari's view of the relationship between reason and intuition as suggesting a way of understanding the goal-orientation of Indian philosophy. We thus examine the implications of this understanding for (i) the relationship between theory and dogma, (ii) the relationship between philosophical theories and life, and (iii) the relation between theory and theory, that is, between different philosophical theories.

(i) Theory and Dogma:

As already noted, philosophical theories may be understood as forming part of the explanation of the ultimate goal of life. 'Explanation' of something does not necessarily mean its proof; and yet it could be part of proof. A set of interconnected theories offered by a philosophical system might then be viewed as a formulation of life, a formulation of its significance, in so far as the system purports to explain life's goal. It is, in other words, the formulation of the principles which ought to govern a perfect life, or a near-perfect life; and it has to hang together, as logic, which is a formulation of the principles of thought, has to
hang together. A philosophical system thus presents a 'logic of life'.

In this attempt to present a logic of life, certain questions are asked and answered, and not certain other questions. Or a certain kind of questions are asked and not questions of a different kind. Thus, for example, if it is said that Purusa and Prakriti are the ultimate principles, the question need not be 'Is there Purusa?' or 'Is there Prakriti?' or 'Can we prove them'? It can well be 'What is Purusa?' and 'What is Prakriti?' and 'How is their discrimination a basis of our understanding and evaluation of everything, of life as a whole?' Similarly, in the case of the Advaita, the question need not be 'In there Brahman?' or 'Is there Atman?'; it can well be 'What is Brahman?' and 'What is Atman?' and 'How is their identity the basis of everything else?'

Thus, the task of philosophy is not so much to establish Purusa or Prakriti, or to establish Brahman or Atman, as to explain these. Explanation being a component of proof or establishment, this amounts to establishment of a certain kind. Not establishment of Purusa or Prakriti as such, or of Atman and Brahman, but establishment of their discrimination/identity as the ultimate goal as well as the
standard to judge the significance of life. This kind of 
establishment could, of course, be done with varying degrees 
of sophistication.

But, as has already been argued in the last chapter, 
thoretical philosophy is not alone in this attempt to 
set up a particular understanding of the ultimate goal 
of life, of a criterian for evaluation. Not only there is 
direct knowledge on the one hand and there is concrete life 
on the other to complement as well as condition the theoret­
ical enterprise; there is also, it has been observed, a 
crucial reliance on Authority or ‘sabda’. 

Now, in so far as sabda refers to the intuitions 
contained in the scriptures of the different religions of 
the world, and in so far as religious doctrines and dogmas 
have a direct or indirect scriptural basis, faith in these 
doctrines becomes relevent for the understanding and attai­
nment of man’s ultimate goal. The scriptural basis of our 
religious dogmas brings these otherwise often irrational 
views into a certain positive relationship with reason 
ity itself : instead of being a mere limiting factor to the 
play of reason, faith becomes the very condition for the 
possibility of a significant play of it. This is the kind 
of relationship between reason and faith, between
philosophical theories and religious dogmas, that is implied by the Bhartrahari’s understanding of the relationship between reason and intuition.

Rational arguments and theories are thus closely related to faith in religious doctrines and dogmas which are themselves based on the scriptures. For, the scriptures constitute mankind’s intuitions about what is to be considered as a value/goal and what is therefore to be pursued. One way of understanding the relationship between philosophical reasoning and religious faith is, therefore, to view the former as essential to the explanation of the latter with a certain degree of convincingness. In this view, then, the dichotomy between philosophy and religion cannot be as real as in the case when either reason and faith are viewed as antithetical to each other or one of them is made wholly subservient to the other.

Take, for instance, Śankara’s understanding of the issue. According to Śankara, reason has its role in confirming the meaning of the revealed texts (śruti); that is, reason must assist the understanding of śruti. Whether the ultimate goal as enjoined by the śruti, is right or not is not the issue; the issue is what way it is to be understood.
This view implies an acceptance of sruti which is consistent with the non-acceptance of a number of interpretations of it. What is really implied by the acceptance of sruti is therefore the acceptance of a framework or a direction rather than the acceptance of a particular doctrine or dogma. The framework or direction can, however, be accepted only through some particular doctrine, or set of doctrines, which lies in that direction. This tends to give the wrong impression that if a particular understanding of sruti is to be rejected then sruti as such will have to be rejected. It is this kind of misunderstanding that Śankara is able to take care of when he says that the role of reason is to confirm the meaning of sruti.

But, what if there is a conflict between reason and sruti? The modern man would say that reason should be accepted instead of sruti. Is the alternative to this position the view that sruti deals with the non-empirical realm and reason deals with the empirical? No; it is possible to deal with this in an altogether different way. Thus, when there is a conflict of the above kind, it is possible to consider that the sruti text in question is not to be taken in the sense in which it is found to conflict with reason. In other words, as already suggested, the acceptance of
śruti is consistent with the non-acceptance of a particular interpretation of it.

What about conflicts between different śruti texts? "Where so-called scriptures conflict either among themselves or with knowledge otherwise established, they fail to be valid and cannot be reckoned among means of correct knowledge." It is clear that there is no question of subverting reason by an appeal to authority.

Incidentally, this view of the scriptures and their relationship with reason helps to bring out how different philosophical systems in India can owe allegiance to the same set of scriptures. The acceptance of the authority of scriptures signify a very fundamental assumption regarding the nature and role of thought; as already noted, it signifies a commitment to a certain direction rather than a commitment to a particular doctrine. As pointed out with reference to Bhartrhari's treatment of the issue, this direction is a precondition for the meaningful use of reason. This acceptance of a direction is normally possible through some particular interpretation/understanding of the śruti texts. Thus there is at once reason for agreement as well as disagreement between the systems in their view of the scriptures. This acceptance of a direction is analogous to
the acceptance of certain ultimate postulates in science; without these postulates the superstructure of science would simply be impossible.

This view also helps to answer another problem. As has already been pointed out in the last chapter, there is the problem of relating the different metaphysical doctrines of the various systems to the corresponding conceptions of moksar. It might be said that in a sense it is the same goal, that is, in so far as the goal is understood also in terms of the life of the realized person which is essentially the same in the various systems, and that the differences between the theories do not so much matter; in another sense, however, the different goals are different as the same goal might lend itself to different interpretations or theoretical explanations.5

The relationship between the different theories on the one hand and the more or less (same kind of life on the hand and the more of less) same kind of life on the other will be treated in the subsection (ii) that follows; and subsection (iii) will take up the question of the relationship between the different theoretical systems themselves.

(ii) Theory and Practice:

As for the relationship between theoretical
understanding and practical life, it cannot be stressed too often that each is incomplete without the other. It is, of course, possible that a certain individual may have the required pattern of life without himself being consciously involved in the theoretical articulation of the principles of human life. This cannot, however, be said of a society. In the case of a society, it is important that this is done consciously, at least by a section of that society. And the individual's life is what it is in the background of this conscious theoretical articulation of it.

In other words, the theoretical consistency of a system of philosophy is a necessary condition for the practical consistency of life to be really that consistency; and vice versa.

Now, the question is whether different sets of philosophical theories have different patterns of life as their corollary, or whether it is the same pattern of life. Though it is differently explained, the ultimate goal can, as pointed out earlier, be essentially the same. In this sense the pattern of life presented as the ideal one is essentially the same for different sets of theories. The different systems may be said to present the ideal of life in terms of the integration of the four purusarthas.
Moreover, the actual description of the realized person by the different systems is also essentially the same; it is in the image of the *sthitaprajña* as outlined in the Gita.

One must here take note of the possibility of different models even of the same pattern of life; that is, let us say, the possibility of different models of spirituality, such as, for instance, the *anubhava pradhāna* model represented by Ramana Maharshi, the *vicara pradhāna* model represented by Sri Aurobindo, and the *acara pradhāna* model represented by Gandhiji. Not only that the differences between them is a fact one cannot escape noticing, it is also necessary that this is so. For, in the absence of an interaction with the other models in the larger context of the society, any one of these models is likely to degenerate into a static and meaningless condition.

However, these different models of spirituality are not necessarily related to different theories. One comes across these different models within the same theory as well. Hence, the mere fact of there being different models of spirituality does not by itself refute the view that different theories have essentially the same pattern of life as their corollary. If anything, this only supports it.
A word about the relationship between metaphysics and ethics may not be out of place here. If the understanding presented above regarding the relationship between theory and life is correct, then the relationship between metaphysics or theoretical understanding of reality in general and ethics or the theory of conduct, is also to be understood in accordance with this. It is, thus, not necessary to suppose that from different metaphysics different ethics should follow. Rather, the ethics will be the same for widely different metaphysics. For, the theory may be different in general, but when these different theories have essentially the same pattern of life as their corollary, it is only natural that they have the same theory of conduct.

This explains how the different systems of Indian philosophy have allegiance to the same tradition of dharma śāstras. There is of course, a succession of such śāstras, and naturally there will be some differences between them; but these differences are not on the lines of the differences between theories.

The relevance of the different explanations of the same goal, and of different theories in this connection, is to be understood with reference to (a) the possibility of variously apprehending the goal in its diverse aspects, and
(b) the possibility of the varying individual characteristics demanding different conceptualizations of the goal and different sets of theories corresponding to them; each of these different sets of theories will, as has already been noted, be translatable into the same pattern of life but in a number of different ways thereby giving rise to different models of spirituality.

Again, as already noted, the goal itself is not justified fully and adequately by any set of theories; it requires a practical aspect to complete this justification. And this needs to be emphasized, because the goal is not a goal until its intuition and rational justification are brought together and completed by a certain form of life which is, in a sense, their unifying factor. The life factor thus unifies not only the different theories and their apparently different conceptions of the ultimate goal; it also unifies the theories with their corresponding intuitions.

We shall now briefly touch upon the 'Bhattacharya Model' of the conception of Indian philosophy with special reference to Daya Krishna's objections to it; this provides us with an opportunity to examine the relationship between theory and practice in a more concrete manner.
In the language of K.C. Bhattacharya, it is philosophical reflection alone which makes us aware of certain possibilities which demand to be actualized, even though the process of actualization itself is not exactly philosophical in nature. Philosophy is thus an essential and inalienable preliminary to spiritual freedom.

Daya Krishna raises a number of objections to this view of the relationship between understanding or awareness of the goal on the one hand and its actual attainment on the other. Thus, for instance, he argues that if this conception of Indian philosophy were correct, then philosophical activity would have come to an end long age; for, according to him, once the possibility of moksha as the supreme ideal is opened up by philosophical reflection, it is available to mankind for all time. Again, he thinks that philosophy cannot be of help to the spiritual aspirant (sadhaka) even in the limited task of removing doubts about moksa, because what is really advocated in India is not tackling doubts intellectually but the inculcation of faith which is essentially non-intellectual and non-rational.

We have already seen that theory and life (sadhana) are interdependent in such a way that none can be what it
purports to be without the other, though in any particular case either can be more or less sophisticated than the other. So there is no question of the theoretical awareness of mokṣa being present in the proper sense of the term without a corresponding life. It is not at all a question of a complete awareness of the goal first and then a practical attainment of it.

Also, mokṣa is not realized as the goal once and for all, that is if we take into account the social dimension of it. Moreover, more than one explanation can be given for the ultimate goal, and the need for new explanations can arise from time to time and under changed circumstances. In these matters there will be doubts, differences and disputes, even though in all these the basic character of the ultimate goal is not so much brought into dispute. For these and similar reasons one must desist from saying that philosophy ever comes to an end.

Similarly, it is not correct to say that intellectual assistance is impossible in the case of the śādhaka; we shall see in section (d) below how philosophy can be of assistance in the explanation and realization of the goal. The idea that faith is essentially non-intellectual and non-rational, is also unacceptable; we have been what the
relationship between reason and faith is in subsection (i) above: there is such an intimate relationship between them that each naturally flows into and completes the other.

One might, perhaps, not want to draw such a sharp distinction as Bhattacharya draws, between the theoretical awareness of a possibility and the actualization of the same. The distinction is often drawn so sharply on account of an absence of a clear understanding of their relationship in the Indian context. At the same time, Daya Krishna's objections to what he calls the Bhattacharya-model of the conception of Indian Philosophy, show a complete lack of appreciation of the intricacies of the Indian approach. Take, for instance, the observation that faith is what is advocated to the sadhaka and not intellectually tackling doubts; this observation is based on a very sharp distinction between faith and reason, between religion and philosophy, which we have found to be of no help in understanding the Indian mind and its achievements.

In this subsection we stress that theory and life go together, that the same kind of life can go with different theories, that this kind of life, viz., the spiritual kind of life, can have different models, that this does not imply different theories requiring different ethics, and that if we ignore these things, then we cannot properly understand
or appreciate the Indian conception of philosophy and its relationship with life. As to the idea that different theories can serve as explanations of the same basic reality, the reality and the paradigm of the perfected soul, it is not a mere assumption but a fact. People have attained that perfection, which is called self-realization; that this is the same for persons belonging to different theoretical persuasions becomes clear once the life-factor is brought in.

One might go one step further and argue that the different theories can be true of the same reality even if they conflict among themselves, as when one theory accepts God and another rejects Him, or when one accepts transcendence and another rejects it, or when one accepts monism at the absolute level and another accepts dualism. If there can be Euclidean geometry and non-Euclidean geometry, why can't there be a Sānkhya understanding and an Advaita understanding of the same reality?

This question takes us to the issue of the relationship between the different theoretical systems in the Indian context which we deal with in the following subsection.

(iii) Theory and Theory:

What is the relationship between theory and theory,
or between one philosophical system and another, which is implied by the acceptance of a framework of values in which reason is to function? This relationship can be indicated more or less clearly now.

In so far as the Indian philosophical systems operate within a broad framework of certain interrelated values, and in so far as its operation or functioning is related to the roles performed by Experience and Life, it is possible to regard these systems as having the same paradigm. The paradigm is the same in so far as the goal is the same, in so far as it refers to the same pattern of life; it also differs from system to system in so far as each brings out different understandings of the relevant śruti texts, different interpretations of the same tradition. In other words, the paradigm is the same in essence but not in details. These philosophical systems are, therefore, different and yet at a more fundamental level they are not. Hence the significance of the term 'Sāddarśanas'.

Thus, without denying or minimising the importance of their differences, it is possible to say that basically the Indian philosophical systems constitute a single metaphysics, viz., the theory of the self, vis-à-vis its relationship with the non-self. Each system provides the theoretical
support for the justification and realization of the ultimate goal, which is the realization of the true nature of the self, in a word, self-realization. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of Buddhism shows that Buddhism need not be an exception to this general pattern.\(^7\)

However, some metaphysics is discernible in each system, a metaphysics which is its own. This is because each system deals with a different aspect of reality, because each approaches reality from a different angle. Thus we might say that the Sāmkhya is mainly cosmology; the Nyāya deals mainly with Logic; the Yoga concerns itself mainly with practical discipline; and the Mīmāṁsā deals mainly with the ritual performance of duty. Each is refinement of a certain aspect, all these going, in varying proportions, into the making a single life. It is important to note this, because each system is not merely taking a certain point of view to its ultimate limits, but it is indeed refining that aspect on which its particular point of view is based. Thus, for instance, Mīmāṁsā is not just ritual; it is a refinement of ritual. Each aspect finds its refinement through a particular system of Indian Philosophy.

The refinement just spoken of is a refinement in the philosophical sense. To put it differently, the Nyāya, for instance, is not just logic, it is the philosophy of logic;
similarly, the Mīmāṃsa is not just ritual, it is the philosophy of ritual. Bhartrihari's is, in the same way, not just grammar, but the philosophy of grammar. There can be a philosophy of action, of knowledge, of devotion, of nature and its evolution, and so on, and at the same time all these can be part and parcel of the same basic metaphysics of the self, of self-realization.

Viewed thus, the Indian philosophical systems are not as much systems in the sense in which the term may be applied to the modern Western philosophical scene. Even if we regard the different schools of Indian philosophy as having, in a sense and to a certain extent, different metaphysical theories, this does not imply that these schools or systems therefore determine the nature and substance of reality differently. For, this reality is understood in terms of man's ultimate goal which in its turn is explained only in part by any particular theoretical system as such, the other aspects of its explanation being direct knowledge or Experience and concrete life. In the process of thus explaining the nature of reality in terms of the ultimate goal, the efforts and achievements of the theoretical system modify, and are modified by, the factors of Experience and Life. Thus it is that the different theories contribute to essentially the same understanding of reality.
In short, to understand the relationship between the different schools of Indian Philosophy, it is necessary to note (i) that these schools may be seen as representing different ways of refining and theoretically structuring the different aspects of reality, and (ii) that together these present a single coherent picture of reality, a single metaphysics in this sense of the term.

If this is so, then, the differences and disputes between these systems will have to be viewed differently from the way in which disputes between the Western philosophical systems are viewed. On account of their isolation of theory from Experience and Life, the modern Western philosophical systems are less easily amenable to the kind of interpretation regarding their relationship that we have found in the case of the schools of Indian philosophy. In so far as their basic framework is the same, the Indian philosophical theories are conditioned by that framework and they may be seen as part of the same whole; this cannot be said equally of the modern West where, as they do not belong to such a single framework, the systems really vie with one another for acceptance as the only true understanding of reality.

This is not to say that the systems of Indian philosophy do not compete among themselves. There is, indeed, severe competition; but it is competition within the same framework, and that makes all the difference. For, this
framework is such that in it theory is seen not in itself but in relation to Experience and Life on the one hand and a structure of goals on the other. This naturally affects the understanding of theory and of the relationship between theories.

The difference that this makes may be briefly put thus: In the Indian context, if a particular system happens to loss ground and die out slowly, the picture of reality to which it contributed suffers only marginally. For one thing it is essentially the same picture that the different systems together presented; and, for another, the aspect which a particular system represented could be incorporated into another system more or less adequately. But, if that particular system thrives, it is an enrichment of thought.

The relevant question in the case of the modern West is what could be gained by a system if it is dissociated from the intuitional and practical aspects. If much logic often coexists with a severe incapacity to say anything significant about the nature of reality, it is possibly because all the force and vigour of reasoning is not equal to the task of putting together the various elements of reality which are, in the first instance, seen in isolation from one another.
The conviction that there can be different formulations and explanations of the same reality, is part and parcel of the make up of the Indian psyche, and it is a natural corollary to the understanding of the nature of theoretical philosophy, and of reason itself, which we have outlined as the Indian understanding.

The Indian understanding of theory is thus clearly distinguishable from the modern Western understanding of it. To say this is, however, not to argue that one understanding is definitely superior to the other, though we may have tended to suggest that we hold this view. In any case that is outside the scope of this thesis. What is intended here is to underline the point that, in order to be able to appreciate the achievements of the Indian mind vis a vis their modern Western counterparts, it is necessary that we do not rule out, without prior examination, the plausibility of this Indian understanding of reason and theory.

Even if one cannot arrive at a final conclusion in the matter, it may be useful to consider also whether both the understandings of reason indicated above can equally be in the interest of reason itself; this may also be necessary in order to avoid the many pitfalls in the comparison of the philosophies of India and the modern West. However, without
saying here anything further on this issue we shall, in the following section, take a closer look at the role of theoretical philosophy vis a vis the justification and realization of the ultimate goal.

(d) The Role of Philosophy vis a vis the Ultimate Goal

We argued in Chapter II that it is the integral relation between theoretical philosophy on the one hand and a basic structure of interrelated goals on the other, which manifests itself in the preoccupation of Indian philosophical systems with the ideal of *moksha*. In other words, this goal-orientation is indicative of the kind of framework in which theory is to function. This, however, seemed to suggest that in this understanding of philosophy the role assigned to it is rather too limited if it is not wholly negative.

This impression is strengthened when one says, as does K.H. Potter, that it is the business of speculative philosophy in India to combat skepticism and fatalism.\(^2\) Potter contends that speculation becomes relevant "because of man's doubts that freedom is possible of attainment;" he feels that it is relevant in Indian thought as "the antidote to lack of faith in the availability of freedom for man;" again, "the traditional commitment to freedom (moksha) as
the ultimate goal of human striving, this orientation, is not peculiarly Indian but it is typical of Indian thought.\(^9\)

But, to this view the objection has been raised by Daya Krishna that, on this conception, philosophy is contingent upon the feeling of doubt about moksha.\(^10\) The question of the role of philosophy vis a vis the explanation and realization of the ultimate goal may therefore be discussed here with reference to this controversy between K.H. Potter and Daya Krishna.

Daya Krishna agrees that it helps philosophy to shed its contingent character if we suppose that intellectual difficulties on the path to moksha arise inevitably and necessarily on account of the rational nature of man. But he argues, "it is implicitly assumed in this view that intellectual difficulties of a purely rational/cognitive kind can stand in the way of a practical pursuit of ends which are non-cognitive, non-intellectual and non-rational."\(^11\)

Yet another objection raised in this connection is that intellectual difficulties possess an enormous fecundity of their own, so that each, even in the process of its own death and dissolution, gives rise to innumerable others clamouring equally for their solution. On the assumption
that philosophy is concerned with the removal of intellectual difficulties, its task would be, as Daya Krishna sees it, perennially self-defeating. In his opinion, therefore, these highly questionable presuppositions of Potter's view render his conception of Indian philosophy completely untenable.

But, to imagine that intellectual difficulties need not affect the seeker after perfection, and to argue that if it affects him then it is impossible to do anything about it by philosophical reflection, - these presuppose a certain understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, as also of the role played by philosophy in the pursuit of mokṣa. And, the understanding presupposed here is certainly different from that we have been arguing to be the typical Indian understanding. Thus, we argued that the role of Thought or theory in the justification of the ultimate goal has to be seen in its relationship with the roles played by Experience on the one hand and Life on the other; and this implied, among other things, a denial of the dichotomy between theory and practice.

Also, it is not good logic to argue that if we allow intellectual difficulties to be potent enough to trouble the seeker, then these difficulties will for ever
continue to plague him. For, it is quite possible that there is a continuous interaction between the intellectual efforts and the practical moves of the seeker, such that the difficulties will not remain the same in nature and intensity. Important indeed is the fact that theoretical understanding is not alone in its efforts towards the justification and realization of man's ultimate goal.

One might, of course, ask: why at all should one pursue the goal if it is not intellectually clear? Hence it is that Potter thinks it proper to describe the role of philosophy in India as essentially one of fighting skepticism. But it is necessary to have a closer look at Potter's understanding of the nature and role of doubts about moksha in Indian philosophy. And this requires, first, placing his views in their proper context.

Potter's views regarding Indian thought as a whole cannot be dissociated from the kind of situation prevailing in the modern West of which he is a product. The modern West gives as much prominence to the different modes of knowing as to the modes of the reality. Or, even, the different modes of knowing tend to determine the different modes of reality. This is so, if we take the situation in the West as a whole. Each system adopts as basic a particular mode
of knowing and regards the other modes to be secondary. Consequently, a certain aspect of reality is held in doubt if it requires a certain mode of knowing which is different from the one accepted as basic in a particular system.

Now, the importance of this is that doubts about the nature of reality are directly linked to the kind of logic one accepts, to the epistemological presuppositions of a particular system. Here the thought, as it were, wholly determines the nature of reality.

To instantiate, the method of proof is fundamental to the rationalists; as a result, what cannot be logically demonstrated will have to be held in doubt. Similarly, to the empiricists, for whom evidence is a fundamental requirement, anything that does not have the required kind of evidence is to be held in doubt.

In India, however, a different kind of situation obtains. The understanding that the different systems are different ways of approaching the same reality, - this is not a marginal understanding in India. Hence, the insistence on the correctness of one's own approach is modified and considerably tempered by this understanding. This is only natural when thought or theory is viewed along with Experience and Life as factors in the justification of a particular
understanding of man's nature and goal.

Epistemological questions are no doubt raised and discussed in India with great vehemence. Note, for instance, the disputes about the validity of śabda, or the discussions regarding the nature and content of perceptual knowledge. It is still possible to say that in India there is a certain flexibility about the mode or modes of knowing, and that here it is more a matter of explication than of clearing doubts. Doubts, of course, there are; and there are also attempts to clear them. But as this situation is not wholly analogous to that which obtains in the West, reducing intellectual clarification and explication of the goal to removal of doubts is an invitation to confusion and misunderstanding.

In short, in the Indian situation 'doubt' has to be understood in the context of 'explanation' which is what a philosophical system here purports to be; it is not to be understood in the context of proof, demonstration, material evidence, etc., one or the other of which is normally emphasized in the various modern Western philosophical systems.

Not only is it incorrect, then, to understand 'doubts about moksha' as skepticism and fatalism, it is also necessary to view such things in the background of the kind of 'explanation' that is available. Then only can Potter's
phrase 'the removal of doubts' adequately describe the role of philosophy in the Indian context. Also to be noted here is the fact that what is held in doubt is not so much the possibility of attaining an ultimate goal as Potter thinks; rather what is doubted is whether a particular understanding of this goal is correct. This also shows that Indian philosophy and its role vis a vis the realization of mokṣa cannot be understood merely as an antidote to skepticism and fatalism.

In the absence of a proper understanding of man's nature and goals, it is the task of philosophy, of course in association with the other factors already mentioned, to make this clear and pave the way for the actual attainment of these goals. This is a simple but basic truth, about the task that philosophy performs in the Indian context; and it is, to say the least, misleading to describe this positive and all-important task as the 'removal of doubts'.

Even supposing that doubts and fears about the possibility of mokṣa are what really demand speculative philosophy to enter the arena, it is important to consider whether these doubts are necessarily real or whether they could also be methodological. It is quite conceivable that, as in the case of Descartes, for instance, it was partly at least as a
methodological device that doubts were raised and discussed in Indian philosophical systems. Now, this would make the role of philosophy in India at least as positive as in the case of Descartes, the Father of modern Western philosophy. Of course, as we began with a very questionable supposition, it is not necessary for us to say this. Indeed, we shall not say this, because the role of philosophy in India is, in some important respects, not comparable to that of modern Western philosophy. As the perspectives or frameworks in which the two philosophies differ, the roles that can be assigned to these two are also significantly altered.

This is not at all to deny the possibility of philosophy playing its role in combating skepticism and fatalism. But we ought to distinguish between what can be said in the background of one understanding of philosophy and what may be said in the background of a different understanding of it. The two understandings of philosophy arise due to what we have called a difference in perspective between India and the modern West. Each perspective has its problem of doubts and its own way of dealing with this problem.

An understanding of Indian philosophy was presented in the last chapter in terms of its relationship with Experience and Life on the one hand and with the ultimate goal on the other. In so far as Potter does not take the former relationship into account, it is indeed doubtful whether his approach
can be of assistance in understanding the latter, that is, in understanding properly the role of philosophy in India vis a vis the ultimate goal.

So far we have merely suggested, by way of a criticism of both Daya Krishna and Karl H. Potter who are themselves locked in a controversy, that the role of philosophy does not become purely negative just because philosophy is understood as integrally related to mokṣa. To say that this role is indeed positive, one will have to say more definitely and positively what that role is. Let us now attempt this.

A philosophical system normally employs a paradigm in its attempt to explain the nature of reality. That paradigm in terms of which everything is to be understood is, in a sense, taken for granted. Thus, for example, an empiricist system attempts to understand all reality in terms of sense-experience, and a rationalist system in terms of logical or mathematical truth. One might say that the Advaita uses the reality of Brahman, as illustrated by the stitaprajna, the realised person, as the standard; it uses the Experience, Thought and Life of the stitaprajna as a measure for the experience, thought and life of the ordinary man.

This use of Brahman as the paradigm gives, it may be argued, an intellectual understanding in at least as full a
measure as the use of the other paradigms. There are problems anyway. That is, whether we take sense experience as the standard, or mathematical truth as the standard, each involves difficulties in apprehending not only what is taken for granted as the paradigm but also the relationship between the paradigm granted and what is supposed to be explained in terms of it; and, either can involve enormous difficulties for relating its respective metaphysical system to the proper form of life which cannot be totally left out of a comprehensive understanding of reality. The existentialist objections to systematic philosophy, which will be taken up for a brief discussion towards the end of section (e) below, point to just this kind of problems.

Similarly, there will be problems when, for instance, one takes the reality of Brahman as the standard or paradigm. Whether these problems are of the same kind as the ones mentioned above, is a moot question; it is an important question too. But we shall not consider it here. For the present it is enough to note that in Indian thought moksa is the paradigm in general and other things are understood in terms of that. In so far as the experience, thought and conduct of the Stitaprajna constitutes this paradigm, whatever thought etc., which does not measure up to it, is a misunderstanding, an illusion.
It might then appear that there is no difference in procedure between the Indian and modern Western approaches. But there could, indeed, be a vital difference.

One might attempt to formulate the difference thus: It is one thing to understand Man's nature and goal in a particular way and then, on that basis, try to understand the other things - physical objects, mathematical truths, etc. - and it is quite another to make a certain understanding of the physical objects or of mathematical truth the basis of an understanding of the self, of the nature and possibilities of human beings in general. The Indian philosophical systems, one might say, can thus be differentiated from modern Western Philosophies which also try to arrive at a proper understanding of life and its goal, but in a different way altogether.

But this is not to say that the centrality of man is the distinctive feature of Indian philosophical systems. What is taken for granted and taken as a paradigm in Indian thought is not just man as such but the realized person. It is the reality of the Sthitaprajna, and thereby a certain understanding of human life, that provides the paradigm; everything else is explained with reference to this as the standard.

The paradigm of Indian philosophical systems is,
then, significantly different not only from the kind of paradigms that the empiricists and the rationalists employ in their explanation of the nature of reality; it is also different from the pythagorian paradigms reflected in some contemporary Western philosophies too, viz., the idea that man is the measure of all things. Not just any man, but the realized person is, in Indian thought, the measure and the standard in terms of which everything is to be understood. The perfected soul, or the near-perfect individual who, of course, has a certain definite and positive relationship with the society in which he lives, is the ultimate criterion for reality.

The modern Western tendency is to give at least as much prominence to the different modes of knowing as to the modes of being. Thus it is that the epistemological standard—mathematical truth, sense experience, etc.—is raised to the level of, it is even placed above, the ontological standard. This may appear perfectly legitimate; until, of course, we see it as a symptom of the modern West's over-emphasis on the theoretical aspect, often to the exclusion of its relationship with the aspects of Experience and Life. In any case, this is not the only way of understanding the role and significance of theory; nor is this the only way in which the role of theoretical philosophy may be understood as positive.
Now, to focus attention on the role of philosophy in India, it may be argued that this role is positive in so far as the ultimate human goal, which is variously conceived in the systems and in terms of which the reality of everything else is judged, is not a mere assumption; this goal is shown to be a possible and valid goal. This is also one of the purposes served by showing that a particular understanding of the goal is the right understanding. To put it differently: though in a sense the reality of the goal is taken for granted, in another sense this goal is the very subject-matter of philosophical speculation. That there is an ultimate goal which could really be a framework of some inter-related goals, is taken for granted; but what the theoretical description of the goal is and how it is to be practically attained - this it is the business of philosophy to spell out. And this is not something that may properly described as a negative role.

To realize that the goal is possible and valid is not, however, to realize the goal in actuality. Therefore it might still be said that the role of philosophy is negative in the actual realization of the goal.

Let us note, however, that this can be true only under the assumption that the relationship between theory
and practice is such as to allow their separation from each other. If, on the other hand, theoretical philosophy is viewed, as we have tried to view it in the second chapter, in its intimate relationship with Experience (direct knowledge) and Life (conduct), then this kind of a dichotomy between theory and practice does not arise. And, in so far as philosophical reasoning is necessary both to give content to the otherwise empty intuitions about a framework of goals and to provide a unity and focus to the life in pursuit of these goals, it would be more appropriate to describe as positive the role philosophy plays in the explanation and realization of these goals.

Could one say that the "aim of philosophy, on the theoretical side, is the removal of ignorance relating to the nature of the final goal of life, and, to overcome narrowness"? Perhaps one could. But in so far as the relationship between the theoretical and the practical is not worked out clearly, this will not show how in India the role of philosophy is positive. In order to show this, it seems one has to indicate clearly and in sufficient detail how theoretical philosophy is related to direct intuitive knowledge on the one hand, and to concrete Life on the other. It is this that we attempted in the second chapter. Indeed,
from the understanding of their relationship we have indicated there, it would follow that the role of philosophy in the explanation and realization of the ultimate goal is positive.

(e) Theory: Its function and Formulation

The above analysis of the role of philosophy in the Indian context indicates the possibility of characterizing the Indian perspective in terms of its understanding of the function and formulation of theory. We might thus say that, according to this understanding, the function of theory is fixed but its formulations can indeed be many.

The different philosophical systems in India could be viewed as having the same function vis a vis the ultimate goal of human life, viz., to provide a certain understanding of the self and its possibilities. For, the establishment of the self is something like a precondition for the justification of the goal understood in terms of the purusartas and their interrelationship. A Coomeraswamy's interpretation of Buddhism allows this understanding to be extended to Buddhism as well.12

If the function of theory is fixed and its formulations are many, it may be thought that formulation is not a matter of any consequence. That is, it may be supposed that this
understanding implies a devaluation of theoretical systems as a whole. But this does not follow from what we have said about the function and formulation of theory as it is understood in the Indian context.

On the other hand, formulating thought or theory is as much important as its functional aspect. For, in the absence of a proper formulation, it is possible that theory becomes entirely arbitrary in its functioning, and, in that sense, proper functioning of theory is rendered difficult if not altogether impossible.

If it is thus important that theory is properly and carefully formulated, it is at the same time inevitable that the different formulations differ considerably from one another. For, each formulation is an attempt to present a particular understanding of the self and its goals, and, as already indicated, these understandings differ among themselves for various reasons. But the different formulations do not necessarily contradict among themselves on this account. The question of contradiction among the systems of thought, as also questions regarding their adequacy and limitations, will have to be considered in the background of the relationship that theory has with the aspects of Experience and Life; and, when so considered, these issues assume an altogether new character.
To elaborate: Questions regarding adequacy and limitations of theoretical systems can be significantly different in the two perspectives under consideration. In the Indian perspective the question of adequacy, for instance, can be raised about a theoretical system only with due regard for the aspects of Experience and Life which are, in a sense, built into the theory. The question is, then, not merely one of the correctness of theory; rather it will be a question regarding the plausibility of a particular combination of Experience, Thought and Life as an explanation and justification of a particular understanding of the ultimate goal. To the extent, then, that a particular combination of Experience, Thought and Life is adequate for this purpose, to that extent the particular theory in question is also to be regarded as adequate.

A limitation of the theory is, likewise, not necessarily limitation of the theory alone; it could be a limitation of the Experience-Thought-Life complex. As already pointed out, a basic 'limitation' of the Experience-Thought-Life complex is that it has to take recourse to sabda or Authority of tradition in order to adequately justify the goal. It is a limitation of reason, and of theory itself, in that they need a direction; that is, if it is a limitation at all.
In the case of the modern Western perspective on the other hand, the question of adequacy of a philosophical system is, by and large, the question whether a theoretical system has, or does not have, aggreable presuppositions and faultless logic with coherence of doctrines. The connections theory has with Experience and Life are as good as severed. In other words, in the Modern Western perspective, it is as if a theoretical system either stands by itself or falls by itself. Under this assumption, different theoretical systems cannot all stand together, especially when they conflict among themselves, though it is quite conceivable that they all fall together. The competition and tensions among the modern Western philosophical systems are best understood in the background of this assumption.

As has already been noted in the previous section, tensions among the systems of Indian philosophy any be understood as being qualitatively different from this. This difference may now be characterized thus: unlike in the case of the modern West, tensions among the systems of Indian philosophy are conditioned both by the prior commitment to a framework of goals which will initially be perceived only vaguely, and by the aspects of Experience and Life the different varieties of which cannot be contrasted in the same way as theories are sometimes contrasted. On the one hand,
one kind of Experience cannot be contrasted with another in a meaningful way except in its relation to Thought and Life; and, on the other, the scope is extremely limited for a real contrast between the Life factor which goes with one system and that which goes with another, for the simple reason that they are essentially the same, that they all consist in the actual integration of dharma, artha, kama and moksa.

This understanding of the function and formulation of theory in terms of which now characterize the Indian philosophical perspective, may, in one sense, be applied to the modern Western scene as well. In fact, it may be useful to try this in order to understand the strength and limitations of the different systems of the modern West. Nonetheless, as this understanding of theory is not really a governing principle for these systems, this attempt to reinterpret them is not likely to obliterate the distinction between the perspectives of India and the modern West as we have outlined that distinction here.

The West's own understanding of its theories is clear enough: the various reactions of the contemporary West to its modern systematic philosophies provide the evidence.

Take, for instance, the existentialist 'repudiation'
of the theoretical bias of systematic philosophy as a whole. This is best exemplified in the Christian existentialist thinker, Gabriel Marcel who accuses Descartes of a surfeit of abstraction and who consciously tries to attain a high degree of concreteness in his exposition. Like many other existentialists with whom he shared this and many similar views, Marcel employed the form of fiction to present his ideas; for, this form allows a maximum of concreteness with very little scope for theoretical abstraction.

However, it has been argued, and argued with considerable force, that this attempt to do without abstraction is based on a certain understanding of the relationship between the abstract and the concrete as also a certain understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and the practical. It has been argued that on a closer analysis one finds both abstract and concrete elements in both systematic and existentialist philosophies: the theory of the former is not without its links with practice or life which is concrete; nor is the concrete philosophy of the latter without a certain degree of theoretical abstraction. It is only that the connections between theory and practice, as well as the connections between the abstract and concrete elements, are rather tenuous as they are very vaguely understood in these philosophies.

The positivist reaction to systematic philosophy may
also be understood in the same way. Having realized the risks of taking seriously the methods of proof and evidence, and faced with the fact that no incontrovertible system can be built up either way, some contemporary thinkers tended to deny the very possibility of metaphysics. Now, this tendency to deny metaphysics has to be seen in its relationship with a tendency which Descartes, the Father of Modern Philosophy, himself displayed, viz., the tendency to isolate Thought or theory both from the framework of goals and from the aspects of Experience and Life, thereby rendering theory itself inadequate in a significant way.

These contemporary reactions to modern systematic philosophies, therefore, help to bring to light the tendency of the modern West to isolate thought or theory from everything else. This does not, of course, mean that these contemporary attempts to redefine philosophy involve a difference understanding of theory and its relationship with Experience, Life, etc., an understanding that is different from the one which was implied by the approach of earlier system-builders.

This view is supported by the kind of problems which continue to plague the Western philosophical scene. If the problem for Kant was how to put together the different critiques, the problem in Wittgenstein is how to put together the
different language games, i.e., the different fields of discourse. Having begun with discrete elements which are individually grasped, both of them face the problem of uniting them into a single whole. Wittgenstein approaches a solution to this problem, almost in a flash, when he says that only he who lives truth can speak truth. This is not much more than a flash of insight, in spite of Wittgenstein's own claim that the work lies outside modern Western civilization.

It is also not intended to suggest here that the contemporary Indian response to its past or to the West indicates an awareness of the speciality of either with regard to its understanding of the nature, function and formulations of theory. It will be argued in Chapters VII and VIII that an absence of this awareness is indeed the basic source of the confusion prevailing in the field of comparative studies today.

Suffice it to say here that there is a significant difference between traditional Indian philosophy and modern Western philosophy with regard to their understanding of the function and formulation of theory. While it is possible to argue that the Indian philosophical systems are infused with the notion that theory can have many formulations but a single function, it is difficult to say the same thing about the modern Western philosophies.
The Indian approach is to understand theory in its relationship with other elements such that there is a clear recognition of the possibility of having different formulations of theory consistently with a function that is fixed and therefore the same for all these formulations. In contrast, the tendency of the West is to isolate theory from almost everything else, thereby tending also to attribute to its formulation a fixity which perhaps belongs properly to its function alone.

f) Conclusion

After having examined in the previous chapter a certain dimension of the goal-orientation of Indian philosophy, viz., the complex character of the goal as well as the complexity of its justification, and having suggested thereby a certain understanding of the Indian perspective, we have, in the present chapter, analysed another dimension of this orientation. We have thus considered here in some detail the relationship between the complex goal and its complex justification.

Specifically, we have considered here the relationship between mankind's basic intuition of the ultimate goal on the one hand and the rational element in its justification, viz., thought or theory, on the other. This has enabled us
to see (i) how the goal, understood here in terms of the puruṣārthas and their inter-relationship, is basically a matter of intuition which is always available to human beings who seriously consider the business of living, (ii) how this intuition provides a direction to thought or theory a particular system of which, along with its corresponding Experience and life, supports a particular understanding of the ultimate goal, and (iii) how this intuition, in its turn, depends on thought or theory for its very content.

This has suggested that both reason and intuition are probably present in both the Indian and Western contexts so that their difference should really be not in the presence or absence of either of these elements but in the very manner in which the two are related in the two contexts. It was possible to say, in this connection, that in the Indian context both reason and intuition are understood to perform certain functions together, which neither can perform by itself, while in the modern West one or the other of these is often supposed to function with relative autonomy.

As a result, though both reason and intuition are present in both the contexts, there may be a significant difference between the apparently same or similar elements. For, according as their roles and functions differ, their
nature too differ. Of course, this appeared to lead to problems, especially, in intercultural studies; but we also noted that problems arise mainly on account of our tendency of looking at a certain element in one context from the perspective of another. These problems can be taken care of if the two perspectives are understood as distinct and if each is taken as a whole and compared to the other. This will be discussed in some detail in chapter 7 and 8.

We have also seen, in this chapter, some of the implications of our understanding of the relationship between reason and intuition. Thus, we noted that (i) theory and dogma, (in other words, knowledge and belief), (ii) theory and practice (knowledge and action), and (iii) theory and theory (system and system) are all closely interlinked pairs such that an element of any one of these pairs is what it is only in a certain relation to the other element of the pair. Our analysis of the relationship between reason and intuition showed how vital it is, for a proper understanding of Indian thought, to take this relationship into account; and a consideration of the implications of this relationship served to further clarify the nature of this relationship, thereby also clarifying the basic Indian perspective itself.

Still more clarification of this perspective was
attempted by way of an analysis of the role of theoretical philosophy in the explanation, justification and realization of the ultimate goal. It was noted, in this connection, that this role is indeed positive and significant; but to understand it as such, this 'vertical' relationship between theoretical philosophy and the ultimate goal must be viewed in the background of another relationship, viz., the 'horizontal' relationship between theory on the one hand and Experience and Life on the other. In other words, we see what role theoretical philosophy plays vis-a-vis the explanation and realization of the ultimate goal, provided we take into account the whole situation with the totality of its elements which are variously but intimately connected among themselves.

We also attempted in this chapter to distinguish between the understanding of thought or theory as suggested by our analysis of Indian Philosophy and the modern Western understanding of the same as largely independent of everything else. In this connection we referred to some contemporary responses to the latter understanding with a view to sharpen the contrast between the approaches of India and the modern West.

It has thus been possible to state the difference between the two perspectives with reference to a significant
difference in their understanding of theory itself. The modern Western perspective, it has been noted, tends to grant autonomy to reason and to theory, while the Indian perspective is decidedly against granting it such autonomy. In the latter case, theory is understood as functioning within the framework of intuitions about a framework of goals, that too in association with the aspects of Experience and Life.

It was already suggested in the last chapter that the two perspectives in question may be distinguished from each other, not merely in terms of the relationship between Experience, Thought and Life, or in terms of the relationship between theoretical philosophy and the ultimate goal it attempts to justify, but, rather more abstractly, also in terms of the understanding of the relationship between the whole and its parts. This characterization of the two contrasting perspectives in these general terms, now gets some support from our analysis of the relationship between reason and intuition in the Indian context; for, this relationship also points in the direction of a particular understanding of the relationship between the whole and its parts. Let us see how.

According to the Indian understanding, theory has a direction and is saved from confusion because of the intuition about a framework of goals; but intuition itself is saved by theory from the danger of being hollow. Thus there is a relation of mutual dependence between reason or theory on
the one hand and the intuition of goals on the other. Now, let us put this result of our analysis in the present chapter, along with the findings of the last chapter. These findings were that, according to this understanding, theory functions in a significant manner only in association with the aspects of Experience and Life, and that these aspects, in their turn, need theory for them to play their roles meaningfully. There is thus a mutuality in this relationship too.

In short, one cannot isolate reason or theory from intuition; nor can we isolate the latter from the former; just as Thought cannot be isolated from Experience and Life considered as elements in the justification of the goal; and as Experience and Life cannot be isolated from each other or from Thought itself.

Now, this mutuality in the relationship of the various elements, considered both horizontally and vertically, indicates the 'holistic' character of the Indian approach. This indicates, in general terms, that this approach takes the whole into account while considering any of its parts. And as already noted, this means, specifically and in concrete terms, that Thought or theory performs its function in association with the aspects of Experience and Life, and in a
certain relationship to the intuition of a framework of goals which provides a direction to theory itself.

If this characterization of the Indian perspective in concrete terms has the limitation that, being specific, it seems to exclude other possible characterizations in similar specific terms, the above characterization in general terms, that is the characterization in terms of the relationship of the whole and its parts, has the disadvantage that it is too vague and abstract. However, these two ways of characterizing the Indian approach illumine each other, and, taken together, they should go a long way in clarifying the essential nature of Indian thought.

In contrast, one may characterize the modern Western perspective as tending to regard as autonomous the aspect that it takes up for consideration at any given time and in any given context. Thus, for instance, it tends to view reason and theory as independent of such things as intuition of the ultimate goal, faith, conduct, etc. This is because the modern West tends to view each element it considers in isolation from other elements which are all, in fact, interrelated among themselves, and which therefore the West also tries ultimately to relate or to put together. This attempt to construct the whole out of its parts, each more or less separately grasped, is in sharp contrast to the Indian
approach which tends to view the parts always as parts of a whole.

Thus the understanding of the two perspectives in terms of the relationship between the whole and its parts, which was already suggested by our analysis of the goal-orientation of Indian philosophy in the last chapter, emerges now much more clearly and forcefully. The Indian perspective, we find, is characterized by the firm conviction that, not only the whole needs to be analysed and understood in terms of the parts, the parts themselves are to be understood in terms of the whole.

While this understanding issues a clear warning against viewing Indian philosophical theories through the screen of Western ideas and categories, it also helps to remove the impression that, in the Indian perspective, theory is relegated to the level of a mere tool destined to subserve the interests of tradition and blind orthodoxy. For, if theory is incompetent to do its job without an intuition of the framework of goals, intuition also cannot have any substance without its theoretical content. This understanding does not therefore, involve a denial of the importance and significance of the thought aspect.

The above understanding of the Indian perspective
and of the place that theory occupies in it helps to clear another misunderstanding. Now, it has surprised quite a few that in Indian thought there exists great logical subtlety hand in hand with much that is usually regarded as antithetical to reason. Our analysis of the nature and role of theory in the Indian context should suffice to dispel any such feeling of dismay. For, if the understanding of the Indian perspective we have arrived at has any plausibility, then it is only to be expected that here the play of reason is not adversely affected, rather it is really assisted, by those factors which at first seem to minimise its scope.

An awareness of the limits of reason does not necessarily lead to a denial of its significance; rather, this awareness may be a necessary condition for a proper appreciation of the significance of reason itself. For, while neither reason nor intuition may be in a position to function independently of each other, both together might be able to function meaningfully. Thus, our analysis has brought out the full scope as well as the real limits of reason (and intuition) according to the Indian understanding of them and of their relationship.

In short, on the assumption that our understanding of the Indian perspective has some plausibility, it is possible
to say that Indian philosophy has attained great heights of logical subtlety, not in spite of its moksha-orientation, but possibly because of it.

Now, the possibility of dispelling such misgivings about Indian Philosophy as cited above, should serve to further support our contention regarding the essential character of this thought and its perspective. However, since we are dealing with a very large issue and since, for one reason or another, there is always a need to make this kind of characterization of a whole philosophical tradition more and more and more clear, it is thought useful, in a sense necessary, to substantiate this understanding of the Indian perspective with the help of some illustrations. Such illustration will also provide an opportunity to put the two perspectives side by side, so that their contrast gets sharpened and the strength and limitations of each perspective acquire some transparency.

The following three chapters attempt these illustrations. These relatively small chapters take up issues from the areas of metaphysics, ethics and religious philosophy, and consider them with reference to the treatment they receive in Indian as well as modern Western thought. This should give our delineation of the two perspectives further concreteness and clarity. Once the alternative perspectives are thus
delineated in sufficient detail, and only then, we may rightly proceed to bring out the implications of this for comparative studies between India and the modern West.
1. Prof. K.J. Shah has discussed this in some detail in his paper "Reason, Slave or Master" read at I.C.P.R. Seminar, Lucknow, 1987. I am indebted to this discussion both for the line of thinking adopted in this subsection and for its formulation.

2. The Vākyapadiya of Bhartṛhari, Trans. K.A. Subramaniam Iyer, p. 50. Iyer's Translation of the 41st para is: One who has recourse to Tradition which shines uninterruptedly like the 'I' consciousness, cannot be diverted therefrom by mere reasoning (underlying mine.)

3. Iyer's Translation of the 42nd para is thus: Fall is not unlikely in the case of one who relies on reasoning as in the case of a blind man who walks along a difficult path by groping with his hands. (Iyer, p. 50)

4. Sastri S.S., Sāmkhyakarika, p. 19

5. Indicative of this possibility and its significance is the story in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, ch. V, about the same instruction "da" by Prajapati being understood by gods, men and demons as self-restraint, charity, and compassion respectively.


7. Coomaraswamy, A.K., Hinduism and Buddhism. Coomaraswamy thinks that the difference between the two is that while Hinduism attempts to say what the self is, Buddhism approaches the same issue by saying what the self is not.
8. Potter, K.H. Presuppositions of India's Philosophies, p. 50

9. Ibid. p. vii

10. Daya Krishna, "Three Conceptions of Indian Philosophy" in Philosophy East and West, Jan. 65, pp. 37 - 51 and "Indian Philosophy and Moksa, Revisiting an Old Controversy"

11. Ibid., "Three Conceptions ... ", p. 40.

12. See Note 7 above

13. Kangirathinkal S., in his Ph.D. thesis on Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy, has argued out the plausibility of looking at systematic and Existentialist philosophies in this way. He has discussed this issue with reference to Descartes philosophy and Marcel's reactions to it.

14. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Culture and Value, Ed. Von Wright, University of Chicago Press, 1980; p. 35 e. The translation by Peter Winch is: "No one can speak the truth, if he has still not mastered himself".

15. Ibid.