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Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad *Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge: Themes in Ethics, Metaphysics and Soteriology*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). Pp. xiv + 176. Price £50.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 7546 5456 8.

Reading Indian philosophy faces multiple challenges. First, Indian philosophy as a category is still struggling to emerge from the mystic haze cast over its rational thinking. On the other hand, while identifying categories in Indian philosophy that parallel Western parameters, it needs to exist as a tradition of its own and not as a branch of contemporary Western thought or a section of the history of philosophy. This recognition of Indian philosophy on its own merits faces the challenge of establishing the presuppositions of Indian thought while bringing Indian thinking to a broader contemporary perspective. Many comparative studies fail to demonstrate unique aspects of Indian thought or differentiate it from apparently similar concepts in Western philosophy. The issue is, if Indian philosophy is an independent philosophical project, it needs to be read within the parameters of its own categories and presuppositions. And the question is, is it possible to read Indian thought in this setting? While this approach illuminates unique aspects of Indian thinking, it is nonetheless a complex task.

These challenges are confronted by Indian philosophers in ways that justify Indian thinking as a philosophy within its own parameters. Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad's new book, *Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge*, is one of these pioneering works that endeavours to offer new ways of thinking through Indian philosophy while embracing its own hermeneutics, and at the same time bringing aspects of Indian philosophy to a wider audience.

As Ram-Prasad identifies in the introduction of the text, Indian philosophical thought has always applied knowledge to attain something else, not explicitly claiming that knowledge is an end in itself. Nonetheless, following Ram-Prasad, this presupposition has not reduced Indian philosophy to a method only for achieving liberation. He points out that Indian thinkers have invested a great deal in epistemological and ontological aspects of philosophical thinking through their analysis of the modalities and instruments of knowledge.

In the first chapter, Ram-Prasad proposes a model of 'multiplism' that he considers inspired by Jain philosophy, while leaving open the issue of whether 'multiplism' could fit within the parameters of Jain thought. His project of 'multiplism' relies on three Jain categories. The first is *syādvāda*, that a statement and its negation can both be asserted. The second is *anekāntavāda*, that reality is fundamentally many-sided. And, the third is *naṣāvāda*, that each schematic account of the world is circumscribed, both truthful and limited.

His argument of multiplism, in his own words, relies on the assumption that a common reality can contain many different and incompatible truths. Ram-Prasad is conscious of the possible arguments over this application, as he points out that *anekānta* is not historically understood by Jains in the same way that Ram-Prasad understands it. However, if we examine the history of Jain philosophy, the interpretation of *syādvāda* or of *naya* has not always remained stable. Philosophical categories have always been subject to reinterpretation and appropriation without distorting the foundational concepts, such as the category of non-violence in the case of Jainism. Ram-Prasad finds this new project of multiplism a better solution to the violence that is rooted in our construction of 'otherness'.

Ram-Prasad proposes four modalities to describe the relationship with the 'Other': (1) homogenization, where the other is overcome; (2) exclusion, where the Other is recognized negatively; (3) pluralism, where existence of the Other is acknowledged; and (4) multiplism, where affinity with the Other is sought. He identifies that the first two of these alternatives generate violence, and while the third does not, neither does it foster affinity. He brings both Buddhist and Jain ethics of empathy to address the ways that multiplism can foster a deeper relationship with the Other. What Ram-Prasad has not addressed here but will perhaps in his future writings, is that this romantic relationship with the Other, as proposed by multiplism, has already been experimented with in Indian culture by various Sahaja and Nirgun Sants. This experimentation within Indian culture has engendered its own cultural hybrids, and historically, within Indian thought, the multiplist perspective has identified yet another category of the Other that demands, and properly deserves, its exclusive identity.

The second chapter of this book tackles the issue of consciousness. While analysing classical Indian perspectives on the nature and function of consciousness and broadly addressing the issue of whether or not consciousness is conscious of itself, he compares various aspects to contemporary studies on consciousness. Ram-Prasad identifies the Indian understanding of *caitanya* as *svaprakāśa* to be a metaphoric expression that consciousness is 'auto-luminous,' identifying literal luminosity as identical to the light of the sun or a lamp. He brings into perspective five different conceptions of luminosity developed in Indian classical thinking.

The Nyāya school proposes that the occurrence of a first-order cognition consists of grasping an object, with a second-order cognition that cognizes as its object the first order cognition. Following the Bhāṭṭas, a higher-order cognition occurs through the mechanism of analytic presumption (*arthāpatti*). Following the Yogācārins, since cognition consists of unmediated apprehension, it does not depend upon second-order cognition. For the Prābhākaras, the occurrence of cognition consists in the formation of the cognition, the cognizing self, and the content of cognition. Following the Advaitins, the occurrence of cognition

consists in cognition of its own occurrence as an independent prerequisite for the cognition of objects. Based on these diverse understandings, both the topic of consciousness and the process of cognition are richly represented in Indian philosophy. Ram-Prasad argues in this chapter that the study of consciousness as found in Indian philosophy can make a significant contribution to contemporary consciousness studies, while asserting that his is merely a programmatic study.

The three remaining chapters address soteriological issues that have remained crucial in the rise of different schools of Indian thought. The third chapter, 'Knowledge and, action: on how to attain the highest good', brings to light the debate between the Mīmāṃsā and Ādvaita schools upon the role of action in liberation. While Mīmāṃsakas deem it critical that action leads to liberation, Śāṅkara, a monk who renounced household life, which in Indian culture epitomizes an active role dependent upon agency, considers knowledge of the reality as the only means to liberation, relegating action to a subsidiary role that prepares the seeker for knowledge. In the case of Mīmāṃsā, correct actions require knowledge and thus knowledge precedes action. In the case of Śāṅkara, actions are bound to yield fruit, subsequently leading to the chain of rebirth. It is explicit that what is meant by knowledge in these two schools is quite different: for Mīmāṃsakas, knowledge is 'about' something, whereas for Śāṅkara, the liberating knowledge is free from mental constructs and objects of qualification.

The fourth chapter, 'Liberation without annihilation: Pārthasārathi Mīśra on Jñānaśakti', examines developments in Mīmāṃsā subsequent to the rise of Śāṅkara's philosophy, where Mīśra attempts to give a role to cognitive power in the process of liberation as propounded by Mīmāṃsā. For the Advaitins, the self is free from agency and so does not embody any power. On the other hand, for Mīmāṃsakas, agency is inherent to the self and agency presupposes the power to act. Therefore, the self in this system is always endowed with power. In the state of liberation, according to the Mīmāṃsakas, although there may not be any cognitive activity, the self nevertheless contains cognitive potency. This addition to the discussion on Mīmāṃsā found in the third chapter brings to the fore the essential distinction between these two schools concerning liberation. As the consequence of knowledge is addressed with different modalities in classical India, this proper analysis allows us to reach the core of this debate.

The fifth and the final chapter of this study, 'Conceptuality in question: teaching and pure cognition in Yogācāra–Madhyamaka', demonstrates the role of the teacher in the Buddhist tradition that follows the Yogācāra–Madhyamaka understanding. In this system, an enlightened being is expected to be free from mental constructs while instruction presupposes the existence of the relationship between disciple and preceptor. Ram-Prasad states that the tension between insight as pure cognition or as conceptually structured knowledge is resolved by acknowledging their difference, and at the same time, accepting the latter to be important for the task of teaching that requires compassion.

While the new hermeneutics on multiplism found in the first chapter and a fresh comparative analysis of the issue of consciousness in the second chapter contextualize this study, the remaining chapters maintain this investigation within the parameters of Indian philosophical thought with a focus on the issues of liberation identified as the consequence of knowledge. This approach of reading Indian thought without reducing it to an appendage of Western philosophy or making it a branch of the history of philosophy is, I believe, the most appropriate method of approaching Indian philosophy. This wonderful text, programmatic in nature, paves the path for future studies in Indian philosophy, as many of the issues raised by Ram-Prasad require further investigation.

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Linda Zagzebski *Philosophy of Religion: An Historical Introduction*
(Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). Pp. ix + 254. £50.00, \$78.95 (Hbk);
£16.99, \$29.95 (Pbk). ISBN 9781405129220 (Hbk); 9781405118729 (Pbk).

As an introduction to the philosophy of religion this book has four unique features: the first is that it is 'historical, but not chronological' (viii). By this Linda Zagzebski means to draw attention to ancient, mediaeval, and modern sources and contributions to current debates. Were it chronological, she might have had chapters on ancient Greek, Hellenistic, early Christian, medieval Christian, early modern, and contemporary philosophy of religion. Instead, for many of the problems she examines, she traces their history to early sources, explains what motivated the thoughts and arguments, and then follows the history through classical versions of those arguments up to recent versions. A second unique feature is that she gives attention to the role of emotions in addressing many of the problems she examines. A third is that she draws on previously published views and arguments of hers (for example, her work on freedom and foreknowledge, on virtue epistemology, and on divine motivation theory). A fourth is that she incorporates and develops some of her current work on self-trust and religious diversity.

In chapter 1 Zagzebski addresses three background issues. First, she describes what religion is, what philosophy is, and the early development of the philosophy of religion. Her account of religion: 'a complex human practice involving distinctive emotions, acts, beliefs' which serve to 'express and foster a sense of the sacred' (2). On her account, emotions seem to take primacy over acts (rituals, symbols, sacraments) and beliefs (both credal expressions and cognitive