

LANGUAGE AND REALITY IN BRHADARANYAKA -
UPNISAD AND LUDWIG WITGENSTEIN'S
TRACTATUS LOGICO - PHILOSOPHICUS

This paper attempts to explicate and compare some ideas about language and reality expressed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (later to be abbreviated *BAU*) and *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus* (later to be abbreviated as *TLP*) in order to show that there is some similarity of approach adopted in two texts.

1. *Substance without form* : *BAU* holds that the world existed in the beginning in an amorphous condition (*avyākṛta*). It can be conceived as some kind of primordial matter without form. As a result of *Nāma-Rūpa* (i.e., a principle of individualization and differentiation) individual and diverse beings and things were created, (*BAU* paragraph 7). *TLP* holds "Substance is what subsists independently of what is the case". (*TLP* 2.024). "What is the case — a fact is the existence of state of affairs" (*TLP* 2). "A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)" (*TLP* 2.10). "Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent" (*TLP* 2.0271). So objects are the subsistents, hence the substance. It is the combination of objects through their forms — "Space, time and colour (being coloured) are forms of objects" (*TLP* 2.0251) — that produces a state of affairs.

The comparison between the preceding ideas given in *BAU* and *TLP* shows that both believe that prior to the individuation and differentiation of things there was substance without form. Wittgenstein holds that such a substance only subsists, whereas no such distinction is made in the *BAU*.

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2. *Process of Individualization and Differentiation* : According to *BAU* it is through the process of individualization and differentiation that things come out from the formless matter. Everything is individualized through *Nāma-Rūpa* i. e. the Name and the Form, “.. Name together with form is a factor of differentiation” (*BAU* paragraph 7). When the primordial matter received particular form it also assumed at the same time name corresponding to it. The nature of such a link is essential. “... the link which unites the name with the object it denotes is, neither as something conventional nor a social product but something which is indissoluble and which exists by itself and forever.” (*BAU* paragraph 7). *TLP* holds that the objects only subsist before their configuration through which they receive their form. “Configurations of objects produce state of affairs (*TLP* 2.0272). “In a state of affairs objects stand in a determinate relation to one another” (*TLP* 2.031). “The determinate way in which objects are connected in a state of affairs is the structure of the state of affairs” (*TLP* 2.032). “Form is the possibility of structure” (*TLP* 2.033). So the configuration of objects provide individualization to objects by providing them with a structure (i.e., a determinate form) : it also provides individualization to a state of affairs.

The comparison shows that according to *BAU* individualization and differentiation of objects becomes possible both by a material and a linguistic process : when the formless matter received a particular form, at the same time it assumed a name corresponding to it. Does language play any role in the process of individualization and differentiation in *TLP* as it does in *BAU*. In the first instance one may say ‘no’ because it is only the configuration of objects that gives individualization and differentiation to an object and a state of affairs. But that is not true. A proposition does seem to play a role because the

relationship of a proposition with its corresponding state of affairs is not conventional but essential (*TLP* 4.03), a proposition being a picture of a state of affairs. The internal relation of depicting that holds between the language and the reality (*TLP* 4. 014), also holds between a proposition and its corresponding state of of affairs.

3. *Individualization through the analysis of language* : According to *BAU* since there is an indissoluble i.e., essential relationship of correspondence between the language and the reality because of the rule or the principle of *Nāma-Rūpa*, etymological analysis of language can help towards individualization of things : "The word expresses in itself through its elements (sound, syllables) the innermost and authentic nature of the thing which it designates. Therefore an appropriate etymological analysis of the word allows us to know what it truly means, to discover the essence of the object which it denotes."¹ Furthermore *Ātman* divides itself into *Prāṇans* : "*Prāṇans* are those which become manifest; the perceptible reality composed by the individual and *Ātman* is their essence".² Each individual is represented by 'I.' Wittgenstein in the *TLP* also holds that there is an essential relationship of correspondence between the language and the reality (the world) because of the principle of representation. The reality that is beyond the world (totality of facts) is the mystical because it is not representable through the logic of language that is the language of facts. "The totality of propositions is language" (*TLP* 4.001). "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (*TLP* 1. 1). Thus the analysis of the language can give us the totality of propositions: the totality of propositions can tell us about the totality of facts they represent.

In *BAU*, individualization and differentiation of things, through the analysis of language, is all comprehensive. It gives us the analysis of the reality as a whole i.e., both the perceptual and

the non-perceptual. Wittgenstein's analysis of the language in the *TLP* is limited only to the perceptual. However, he extends the scope of language in *Philosophical Investigation* (later abbreviated as *PI*): any language does not essentially have the clear and firm structure of the formulae in logical calculus. There are various forms of language. "To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." (*PI* p. 19)

4. *Analysis of Language :*

4.1 As mentioned in the preceding section *BAU*'s analysis of language is etymological i. e., etymological analysis of a word through its elements (sound, syllable etc.) expresses the innermost and authentic (essential) nature of the thing it designates. What is a word? A word can be complex like *satya* and simple like *sat* since *sat* is not further analysable. A complex word can be considered as a sentence because in ancient Indian texts written in Sanskrit such a sentence is merely an order of words. However, words are not there as separate units but are obtained by analysing the sentence or a complex word. It is done through dissecting (or analysing) the sounds and syllables in a sentence. In *TLP* the suggested language is logical. 'Logical analysis of the language gives us the totality of propositions A complex proposition like $p \vee q$ is analysable into truth-functions and elementary propositions. It is only an elementary proposition that represents a state of affairs and truth functions do not represent anything in the world. An elementary proposition is a combination of simple names. However a proposition is not a blend of words — (Just as theme in music is not a blend of notes). "A proposition is articulate" (*TLP* 3.141) "It is only in so far as a proposition is logically articulated that it is a picture of a situation. (Even the proposi-

tion "‘Ambulo’ is composit : for its stem with a different ending yields different sense, and so does its ending with a different stem) (*TLP* 4.032). Furthermore, according to *TLP* "a propositional sign provides us with logical coordinate that is the logical place". (*TLP* 3.41). "In geometry and logic alike a place is a possibility : something can exist in it" (*TLP* 3.411). So in whatever way we analyse 'Ambulo' and with whatever name we fill the logical place in the propositional sign, it will represent the situation from that angle.

In comparison we can say that according to both *BAU* and *TLP* a word (in Wittgensteinian sense a propositional sign) can be so analysed that it provides us with logical co-ordinates which represent reality.

4.2 According to *BAU* each word or name inseparably denotes or designates its corresponding form (of an object) because of the principle of *Nāma-Rūpa*. If it is a complex word or a name, it designates or denotes a complex form (of an object), while a simple word designates a simple form. It also follows from the principle of *Nāma Rūpa* that a name must designate or denote one form (of an object). In *TLP* according to the theory of representation, a simple name in a proposition must represent or stand for an object in a state of affairs (or situation) and that a proposition must represent a state of affairs and that there is one to one correspondence between a name and the object it represents, and a proposition and state-of-affairs it represents.

In conclusion we can say that the principle of *Nāma-Rūpa* in *BAU* is a principle of representation. There seems to be a great

similarity between this on the one hand, and Wittgenstein's whole theory of language and reality in the *TLP* on the other.

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NOTES

1. Fernando Tola "Archaic Elements in three Conceptions of the Atman in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*" in the *Journal of Religious Studies* (Patiala), India. Vol. xii, 2, 1984, p. 63.
2. *Ibid.* p. 72.