

Views on the Philosophy of Knowledge in the Mahabharata Epic

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Abstract:

This article discusses the formation of the first buds of philosophy in Ancient India, the creation of the great epic poem "Mahabharata", which occupied a special place in its culture and history, and its significance in the life of the Indian people. The epic poem "Mahabharata" provides valuable information about the way of thinking of the ancient Indian people, epistemological views, and the significance of knowledge in human life.

Keywords: Indian philosophy, epic poem "Mahabharata", epistemology, "Bhagavadgita", Krishna, time and space, man, world, universe, Dharma, thinking, contemplation, consciousness, spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The Mahabharata, created three thousand years ago, is not only a wonderful monument of literature, but also a unique encyclopedia of the life, customs, manners, aesthetic and ethical views of the peoples of ancient India. In the Mahabharata, the issue of knowing the world is of great importance. A person knows the world through self-awareness. Knowledge, that is, cognition, is considered important for a person to fulfill his moral duty and great work. It is through cognition that a person understands existence and himself. Krishna calls on a person to abandon careless worldly desires in understanding the world. But the world cannot be fully known, because it is infinite, and there are many worlds in it.

In the epistemology of the Mahabharata, it is important for a person to understand such realities as time and space. Through them, a person thinks, through them determines his existence, through them knows himself and the world. The epistemological basis chosen in the epic encourages its authors and listeners to seek and master the fullness of worldly existence. The Mahabharata is based

on the understanding of oneself and the universe, on gnostic truths such as the general (dharma) and the particular. The epistemology (the way of understanding the universe) clearly indicated in the epic is the Bhagavad-Gita, or the “sacred conversation” between the teacher and the student. Krishna instructs his disciple Arjun in his desire to understand the problems that disturb his soul. Having grasped the existence of the world in his mind (seeing its true reality), Krishna encourages Arjun to free himself from worldly desires that condition his spirituality. In order to understand something, Arjun, according to Krishna, must have a different mental state for himself. This state is characterized by a general indifference, hostility towards all living beings, concentration of the mind, freeing it from earthly (conditioned material) attachments, the intention to comprehend what is revealed to you with your unity. The intention to unite with the object (the phenomenon of awakened consciousness, buddhi), with what can be known without harming it (the term *yoga* itself means “union”).

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODS

The Mahabharata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. It consists of over 74,000 verses, as well as long prose passages, or a total of 1.8 million words, making it the longest epic poem in the world (about 10 times the size of the Iliad and the Odyssey). The name Mahabharata (महाभारत) can be translated as "The Great Tale of the Bharata Dynasty". "Traditionally, the Mahabharata is attributed to Rishi Vyasa. Due to its enormous length, scholars have tried to unravel its historical growth and compositional layers, and it has a long history. It is believed that its final form was completed in the 3rd-5th centuries AD, with its central core dating back to 500 BC." It is known that the Mahabharata was originally created orally, and that these epics are the product of folk oral tradition. These epics, which have been performed by the bakhshis (kathaks) for centuries, have been supplemented by new chapters and stories, each bakhshi adding new chapters and stories to his own abilities. The “addenda” are diverse - they can be legends, stories, and tales, and sometimes they consist of odes, parables, and even direct advice. Their sizes also vary - from short poetic fragments to large epics. The famous Soviet orientalist P. Grinser believes that some epics in the epic, in particular “Damayanta with a Horseshoe” and the stories of Savitri, can be included in the list of masterpieces of world literature in their own right. To imagine the scale of new additions to the “Mahabharata”, it is enough to mention one thing - two-thirds of the 200 thousand-line epic are made up of additions such as the above.

In India, this epic has occupied the position of a sacred tradition, a memory (smriti) since ancient times. Regardless of the importance that the Indians themselves attach to this poem, it is an invaluable source for us to get acquainted with the religious state of the Indians in the Middle Ages, because this book describes the main religious and philosophical directions of ancient times (Vishnu, Krishna and Shiva), their legends, and presents their religious and philosophical views.

During the research, the principles of systematicity, historicity, logic, objectivity, scientificity, impartiality, generalization of philosophical information, philosophical comparison, analysis, and logical sequence were used in covering the topic.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The basis of the Mahabharata's thinking is characterized by the gnostic truth of expanding the boundaries of being, of overcoming oneself, which is associated with karma. In none of the world epics is the idea of knowledge as a blessing so clearly expressed as in the Mahabharata. Knowledge is inherent in human nature. Perception differs from other forms of life. Man comes into the world for (moral) duty, for great work (artha), for love (kama) - and for thinking (knowledge). This is his duty, this is his personal dharma. The content of the Mahabharata, - claims its creator himself, - "The revelation of Truth, the Veda, abstract thinking and knowledge." The most important religious and philosophical part of the story, the Bhagavad-Gita, speaks of knowledge as a blessing.

Knowledge is more important than all feelings. In our opinion, in none of the other epics (mythologies) in the history of mankind (Egyptian texts, ancient Greek epic, Kalevala, Bible) has such a consistent development of the phenomenon of knowledge occurred. The goal of knowledge is something that elevates a person above himself, something that he can never reach, but which inexorably attracts him, thereby turning him into reality. "Mahabharata" repeatedly testifies to the "power of knowledge" through the mouths of its heroes. Through knowledge, a person rises higher, comprehends dharma. In ignorance, if a person does not have knowledge, a person also perishes.

The ideal of "Mahabharata" is a wise man who clearly sees the "single essence" in everything and everything, a "flawless sage". "Those who know the essence of the Vedas and Vedanta ... always succeed in all their endeavors," says "Mahabharata". Understanding the essence, that is, the ability to clearly see the essence, the dharma of being, brings success and happiness to humanity. In fact, this is how it is, when a person must understand himself in order to understand the world and being. After understanding himself, when he understands the essence of being and moves towards it, there will be no unnecessary thoughts and thoughts, no questions that torment him.

A person in the "Mahabharata" is something that is higher than belonging to a certain varna, he is higher than the rules that he adheres to in order to perform certain religious and other actions, other rules of the Vedic tradition. A person in the epic is something that can only be compared with the absolute (this is also important from the point of view of epistemology). In the epic, gods and people are depicted close to each other. That is, gods are depicted in human form, people meet and talk with gods, people are born from gods, when a person becomes a king, his decisions become the words of gods, gods bestow many knowledge, abilities, etc.

Another important point of the Mahabharata regarding the nature of thought is contradiction. The Mahabharata itself develops the Sankhya ideas about thinking as the resolution of contradictions. In the Mahabharata, to understand something is to resolve a contradiction. Queen Savitri addresses the god Yama: "The eternal dharma of the righteous is not to harm any living being by thought, word, or deed ...". Do not harm any living being with thought. For Savitri and the Mahabharata, thought, like action, is real and effective. Through thought, we overcome some contradiction in our lives, find a solution to it. There is good and bad in thinking. In thinking, one should think that one's thoughts do not harm others.

The beginning of self-knowledge (the beginning of inquiring thought) is the feeling of the breath of dharma. Dharma manifests itself to a person in the form of a feeling of suffering for himself, for other people, for other life (plants, animals, etc.). Only after experiencing dramatic doubts before the battle does Arjun understand his own and common dharma; Yudhishthira, being in exile, learns the meaning of being a kshatriya; Savitri, having lost her husband, understands what is hidden in life and what human life itself is. Thought, as a manifestation of dharma, is ontological and therefore effective. It is omnipotent (of course, if it is dharmic). Brahma frees himself from karma through thought, with thought he unites with Brahma, with thought he opposes the will of the ascetic gods, with thought the goodness in the universe is preserved. The set of thoughts, says the Bhagavad-Gita, leads to the preservation of "the integrity of the world." Krishna states that a person who has achieved separation from lust becomes a yogi (literally: one who unites with Brahma). The person who has achieved this approaches Brahma. Approaching Brahma is clear - illuminated by the mind. He becomes a "seer of truth". True reality - the truth of Brahma - is revealed to him. In the worldview of the ancient Hindu people, one of the highest goals of man is to reach Brahma, and thinking helps him on this path. Thinking is considered important in achieving the highest goal of man - freedom from karma and achieving nirvana.

Self-knowledge, self-study (practice yoga) - this means focusing on oneself - "I" - temporarily, in connection with passions and personal interests. Self-knowledge means seeing how insignificant

your fleeting desires, goals, and efforts aimed at achieving certain results are for you. Self-knowledge means freedom from the control of one's desires and feelings.

He who has mastered the feelings, who has curbed his hatred, knows no dependence, and subordinates them to his will forever. He who has attained enlightenment, who has become free from pain, and after that his heart is pure, his mind is strong. Whoever passes through the world of feelings, free from attraction and hatred, with strong will, with feelings subordinate to the Atman, he attains clarity (spirit). With clarity (spirit) all his sufferings disappear, because when the mind (chetas) is clear, the intellect (buddhi) soon becomes strong.

Because he cannot collect his thoughts, a person has no creative thought; those who do not have creative thought have no world, but what happiness can there be for those who do not have a world? Only when a person collects his scattered thoughts in his mind, comprehends the essence of dharmas, and acquires creative thinking, does he understand the whole world and feel happiness. Self-deepening through knowledge or renunciation of desires is natural for a person. This is his ontology. This is his self-recovery - liberation from karma.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in the epic "Mahabharata", knowledge is primarily the understanding of this dharma. A person's self-understanding, restraining his emotions elevates a person further and leads to a connection with Brahma. Human knowledge, his mind are given by nature. If his thinking is correct and good, if he collects his scattered thoughts, he achieves contemplation. Every person has the opportunity to become a Buddha, this state is achieved through contemplation, yoga. Collecting thoughts is considered important in understanding the truth, which is one of the highest desires. When a person collects his thoughts, he realizes the integrity of the world, which gives him the opportunity to reach Brahma. Connecting with Brahma gives the gift of seeing the truth. The epic "Mahabharata" shows that in knowledge, one should not rely on feelings, but on divine law, dharma, and reason.

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