

Emergence Of Linguistic Analysis In Modern Human Society

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ABSTRACT

In this scientific age people use to believe in factual things only, which we can prove evidentially or rationally. They use to consider religious beliefs or faith as irrational and unacceptable, while this is not true, not rationally acceptable either. Beyond our reasoning and beyond our believing, there is a pre- conceptual faculty that senses of glory, the presence of the divine. We do not perceive it, we have no knowledge, we only have awareness. It is a feeling, a sense and a natural human tendency, an awareness of divinity. By nature, we all like happiness and dislike unhappiness and pain. There are two categories of pain and pleasure. One is the Cognitive approach, which is linked with physical sensory experiences and claims that religious beliefs give some information about facts or reality and are acknowledged as verifiable or falsifiable in some sense. The other one is Non- cognitive approach, which holds that religious beliefs do not give any information about facts what so – ever. Philosophers of this view try to prove that there is no cognitive content or truth content in religious beliefs or theological assertions; however they are not meaningless, they used to generate or vent some emotions, or to recommend a specific way of life. The aim of this paper is to examine both the views and trying to present a rational non- cognitive approach in which different views are beautifully reconciled.

Everyone by nature has a feeling of self and with that experiences knowable phenomena with a painful, joyful or neutral feeling. By nature, we all like happiness and dislike unhappiness and pain. There are two categories of pain and pleasure. One is linked with physical sensory experience which we call **Cognitive Approach** and one with the mental level which we call **Non- Cognitive Approach**. It is ordinarily accepted that our sense organs give us a real knowledge of the world, if function normally. This is a matter of common belief and very largely acceptable too. Given this acceptance sense experience is acknowledged as the only source knowledge about the world. So to describe what is reported directly by sense experience is accepted as a matter of fact, which we say cognitive approach in linguistic analysis.

The cognitivist thinkers try to show that the theological assertions are cognitively meaningful, or they contain within them some sort of truth- claim about a reality here or here- after. The authors of cognitivist view argue that theological assertions are verifiable/ falsifiable and as such they are genuine statements about some matter of fact. Some authors, influenced by the Logical Positivist criterion of meaning, try to show that theological assertions are verifiable in some form of human experience, hence they are meaningful. John Hick, I.M. Crombie and Basil Mitchell are the main authors of this view.

John Hick : John Hick , in his celebrated article- “Theology and Verification”, tries to build a case of Eschatological verification of these assertions. John Hick admits that the statements of faith are factual because they are, in principle, verifiable. The logic of religious belief, in his view, is

unique and complex. Theism is, in Hick's opinion, a 'Total interpretation' that is neither falsifiable nor probable.¹ There is only one universe and all that we can do is to give its interpretation on the ground of our experience about it. One can give an atheistic interpretation and someone else can give a theistic one. But our experience of the world cannot logically compel us to revise our faith. Psychologically one can feel a compulsion to do so but logically there is nothing of that can falsify theism. This position seems to stand against the factuality of religious faith but it is not so.

Hick argues that although nothing can falsify religious faith it can be verified in case it is true. Conclusive falsification of faith is not possible but conclusive verification is possible. Hick is against the view that 'falsification' and 'verification' are symmetrical notions and whatever is falsifiable is verifiable, and vice-versa. Through some examples of mathematical proposition and propositions regarding very remote future, he has proved that some propositions can be verifiable but not falsifiable and the opposite one is also possible. By this Hick wants to show that a statement can be accepted to be factual if it is shown to be either falsifiable or verifiable, but not both.² By clearing the logical ground for the verification of statements of faith, Hick invokes the biblical idea of continued existence of humans after bodily death to argue that it is a logically consistent notion and one can in such an experience (in the experience of life after death) verify the truth of religious faith. If it is true that human beings continue to exist (in some different form of body with full previous memory) then someone, after his bodily death, will resurrect on some other plane before God and witness the dispensation of justice of one's deeds. This will verify the truth of religious (Christian) faith. If, on the other hand, it is not true then it can't ever be falsified because in that situation no one will continue to exist after death.³ Thus Hick tries to show the possibility of actual verification of the truths of religious faith and supports their direct factuality.

I.M. Crombie: The critics of theology generally criticize theological statements on the ground of their anomalous character. I.M. Crombie focuses his attention on the nature of this anomalous character to prove their factuality. It is stated against the statements of faith that their subject term seems to be refer to an individual but, on examination, it is found that they don't refer to any real individual. 'God' is the subject term of all the statements of faith. Like other normal subject term it seems to refer to some individual. But no one can point to the individual that is referred to by this subject. This is the first anomaly regarding the statements of faith that Crombie acknowledges.⁴

The second anomaly is about the predicate of these statements. What is stated about God in the predicate of the statements of faith doesn't falsify any possible state of affairs and makes it beyond comprehension as to what they exactly state. In an ordinary statement 'John made a chair', we easily understand what is said about the subject 'John'. We all understand what John is doing. Our understanding of what is being done by John depends on our understanding the situation that would count against asserting that he is making a chair. We know what will not be called as making a chair (if John is sitting idle then we will not say that he is making, if he is making a table instead, then we will not say that he is making chair, and so on). Our understanding of the predicate – making a chair essentially excludes so many situations. But we find that the predicate of statements of religious faith don't allow anything to be excluded. In the statement – 'God created the world', the predicate-criterion of the world, is such that no situation could be envisaged as falling outside or being excluded from it. We, in fact, don't know as to what would be the situation that will falsify that 'God created the world'.⁵

Crombie argues that in our language we meaningfully keep on using words that stand for mind and psychic states and processes. We can never point to the thing that is called point. The very

nature of these states and processes is such that makes them intangible and put them beyond the scope being pointed. Although some behaviorist can oppose this move by arguing that such words can be reduced to tangible behaviors but Crombie, anticipating this objection, holds that it becomes possible to relate certain behaviors to some words signifying mind and mental processes only because we already understand which behaviors are expected. Crombie tries to show that our ordinary language is rich enough and makes room for paradoxical uses of words. Such uses don't create confusion rather convey the intended meaning when they become an appropriate response to our normal feeling that we are not merely physical body but something other than and different from that.⁶ From this, Crombie does not jump to the conclusion regarding the possibility of an infinite spirit. He only comes to the most reasonable conclusion that while gazing the infinite sky in a starry night we are filled with a sense of unfathomable mystery behind it. In such situations the utterance- "God created the world", becomes quite an appropriate response to what we feel. Such statements become meaningful in such situations and despite all the paradoxically, we can't accept that they are empirically vacuous because they assume meaning only as appropriate response to the situation that a person actually experiences.⁷

Basil Mitchell : Basil Mitchell holds that assertions of faith are factual in nature. He denies Flew's allegation that religious believers regard such statements falsifiable.⁸ Mitchell contends that although rational considerations can and ought, at times, promote revision in one's long held belief's, no one can give a general demarcation of exactly at what point a set of evidence can and ought stand decisively against it. It depends on each believer himself to decide whether it happened to him. To underline his claim Mitchell holds that the rationality of religious belief ought not to be determined by deduction from rational principles but by gathering various sorts of evidences to find a pattern in their collectivity. The conclusive proof that is available in deductive argumentation should not be regarded as the only model of rational defence.

Mitchell concludes that statements of faith are factual because the believer admits that there are certain facts that stand against his belief. The believer does not admit only one thing that such instances conclusively falsify his belief, and in so doing he doesn't do any irrationality.⁹

On the other hand, non- cognitivist thinkers, try to show that there is no cognitive content or truth- content in theological assertions; however they are not meaningless since they are meant for some other purpose. They holds that sentences expressing religious belief do not give any information about facts and what so- ever. It is shown by these thinkers that they are used to generate or vent some emotions, or to recommend a specific way of life etc. R.M. Hare, R.B. Braithwaite and H.H. Price are the leading authors present a radically new and interesting view of religious belief in the sense that they defend the meaning of the theological assertions by showing that this meaning does not necessarily presuppose the actual existence of the object of religious faith i.e. God.

Braithwaite, who is an eminent thinker of non- cognitive trend, expresses his views systematically in the celebrated article 'An Empiricists view of the Nature of Religious Belief'.¹⁰ He holds that theological assertions do not refer to any reality here or here-after, but they only recommend an ethics where 'God' is used only as a subject term in some stories through which this ethical lesson is delivered. The gist of his view can be presented as follows: Religious assertions have the function similar to that of moral judgments. As moral judgments don't state any matter of fact; they only prescribe something that is to be done, theological assertions also prescribe a way of life. Such prescriptions are given in the form of some stories (Braithwaite calls them stories) to make it easily acceptable and internalisable by the people. This is the function of the subject of such stories. They don't actually mean to refer to any real thing or person. The actual meaning of the story lies in what

message it delivers and for so doing it is not necessary that the story be a description of any actual event. Similarly the actual meaning of theological assertions, which are presented in the form of some stories, are intended to recommend a way of life and they are not intend to assert the reality of the story. Although theological assertions have the function similar to that of moral judgment they are different from one another in many important respects. Moral judgments are given directly and the message they deliver is grasped by the people in their isolation. When somebody says 'Truthfulness is a virtue' the judgment clearly states what sort of conduct is to be followed. It means that one should not tell lies or cheat others. The recommendation is clearly and directly given in the judgment. The imperative or the recommendation lying in this judgment can be grasped by anyone in its isolation without necessarily relating it to some other assertions. Theological assertions, on the other hand, do not give the imperative or the instruction directly in this way. When a religious believer says "God is our heavenly father", he intends to recommend a particular way of life; a code of conduct but that cannot be conceived if this assertion is given in its isolation. The recommendation or the imperative contained in it can be grasped only if it is understood in connection to the body of other statements of which it is a part.

R. M. Hare takes a different line of argument and tries to show that theological assertions are the expressions of believer's pro-attitude (what he calls Bliks) which is quite non-rational in nature.¹ The gist of his argument that he presents in a symposium on the theme 'Theology and Falsification', could be presented as follows:

The assertions of religious belief are not description of any matter of fact. In these assertions the peculiar pro-attitude of the religious persons get manifested. Religious believers somehow develop a pro-attitude towards the events of the world and their life and they interpret all events in that light only. A religious person, who believes in the existence of a benevolent God, is, in Hare's view, is a person who has developed a peculiar pro-attitude towards the happenings of the world. Due to this attitude, she/he gives credit of good events to God and says that those things happened because God is benevolent. But just because of this very attitude she/he does not accept the badness of any painful event. She/he either dismisses it completely or tries to justify by arguing that something good is hidden in it. Thus the religious believers take the cases of favourable events as a support of their belief but refuse to admit that unfavourable events go against their belief in the benevolence of God. In fact they choose to admit or discard any event of world only in the light of what they believe. They don't change their opinion about what they believe since their beliefs are not developed on pure rational grounds. In fact, such people judge the rationality or irrationality of any argument on the basis of their attitude and it is not the other way round. That means they pick up only those instance of life which suit their attitude and ignore all others completely. This is exactly what pro-attitude means. Theological assertions are, in fact, expressions of the pro-attitudes of religious believers and the theologians. They are the expressions of blik. To understand the meaning of what theology asserts is to read what pro-attitude manifests through it. There is no matter of fact involved in that. So theological statements are the manifestations of the 'blik' or pro-attitude of the religious people.

H.H. Price, in the light of his insightful distinction between two phrases – "Belief- in" and "Belief- that"(which he presents in his well known work 'Belief') wants to show that belief in God can be seen as a pure evaluative sort of belief which does not demand for believing in any matter of fact. ¹ Price's valuable insight can be presented in brief in the form of the following argument:

Human beings believe in persons and things and these beliefs may be put into two broader categories which are signified by the two terms "belief that" and "belief in". Ordinarily "believing

that” refers to the instances where someone assumes or holds something to be true just as a matter of fact without having any emotional attachment with the object of belief.

It would not be correct to say that someone believes in her/his friend means that she/he believes that he is good at doing this thing or that thing. Believing in friend because certain factually determinable good qualities are present in him is not believing in friendship but it is a bargain and business. If someone believes in his friend because she/he believes that it would be helpful for her/him to rise in his career then it is obvious that she/he has made him his friend for the sake of some benefit. The emotion of friendship lacks here completely, so it is not actually a case of believing in one's friend. **Believing in one's friend is that case of believing where one values the friendship with his friend for its own sake.**

Someone may believe in her/his friend only because the warmth of the relation of friendship with him is valuable for her/him. Similarly believing in God can be of pure evaluative nature that can't be reduced to any factual beliefs. One can believe in God just because this belief itself is most valuable thing in one's life. It is not necessary that a believer believes in God because this belief gives her/him some sort gross or refined physical benefits. Thus believing in God as an instance of pure evaluative belief should not be regarded as belief based on factual matters at all. Hence theological assertions, in H. H. Price's view, have pure evaluative meaning which don't necessarily presuppose the truth of any factual statements.

In the field of analytical investigations of religious faith, people mostly inclined to dismiss the faith as such as irrational and superstitions. This is not true and not- rationally acceptable either. In this technological age faith is useless scientifically or factually, that's why **Linguistic Analysis** is must. Non- Cognitive approach saves us not only from superstitions but gives us insight to understand the value of life. Values does not work upon facts, it is valuable in ethical and emotive manner.

References :

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