

Malkani on Reason and Intuition
by Student
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BOOKS / ARTICLES QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- G.R. Malkani, "Limitations of Logic" (in *Philosophical Quarterly* 24, 1951)
- G.R. Malkani, *Reason and Its Limitations*
- Paul Brunton, *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*

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NOTES:

- **RETYPE STUDENT PAPER presented in class or a summary of a class (V09P).** THERE ARE NO AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES EXTANT.
- This is **1982 04/07a, Malkani Paper, and the first entry associated with this date. 1982 04/07b = Astrology Seminar**, for which we have no audio, just JF notes.
- During this time period, Anthony assigned people to write summaries or papers on philosophical articles. It's not clear if this is a paper that was read in class or a summary of the class in the form of a paper.
- See also WG Papers 1982 0414a, 1982 0422.
- The class that took place on this date is referenced a few times in WG Class 1982 0417a (Alchemy). Something said there towards the end makes it sound like AD wasn't present for this class.

MALKANI ON REASON AND INTUITION

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Malkani: Limitations of Logic and Reason and its Limitations (Wed. 4/7/82)

In Limitations of Logic [Note: See G.R. Malkani, "Limitations of Logic," *Philosophical Quarterly* 24, 1951, pp. 137-146.] Malkani discusses the relationship between reason and intuition; at what level is each of these terms being used? To begin with his conception of reason, one point of view is that, despite a certain difference in tone and emphasis, he really is using it the same way as Iyer does. Iyer says that reason makes explicit what is implicit in experience. What Malkani refers to as intuition would then correspond to Iyer's term "experience", taken as an intuition of the totality, including awareness. Reason then, for both men, stands below this level, unfolding and interpreting it. This is similar to the relation of Nous to reason for the Greeks, except that the Hindus emphasize the subjective path (the intuition is of the self-evidence of the knower, the content-less I) whereas the Greeks emphasize the objective, the Ideas. But there is a fundamental difference in how Iyer and Malkani refer to reason. For Iyer, reason is an active participant, and can take you, step by step, towards the truth. It is not simply subordinate to the experience it interprets; experience unexamined by reason would not have any particular value, and one's experience is transformed by the reasoning upon it. Malkani, on the other hand, says that reason can never take you up to the truth, but only reveals the level of intuition from which you're working. It is a passive recipient. When Iyer says that reason removes wants and fears, he grants it a real efficacy, like *dianoia*. Reason in Malkani lacks such efficacy, and is more like intellect for Iyer.

Malkani definitely disputes the claim that reason is unbiasedly objective, capable of finding truth or refuting error. On the contrary, he says, it is your vision that determines your metaphysics, and that in turn determines your logic. Therefore no one ever reached his metaphysical position through logic. There is no universal logic that can decide the correctness of a view. There is, instead, a different logic for each level of experience and intuition. The realist and idealist, using different logics, talk past each other and nobody is refuted. We see this when we try to discuss the Hidden Teaching with some people: no amount of reasoning seems to help if the person doesn't have some intuition of the truth of mentalism. Since reason is incapable of establishing truth, Malkani suggests revealed scripture, intuitively grasped, as the guide towards truth. What, then, is the role of reason? It can prepare the ground for a higher level of intuition. But how is this possible? And if we can meaningfully compare differing philosophical viewpoints, aren't we using reason to do so? Then there is some objective validity to reason. If this were not so, discourse would be useless. And if people do, however rarely, change their convictions as a result of reasoning, then reason must have some validity, some basis or criteria of truth other than the vision you start with.

While reason can indeed disabuse you of a belief, it certainly could never do so to a real intuition. So how is Malkani using the word "intuition"? His use of this term needs to be clarified. He is not using it as the highest level of the divided line, as insight. Rather, on each of the four levels, intuition is the relational mode between the knowing function and what it knows. It is the given-ness, the direct apprehension of whatever level you take as reality, and which becomes your religion. It is immediate, innate knowledge, your deepest presuppositions, as opposed to reason which is mediate. It is because he redefines intuition to mean the relational mode that Malkani can speak of intuiting sense data or intuiting a belief. Insofar as each level of the divided line does deal with an aspect of reality, there is something

valid being intuited at that level. It is your point of contact with the self-evident, although as your convictions change and you change levels you no longer take as self-evident what you formerly did. Most of us come from a mixture of views, operating from many contradictory hypotheses at once, due to the variety of qualities that constitute us. That is why we need both a dualistic metaphysics to satisfy the intellect and a monistic metaphysics to satisfy the intuition.

Reason and Its Limitations, which Malkani wrote 27 years earlier than the other article, gives a radically different view, presenting reason much as Iyer does. “Philosophy is the attitude of reason towards reality.” “Reason is the only judge of its own limitations.” “There is no point of view higher than reason from which reason itself may be criticised.” Even direct mystical experience is only higher than reason in that it fulfils reason, “makes reason more rational”. In other words, the Nous is super-rational, is that which reason by its very nature seeks and is not cut off from.

The principles of reason (such as: the whole is greater than the part) are based on the intuition of their self-evident truth. In a reasoned argument, then, where is reason? It is the intuition that sees the self-evident truth of the reason principles that are the separate steps (A, B, etc.) of the argument. It is also the intuition that grasps the connections between the steps, that sees the self-evidence of “B follows from A”. What is the role of reason in all this? It is reason that arranges the steps in such a way that both the connections and the conclusions can be grasped. For a different sort of person, one who operated with a stream of intuitions, this reasoning activity would not be necessary. Plotinus tells us that, in the Nous, the Reason Principles form a concentrated whole. [Note: See Plotinus, I.1.8, third para.] There, only intuition would be appropriate or possible. Lower down, when they’re separated out and that concentration somewhat dispersed, then reason is needed to establish the connections --- and error is possible. When reason has fully completed its work and the propositions are perfectly arranged, then the result is one whole again, self-evident to intuition. But the process of reasoning is guided by reason, not by intuition. It can take you up to the same truth known by intuition, to that concentrated whole, but it doesn’t necessarily do so. It can simply remain at the level of reason and not seek its source.

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