

The establishment of a system of rights under divine destiny: Traces of Indian philosophy in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*^{**}

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of Indian philosophy on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and examines it within a Western context. The paper compares Indian philosophy with Hegel's philosophy in three key areas: 1) Abstract right and property, 2) Morality, and 3) Ethical life. The findings suggest that there are notable similarities between Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and Indian Brahmanical thought.

Key words: Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-Gita

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Introduction

One of the perennial questions in the field of political philosophy is how we ought to coexist within a society. The formation of a society inevitably leads to governance, regulation, and the establishment of a social structure commonly referred to as the 'state.' The state is a primary focus for scholars of political thought. To examine the mechanisms by which society is regulated, we must consider human nature, which raises fundamental questions: Who should govern? Why should we obey? And what is the necessity of a state? These inquiries lie at the heart of political philosophy.

In response to these questions, Hegel introduces the abstract concept of 'right' in his seminal work, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. This text is critical for understanding how persons acquire their rights within a society and how such concepts are constructed. In this paper, I argue that Hegel's narrative in the System of Right, which legitimizes the fundamental rights of all persons, can be compared to Brahmanical thought. In this context, Brahmanical philosophy emphasizes God as the creator of humanity, positing that persons seek a fulfilling life in order to ultimately reunite with God. Hegel references Hinduism in the preface of his *Philosophy of Right*, suggesting the influence of Brahmanical thought on his work. (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 29) Therefore, this paper will

explore the traces of Brahmanical philosophy within Hegel's ideas, which may yield valuable insights into his conception of rights.

Hegel is a philosopher whose works are notoriously complex, yet his intricate thinking is presented in a structured manner. In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel organizes his writing into three sections: Abstract Right, Morality, and Ethical Life (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. V). This structural organization aligns intriguingly with Brahmanical thought. Consequently, this paper aims to trace the influence of Brahmanical philosophy in Hegel's seminal work, *Philosophy of Right*.

Abstract right in Paramatman and Ataman in property

Hegel begins with the concept of Abstract Right, framing his exploration as an inquiry into *Philosophy of Right*. At the core of his study lies the idea of right, which he posits exists on two levels: as a conceptual framework and as an actualized phenomenon. As Hegel articulates:

“Philosophy has to do with Ideas, and therefore not with what are commonly dubbed 'mere concepts'. On the contrary, it exposes such concepts as one-sided and without truth, while showing at the same time that it is the concept [Begriff] alone (not the mere abstract category of the understanding [Verstand] which we often hear called by that name) which has actuality, and further that it gives this actuality to itself. All else, apart from

this actuality established through the working of the concept itself, is ephemeral existence, external contingency, opinion, unsubstantial appearance, untruth, illusion, and so forth. The shapes which the concept assumes in the course of its actualization are indispensable for the knowledge of the concept itself. They are the second essential moment of the Idea, in distinction from the first, ie from its form, from its mode of being as concept alone. ” (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 17)

Hegel further asserts that the concept of right is fundamentally rooted in the notion of will. Wills must be free and cannot be dissociated from the idea of right. As Hegel states:

“The basis of right is, in general, the realm of spirit [das Geistige]; its precise place and point of origin is the will. The will is free, so that freedom is both its substance and its goal, while the system of right is the realm of freedom made actual, the world of spirit [Geist] brought forth out of itself as a second nature.” (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 26)

If wills lack freedom, it becomes merely an empty concept. Consequently, we can conclude that the system of rights is fundamentally about actualizing freedom. The capacity of right is thus intrinsically linked to the personality of a person who possesses that right. This connection enables a person to recognize that their wills are inherently free, universal,

and infinite in nature. Such an understanding is essential for a person to acknowledge their capacity of right; without this acknowledgment, one cannot truly possess the capacity of right. Furthermore, to realize this capacity, a person must actualize the existence of the abstract concept of right. Therefore, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* centers on a person who can claim access to the universal abstract concept of right, as he articulates:

“Personality begins not with the subject's mere general consciousness of himself as an I concretely determined in some way or other, but rather with his consciousness of himself as a completely abstract I in which every concrete restriction and value is negated and without validity. In personality, therefore, knowledge is knowledge of oneself as an object, but an object raised by thinking to the level of simple infinity and so an object that is purely self-identical. Individuals and peoples have no personality until they have achieved this pure thought and knowledge of themselves. Spirit that is in and for itself differs from spirit in its appearance in this, that in the same respect in which the latter is only self-consciousness —a consciousness of self but only in accordance with the natural will and its still external oppositions²⁶—the former has itself, as the abstract and free I, for its object and aim, and so is a person (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 54)

A person serves as the source of legitimacy in transforming the abstract concept of right into a tangible reality. The true nature of Abstract Right is characterized by freedom without limitation; it is an end in itself. While Abstract Right is complete in its ideal state, it can only be recognized as a possibility. This distinguishes it from particular concepts, such as wills, which are impure and not fully abstract. Wills, in its pursuit of self-actualization, are universal. It represents the actions a person takes toward others to express their right within the external world, as Hegel writes:

“Every self-consciousness knows itself (i) as universal, as the possibility of abstracting from everything determinate, and (ii) as particular, with a determinate object, content, and aim. Still, both these moments are only abstractions; what is concrete and true (and everything true is concrete) is the universality which has the particular as its opposite, but the particular which by its reflection into itself has been equalized with the universal. This unity is individuality, not individuality in its immediacy as a unit, our first idea of individuality, but individuality in accordance with its concept ;¹⁶ indeed, individuality in this sense is precisely the concept itself. The first two moments—(i) that the will can abstract from everything, and (ii) that it is also determined in some specific way either by itself or by something else—are readily admitted and grasped because, taken independently, they lack

truth and are moments of the understanding. But the third moment, which is true and speculative (and everything true must be thought speculatively if it is to be comprehended) is the one into which the understanding declines to advance, for it is precisely the concept which it persists in calling the inconceivable. It is the task of logic as purely speculative philosophy to prove and explain further this innermost secret of speculation, of infinity as negativity relating itself to itself, this ultimate spring of all activity, life, and consciousness.— Here attention can only be drawn to the fact that when people say 'the will is universal, the will determines itself', the words they use to describe the will presuppose it to be a subject or substratum from the start. But the will is not something complete and universal prior to its determining itself and prior to its superseding and idealizing this determination. The will is not a will until it is this self-mediating activity, this return into itself. Addition: What is properly called the will includes in itself." (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 32)

We can categorize the rights that a person may exercise over other entities through their free will into three types. The first type is possession or property ownership, which involves what one can do with oneself and one's belongings. This allows a person to distinguish themselves from

others, enabling the exchange of possessions or the alteration of one's circumstances. This leads to the second type: contracts. The third type diverges from the first two and can be seen as a reversal of their principles. This type may focus on the possession of others or involve contracts based on what one has, which may lead to criminal activity. Property ownership is foundational, as it allows a person's freedom to be expressed effectively. When one claims possession over an object, they transform it into private property. Moreover, the right to possess differs from mere possession; a person may own their body and even exercise their right to harm themselves. This right to possess distinguishes humans from animals, which can only own their bodies without any additional rights. Animals lack the freedom to inflict harm upon themselves. For this reason, laws must protect property, as such protections ensure the person's freedom in a broader sense.

In the concept of property ownership, a person has the right to interact with objects in various ways. Possession can be achieved through physical force, construction, creation, marking symbols, or usage. Utilizing objects serves the needs of the user and constitutes a form of possession. In contrast, alienation occurs when a person's intention toward an object ceases to be their own. This concept is linked to contracts, as they bind different wills; one must relinquish a degree of their own will to exchange belongings with others.

The notion of wrong can be understood in relation to both Abstract Right and Particular Right. A non-severe wrong involves actions that concern universal rights but offend particular rights. Counterfeiting represents a misunderstanding of universal rights while clinging to particular rights. In the case of crime, the offender misinterprets both universal and particular rights. When one desires an object, their intention is directed toward it. If they misinterpret their circumstances and are unable to redirect their focus, they may commit a crime.

In this sense, we can assert that the person is the source of legitimacy for rights. Thus, a person's freedom underpins a *Philosophy of Right* that encompasses possession, contracts, and crimes. I propose that Hegel's narrative of Abstract Right underscores the significance of the notion of right and how rights are recognized through actual actions. However, this idea is not entirely novel, as universal Abstract Right has been referenced previously. Hegel also acknowledges this concept within Brahmanical thought in his introduction, as he writes:

“— This is the freedom of the void which rises to a passion and takes shape in the world; while still remaining theoretical, it takes shape in religion as the Hindu fanaticism of pure contemplation, but when it turns to actual practice, it takes shape in religion and politics alike as the fanaticism of destruction (of the whole subsisting social order), as the elimination of

persons who are objects of suspicion to a given social order, and as the annihilation of any organization which tries to rise anew from the ruins.* Only in destroying something does this negative will possess the feeling of itself as existent. Of course it imagines that it is willing some positive state of affairs, such as universal equality or universal religious life, but in fact it does not will that this shall be positively actualized, and for this reason: such actuality leads at once to some sort of order, to a particularization of organizations and persons alike, while it is precisely out of the annihilation of particularity and objective determination that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom proceeds. Consequently, whatever negative freedom means to will can never be anything in itself but an abstract idea, and giving effect to this idea can only be the fury of destruction.” (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 29)

In this paper, I aim to highlight the similarities between Brahmanical thought and Hegel’s concepts of Abstract Right and Particular Right. I will begin with Bhagavad Gita, a key Brahmanical scripture from a transformative period in Indian philosophy. The scripture opens with the existence of the Supreme Being, who transcends all and is the source of all living things, including humanity. This Supreme Being possesses

unlimited power and desires nothing outside of itself, existing in a formless state. We may refer to this being as Paramatman (where 'Paramat' signifies universal, inclusive, and abstract) or Brahma. This holy being parallels the concept of Abstract Right, which is characterized by freedom from all constraints and serves as its own end. Furthermore, both the Supreme Being and Abstract Right represent possibilities that enable the actualization of various outcomes.

Furthermore, Paramatman imparts a portion of himself (Bija) to a creation that initially lacks will. As a result, this creation develops its own will and becomes a soul, known as Ataman (where "Atama" signifies identity). The Artama soul is a fragment of Paramatman, characterized by its particularity and actual existence. This attribute of the Artama soul resembles Particular Will, which is grounded in Abstract Right but is neither pure nor complete in itself. Ataman represents a will directed toward specific entities, rather than embodying universality.

In the broader context, both Brahmanical thought and Hegel begin with a concept that is universal, powerful, free, and pure. However, this concept exists only as a possibility and cannot be manifested in any concrete form. In Brahmanical philosophy, this is referred to as Paramatman, while Hegel articulates it as Abstract Right. When this concept is transformed into actual existence, it must take on particular

characteristics and limitations, thereby losing its inherent perfection. This transformation can be identified as a particular will or Ataman.

From a socio-political perspective, we can examine the influence of the concept of Ataman, which is derived from Paramatman. In Brahmanical thought, Ataman significantly impacts legal concepts. The Brahmanical texts articulate that kingship (which can also be understood as the concept of the state) is rooted in the desire of Paramatman or Brahma. When Brahma created the world, he also introduced Ataman, integrating it into the universality of Brahma. However, a worldly challenge arises, as freedom cannot persist without form. Specifically, Chapter Seven of the Dharmashastra discusses the principles of kingship, stating that Paramatman created kings to safeguard freedom. Without this structure, persons may struggle to acknowledge their rights to property, whether over their belongings or their own bodies (Buhler, 2012, p. 93).

This illustrates the parallels between Brahmanical thought and Hegel's ideas regarding the origin of laws. Hegel contended that true law should be understood as Positive Law, which constructs its own interpretation of rights rather than deriving them from nature. This is because natural conditions are always abstract and devoid of form, embodying only potentiality. A king, for example, has no legitimate claim over the property of others; if he imposes excessive demands, it is akin to farmers destroying their own crops. Moreover, Hegel viewed less severe

wrongdoing as actions that violate Particular Law while still adhering to Universal Law. This perspective also finds resonance in Brahmanical thought. If one wishes to comprehend Universal Law but acts against Ataman, this is acceptable, thereby reinforcing the idea that Brahmanical philosophy is fundamentally based on universality.

However, there are significant differences between Hegel's thought and Brahmanical texts. Brahmanical philosophy aspires toward dharma, which ultimately aims to liberate the person from the material world. While it is rooted in Universal Right, which relates to Particular Right and bears similarities to Hegel's ideas, the ultimate objective is to return to Brahma. In contrast, Hegel acknowledges the significance of universal concepts but directs his focus toward worldly outcomes. His analysis emphasizes the relationship between the person and rights, which serves as the foundation and origin of *Philosophy of Rights*.

Morality: an action with consciousness and responsibility from the Bhagavad Gita's framework

In the previous section, we discussed how Hegel articulates his idea in *Philosophy of Right* through the nature of Abstract Right, which is independent and serves as a goal in itself, free from limitations. This abstract state distinguishes it from other entities, rendering it perfect in its own right. However, this very abstraction also categorizes Abstract Right as

a realm of possibilities. As discussed, the system of rights must transform Free Will into a tangible reality. Consequently, Hegel does not conclude his discussion of rights merely in terms of possibilities.

Hegel begins the second section of the book on morality, which can be summarized as follows: “Morality concerns man as a subject responsible for his own actions, which have implications for the external world. Man recognizes and exercises his freedom.” This emphasizes the person's role in understanding the moral implications of their actions and the impact these actions have on society, as he states:

“The second sphere, morality, therefore throughout portrays the real aspect of the concept of freedom, and the movement of this sphere is as follows: the will, which initially is only for itself and is immediately identical only in itself with the universal will or the will that is in itself, is superseded and raised above its difference from the universal will, above this situation in which it sinks deeper and deeper into itself, and so is posited as identical for itself with the will that is in itself.* This process is accordingly the cultivation of the ground in which freedom is now set, ie subjectivity. What happens is that subjectivity, which is abstract at the start, ie distinct from the concept, is equated with it, and the Idea thereby acquires its genuine realization. The result

is that the subjective will determines itself as objective too and so as truly concrete." (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 110)

To understand Hegel's argument, we must examine each component closely. First, there is a shift in terminology from 'person with the capacity of right' to 'subject.' This change reflects a moral perspective that emphasizes the necessity of action. An action, informed by wills, influences the external world, distinguishing it from mere possibilities of abstract free wills. Hegel further elaborates that being a subject differs from being a person. A subject must possess knowledge and bear responsibility for their actions, which interact with others in the external world. Thus, an action is the result of a subject's will, and the sense of responsibility cannot exist without a corresponding level of knowledge.

The knowledge in question is articulated in two ways: the knowledge of one's freedom to act and the knowledge of goodness. The latter is particularly crucial, as Hegel contends that it must be understood through one's conscience. This is because goodness embodies the essence of Particular Will. Each Particular Will is intertwined with values and goodness, as he writes:

"The good is in general the essence of the will in its substantiality and universality, ie of the will in its truth, and therefore it exists simply and solely in thinking and by means of thinking. Hence assertions such as 'humanity cannot know the

truth but has to do only with phenomena', or 'thinking injures the good will', are assertions depriving spirit not only of intellectual but also of all ethical worth and dignity." (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 127)

Goodness can be understood as encompassing right, justice, and law, all of which are intrinsically linked to welfare. Rights, justice, and law that do not promote welfare lack true goodness, and conversely, goodness must lead to the realization of welfare. The knowledge of goodness represents a consciousness arising from the understanding of Particular Will at both person and universal levels. The concept of goodness became a focal point for critiques of nihilism in Kant's discussion of morality. In this context, we can define goodness as that which pertains to duty, as a person's actions are fundamentally grounded in their sense of duty. Duty is an essential component of Particular Will, and, as discussed, the essence or goal of Particular Will is tied to goodness. Thus, a person's duty, which constitutes moral action, is ultimately directed toward the pursuit of goodness.

This notion of goodness involves the protection of right, justice, and law in service of welfare. At this juncture, we can conclude that Hegel's concept of Right has evolved from an abstract state of mere possibility into a more concrete reality manifesting through action, shaped by a person's will and interactions with the external world. Such actions

arise from persons who are cognizant of their condition as subjects. They must recognize the evaluations of good and bad, right and wrong, which motivate their actions. This understanding is facilitated through the concept of goodness. Thus, moral action can emerge, as Hegel articulates:

“However essential it is to give prominence to the pure unconditioned self-determination of the will as the root of duty, and to the way in which knowledge of the will, thanks to Kant's philosophy, has won its firm foundation and starting-point for the first time through the thought of its infinite autonomy, still to adhere to the merely moral position, without making the transition to the concept of ethical life, is to reduce this gain to an empty formalism, and the science of morals to the preaching of duty for duty's sake. From this point of view, no immanent doctrine of duties is possible; of course, material may be brought in from outside and particular duties may be arrived at accordingly, but if the definition of duty is taken to be the absence of contradiction, formal correspondence with itself—which is nothing but the establishment of abstract indeterminacy—then no transition is possible to the specification of particular duties nor, if some such particular content for acting comes under consideration, is there any criterion in that principle for deciding whether it is or is not a duty. On the contrary, by this means any

wrong or immoral mode of conduct may be justified." (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, pp. 130-131)

I would like to reference the concept of rights as presented in Bhagavad Gita. As I argued earlier, both Brahmanical thought and Hegel commence their explanations with a state of universality that is powerful, independent, and complete in itself. However, this state remains a mere possibility and has not yet achieved concrete existence.

The Brahmanical tradition refers to this core essence as Paramatman, the source of all living beings, while Hegel identifies it as Abstract Right. Both concepts ultimately guide persons in how to actualize these ideas. In Bhagavad Gita, the link between this idea and morality, as well as moral action, is also emphasized in relation to Paramatman, which I compare to Hegel's Abstract Right. Furthermore, we may consider Bhagavad Gita as a supplement to the *Mahābhārata*, a foundational Brahmanical text. Bhagavad Gita centers on Arjuna, the protagonist, who hesitates to fight against his relatives. Krishna, an avatar of a Hindu deity, reassures Arjuna by explaining that all humans originate from Brahma and are born unique (Particular) while being part of the universal Paramatman. This perspective aligns with Hegel's explanation of Abstract Right, as previously discussed (Promtha, 1999, p. 11).

Later, Krishna urged Arjuna to recognize his condition as a subject capable of action (a person), distinguishing him from merely embodying

Paramatman. This teaching in Bhagavad Gita parallels the second part of Hegel's *Philosophy of Rights*, where he shifts terminology from 'the Capacity of Right' to 'Subject,' denoting a conscious self. A Subject is aware of two critical aspects: the possession of freedom and the understanding of goodness. In Bhagavad Gita, once Arjuna becomes aware of himself—a recognition aligned with the Brahmanical Samkhya principle—Krishna further instructs that mere self-awareness is insufficient. Good karma can only manifest through actions, which the Brahman terms 'Yoga.' These two principles can be integrated as 'Samkhya Yoga,' emphasizing both self-consciousness and the performance of good deeds (Promtha, 1999, p. 19).

Furthermore, 'Samkhya' and 'Yoga' can be viewed as reflective of Hegel's principles of moral actions. This is because Hegel's concept of morality involves performing actions based on one's will and interactions with the external world. Thus, an action must be executed by a person who is aware of their status as a subject and possesses the ability to evaluate goodness, which informs their decisions. A person may regard their duty as the responsibility to uphold this goodness. The notion of moral duty is also present in Bhagavad Gita, particularly in the context of duty being relative to goodness. Goodness encompasses right, justice, and law, all of which are intrinsically linked to welfare. These two elements are inseparable, as illustrated in Krishna's teachings to Arjuna. Krishna

emphasizes duty, which is intrinsically connected to Arjuna's pursuit of goodness—the true good that would bring joy and peace to him and all of humanity. In this sense, the Brahmanical concept of goodness necessitates self-understanding before taking any actions accompanied by responsibility. Additionally, as an avatar of a deity, Krishna exemplifies awareness of his own status as a subject, informed by knowledge and responsibility. When he performs good deeds, he is open to critiques that arise from his own judgment. This underscores the idea that morality cannot exist without a person's recognition of their condition as a subject, which is accompanied by freedom, a framework of goodness, and a sense of responsibility.

In conclusion, we have compared two perspectives on goodness and morality that emerged in different contexts: the Brahmanical Bhagavad Gita and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Both works contribute to the understanding of moral actions and, to some extent, reflect each other. This can be succinctly summarized as follows: "Moral actions can be performed when the doer is aware of their status and acts based on their understanding of what is good."

Finally, Bhagavad Gita offers an important insight that parallels the second part of Hegel's work: morality cannot manifest in concrete form without a systematic foundation. Morality is vulnerable to threats such as

force and warfare. Therefore, to sustain it, humanity must rely on a vital innovation known as the ‘state.’

Hegel's Ethical Life and the Prevention of the Failure of Goodness without State Power in Manava-Dharmasastra

This paper highlights the central idea of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* as the concept of the ‘System of Right.’ From Hegel’s perspective, the System of Right serves ‘to transform Free Will and good conscience into actual realities.’ Consequently, the principles concerning ethical life, presented in the final section of his work, most effectively illustrate the concrete form of rights.

This idea aligns closely with Brahmanical thought as articulated in Chapter Seven of Manava-Dharmasastra, which discusses kingship and statecraft—concepts that are inseparable in Eastern political philosophy. The chapter emphasizes what a king should know and how to effectively govern his kingdom, beginning with the crucial question of the origin of kingship. Manava-Dharmasastra posits that a king is created to protect and ensure that the kingdom is governed as it ought to be. Without a king, citizens would be fearful and ultimately disunited. Thus, Brahma is said to have created a king endowed with the powers of Indra, Vayu, Yama, Surya, Agni, Varuna, Chandra, and the God of Affluence. As the king receives these powers, he is rendered superior to all others (Buhler, 2012, p. 93). This

Brahmanical narrative mirrors Hegel's notion that the state is God's solution for humanity. Statecraft has a critical role in every civilization, and Hegel believes that God oversees all creatures.

In Brahmanical theology, each creature is a part of Brahma, the all-powerful entity. Brahma's power is limitless and can affect all living beings. Similar to the concept of rights, this power exists in an abstract form, embodying potentialities rather than concrete realities. As previously discussed, there must be a standard set of goodness concerning issues of morality, which considers both survivability and honor. The concepts of goodness and duty, as taught by Krishna to Arjuna, do not inherently guarantee the well-being of the people without the backing of authority. This is why Arjuna must fight for state authority—to establish a system that ensures rights, freedom, and welfare for citizens, as stated in Chapter Seven of the Law Code of Manu:

“The king was created as the protector of people belonging to all social classes and order of life who, according to their rank, are devoted to the law specific to them.” (Buhler, 2012, p.93)

As discussed in previous sections, Hegel posits that the concepts of freedom and goodness are abstract. A person can achieve these ideals and transform them into tangible realities only by sacrificing personal interests for the greater public good. In this sense, the state serves as the

vehicle for realizing public interest while also attending to a person's well-being. Thus, we can conclude that the role of the state in both Brahmanical thought and Hegel's philosophy converges on the foundation of ethical life.

I propose that we can better understand Hegel's concept of ethics by framing it as the moral obligations persons hold toward the communities to which they belong. Hegel clarifies ethical life at three levels. First, the family constitutes a commitment arising from consensual marriage, encompassing marital property and child-rearing. Notably, the responsibilities of parenthood underscore a hands-on ethical commitment passed down from generation to generation (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 162). The next level is civil society, where Hegel identifies three key commitments: the demand management system, systematic standards, and mechanisms for justice (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 180). The final level of ethical life is the state, which guarantees the rights of persons alongside the rights of the state within the inter-political sphere. It is only through these commitments that genuine freedom can be realized. Since commitment is intrinsically linked to the freedom of persons, we should not perceive it as something that restricts our freedom (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 228).

Under these conditions, living within a community can create confusion regarding the concept of freedom. Hegel's ethics, grounded in

the notion of freedom as discussed in Abstract Right, emphasizes self-awareness in his examination of morality in the second part. In the third part, concerning ethical life, Hegel identifies the state as the solution that actualizes moral concepts. The state serves as an ethical institution that guarantees the rights, freedom, and welfare of persons—elements we previously identified as aspects of goodness. In this sense, the existence of the state fosters social unity and enables persons to thrive within a community, positioning them as ethical subjects capable of achieving their life goals.

Conflict management and personal freedom can be comprehensively understood through Hegel's exploration in the first part of *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel introduces the concepts of Abstract Right and Morality, which a person possesses as abstract notions without guaranteed realization. However, he further argues that persons can achieve their goals and freedom in concrete terms by sacrificing personal gain for the greater public good. In this sense, statecraft functions not merely as a mechanism for peace or a guarantor of personal interests but as a facilitator for public welfare. As discussed, the state enhances a person's well-being, allowing life to be meaningful and free. This elucidates Hegel's assertion that God's role in worldly matters is embodied in the state. He concludes his work by illustrating a tangible framework for safeguarding a person's rights under state authority. Thus,

what he initially presented as abstract necessitates the existence of the state to be realized concretely.

In this context, the state serves as a mechanism for upholding rights and goodness within society. It reconciles a person's Particular Will with Universal Will through the collective recognition of goodness, which persons adopt as their duty and ethical commitment. Hegel's perspective aligns closely with Brahmanical thought, which asserts that kingship exists to maintain societal order. In this framework, aristocrats are expected to possess a disciplined mindset, prepared to establish order even in times of conflict. A king, in particular, must create conditions that allow all persons to live freely. Thus, the political communities envisioned in both Hegel's work and Brahmanical thought converge in their ultimate aim: the expression of person freedom and the protection of rights.

A pertinent question arises: if a king or state is responsible for maintaining order, from where does that order originate? According to Brahmanical texts, a code of punishment is established by Brahma, who is portrayed as wise and is intertwined with concepts of sin and the cycle of rebirth. The Vedas, considered the eternal religious texts that transcend time and space, are believed to originate from Paramatman or Brahma. As stated, 'Time is a creator. Time is a destroyer. Time is a flame. Time is an extinguisher...the present, the past, and future are all the sons of time' (Kusalasai, 2009, p. 4). In this respect, Brahma embodies a role analogous

to that of God in Hegel's philosophy—a creator of all living beings, a facilitator of existence, and a transcendent force beyond the state.

This underscores that Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* focuses on the exploration of the concept of right along with other abstract ideas. Hegel's work encompasses both the abstract dimensions of these concepts and their manifestation as concrete realities.

The emergence of an idea is intrinsically linked to the Capacity of Right, which naturally leads to the second section on morality. This can be summarized as follows: 'Morality pertains to a person as a doer who bears responsibility for actions that impact the external world. A person recognizes and exercises their freedom.' Hegel shifts the terminology from a person possessing the Capacity of Right to that of a subject.

The change in terminology from 'person' to 'subject' underscores that morality is rooted in willing actions and their effects on the external world, contrasting with the mere potentiality of free will as an abstract concept. Hegel emphasizes that a subject must possess knowledge and responsibility regarding their actions. This knowledge encompasses a sense of goodness, which is inextricably linked to rights, justice, and welfare; without these elements, welfare cannot truly be considered good.

In the second part of Hegel's work, the notion of Abstract Right becomes clearer through the self-awareness of the subject. In the third section, which deals with Ethical Life, Hegel presents the state as the

realization of rights and freedom, functioning as a mechanism that transforms Abstract Right into a tangible reality. Thus, the state emerges as an ethical institution that upholds and manages a person's rights, freedom, and welfare—concepts that Hegel associates with goodness. It enables persons to engage in society while pursuing their moral and ethical lives.

Hegel asserts that persons can achieve their goals by sacrificing personal gain (the Particular) for the greater good (the Universal). In this framework, the state serves not only as a guarantor of rights and a mechanism for peace but also as the ultimate aim of communal existence. The state aims to harmonize person's rights and well-being in a balanced manner, facilitating a life that is both free and meaningful for its citizens. Moreover, Hegel posits that the state's structure and functioning are influenced by divine will, reflecting the broader currents of world history that shape its evolution. This historical perspective underscores that the development of the state is not static; it is subject to change as it aligns with God's plan (Hegel, Houlgate & Knox, 2008, p. 228).

Conclusion

To summarize, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* begins with the concept of Abstract Right, exploring its complexities through the framework of the System of Right, or the state. This system allows for the

concrete manifestation of personal rights. Interestingly, while Hegel emphasizes the importance of the state in worldly matters, he concludes by invoking abstract concepts like God and world history. This parallel can be drawn to the Brahmanical teachings in Bhagavad Gita, which also emphasize a state of universality represented by Paramatman. Although this state is powerful, independent, and pure, it exists as a possibility that cannot manifest without becoming a particular will or Ataman. Ultimately, Ataman is linked to Paramatman and will return to it, illustrating how the ideas surrounding state formation in Hegel's philosophy resonate with Brahmanical thought.

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