

Obituary

Professor S. R. Bhatt (1939-2024)

The Indian Philosophical Congress condoles the sudden demise of its Chairman, Professor S.R. Bhatt, one of the eminent philosophers of our country, who is internationally known as an authority on Ancient Indian Culture, Buddhism, Jainism and Vedanta. He has been great inspiration for teachers and scholars of philosophy, both in India and abroad. He retired as Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, Delhi. Prior to that he was Professor and Head, Dept. of Philosophy, M.S. University, Baroda. He was the Chairman of ICPR and ICPR honoured him with the “Life time achievement award in Philosophy” for his contribution to the discipline of philosophy. His research areas include Indian Philosophy, Logic, Epistemology, Ethics, Value-theory, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Religion, Comparative Religion, Social and Political Thought etc.

Professor Bhatt has lectured in many universities and research institutes of India, China, Sri Lanka, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Turkey, Germany, United States and Trinidad. He was a member of many national and international associations. He was a member of Board of Advisors and Regional Coordinator of Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington D.C., USA. and has organized more than 50 national and international conferences, seminars and workshops. He has convened many roundtables and participated in invited sessions in international conferences. In the World Congress of Philosophy held at Seoul, South Korea, in 2008 he convened three roundtables on Buddhism, Jainism, Schopenhauer and Indian Thought. Later at World Congress of Philosophy at Peijing, China, he had organized roundtables on Jainism and Dharma. He has authored and edited more than 25 books and has more than 200 published research papers to his credit.

His important publications are: Knowledge, Values and Education, Buddhist Epistemology, The Concepts of Atman and Paramatman in Indian Thought, Vedic Wisdom, Cultural Inheritance and Contemporary Life, Major Religions of the World. Applied Philosophy, Value Theory and Business Ethics, Buddhist Thought and Culture in India and Korea (Ed.), Buddhist Thought and Culture in India and Japan (Ed.), Glimpses of Buddhist Thought and Culture (Ed.) and Knowledge, Culture and Value (Ed.) He was Co-organizer of Indo-Japan Seminar on —Spread and Influence of

Hinduism and Buddhism in in Tokyo, Japan, in 2000. He was one of the organizers of an International Conference on ‘Holistic Science and Integrated Living’ at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA, in 2010.

Professor Bhatt believed that philosophy, stands both for the theoretical knowledge of the nature of Reality and nature of life and its forms and conditions, and the practical (applied) knowledge of the principles of conduct for the guidance of life. Because of the ability of self-reflection, self-awareness and self-realization human life is the most significant facet of the Reality and therefore it is one of the most important tasks of philosophy to solve the riddles of human life and existence and provide opportunities for fullest possible efflorescence. Philosophy is concerned with Reality within, Reality without and Reality beyond

Professor Bhatt argued in many of his lectures that there are three important tasks of philosophy: (1) To study the nature and phenomenology of our knowledge, and to formulate the norms and criteria of its sources, validity and truth. (2) To ascertain, in the light and by the means of the instruments and equipment so developed, the nature of the Reality – within (human life), without (external world) and beyond (supra-mundane Reality). (3) And, finally, in the light and on the basis of the enlightenment so gathered, to develop and formulate, for life’s guidance, the goals or values and the means and modalities to realize the same.

“Philosophical reflections do not originate in cultural vacuum or in a void. To be meaningful and useful they have to be rooted in culture specific experiences. “

- S. R. Bhatt

(Write-up by: S. Panneerselvam)