



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2020; 6(4): 153-156

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www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 17-05-2020

Accepted: 26-06-2020

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Analysis of theism of the Nyāya Philosophy - An analytical study

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Abstract:

The Nyāya Philosophy is known as theistic philosophy in Indian philosophical literature. The Nyāya Philosophy usually refers to an entire community. As a result, all texts in the Nyāya Philosophy are considered within the scope of discussion. Maharishi Gautama was the founder of this Nyāya Philosophy. He wrote the book *Nyāyasūtra*, which is the original text of the Nyāya Philosophy. Therefore, we have resorted *Nyāyasūtra* as the representative of the Nyāya Philosophy in this research paper and have analysed for why the Nyāya Philosophy is called as theist? This is the main topic of this research paper. But there are some doubts in this topic. For example, it is not clear from Gautama's opinion that the God (*īśvara*) is the creator of the Vedas. If that is not, then Gautama's opinion will conflict with the words of the Vedas, and so on. This research article analyses all these doubts. Therefore, the main requirement of this research paper is to dispel these doubts and analyse the above topic properly. This research paper follows Analytical Research Methodology.

Keywords: Theist (*āstika*), Atheist (*nāstika*), Āpta, God (*īśvara*).

Introduction:

India's heritage was enhanced by the rise of the philosophical communities in ancient time. Indian philosophy originated in the form of theories of many sages from the Vedic period. The ancient philosophers in India not only analyzed human problems, but also analyzed the mysteries of this global world. The Nyāya Philosophy, glorified by spiritual knowledge, is one of them. According to Vātsyāyana, the test of substance by *pramāṇa* is called *Anvīkṣā*, so another name of the Nyāya Philosophy is *Anvīkṣikī*.

Maharishi Gautama wrote the book *Nyāyasūtra* by naming the substances useful for salvation in the first formula (*sūtra*). Many historians think that Gautama and Akṣapāda were different people. According to them, Gautama wrote the first part of Nyāya about 550 B.C., *Nyāyasūtras* of Akṣapāda were written about 150 A.D.¹ The Nyāya Philosophy is known in Indian philosophical literature as theist philosophy. But why is it called theist? What are their (Nyāya Philosophers) arguments in this regard? In this research article we will analyse all these things theoretically.

The meaning of the word theist in Indian Philosophy:

In ancient times, philosophers analysed the subjects in different ways. Although Indian Philosophy originated in the Vedas, but there are two different of opinions in regarding the authenticity of the Vedas. Namely theist philosophy and atheist philosophy. There is disagreement among the writers about the meaning of these two words theist and atheist. According to Manu, those who reject the authenticity of the Vedas or those who apply contradictions to the Vedas are atheists.² And the exact opposite group is called the theists. In fact, the words theist and atheist are used in Indian Philosophy according to this view. I would like to discuss this very briefly in below. Because it may be difficult to understand the main topic of this research paper without knowing the meaning of the theist.

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¹ A History of Indian Philosophy. Page No. 279.

² Manusmriti. Page No. 24.

There is a doubt that, why the word atheist will be accepted according to Manu's opinion only? The term theist is also applied in various texts in the sense of acknowledging the afterlife. Moreover, the term theist is commonly used to acknowledge the God (*īśvara*).

The vision of philosophy came from the desire to get rid of the deep sorrows of human life. So the ancient philosophers thought about how to liberate human being from that sorrows. They tried to draw the human mind from worldly pleasures to eternal knowledge. Because it is not possible to gain enlightenment by enjoying worldly things. The soul is bound by worldly pleasures. Addiction to worldly things awakens human lust. If ghee is added to the fire, it burns even more. In the same way, worldly pleasures increase lust. Desire is never diminished by the enjoyment of desires. [3] According to the scriptures, it is not possible to liberate amorous people. This world is a mixture of three kinds of sorrows. Namely spiritual, primordial, supernatural. Therefore the word afterlife means a stage without the connection of the three kinds of sorrows. Almost all Indian philosophical communities acknowledge ignorance as a cause of sorrow. Lord Buddha spoke of four aryan truths to get rid of this bondage of sorrow. There are differences between the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra community on the nature of *Nirvāṇa* (Salvation) in the Buddhist Philosophy. But analysing it is not the subject of this article. In general, the attainment of *Nirvāṇa* in Buddhist Philosophy is our subject, which helps us to attain the ultimate realization of the afterlife. According to the Mādhyamika, *Nirvāṇa* is indescribable. From Nāgārjuna's negative utterances it is known that *Nirvāṇa* is the realization of the all spiritual entity, which is not obtained by experience or by intellect [4].

According to Jaina Philosophy, the *Jīva* or *ātma* is bound for the connection of action (*karma*). Naturally, the *Jīva* is free, eternal, pure. But this kind of the *Jīva* is covered for actions. Thus the release of this *Jīva* is possible after the destruction of all activities. Now the question is, what is the nature of the destruction of the bond? The *Jīva* is liberated for the ultimate destruction of all worldly deeds. What is the way to gain salvation (*mokṣa*)? The answer to the question is that perfect knowledge (*samyaka jñāna*), perfect realization (*samyaka darśana*) and perfect character (*samyaka caritra*) - these three things are the causes of salvation of human being. [5] According to Umāsvāmī, this salvation is not a lack of substance or a matter of unconsciousness. From the above discussion, it is clear that if one can become a theists by accepting the afterlife, then Buddhist Philosophy and the Jaina Philosophy will be theistic philosophy. But this is definitely against the Indian Philosophy. So the context of acknowledging the afterlife in the judgment of theism fails.

Now the second doctrine of theism will be explained. The God has been recognized as the source of knowledge according to the Nyāya Philosophy and the Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. The co-operative cause of knowledge is God. The God has been recognized in the Yoga Philosophy as the cause of attaining *samādhi*. That God is not uninterrupted by time. The word *Pranava* literally means this God. Moreover, the God is the source of all knowledge, so he is omniscient. According to Śaṅkarācārya, *Saguṇa Brahma* is the God. The God has also been recognized in the Cārvāka Philosophy,

though different from other philosophical doctrines. In fact, the Cārvāka Philosophy was based on real life needs. Therefore each of their doctrine was in demand by the common people. According to them, the king is God. [6] The king is seen by the common people, so the king is a worldly thing. Miracles are not acknowledged by the Cārvāka Philosophy. On the other side, the God was not recognized in the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. According to them, this world was created by the connection of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* (Soul). Among them *Prakṛti* is inanimate and *Puruṣa* is eternal, free. In fact, free and fixed or closed these two conditions have been recognized in the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. So even if God exists, he must exist either as a fixed substance or as a free substance. If the God is closed, then there is no need to acknowledge the God as the cause of the world. Moreover, if the God is eternal and infinite, then his conversion is not possible, which is contrary to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. According to *satkāryavāda* the action potentially exists before it is generated by the movement of the reason. Therefore the God is imperfect matter.

From the above discussion it is understood that if acknowledging the God is called theist then the Cārvāka Philosophy will be theist philosophy; and to deny the God is called atheist, the Sāṃkhya Philosophy will be atheistic philosophy. But these two things are imperfect, as they are against the Indian Philosophy.

Analysis of theism of Nyāya Philosophy

There are two differences ideology between the theistic philosophical communities. Some of these communities have expressed their views by directly believing the words of the Vedas. For example, the Mīmāṃsā Philosophy, who believes in the *karmakāṇḍa* of the Vedas and the Vedānta Philosophy, who believes the *jñānakāṇḍa* of the Vedas. On the other hand, who does not directly acknowledge the Vedas, but acknowledges the authenticity of the Vedas by giving the proper arguments. Such as the Nyāya Philosophy. This community establishes the authenticity of the Vedas by providing arguments. From this point of view the theism of the Nyāya Philosophy will now be analysed.

In logic, one must refute the opposition's opinion against a specific subject and then make his decision. In the *Nyāyasūtra* too, Gautama first established the opposition party to the Vedas. In order to express the opinion of the opposition, he said that there is no evidence for the authenticity of the Vedas. Because the Vedas have false sentences, contradictory sentences and repetitive faults of many sentences.

“तदप्रामाण्यमनृतव्याघातपुनरुक्तदोषेभ्यः (२/१/५७)” [7].

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³ Manusmriti. Page No. 39.

⁴ Mūlamadhyaamakārikā. Page No. 356.

⁵ Sarvadarśanasamgraha. Page No. 110.

⁶ Sarvadarśanasamgraha. Page No. 8.

⁷ Nyāyasūtras. Page No. 94.

anti-sentence? In fact, this interpretation has been proved to dispel the misconceptions of the opponents about the Vedas. In other words, the opponents are being informed first that their opinion is misconception. This was not explained in order to establish the authenticity of the Vedas. To establish the authenticity of the Vedas, Maharishi Gautama then goes on to say that the Vedas are divided like ordinary sentences. But how will the Vedic evidence be established by this argument? Since even simple sentences contain many mistakes or lies. So why did Vātsyāyana use this word? The solution to this doubt is explained by Uddyotakara in his equitable text. According to him, although there are semantic differences between the sentences of Manu etc., the authenticity of these sentences is established. In the same way authenticity of Vedas is established. Now the question may be that what is the relation of Vedic evidence with the difference of sentences? In fact, in practical life a sentence is distinguished only when it has a proper purpose or need. No sentence or its distinction is accepted unnecessarily. The difference of sentences here means the command, permission, provision, prohibition, etc. Maharishi Manu's sentences have a practical essence. Thereat, the authenticity of those sentences is acknowledged. The same thing is applicable for the words of the Vedas. But even this does not establish the authenticity of the Vedas. Because in the Cārvāka Philosophy there are also differences in sentences. There are a lot of anti-vedic talks. The Cārvākas have expressed their opinion that, the Vedas are the delusions of the swindlers.

Finally, Maharishi Gautama has made the final decision to establish the authenticity of the Vedas.

“मन्त्रायुर्वेदप्रामाण्यवच्च तत्प्रामाण्यमाप्तप्रामाण्यात् (२/१/६८)”¹⁸

He says that since the Vedas are the words of *Āpta*, so the authenticity of the Vedas is perfect. He has taken Mantra and Āyurveda as examples to support his argument. That is to say that, the evidence of Mantras and Āyurveda is established for the utterance of *Āpta*, in the same way the evidence of the Vedas is fulfilled. Now the question is who is this *Āpta*? What are its symptoms? *Āpta* is a person, who has no delusions, is not a crazy person, does not deceive anyone, and has no sense organs impairments. Commentator Vātsyāyana gives three adjectives of him. The first of them is the one who directly acquires proper knowledge of a subject. Without proper knowledge of the subject, it can't be understood whether the subject is worthy of acceptance or rejection. This means that *Āpta* is not a wanderer. Proper knowledge of the subject is possible only when all the sense organs of a person are perfect. This means that no sense organs of him should be crippled. The second adjective is kindness to living beings. *Āpta* is a person who gives the proper knowledge of the subject to another for the welfare of the living being. This means that he is not a cheater. The third adjective is the desire to impart proper knowledge of the subject to another. If there is no such desire or if there is a desire to impart wrong knowledge, then he cannot be called *Āpta*. Analysing all the adjectives about *Āpta* above, it is understood that he is not a delusional person.

Maybe Maharishi Gautama has explained the Mantras related to Āyurveda by the word 'mantra' in the formula (*sūtra*). Because if Mantra and Āyurveda were two different terms then it would be difficult to apply. The Vedas have different mantras in many senses. If all of them are accepted

as the evidence of authenticity the Vedas, then the Vedas have to be resorted to for the authenticity of the Vedas. Which is a classical fault (*ātmāśraya*). That is why the mantras related to Āyurveda are meant here. Similar meanings can be inferred from the views of Uddyotakara. Because he only said about Āyurveda, but not about Mantra.

“किमायुर्वेदस्य प्रामाण्यम्, यत् तदायुर्वेदेनोपदिश्यते इदं कृत्वेष्टमधिगच्छति, इदं कृत्वानिष्टं जहाति”¹⁹

”^[10] If Mantra and Āyurveda are two different terms then Āyurveda cannot be understood literally. Because there is no special part called Āyurveda in entire Vedas. But some mantras related to Āyurveda are found in Atharva Veda. In here Maharishi Gautama does not mean Āyurveda as Atharva Veda. A part of the entire Vedas is the mantra about Āyurveda.

Now the question is, why did Gautama accept Mantra and Āyurveda as examples? An example is a thing, in which there is no disagreement between the general people and scholarly people. To know the solution of this doubt, first need to know about the example. Although the Āyurvedic mantras are not understood by the common people, but there is no opposition of the common people about the results of that mantra. Because ordinary people are cured by treatment according to the Āyurvedic mantra. Moreover, it is possible to prevent poison or lightning by applying special mantras of Āyurveda. Ordinary people accept the truth of all these worldly things. Now if the mantras of Āyurveda were false then its result would also be false. So the one who wrote all those mantras, must have been aware of the result. He wrote all those mantras for the welfare of the people. Hence he is *Āpta*. Though the Āyurveda is not the original Veda, but its proof is unanimous. Now there may be doubt as to how the authenticity of the Vedas of destiny is fulfilled by visual examples? Because the Vedas are not worldly. According to the glosser Viśvanātha, Āyurveda is a part of the Vedas. If so, then it can be said that Maharishi Gautama accepted Āyurveda as the Vedas. Thereat, the whole Vedas can be perfected by establishing the authenticity of a part of the Vedas. There is no problem with this. But the complexity of the matter increases when Āyurveda is not considered as Veda. For example, Āyurveda has been mentioned separately from the four Vedas among the eighteen types of knowledge (*vidyā*) mentioned in Viṣṇu Purāṇa.¹¹ In this situation it can be said that the Vedas not only describe miracles, but also worldly things. For example, if someone sacrifices for to get the village (*sāmgrahaṇī*), then he gets the village. Through this generosity the authenticity of the entire Veda can be inferred. If the part of the Veda is special evidence, the rest cannot be unproven. Because the producer of the proof is the same in both parts.

From the above discussion it is known that, the speaker of Āyurveda mantra is *Āpta*, in the same way the speaker of Vedas is also *Āpta*. That is to say, the authenticity of the Vedas is fulfilled only for the utterance of *Āpta*. The authenticity of the Vedas cannot be established independently.

Now the question, who is meant by *Āpta*? We have already discussed about some features of him. But it is not known who *Āpta* means. In fact, Gautama did not say anything

⁹ Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika. Page No. 257.

¹⁰ Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika. Page No. 257.

¹¹ Viṣṇumahapurāṇam. Page No. 342.

⁸ Nyāyasūtras. Page No. 146.

clearly about that. But in Gautama's later times many logicians claimed that the Vedas were composed by the God (*īśvara*). Could it be that Gautama does not acknowledge the God as the creator of the Vedas? Because it can be said from the aforesaid signs of *Āpta* that the scribes like Manu are the subject of those signs. Even ordinary people may be the focal point of those symptoms. But they are not God. If Gautama does not acknowledge God (*īśvara*) as the creator of the Vedas, then there is a conflict with the words of the Vedas. Because it is known from the *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* that the four Vedas originated from the God or *Puruṣa*.^[12]

In here the above doubts are being resolved. In fact, *Vātsyāyana* did not say anything about it. But *Uddyotakara* says that the Vedas are the advices of eminent persons.¹³ That is, the Vedas were not written by ordinary people. Then it can be assumed that he meant the God by this specialty. It is known from a proper analysis of *Vācaspatimiśra*'s opinion that he considers the God to be the creator of the Vedas.¹⁴ The God has advised the Vedas to show the way to the benefit of animals and the cessation of evil. Moreover, in his gloss on the *Yoga Philosophy*, he mentions that *Mantras* and *Āyurveda* are made by the God.^[15] Because the God is omniscient for the abundance of intellect. *Mantras* and *Āyurveda* cannot be formulated by anyone except the omniscient. *Udayanācārya* has also expressed the same opinion. According to him, only the omniscient can compose the Vedas, the source of miracles and the source of all knowledges. So it can be assumed that *Maharishi Gautama* also accepted *īśvara* as *Āpta*. But the question may be, then why did *Gautama* not accept the word *īśvara* in the formula? In fact, two of the many features of the formula are the use of lowercase letter and the indicator of many things. If *Gautama* had accepted the word *īśvara*, it would have added more letters, and only the authenticity of the Vedas would have been established. If this second part had been implemented, *Gautama* would have opposed his own opinion, as he says about worldly evidence. Moreover, the advices of *Manu*, *Yājñavalka* etc. are not considered as conclusive evidence. But the rituals or advices introduced by them are known as evidence to be in accordance with the Vedas. Therefore, it can be said that *Maharishi Gautama* has adopted the word *āpta* in the formula (*sūtra*) to establish the evidence of both worldly and supernatural things.

Conclusion

According to *Gautama*, the Vedas are the words of *Āpta*. If he acknowledged only the God as the creator of the Vedas, then it would be in conflict with various events in our practical life also. In reality many things happen. Those for whom it is not possible to acknowledge the God only. Such as weather forecasts are accepted by the common people as true. Because the information is known by meteorologists through research. These meteorologists have all the qualities of *Āpta*. Many more such things are happening in our daily life. Therefore it can be said that, *Gautama's* opinions are applicable in real life also.

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¹² Daily Invocations. Page No. 61.

¹³ Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika. Page No. 257.

¹⁴ Nyayavartika-Tatparya Tika. Page No. 432-433.

¹⁵ Patanjaliyogasutranī. Page No. 28.