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The concept of pramā and pramāṇa in nyāya philosophy

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Abstract:

Vedic literature is the oldest literature in the world. From Veda to Vedāṅga is Vedic literature. Various philosophies arose by reading those thoughts compiled in the Vedas. From that point of view Indian philosophy relying on the Vedas. Rk, Sām, Yaju & Atharva there are four types of Veda. There are four types of Saṃhitā in a Vedic Brāhmana Aranyaka & Upaniṣada. The origin of philosophy is based on this Upanishad. The origin of philosophy in the East & the West. There are nine types of theistic and atheistic philosophy in India. Theistic means believes of Veda and atheistic are opposed to the Vedas. Lord Manu Said न्नास्तिको वेदनिन्दकः. Theistic philosophies are Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣik, Mimāṃsā & Vedānta Philosophy. Atheistic philosophies are – Cārbāk, Jaina & Buddhist philosophy. There is a need for extreme cessation of grief. How to end the grief for this. It is normal to be asked about this. That all the time plagued by different kinds of sorrow. We want to know how to get rid of grief forever, it is the duty and aspiration of Iswarkrishna to give the inquirer the cessation of sorrow. What is sorrow? Where does grief originate from? Is there sorrow in the world? What kind of sorrow can be? Why grief? What is the way to end grief?

Keyword: Pramāṇa, Prameya, Saṃśaya, Prayojana, Driṣṭānta, Siddhānta, Avayava, Tarka, Nirṇaya, Vāda, Jalpa, Vitaṇḍa, Hetvābhāsa, Chala, Jāti and Nigrahasthāna

Introduction

Indian Philosophy have accepted Pramāṇas or the instrument of Valid knowledge and the fact how they help to reach to certain conclusion and doctrines. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophy are one among them. Gautama is the founder of the Nyāyaśāstra. The subject matter of Nyāyadarśana is the search of the means and methods of fundamental truth. It deals with the sixteen categories such as Pramāṇa, Prameya, Saṃśaya, Prayojana, Driṣṭānta, Siddhānta, Avayava, Tarka, Nirṇaya, Vāda, Jalpa, Vitaṇḍa, Hetvābhāsa, Chala, Jāti and Nigrahasthāna, and how a true knowledge of them enables one to attain Mokṣha or Liberation.

In the definition of Nyāya, Vātsyāyana says that 'Nyāya is the examination of an object with the help of the instrument of Valid knowledge or Pramāṇa 'प्रमाणैरर्थपरीक्षणं न्यायः' [1]. The most essential function of means of Valid knowledge is to produce the valid knowledge of objects or Pramā, and closely associated with the same knowledge to be produced is the object to be known Prameya. In order to the realization of Pramā four factors are needed. They are Pramāta, Prameya, Pramiti and Pramāṇa. Pramāta is the person who knows and the object of the knowledge is 'Prameya'. Pramāta helps the seeker to the object of activity. The object which is known thoroughly is called the Prameya and the right knowledge of the object is called Pramiti. Again the acquisition of knowledge is 'Pramiti' and the cause that lead to the acquisition is 'Pramāṇa'. [2] Pramāṇa is also considered as a criterion to make sure whether the knowledge gained is true or false. Keśavamiśra terms it 'प्रमाकरणम् प्रमाणम्' [3]

The pramāṇa or the means of right knowledge is divided into four as Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, Upamāna and śabda. According to Vātsyāyana, the pramāṇa means of cognizing things and this is quite evident from the etymology of the word itself. The pramāṇa as must be regarded as rightly effective, because it is only when a thing is known by means of a pramāṇa that it has the power to arouse fruitful and effective activity 'प्रमाणतोऽर्थप्रतिपत्तौ प्रवृत्तिसामर्थ्यादर्थवत् प्रमाणम्' [4] Footing on this Vātsyāyana calls Ānvīkṣiki as Nyāyaśāstra. The search of Ānvīkṣiki starts from the four divisions of Pramāṇa-Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, Upamāna and śabda.

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The state of liberation is such a state where one knows no sufferings or pain. A man when born will have the sufferings as his twin. The twin of man, that is suffering, will never take birth if man does not take birth. A person is born because of his doings, both good and bad. If he overcomes his doings that is good and bad, then there will be no birth. Likewise, man is a slave to his desires. This is because man does not have knowledge which is right or wrong. The knowledge which is wrong should be erased acquiring right knowledge with the help of pramānas. The acquisition of right knowledge helps to get rid of wrong knowledge.

The Pramāṇa is considered as valid knowledge. The Nyāya defines Pramāṇa as a knowledge which is the true presentational knowledge. Besides the Pramāṇa is a distinct and sure cognition of an object. This quality of Pramāṇa is to avoid all invalid knowledge, for example, memory, doubt, error; hypothetical argument is the reason for rejecting memory. The doubt and other above said elements are excluded because there are not dependable and the cognition of these are not certain.

Pramāṇa has with it three main characteristics and they are assuredness, truth and presentativeness. The knowledge which is imparted by Pramāṇa is true. The Nyāya states that the knowledge which is true has with it the ability to correspond the facts. According to some Naiyāyikas the anubhava which is knowledge which is different from that of memory and others because the latter begins the question. Thus by stating so, the Naiyāyikas reach their definition said above. In this presentational cognition the reality of the object and its ascertainment is true to the core.

In Indian Philosophy valid knowledge is called Prama and the source of valid knowledge is called Pramāṇa. The way by which we can achieve valid knowledge is called Pramāṇa. There is a detailed discussion about the Pramāṇas in Nyāya Philosophy. So this system is also called Pramāṇa śāstra. Naiyāyikas accepts four types of valid knowledge-Perception or Pratyaksha, Inference or Anumāna, Comparison or Upamāna and Verbal testimony or Śabda. Vātsyāyana puts his idea about Pramāṇa as which clearly indicates that he takes pramāṇa as instrument of knowledge. Uddyotkara defines Pramāṇa as उपलब्धिहेतुः प्रमाणम् । the cause of knowledge is called pramāṇa. He also says that the knower and the knowable have served their purpose by producing the immediate cause of the knowable, namely the object to be known, where as the Pramāṇa is directly involved in producing the knowledge. The knowledge that which we know directly is more convincing and trustworthy. Doubts never occur about the facts which we know directly. This kind of true and pure knowledge is called Perception. Gautama gives the definition of Perception as the knowledge which arises from contact of a sense with its object and which is determinate, unnamable and non erratic. 'इन्द्रियार्थसन्निकर्षोत्पन्नं ज्ञानमव्यपदेश्यमव्यभिचारि व्यवसायात्मकं प्रत्यक्षम्'।^[5] Annambhatta defines perception as the knowledge generated by the contact with the object. तत्र प्रत्यक्षज्ञानकरणं प्रत्यक्षम् ।^[6] There are two kind of Perception Savikalpaka or determinate and Nirvikalpaka or indeterminate. The knowledge which possess a qualification is called Savikalpaka. The knowledge which does not possess a qualification and which is a simple cognition of the thing is called Nirvikalpaka^[7]. Perception occurs when the soul comes into contact with mind, the mind with the senses and the senses with the objects.

The Perception leads to inference. Gautama defines Inference or Anumāna as the knowledge which sprouts from perception.

Inference is classified in to various types. Three forms of inference as classified by Gautama as 'अथ तत्पूर्वकं त्रिविधमनुमानम्-पूर्ववत् शेषवत् सामान्यतोदृष्टं च ।'^[8] These three forms are explained by Vātsyāyana. He says that the meaning of word पूर्व is cause and the word शेषवत् means is the effect.

The meaning of the word तत्पूर्वक is the one preceded by perception. So the earlier said meaning or definition of inference is proved to be correct, that is the knowledge of specific order is always preceded by Perception.

Whenever the sky is clouded by dark clouds, one infers that it may rain, likewise in this aspect the effect is inferred from the cause this very aspect is called the Pūrvavat Anumāna. For example, to infer water in red colour and so on. In this example the knowledge pertaining to cause is digged out from the perception of effect and this leads to the Śeṣavat Anumāna.

The third type of inference is the Sāmānyato dṛiṣṭa anumāna. This anumāna originates from the things which is seen by everyone or the thing which is seen by everyone. The example for this is that when one sees an animal with horns, one infers that it has a tail also. Sāmānyato dṛiṣṭa anumāna in other words can be said that this anumāna occurs where there is no chance or existence of cause and effect. Inference may be of two types-Svārthānumāna and Parārthanumāna. Svārthānumāna is inference for one's own need and Parārthānumāna is inference for others अनुमानं द्विविधं स्वार्थं परार्थं च ।^[9]

The knowledge of comparison arises from the similarity of things which are known previously. प्रसिद्धसाधर्म्यात् साध्यसाधनमुपमानम् ।^[10] The objects are then recognized and known through resemblance. A person hears the word 'gavaya' and understands that it is animal, similar to a cow. He then gets a chance to meet this animal in the forest and understands that it is similar to a cow. The knowledge so acquired is called Upamiti and it is through the means of Upamāna. उपमितिकरणं उपमानम् ।^[11] This is acquired the peculiarity of this knowledge is that it enables one to comprehend the object by its name. One thing to be noted to about this is that it differs from Perception and Inference. The difference between Anumāna and Upamiti is that there is always a lack in the direct causal relation.

Verbal Testimony or Śabda has also been recognized as a source of valid knowledge by all the orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy. The knowledge one acquires is from hearing and not by Perception or Anumāna. The instructions given by the wise, intellect and experienced persons should be accepted by all. The Śabda or verbal testimony is unavoidable. The Śabda according to Gautama is the remark or rather assertion received from a reliable person. आप्तोपदेशः शब्दः स द्विधः दृष्टाविदृष्टत्वात् स द्विधः दृष्टाविदृष्टत्वात् ।^[12] It is divided in into two dṛuṣṭartha and adṛiṣṭartha. According to Gautama the words are divided by the layman as well as the intellect. These personalities have knowledge which is true to the core. The Śabda or its object may be either pertaining to this word or the other.

Conclusion

The Naiyāyikas are of the opinion that the knowledge becomes valid because of Pramāṇa. The subject which is conscious and the object cognized is not case for the factual knowledge. The universally accepted fact is what the base of all knowledge is consciousness. When consciousness is

regarded as the foremost and common cause to acquire knowledge, there arises the need for particular cause for knowledge. These particular causes of knowledge is the Pramāṇas.

The prime function of knowledge is to impart the reality between the idea and object. This function of knowledge is inclined to the pramāṇa, the Pramata is incapable of imparting knowledge directly as it is an agent. So this needs a means to get the result. Pramāṇa is the means is distinguished from Pramata and Prameya and is not directly related in giving out objectively valid knowledge or Prama.

It believes that both the particulars and the universals are separately real. Nyāya means argumentation and suggests that the system is predominantly intellectual, analytic, logical and epistemological. The sixteen categories stated in the Naiyāyikas by Gautama gives a clear insight in to the philosophy of Nyāya. The one thing which is of prominence is that the fourteen categories, that too the last fourteen are closely connected, directly or indirectly to the logic. The Pramāṇa or the means of right knowledge helps in proving a tenet. Among the sixteen categories Pramāṇa is the main one because it is base. This Pramāṇa is not the tool of a logician but also each and every one.

Footnotes

1. Nyāyabāṣyam-P-6.
2. Ibid-P-3.
3. Tarkabhāṣha-P-23.
4. Nyāyabhāṣyam-P-1.
5. Nyāyasūtra-1-1-4.
6. Tarkasangraha-P-14
7. Ibid-P-14.
8. Nyāyasūtra-1-1-5.
9. Tarkasangraha-P-16.
10. Nyāyasūtra-1-1-6.
11. Tarkasangraha-P-21.
12. Nyāyasūtra-1-1-7.

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