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# SIGNIFICANCE OF ANUMĀNA IN SĀṆKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Dr. T. G. Sreekumar.

*Sāṅkhyadarśana* has much relevance in the history of Indian philosophy since it deals with the process of evolution of the universe in detail. It puts forth dualism since it regards Prakṛti or Matter and Puruṣa or the Soul as the two eternal principles. Though Sāṅkhya is regarded as one among the Āstikadarśanas, it really has a non-Vedic origin and it often rejects the authority of the Vedas. According to Richard Garbe, the Sāṅkhya philosophy is not only atheistic, but also antagonistic to the Vedas (Aniruddha's Commentary to the Sāṅkhyasūtras, (Tr.) Richard Garbe, pp. xx-xxi), but Arthur Berridale Keith disagrees with this view and states that Sāṅkhya is derived out of the speculations of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. (A. B. Keith, quoted by Gerald James Larson, Classical Sāṅkhya, p. 29) Regarding the antiquity and authenticity of the Sāṅkhya Philosophy, K. C. Bhattacharya has remarked that, much of the Sāṅkhya literature is lost, and there is no continuity of a Sāṅkhya tradition. Hence, in interpreting Sāṅkhya treatises, a constructive method is needed, which included supplying of missing links from one's imagination. (K. C. Bhattacharya, Studies in Sāṅkhya Philosophy, vol. 1, p.127)

The word *Sāṅkhya* is derived from *Saṅkhyā* meaning 'number' as well as 'right knowledge' (सम्यक् ख्यातिः). *Sāṅkhya* gives the discriminative knowledge of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* and the 23 principles. *Sāṅkhya* believes that right knowledge, which is the means for liberation, is gained only through the *Pramāṇas*. (प्रमेयसिद्धिः प्रमाणाद्धि। *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4)

*Sāṅkhya* admits three *Pramāṇas*, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, (Perception) *Anumāna* (Inference) and *Āptavacana* (Verbal Testimony). All the other *Pramāṇas* can be incorporated in the three. (सर्वप्रमाणसिद्धत्वात्। *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4). *Upamāna* (Similarity) and *Arthāpatti* (Presumption) can be included in *Anumāna*. *Anupalabdhi* can be included in

*Pratyakṣa*. Similarly, all the other *Pramāṇas* accepted by other systems thought can be included in these three.

Of the three *Pramāṇas*, *Pratyakṣa* is the first and the foremost of all *Pramāṇas*, since all the other *Pramāṇas* depend on it and all the *Darśanas* accept it as a valid means of knowledge. (प्रत्यक्षस्य सर्वप्रमाणेषु ज्येष्ठत्वात् तदधीनत्वाच्च अनुमानादीनां सर्ववादिनामविप्रतिपत्तेश्च। *Sāṅkhyakārikā Tattvakaumudī* 5.) *Pratyakṣa* is defined thus: प्रतिविषयाध्यवसायो दृष्टम् (*Sāṅkhyakārikā* 5).

The term *Adhyavasāya* in the definition is used to exclude doubt, because doubt arises from uncertainty. The expression *Viśaya* excludes false knowledge (*Viparyaya*), which is based on the objects, which are non-existent. Again, the expression *Prati* denotes direct contact and thus excludes *Anumāna* , *Smṛti* (Memory) etc. (*Sāṅkhyakārikā Tattvakaumudī* 5)

### *Anumāna*

*Anumāna* follows *Pratyakṣa* as it results from previous experiences. It gives the knowledge of a thing through a mark when it is not directly perceived. *Vātsyāyana*, the author of *Nyāyabhāṣya*, has observed *Anumāna* thus: in *Anumāna*, perception of an object leads to the cognition of another object which is not perceived, and with which, the former is connected in some way or the other. (स्मृत्या लिङ्गदर्शनेन च अप्रत्यक्षोऽर्थोऽनुमीयते। *Vātsyāyanabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* of *Gautama*, p.16)

*Sāṅkhyakārikā* puts forth the following reasons for the non-perception of objects: “Things may not be perceived due to i) extreme distance, as in the case of a bird flying far above, ii) extreme proximity, as in the case of some minute particles got into our eyes, iii) defect of one’s sense organs as in the case of a patient of jaundice seeing a white flower as yellow in colour, iv) the mind being absent, v) minuteness as in the case of the *Sāṅkhya* principles of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, vi) being concealed from view as in the case of objects beyond a wall, vii) being overpowered by some brighter object as in the case of the stars in the sky that cannot be seen at daytime due to sunlight, and viii) similarity, as in the case of water from small rivers, mingled with the sea, cannot

be identified distinct from the sea-water  
 नोऽन्यथात्। लोच्यत् व्यक्तान्। अभिप्रायत् समन्वयत्॥ Sāṅkhyakārikā 7,  
 the Sāṅkhyā principles Puruṣa and Prakṛti can only be inferred with the  
 help of Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa Anumāna on account of their minuteness  
 Sāṅkhyā philosophy makes use of Anumāna to prove their theory of  
 causation named Satkāryavāda (कारणकार्यत्वेऽवयवत्वम्। Sāṅkhyakārikā 9). It puts forth the  
 following reasons to prove the pre-existence of effect in the cause,  
 मन्वय शक्यकरणत् कारणभावाच्च कर्तव्यम्॥ Sāṅkhyakārikā 9).

- i) the effect pre-exists in the cause unmanifested, since nothing new can be created from anything, if it were not already there. (असंभवत्।)
- ii) to get some product, we rely upon its own material cause (उत्पन्नत्वम्।)
- iii) anything cannot be produced from anything (सर्वसम्भवाभावात्।)
- iv) something is produced from that only which has a potential to produce it (मन्वय शक्यकरणत्।) and,
- v) every product has the characteristic features of its material cause. (कारणभावात्।)

The existence of Prakṛti or Avyakta is established in Sāṅkhyakārikā thus:

(भेदानां परिमाणत् समन्वयत् शक्तिता प्रकृतेश्च। कारणकार्यविभागात् अविभागात् वैश्वरूप्यत्। कारणमन्वयत्वम्। Sāṅkhyakārikā 15-16)

Avyakta is the root cause of the universe due to: i) the limitedness of the products to their respective causes (भेदानां परिमाणत्।) ii) the presence of the qualities of the cause in the effects (समन्वयत्।) iii) working of the cause in the production of that effect which it is capable to produce (शक्तिता प्रकृतेश्च।) iv) mutual connection of the cause to its effect (कारणकार्यविभागात्।) and v) the resolution of the effects into their respective causes in the end (वैश्वरूप्यत् अविभागात्।)

The existence of Puruṣa too is established through the following reasons:

(सङ्घातपारार्थत्वात् त्रिगुणादिविपर्ययात् अधिष्ठानात् पुरुषोऽस्ति भोक्तृभावात् वैश्वरूप्यत्।)

प्रवृत्तेश्च ॥)

Puruṣa exists, since: i) all those that are made of parts are for the purpose of an external subject (सङ्घातपरार्थत्वात्) ii) due to his distinction from the qualities of Prakṛti and its products (त्रिगुणादिविपर्ययात्) iii) his being the base of all activity of Prakṛti (अधिष्ठानात्) iv) dependence of the objects of enjoyment on the enjoyer (भोक्तृभावात्) and v) due to his tendency towards emancipation (कैवल्यार्थं प्रवृत्तेः)

Almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy describe *Anumāna* as constituted of five parts, namely, *Pratijñā* (hypothesis), *Hetu* (Reason), *Udāharaṇa* or *Dṛṣṭānta* (Example), *Upanaya* (Application) and *Nigamana* (Conclusion). However, *Sāṅkhya* derives *Anumāna* from the first three constituents, namely, *Pratijñā*, *Hetu*, *Dṛṣṭānta*.

*Vācaspatimiśra* endorses the significance of *Anumāna* thus: 'it is much necessary even for the *Cārvākas* who do not accept it as a valid means of knowledge since, otherwise, they could not cognise the ignorance, doubt or misapprehension of another person'. *Anumāna* is derived from the knowledge of *Vyāpti* between *Vyāpya* or *Liṅga* and *Vyāpaka* or *Liṅgi*. तल्लिङ्गलिङ्गिपूर्वकम् (*Sāṅkhyakārikā* 5). In the famous example of 'there is fire on the mountain because there is smoke', smoke is *Liṅga* and fire is *Liṅgi*.

*Anumāna* is of two kinds, *Vīta* and *Avīta*. *Vīta* is based on *Anvayavyāpti* (Positive Inference) such as 'wherever is smoke, there necessarily should be fire'. It is again divided into two: *Pūrvavat* and *Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*. In *Pūrvavat*, the effect is inferred from the cause, as in the inference of rain from the clouds. According to *Sāṅkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, *Anumāna* is the cognition of something, which has been known earlier in general. In the above example of inferring fire from smoke, fire, which is known earlier by seeing in the kitchen etc, is inferred. (वह्निसजातीयो हि महानसादौ पूर्वं प्रत्यक्षीकृतः। *Sāṅkhyapravacana bhāṣya* I.103)

*Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa* is based on general observations like that of the movement of the sun from its being in the east in the morning and in the west in the evening. Knowledge of transcendental objects is gained

through *Sāmānyadṛṣṭa*.  
(*Sāmānyadṛṣṭi* 6)

(सामान्यदृष्टिः) व्युत्पत्तिः

... on the contrary, is based on *Vyavahāryāpi* (Pragmatic Inference), such as, "without fire, there will be no rain". cause is inferred through the effect, like the inference of rain from floods. It is also explained through the inference of rain from sea water from a cup of the same. However, *Tattvokammūṭhi* agrees with the view of *Vātsyāyana* that it is that which remains when all alternatives are negated (वस्तुव्यतिरेकः) (*Sāmānyadṛṣṭi* 6). For example, *Śabda* being a particular *Guna* does not exist in *Kāla*, *Dik* and *Manas*. Since it is a *Guna*, which is cognised only through the ears, it cannot belong to the elements *Prthvī*, *Jala*, *Agnī* and *Vāyu*, or to the *Ātmāna*. What remains is the *Ākāśa*, and there is no other element left. Hence, it is inferred that *Śabda* is the *Guna* of *Ākāśa*.

While discussing the degree of importance of each *pramāṇa* *Vātsyāyana* *Mīmāṃsā* explains the sixth *Kārikā* (सामान्यदृष्टिः) thus: experience of those objects which are incomprehensible through sensory perception can be attained (only) through *Sāmānyadṛṣṭa* *Anumāna*, and those which are incomprehensible even through it can be known through verbal testimony, whereas, some other commentators interpret it as generally, experience (of objects) is attained through sense perception. Those that are beyond the senses can be known through Inference, and those that are incomprehensible even through Inference can be known through verbal testimony.

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