

CHAPTER II

Sāṃkhya Theory of Causality – The Nature of Satkāryavāda as Pariṇāmavāda

The Naiyāyikas think that the whole world is created by an agent known as God. To them each and every effect is generated through some agent just as a jar is made by a potter. By virtue of being an effect the whole universe is created by some agent who is no other than God.

The above mentioned argument has not been accepted by other philosophers. They think that an extra ordinary cause can not be inferred for an ordinary effect. The Sāṃkhya philosophers believed that the world can not be created by God, because the existence of God can not be proved. Even if His existence is admitted He can not be called the agent of the world because the term 'God' is technical due to its inclusion under the category self or a particular kind of Puruṣa. The Naiyāyikas also believe God as a form of self. How can a self be an agent of this world? Sāṃkhya will tell that a self can never be an agent because the property of agency (*Kartṛtva*) does not belong to a self or Puruṣa. This property is superimposed on it just as a white marble or crystal becomes red due to the proximity of a red flower. This self, though not agent, essentially considers itself as an agent mistakenly or wrongly. In fact, a self is indifferent, inactive and witness whom we can not call

agent at all not to speak of the agent of the world. So far as the Sāṃkhya view is concerned there is no necessity of admitting an agent behind the creation of the world. Just as a potter makes a pot the world is not made by an experienced agent having direct cognition of the materials for creation. Even the world is not originated through conjunction of atoms. Hence, the world is actually the transformation of the primordial cause, Prakṛti.

Sāṃkhya thinks that all material objects are endowed with happiness, misery and infatuation. As the seen material object is endowed with three qualities their primordial cause must be endowed with these. Can these be admitted? In order to get reply of this we have to look at the relation between a cause and its effect. An effect may be assumed as an existent object as well as non-existent one. Such is the case with a cause also. Then we get four alternatives regarding the relation between an effect and its material cause :-

- (i) a non-existent effect is produced from a non-existent cause;
- (ii) an existent effect is produced from a non-existent cause;
- (iii) a non-existent effect is produced from an existent cause;
- (iv) an existent effect is produced from an existent cause.

The first argument in favour of *Satkāryavāda* runs as follows. The object which is non-existent like hare's horn cannot be produced (*asadakāraṇāt*).¹ Hence any type of effect is to be taken as an existent object on account of the fact that it remains in its material cause prior to its origination.² Vācaspati thinks that a blue object cannot be made yellow by any artist. In like manner, an object which is non-existent before its origination cannot be made existent by the effort.³ If an effect is non-existent before its origination and afterwards if the non-existent jar etc. are originated, why are not hare's horn etc originated? In both the cases the nature of non-existence is the same. As the prior absence (*prāgabhāva*) and posterior absence (*dhvaṁsābhāva*) of a jar is of the same nature due to having the same type of non-existence, the origination of a non-existent jar before its real origination and origination of the non-existent jar after its destruction would have been possible. Hence, an effect cannot remain non-existent in its material cause before its origination.⁴

Secondly, an individual desiring to produce a particular thing wants to have some materials which are conducive to it (*upādānagrahaṇāt*). A man desiring to prepare curd wants to have milk alone, not water. Hence the effects like curd etc remain in their material causes like milk etc as existent.⁵ He can produce curd from milk only because it remains in it. If otherwise, he would not have taken milk alone, instead he could have taken water etc. Moreover, if an effect becomes non-existent in its material cause, the function of the cause becomes objectless. For, the effect in the form of

object is non-existent one. The material cause cannot make itself an object, because it would lead to the fallacy of contradiction in respect of subject and object (*kartr-karma-virodha*). It cannot take another object as its content, as it is contradictory to our experience. Hence, a relation between material cause and effect has to be admitted. Due to having such relation it can safely be concluded that the effect remains in its material cause before its origination.⁶

The third argument runs as follows :-

From any object, any object whatever cannot be produced. From this it is known that an effect is related to its material cause. As they are related, an effect is existent in its material cause. A relation remains in two i.e. an effect and its material cause. If both are not present at a time, an effect cannot be said to be related to its material cause. If an effect were not related to its material cause and is produced without being related to its material cause, all material causes were not related to their effects leading to the production of any effect from any cause, which is not possible. It is found that a particular effect comes into being from a particular cause, because they are related with each other, which proves an effect's existence in its material cause.⁷

It may be said that due to the diversity of potency of the material cause, all effects do not come into being from a particular material cause (*śakyasya śakyakaraṇāt*). From this, it follows that

the potent effect (*Śakyakārya*) remains in its material cause prior to its production. If a particular potency is not related to a particular effect, there would not have been the cause and effect relationship. If this relation is admitted, the potent effect must be said to be existent in the cause.⁸

The last argument says that a particular type of effect is originated from that particular type of material cause. As for example, paddy is produced from the seeds of paddy. Between paddy and its seeds there is a similarity. It is not possible to produce barley from the paddy, because they are of different types. Due to their similarity an effect is said to be existent if its material cause is existent, because the complete identity between existence and non-existence cannot be conceived of.⁹

After forwarding the above-mentioned five arguments the Sāṃkhya - philosophers have established *Satkāryavāda*. Had there been no effect in its material cause, the yogins would not have transcendental experience of an object existing in the lap of future. The object of the future can be experienced intuitively due to having its existence in the material cause. A non-existent object can never be realised.

After forwarding some arguments from the common sense level they are showing that such thesis is supported in the *Śruti* text also. A thesis would have been more convincing, if it is supported in

the *Śruti* also. The Chāndagya Upaniṣad says – '*Sadeva Saumyadamagra āsīt*'¹⁰ (O Sauma, this phenomenal world existed even before the origination of the same). It indicates that the origination of the phenomenal world is not a new one, but has eternal existence, which goes in favour of *Satkāryavāda*, the proposed thesis of the Sāṃkhya thinkers. The most convincing argument in favour of this theory is found in the *Bhagavadgītā* – '*nāsāto vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.*' That is, a positive object can not come into being from the void i.e., non-existent entity and no absent object comes from a positive one. When it is said that a positive entity does not come from a negative entity, it is shown that a positive entity emerges from a positive one, which entity remains in its cause in the non-manifested form.

To the Sāṃkhya thinkers an entity does not come into being a new. Each and every object is not new at the time of origination. A question may be raised in this connection. Does the object remain in its own form in the cause? If the answer is in the positive, it would lead to another question. If it is already in the cause, what is the utility of its origination? It is presumed that an object in the form of a cause cannot serve our purpose. The object remains in its material cause in a subtle state and it comes into being in the gross form through the instrumentality of the causes.¹² This phenomenon is called manifestation. Hence, the origination of an object is nothing but manifestation, which is found in *Satkāryavāda*. Oil remains in the oilseeds in a subtle state and it is manifested through pressing. The rice remaining in paddy comes out through some

external pressure. Before its manifestation an effect remains in the form of a cause. To them cause and effect are not different entities but they are different forms of a single object. When the specific qualities of an object are submerged in the subtle state and remain in an unmanifested state, it is called cause.¹³ The transformation of a subtle object into a gross one is called effect.¹⁴ There is no distinction of nature between the cause and effect. In other words, the cause and effect are not different essentially, but they are different from the formal level. Due to having such formal distinction a cloth can provide the service of covering something but thread cannot.

The Naiyāyikas also admit the distinction of the causal efficacy (*arthakriyābheda*) between cause and effect. The causal efficacy of a cause and an effect are different in character. The distinction of designation (*vyapadeśabheda*) also remains in these two, for, one is called a cause and another an effect. Even there is the distinction of cognition of these two (*pratītibheda*). In this case one object is cognised as cloth as for example and another one is as thread. For this reason cause is considered different from effect.¹⁵

The Sāṃkhya philosophers argue against the Naiyayikas in the following way. To them the distinction in causal efficacy does not indicate the difference of an object. Because an object may have various types of causal efficacy. The bearers of palanquin bears a palanquin collectively, not individually. In like manner it can be said that threads in fact, collectively give rise to a cloth. In the

same way, the distinction of designation (*vyapadesābheda*) and distinction of cognition (*pratītibheda*) do not indicate the difference of an object. It is known from the fact that a tree is not completely different from a forest; but in fact a forest is not other than the trees.¹⁶

It may be argued that a cause may generate an effect without being connected with the effect. If it is so, then any effect may emerge from any cause. The cause having potentiality of creating a particular effect can generate the same. On account of this jar, cloth, ear-ring etc are originated from earth, cotton, gold respectively. For this reason it can be said that a particular effect is originated from a particular cause. There is no necessity of admitting the fact that a particular effect is hidden within womb of a particular cause. The matter is resolved if a particular power is admitted in a cause. A lump of clay (earth), though not connected with a jar not yet produced can generate a particular jar, having the particular power in it. Any effect cannot be originated from any cause. There is necessity to admit *Satkāryavāda* to indicate that a cause lies hidden in its material cause. From the potency existing in a cause particular cause is known to be originator of as particular effect. Hence, why should we admit that the cause exists in its material cause in a non-manifested way.

In response to the above objection, the Sāṃkhya issues a rejoinder in the following way. They ask whether the potency existing in a cause can produce an effect being connected with non-

produced effect or without being connected to it. If the former is accepted, it would be assumed that it existed before the production of the non-produced effect. Hence, the followers of *asatkāryavāda* cannot admit it. They cannot admit the second alternative as well. Because, if the potency of originating a jar in the soil can produce a jar without being connected with the jar, it is not intelligible why this potency cannot produce cloth etc. in stead of producing a jar etc. It would be difficult to understand why a particular power existing in a particular cause can produce a particular effect.

In fact to the Sāṃkhya, the material cause and effect are identical as they believe that the whole cannot be different from the parts. Hence, a cloth is not different from threads. If they were completely different, they would have been perceived differently. In other words, we would have different perceptions of thread and cloth in two different places, but actually they are found together. Two sheep are seen differently because they have their independent existence. But such case is not found in the cases of cloth, earthen pot etc respectively. We cannot think of a situation that a cloth exists, but not thread. It is also accepted by the Naiyāyikas that a cloth cannot be taken away from the thread and yet they admit them as different. As these two things are cognised simultaneously, they assume a relation called *samavāya* between them. Sāṃkhya cannot admit such relation, because they think that a cloth is not a different object from threads. Had it been different from the other, the properties of thread would not have influenced the properties of cloth.

If the material cause and an effect are the same, why their uses are different? A cloth can help an individual in protecting him from cold, but a thread cannot serve the purpose. Hence, it cannot be said that they are identical.

In reply the Sāṃkhya says that just as all the carriers can carry a palanquin collectively, though not individually, all the threads collectively (though not individually) can remove the cold of an individual. Hence, there is no difference between the material cause and its effect.¹⁷

Vācaspati Mīśra has justified the Sāṃkhya position by way of forwarding some arguments to prove *tādātmya* or identity relation between the cause and the effect. Cloth is not different from the threads because there is neither conjunction nor disjunction between them. Both conjunction and disjunction are found in objects that are different from one another. There is the conjunction between well and the bucket and there is a disjunction between the Himalayas and the Vindhya. In the case of cloth and thread there is neither conjunction nor disjunction, but there is only *tādātmya* in the sense of identity between them.

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