

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM POSED

1.1. Pramā (Valid Knowledge)

In Indian Philosophy the word 'Jñāna' or knowledge indicates both valid knowledge and invalid knowledge. So in order to name valid knowledge the term 'Pramā', is used whereas in the case of invalid knowledge the term 'apramā' is used. Here, we find a difference between Western Philosophers and Indian Philosophers, because, according to Western Philosophers, knowledge means valid knowledge. Invalid knowledge, according to the Western Philosophers, is not knowledge at all. According to Indian thinkers, e.g., Nyāya philosophers, valid cognition is such that it depicts its object with features, in the same configuration in which they are in the object¹. In the case of invalid cognition or error this correspondence is lacking, at least in part².

Pramā is 'Yathārthajñāna'. 'Yathārtha' (Yathā + artha) means not similarity or resemblance but absence of contradiction (Viṣaya avyabhicāri) with regard to the object. For the object of knowledge may be a physical object while knowledge of object is not physical. Therefore, how can that which is non-physical resemble or be similar to that which is physical ? To avoid this 'Yathārtha' is to be taken not in the sense of similarity but in the sense of absence of contradiction with regard to the object of knowledge.

We may say that Pramā is judgmental knowledge in which the object of knowledge is as it is without any distortion. Whenever we perceive 'silver as silver', then the knowledge of silver is valid knowledge. But when we perceive 'steel as silver' then the knowledge is invalid. In both cases the glittering white appearance of the object is perceived. But in the former case it is perceived as belonging to an object which really has the said appearance while in the latter case it is so perceived although the object is not really so, we may say in other words that in the former case we have knowledge, of 'Rajatatva Viśiṣṭa Rajata subhrarupābhāsa', whereas in the later case we have knowledge of 'rajatatva-aviśiṣṭa-rajata-subhrarupābhāsa', with regard to the truth or validity. Two questions here arise, one relating to its nature and other concerning its test. The following four theories of truth are wellknown :

(a) Correspondence theory (b) Coherence theory, (c) Pragmatic theory and (d) Self-evidence theory. In Western Philosophy the proponents of correspondence theory and the proponents of coherence theory hold that both the nature and test of truth are correspondence and coherence respectively. The proponents of pragmatic theory of truth in Western Philosophy do not admit the legitimacy of the question of the nature of truth as a separate question over and above the question of the test of truth. The Nyāya Philosophers with regard to pramā or valid knowledge, admit correspondence as the nature of truth and pragmatic efficiency as the test of truth.

In Western Philosophy the traditional philosophers subscribed to three different theories of truth viz. (a) correspondence theory (b) coherence theory (c) pragmatic theory. At times a section of them subscribe to self-evidence as a theory of truth. So far as coherence theory of truth is concerned, its proponents admit coherence both as nature and test of truth. As regards this correspondence some held it to be the nature of truth, but with regard to its role as the test of truth they are silent. The proponents of the pragmatic theory hold that the nature of truth is not different from the test of truth. And lastly the proponents of self-evidence theory of truth take self-evidence to be the test of truth. Like the proponents of the correspondence theory of the nature of truth, Nyāya

theory in this regard appears to be in a logically sounder position.

Nature of truth is correspondence or 'Tadvatitatprakāram while its test, according to the Nyāya, is pragmatic efficiency or 'Arthakriyākāritva'. There is no compelling reason to hold that the nature of truth must coincide with the test of truth. Moreover, to take the nature of truth as identical with the test of truth is to commit circularity in thinking. For this means in the final analysis that truth^{is} certifying itself. But question of taking them to be identical arises only when that which is claimed to be the nature is beyond doubt and that which appears to be doubtful cannot be and also should not be taken to be the criterion for the resolution of doubt.

1.2. Nature of Valid Knowledge (Nyāya View)

According to Nyāya school of Indian Philosophy, the word 'Jñāna' and the word 'Pramā' are not co-extensive. The range of reference of the word 'Jñāna' is wider than that of the word 'Pramā'. So the word 'Jñāna' as it is used by the Naiyāyikas is taken to mean or refer to both the objects which are referred to by the word 'Pramā' as well as the objects which are referred to by the word 'apramā'. The class of objects referred to by the word 'Pramā' is

included in but does not include all the objects referred to by the word 'Jñāna'. Here, the word 'object' does not always mean material object. It is rather used in the sense of meaning. Whatever is meant by an expression is said to be its object. This object may be physical (chair, table, etc.) or mental (pleasure, pain etc.).

Thus, the objects referred to by the word 'Jñāna' constitutes a wider class under which the objects referred to by the word 'Pramā' are subsumed. Hence, whatever is a 'Pramā' is also a 'Jñāna' but the converse does not hold. Naturally the question arises, how are we to distinguish the class of objects referred to by the word pramā from the class of other objects referred to by the word 'apramā' although both the classes are subsumed under the greater class of objects referred to by the word 'Jñāna' ?

Pramā, according to Nyāya, is presentational knowledge, Yathārthānubhava. It involves four factors subject (pramātā), object (Prameya), instrument (Pramāṇa) and the resulting knowledge (Pramā). Valid cognition requires these four factors, absence of any one of these factors prevents occurrence of valid cognition.

'Pramā', according to Nyāya, is a quality (Guṇa) in the self (Ātma) which is dependent for its generation on mind-self contact (Ātmamāna-Samyoga) and is diaphanous as revealing the object as it is along with its characteristics.

Apramā is also a quality of the soul depending on self-mind object contact but it is not diaphanous, i.e. it does not reveal the object as it is. It is a false representation. A member of class of objects referred to by word 'Jñāna' is included as a member of the class referred to by the word 'Pramā' if and only if it satisfies the criteria of Pramā mentioned above. If it fails to satisfy that criteria, it is to be included in the class of objects referred to by the word 'apramā'.

There is no inherent necessity in anyone of the objects of cognition to satisfy one or the other or both criteria. Therefore, satisfying the criteria is entirely a matter of contingent relation for this object. Thus, being a 'Pramā' or being 'apramā' is not an inherent or built-in characteristic of an object of cognition. In other words, these characteristics are extrinsic and contingent for objects of awareness.

As these characteristics of being 'Pramā' or 'apramā' are extrinsic to any object of cognition, naturally the question arises : how can we ascertain whether any member of the class referred to by the word 'Jñāna' is characterised by the character constituting 'Pramā' ?

To answer this question, Nyāya devises a test viz, the test of 'arthakriyākāritva' or being fruitful in practice. If the members of the above mentioned class possess arthakriyākāritva', being a pramā can be predicated of them.

If they are unfruitful, we should refrain from such act of predication with regard to the objects in question.

1.3. Nature of Valid Knowledge (Jaina View)

According to Jaina, knowledge itself is a Pramāṇa, which apprehends both itself and its objects³. The Jainas hold that a cognition is self-luminous and it apprehends itself directly as well as its objects. The Jainas have divided knowledge (Jñāna) into two kinds viz. Pramāṇa or true knowledge and Naya. In this connection, we are to mention the meaning of 'Naya'. Jainas held the view that ordinary human beings cannot have absolute knowledge. They have to satisfy themselves only with the knowledge that is conditional and relative. For this reason, the Jainas adopt the principle of naya, according to which the mind is thought to approach reality differently from different points of view. It is partial judgement. It is problematic judgement and as such it is different from necessary judgement and assertory judgement. It is hypothetically entertained.

According to this view, validity of knowledge depends on pragmatic utility and there must be correspondence between the knowledge and the object, and knowledge must be free from contradiction. The Jaina thinker, e.g. Mānikya Nandi, has also included novelty as a feature for

determination of the validity of knowledge. However, we find that for determining validity of knowledge the Jainas thinkers have admitted correspondence, pragmatic and coherence theory of truth.

The Jainas have admitted two-fold divisions of knowledge viz. immediate (aparokṣa) and mediate (parokṣa)⁴. As they maintain 'Syādvāda' it is obvious that by 'immediate' they mean 'relatively immediate'.

To make acquaintance with the meaning of word 'Syādvāda' let me write a few lines about it. According to the Jainas, there is no judgement which can claim truth unconditionally. This is known as the 'Syādvāda' which means the doctrine of 'may be'. They hold that every judgement is strictly conditional as absolute affirmation and absolute negation are inadmissible. Again, they hold the view that immediate knowledge is of two kinds, namely, ordinary immediate (Vyavahārika aparokṣa) and absolutely immediate (Pāramārthika aparokṣa). Ordinary immediate knowledge requires medium, such as the sense-organs, but absolutely immediate knowledge does not require any medium.

According to the Jainas, true knowledge is of five kinds viz. Mati (sensuous), Śruti (scriptural), Avadhi (visual intuition), Manohpariyāya (intuition of mental modes) and Kevala (pure and perfect knowledge)⁵. It is to be noted that Kevalajñāna is the highest knowledge, it

cannot be described but only be felt. We should keep in mind that the Jainas have admitted three types of Pramānas viz. Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, and Śabda. For our required purpose we will take the definition of perception as given by the Jainas in the chapter on different definitions of perception. But before closing the discussion on the nature of knowledge as enunciated by the Jainas we like to point out a few things. Absolute knowledge is regarded as mediumless both by Jainas and Vedāntins. Naturally the question arises; do they subscribe to the same account of nonmediate or immediate knowledge when they speak of 'Kevalajñāna' (Jaina) or 'Turiyajñāna' (Vedānta) ? Absolute knowledge (Kevalajñāna) is immediate in the sense of being devoid of mediation even of senseorgans and the mind. Knowledge without mediation is of two types; (a) Knowledge (caitanya) which is non-different from self or Ātman (Vedānta) (b) Knowledge as belonging to the soul or Ātman, and as such different from it (Jaina).

Although both the Vedāntins and the Jainas speak of non-mediate knowledge, yet they do not take the term 'Aparokṣa' or non-mediate' in the same sense in their respective epistemological theories. In this regard the Jaina account has, while the Vedānta account has not a built-in metaphysical distinction of substance-attributes in their respective theories.

1.4. Nature of Valid Knowledge (Advaita View)

Advaita Vedānta holds that valid knowledge (pramā) is that the object of which is not apprehended before and which is not contradicted by any other knowledge. Valid knowledge not only remains uncontradicted but also possesses novelty⁶. This is the reason why memory is not accepted as knowledge proper. Smṛti and anumiti are not of the same type of cognition. According to Advaita thinkers, knowledge, to be knowledge, must have two characteristics viz., (a) non-contradiction and (b) informativeness. The criteria of valid cognition of Advaita thinkers has similarity with the Kantian view of knowledge. For Kant, knowledge to be knowledge, must be informative. i.e. it is expressed in synthetic judgements. For Advaitins cognition in so far as it is non-different (abhinna) from caitanya or consciousness which is of the nature of Brahman and as such is saccidānanda svarūpa i.e. is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss, is real and as such is valid. But what is about invalidity ?

Invalidity is a product of māyā or ajñāna which is positive in nature. It is generated by the āvaraṇa (concealment) and Vikṣepa (Projection) śakti of ajñāna. Therefore, cognition, like sun, is self-luminous and self-valid. As sun is sometimes covered by cloud, and is not revealed likewise self-luminous consciousness which is of

the nature of knowledge or cognition is covered or concealed by māyā. Therefore, this concealment which constitutes invalidity is extraneous or Parataḥ.

In this connection, Nyāya view of Prāmānyavāda deserves a mention. According to Nyāya, cognition in itself is neither valid nor invalid. It is rendered valid or invalid by extraneous factors. While cognition takes on the form of the objects as it is, it is valid. When it fails to do so, it is invalid. It may perhaps be not out of place here to mention that there is difference of opinions among the Advaitins with regard to the question whether cognition is a mental state or not. According to the followers of Bhāmati School, mind is the sixth sense-organ. But according to the followers of Vivaraṇa Prasthāna, pleasure, pain etc. are not the objects of mind as sixth sense-organ. They are the direct object of witnessing consciousness which is of the nature of knowledge. Therefore, mind is not a sense-organ as there is no object for mind to fasten on like a sense-organ. Moreover, if mind be a sense-organ, it could not be an auxiliary to any sense-organ which it actually is.

1.5. Nature of Valid Knowledge (Rāmānuja View)

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, the knowledge which is supported or corroborated by practice, is called Pramā⁷. Rāmānuja holds that knowledge implies a subject and an object. Knowledge is what eternally belongs to the self. It is like a lamp which can reveal the presence of an object as well as its own existence to its substrates. Knowledge functions not for itself but for another. Cognition includes both smṛti (memory) and anubhava (apprehension). Doubt or samsaya is not pramā. Rāmānujists have emphasised practice or vyavahāra in dealing with the definition of Pramā. According to Rāmānuja, there is no false knowledge or bhramajñāna. All knowledge is true as knowledge reveals some objects.

Every knowledge is intrinsically valid. Rāmānuja is a satkāryavādin. He says that for knowledge to be true, it should in addition to agreeing with outside reality, be of pragmatic value in life. For Rāmānuja every knowledge is intrinsically valid. Therefore, to be knowledge is to be valid. Naturally the question arises, how can we speak of invalidity with regard to knowledge then? In this connection, Rāmānuja refers us to the Upaniṣadic theory of Pancikaraṇa or quintuplication and of the theory of Sarvaṃ Sarvatmakam. According to Panickaraṇa theory, all things are composed of all the five elements of earth, water, fire,

air and ether in varying degrees. Illusory perception of an object, i.e. mirage is due to the apprehension of the element of water which is presented to the eye, but which is only a subordinate element in the sandy water whose preponderating element is earth.

Thus, Rāmānuja says that illusion is due to the apprehension of the subordinate and neglect of the preponderating element. In other cases, e.g. nacre-silver illusion, it is said that it (illusion) is due to the presence of a substance common to the nacre and silver.

Illusion, for Rāmānuja, is not a case of perception of unreal as all perceptions are perception of real but it is only a case of confusing of one object with another due to partial identity based on perception of a common substance when one cognition is being sublated by another, and the disillusionment is explained on the basis of preponderant element lying in its constitution. Thus, cognition is never really to be distinguished into valid and invalid, for all cognition has for its object a real presentative element. According to Rāmānuja, all perception is true, but its truth varies only in different degrees. There is no illusion in the strict sense, according to Rāmānuja. The factor which renders knowledge invalid is extraneous to knowledge and it prevents the knower from knowing the validity of knowledge. For example, when because of Jaundice I see the white wall

before me as yellow, the knowledge of white wall is not rendered intrinsically invalid. Rather, I, the knower, am prevented from knowing the validity of this knowledge because of the diseased condition of my sense-organ which as an extraneous condition prevents the self-luminosity of knowledge from being revealed to me, the knower.

In the light of the assumption made by the Rāmānujists to the effect that every knowledge is intrinsically valid, the explanation of the distinction between valid and invalid knowledge as enunciated by the Rāmānujists does not appear to be satisfactory. A knowledge, to be valid, must reveal its object as it is and not as it is not.

Therefore, a composite object in which some elements preponderate and other elements do not do so, should be so revealed to the knower by the knowledge of the object. If the preponderance is not revealed by the knowledge, the knowledge in question is not and cannot be valid. And this invalidity cannot be imputed to any factor extraneous to knowledge. Hence, the Rāmānujists must have to accept the fact that there are at least some knowledges which are not intrinsically valid and this admission runs counter to their prior admission that every knowledge is intrinsically valid.

1.6 Nature of Valid Knowledge (Sāṅkhya View)

According to Sāṅkhya, as enunciated in Sāṅkhyatattva-loka the Pramāṇas are Vijñāna or caitasikajñāna i.e. Jñāna or knowledge state which is modification of citṭa or mental state in the sense of modification of unconscious sixth sense or manas which when, being lit up as it were by the light of consciousness, appears to be non-different from Puruṣa or consciousness as such and so appears to be conscious. Knowledge, according to the author of Sāṅkhyatattvaloka, is anadhigatattvavodha i.e. Vodha or apprehension of tattva or object which was not apprehended or adhigata previously. It appears from the above that Sāṅkhya is insisting on 'anadhigatatva' previous non-apprehension and conformity of knowledge with the object as it is or yathābhutatva or samvādi. As regards other points Sāṅkhya like Tārkikas admit pramāṇa as the Karāṇa or instrument of valid knowledge. According to Sāṅkhya, knowledge means a simultaneous reflection of the object as well as consciousness (puruṣa) into buddhi which is a product of the matter. Of course, consciousness also has its share by way of reflection. But the material cause of a reflection is not the reflectee but the reflector. Thus, knowledge according to Sāṅkhya, is a mode of matter.

But Sāṅkhya is silent as regards the question, what this validity of pramāṇa is consisting of ? According to the

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Sankhya view, both validity and invalidity of cognition are intrinsic characteristics of cognition. A cognition is either intrinsically valid or intrinsically invalid. A mode of cognition or cittavṛitti which is bereft of all doubt and is not contrary to the form of its object or viṣaya and also is not adhigata or previously owned is pramā or valid cognition. In other words, we can say that the puruṣa as knower is endowed with bodha or state of cognition which is bereft of doubt, contradiction and is of an object not apprehended before and this state of cognition is knowledge⁸. Validity of knowledge is intrinsic. It is not due to any extraneous factor. Likewise invalid cognition is Visamvādi or non-conforming to the object and it is also intrinsic and is not due to any extraneous factor.

It is not out of place to mention here the contention of Advaita Vedāntins. The Advaitins hold that while the validity of cognition is self-evident, the invalidity of cognition is due to extraneous circumstances. And at least the Advaitins' view regarding invalidity runs counter to the Sāṅkhya view. By the self-evidence of the cognition, Advaitins mean that in the absence of any detrimental condition of cognition the self apprehends the comprehending mental mode which is the Substratum of its validity as well. However, the invalidity of the cognition is not produced in the same way, for in that case no distinction

between valid and invalid cognition can be made. Invalid cognition is generated by some detrimental factors which are the creation of ajñāna or nescience in the exercise of its capacity as āvaraṇa and Vikṣepa (Concealment and projection).

It appears that while Sāṅkhya contention that validity of cognition is intrinsic is acceptable, the other half of the Sāṅkhya contention, namely, the invalidity of cognition is also intrinsic is simply to be rejected out of hand. The reason for this rejection is not far to see. While validity and truth may safely be ascribed to reality, invalidity and error cannot be allowed to adumbrate the reality. To do so is to deny that reality is reality, Buddhi, Ahankāra and the senses, taken together are called 'Citta' in Yoga and this buddhi is always undergoing incessant changes like the light of a lamp (Pradipa sikhāvat). It is mainly made up of 'sattva' element which is capable of reflecting puruṣa who is of the nature of selfluminous consciousness. Buddhi is incessantly moulding itself from one content to another. This reflection of Puruṣa in buddhi and counter-reflection of buddhi in puruṣa constitute the content of the buddhi which is interpreted as the experiences of the person.

According to Vijñānavikṣu, caitanya or consciousness is reflected in buddhi and this reflection of caitanya in buddhi in its turn is reflected back in caitanya or consciousness constituting knowledge in the ordinary sense of

the term. This account substantially differs from the account given by Vācaspati Miśra in Sāṅkhya Tattakaumudi. According to Vācaspati, buddhi, being constituted by sattva-guṇa alone, is capable of reflecting caitanya or consciousness and when consciousness is so reflected it constitutes the knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term. Vācaspati's view attaches much importance to the Sāṅkhya view that puruṣa is of the nature of consciousness and is asanga or unrelated and so is independent and as such is unmodified and unmodifiable (aparināmi). So cognition in the sense of being a janyapadārtha or category having origination and destruction, cannot be aparināmi and therefore, cannot be of the nature of consciousness. But this view renders cognition in the ordinary sense into a product of Prakṛti or the primal matter and so cognition is basically bereft of consciousness. This consequence appears to be unacceptable even to the cārvākas and the same is true of vijñānavikṣu. To avoid this eventuality vijñānavikṣu postulated the re-reflection of caitanya-reflected buddhi into consciousness or caitanya and this, according to him, constitutes cognition in this ordinary sense of the term. But this view errs by going into the other extreme. What the moot point is, how are we to explain the genesis and annihilation of cognition in the ordinary sense of the term within the fold of Sāṅkhya epistemology? This remains unexplained in spite of Vijñānavikṣu. For either the

re-reflection in consciousness is a real modification of consciousness or it is apparent. If it is a real modification of caitanya or consciousness, caitanya or consciousness cannot be held to be aparināmi or unchangeable. If it is held to be an apparent modification, then ordinary cognition is nothing but an illusion having no value and validity. But to Vijñānvikṣu this also is not acceptable. For ordinary cognition as knowledge is not qualitatively different from Turiya-jñāna or absolute knowledge achieved by the Mukta or liberated self.

1.7. Whether the Indian Views of Perception Exhibit Any Pattern

From the previous discussion it is found that the philosophers are at variance as to the nature of knowledge. Again, they hold different views with regard to the means or ways of knowledge. The cārvāka philosophers hold the view that perception is the only source of knowledge. The Vaiśeṣika and the Bauddha philosophers take perception and inference as the two different sources of knowledge. Sāṅkhya philosophers admit three sources of knowledge, viz. perception, inference, and Testimony. According to Naiyāyikas, there are four sources of knowledge, viz. (i) Perception (2) Inference (3) Testimony and (4) Comparison. The Prabhākara Mimāṃsakas admit arthāpaṭṭi (presumption) in

addition to Naiyāyikas' four sources. Again, Bhāṭṭa Mimāṅsakas & Advaita vedāntins admit one more viz. anupalabdhi (Non-apprehension) in addition to the other five. The Paurāṇikas added two more, viz. inclusion (sambhava) and tradition (aitihya). In this connection, I like to quote Karl Potter : "The Cārvākas accept one pramāṇa, perception. Kanāda and Sugata (i.e., the Buddha) accept in addition inference. Sankhya adds verbal authority (śabda), as do some Naiyāyikas whereas other Naiyāyikas add comparison (Upamāna) as well. Prabhākara adds presumption (arthāpatti) to these, and the Bhāṭṭas and vedāntins add negation (abhāva) as well as presumption. The Paurāṇikas add to these inclusion (sambhava) and tradition (aitihya)⁹."

Knowledge can be divided into two kinds viz. (a) direct knowledge and (b) indirect knowledge.

The knowledge which can be attained without the help of any other knowledge is called direct knowledge or sākṣatjñāna; indirect knowledge is that knowledge which can be attained by means of previous knowledge. Direct knowledge is nothing but perceptual knowledge. According to some thinkers, indirect knowledge is nothing but inferential knowledge. The Vaiśeṣikas and the Bauddhas hold the view that indirect knowledge is inferential. But there are some thinkers who include inference, testimoney, comparison, presumption and non apprehension under indirect knowledge.

Direct cognition or perception is the primary source of knowledge. It is the basic knowledge because other types of cognition depend on perception and without it other forms of knowledge will of course not be possible at all.

There is influence of perception over other types of cognition and as such we may say that perception is the basic source of knowledge. To show this we like to quote a few lines which run thus :

"... Perception provides the raw material out of which thought products are forged Thought products in general are the results of previous perceptual impressions organized into arrangements, and the form of these arrangements is provided either by the original perceptual content or by relationships abstracted from other perceptual contents"¹⁰.

Before taking up other discussion we like to raise a question : Is there any pattern in the welter of the Indian views on perception ?

The answer, we believe, can be given in the affirmative. We venture to suggest the following answer.

Let us take the concrete case of knowledge situation, "I see a rose". This is a case of visual perception and perception being a kind of knowledge it is a case of knowledge (perceptual knowledge). If we analyse this knowledge situation we find the following factors which may

be found to constitute the said knowledge situation. There is, for example, the subject who knows or the knower, and the object of knowledge which is known and somehow these two factors or constituents of knowledge are related by a relation to each other which is expressed by the use of the prepositional word 'of'.

At once a number of questions crops up. First, what is the nature of the subject ? Is it a fleeting momentary state of consciousness ? or is it a substance which has knowledge as one of its attributes and which is non-material in nature ? Or is it again something which is not describable either as material or as non-material i.e. Which may be regarded as other than the material and the non-material having consciousness or knowledge as one of its properties ? The different Indian theories of perception can be arranged in a gradation in the light of the answer which they respectively give to these questions.

The reply of the Cārvāka is that the knower is the living physical body having consciousness as one of its attributes. This account will be found very familiar to one who is acquainted with the Marxist theory of mind. It is objective materialism in its extreme form. Mind is an emergent property of matter when it reaches through dialectical process of evolution a certain critical state of complexity. Next comes the answer of the Naiyāyikas.

The knower is a dravya or substance which has consciousness or knowledge as one of its inessential properties. Here, again the knower is an objective substance but unlike the knower or the subject of the Cārvākas, it is not a material substance. Still it has affinity with the view of the Cārvāka as it also holds that consciousness for this substance is not an essential property.

Now comes the Rāmānujists. According to them, the knower is a non-material substance which has consciousness or knowledge as one of its essential properties. This view has the affinity with the view of the Naiyāyikas in its contention that the knower is a non-material substance while it significantly differs from the contention of the Naiyāyikas with regard to its subscribing to the view that consciousness or knowledge is the essential property of the knower.

Then come the views of the Mimāṃsakas and the Jainas. According to them, consciousness or knowledge is an inherent quality of the knower who is a non-material or spiritual substance. This view, thus, is almost a restatement of the view of the Rāmānujists.

Then comes the view of the Sāṅkhya. According to the proponents of the Sāṅkhya view, the knower is not a non-material or spiritual substance having consciousness as its essential attribute. Rather knower is consciousness and

consciousness is knower. The relation that obtains between knower and consciousness is a relation of identity and not a substantive-attributive relation. Nevertheless there are many consciousnesses as there are many knowers although between one consciousness and another no distinction as consciousness can be made because of the absence of any ultimate differentia like the viśeṣa of the Naiyāyikas to distinguish one entitative existence from another.

Now comes the view of the advaita Vedāntins. They hold that there is only consciousness which is non-different from knowledge and with regard to which the imposition of the distinction of knower, knowledge and known are illusory imposition determining illusorily that which is by its very nature undetermined and undifferenced. Hence, knowledge in the ultimate sense of the term is the self-luminous consciousness or caitanya which is bereft of all distinctions including the distinction of the knower, knowledge and known object.

Thus, we started from an extreme uncompromising objectivism as it is found in the Cārvākas and ends with an extreme uncompromising subjectivism which does not brook any distinction even within the subject lest the admission of the distinction taints and pollutes the purity of undifferenced consciousness which is, in their opinion, knowledge in the true sense of the term.

Notes and References

1. Tadvati tat - prakāraṁ jñānaṁ - Nyāyabhāṣya - Vātsyāyana.
2. Tadabhāvati tat - prakāraṁ jñānaṁ apramā - Nyāyabhāṣya - Vātsyāyana.
3. Sva - paravyavasāyi - jñānaṁ pramānaṁ - Pramāṇanayata-ttvalokalankara - (Sri Vadideva Suri).
4. Tadvibhidam pratyakṣam ca parokṣam ca - Pramananayatattvalokalankara - 2/1 - Sutra.
5. Matisrutāvadhimanahparyāya kevalāni jñānaṁ - Tattvārthadhigamasūtra - Umāsvāmi.
6. Pramātvamanadhigatavadhitārtha viṣayaka - jñānatvaṁ - Vedānta Paribhāṣā - translated by Sri Pancānan Śāstri - p.7 & 9.

7. Yathāvasthita vyavahāranugunam jñānam pramā -
Yatindramatadipikā - Śrinivāsadāsa - Translated by -
Svāmi Adidevananda - p.5.
8. Anadhigatatattvabodhah pramā - Sankhyatāttvālokaḥ -
prakarana - 28 cited in Patanjali Yogadarsana -
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