

## CHAPTER V

### SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING *NIRVIKALPAKA PRATYAKSA*

If we explain the derivation of the word '*nirvikalpaka*', we shall get the following meaning- 'something having no substitute at all.' Normally the concepts through something is expressed are called *vikalpas* or substitutes. An object may sometimes be seen through the spectacle of substitutes or *vikalpas*. Sometimes it may be known directly without via concepts. The bare object or *qua-object* is known in the level of *nirvikalpaka*. 'There is no substitute for this thing' – this type of usage is very common in language of advertisement of an object. From this it is understood that the necessity of this particular object cannot be met by some other objects. That is, there are some essential features (of this object) that are not common in others. The term 'essential' implies its inherent uncommon properties which can be expressed as 'essence'. If there is any opportunity to express the salient features of an object by language etc., it is *savikalpaka* (or determinate). There are two types of awareness: the perceptual awareness being purely private cannot be communicated to others and perceptual awareness though not wholly manifested to us cannot be denied totally. In other words, there is an awareness which is not capable of being expressed with the help of any word. Such type of knowledge is technically known as *Avyapadesya* i.e., that which is not expressed through words. Though there is awareness yet it cannot be expressed in as much as the nature of it is not wholly manifested to one. That is, something is not conceptually manifested to us. If it is asked the reason for it, the answer is that there is no substitute (*vikalpa*). The 'concept' (in the sense of mental construction) of an object becomes a substitute for expressing it. The mental constructions that are borne by 'pure object' are called concepts. Names, colours, universals etc, are borne by an object and, hence, they are called 'concepts' (*dhāranā*). The term

‘*dhāraṇā*’ is related to the phenomenon of ‘bearing’ (*dhāran*). The name, universal, word etc is the bearers of the *qua-object*. The ‘pure object’ is called substratum (*ādhāra*) while the ‘concepts’ are called superstrata (*ādheya*). The concepts serve as substitutes for expressing that ‘pure object’. The knowledge having substitute is called *Savikalpaka* while the knowledge bearing no substitute is called *Nirvikalpaka*. The *Naiyāyikas* accept such type of *Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksa*. A problem may be raised out of the *Prāmānya* of such type of perception and its probable solution that could have been forwarded from the *Nyāya* point of view.

Ontologically the *Naiyāyikas* accept the theory of extrinsic truth (*Parataḥ Prāmānya*) of knowledge. According to them, the truth of a piece of cognition is ascertained by virtue of its successful inclination (*samvādipravṛttijanakatva*). If our cognition is efficacious to the successful inclination, it is to be taken as acceptable. There the argument that is involved can be expressed as follows: “The perceptual cognition is acceptable if it becomes efficacious to the successful inclination (*Pratyaksānubhūtiḥ pramā saphalpravṛttjanakatvāt*)<sup>1</sup>. The knowledge of water would be taken as true if it really quenches our thirst. In the like manner, the untenability of our knowledge is determined by the unsuccessful inclination of the same (*visamvādipravṛttijanakatvāt*). If the knowledge of water does not quench our thirst, it is taken to be false. In this way, the trurh of each and every knowledge is determined.

Now the problem is how the *Prāmānya* (tenability or truth) of *Nirvikalpaka* knowledge can be determined. To *Nyāya* cognition cannot be taken as true ab initio, as soon as it is produced. Hence some extrinsic means are needed to discover its truth. It is true that indeterminate knowledge is a kind of sensation having no name, universal etc., and hence, there is no relation between qualifier and qualificand (*viśesana-viśesyā-samsargānavagāhi*). There are no other means through which the validity of such type of knowledge can be determined as the

two criteria, viz. *Saphalapravrtijanakatva* (capability of causing successful *inclination*) and *Visamvadipravrttijanakava* (capability of not causing successful inclination) of determining *Prāmānya* are not applicable here. The knowledge which does not cognise the characteristic features of an object is empty due to its non-relational character and hence the search for its empirical necessity or otherwise is in vain. The bare cognition of something without knowing its empirical base cannot help us to determine its truth and falsity. An object of cognition appears in our minds' eye when we see the object. Because, an object without any content is not possible to grasp or apprehend. It may be argued how an object can exist without being characterized by its qualifying features. What is the proof for the existence of such type of object? In reply it can be said that as indeterminate knowledge is knowledge, it must have some object, since knowledge without content (*avishayaka*) is epistemologically not apprehendable. To know indeterminate cognition as knowledge is to presuppose the existence of a content. According to some *Naiyāyikas*, the object of knowledge is three fold: *Prakāratā*, *Visayatā* and *Samsargatā*. In the case of *nirvikalpaka-jñāna* (indeterminate knowledge) there is a special type of *Visayatā* called *Turiyavisayatā* (i.e. fourth *Visayatā*) which is inexplicable in nature.<sup>2</sup> Hence a problem arises how can the truth of an object be determined extrinsically? Keeping this problem in view perhaps *Viśvanātha* does not agree to admit the perceptuality of the indeterminate knowledge. The perceptuality of an object having no relation with qualificand and qualifier is, as observed by *Viśvanātha*, not possible at all.<sup>3</sup>

The non-relational cognition implies a cognition having no content of its own. Cognition associated with the concepts can easily be judged as true or false through the extrinsic way of knowing. If it is argued that the indeterminate perception may be taken as self-evidently true (*Svataḥ Pramāṇa*) just as the truth of the injunctions like 'Svargakamo yajeta' (i.e. one should perform sacrifice as a

means to attain heaven) is taken as self-evidently true, it would go against the Naiyāyika's position since they do not believe in this type of truth achieved through an intrinsic way. The Naiyāyikas have accepted the existence of the indeterminate perception, but they have not given any solution to the problem which lies in indeterminate perception.

A solution of this problem, I think, can be offered from the Nyāya standpoint if all of their views are critically reviewed.

The Naiyāyikas are in favour of the view that a man's action is of three types. When one avoids some object, it is due to one's desire of rejection (*hānabuddhi*). In the case of the acceptance and rejection comes into being due to the result of the desire of being indifferent (*upeksābuddhi*)<sup>4</sup>. Let us try to understand the case. The knowledge of the conduciveness of an object (*istāsādhanatājñāna*) generates the desire of acceptabce. The knowledge in the form-'The pine-apple is good for health' is known from the knowledge of the conduciveness of the desired object. If the attainment of good health is desired, the observation of a pine-apple will give rise to the knowledge in the form: 'This is conducive to its being desired' (*idam madistāsādhanam*). So the knowledge of the conduciveness of being desired gives rise to the knowledge of acceptance from which an effort to avail the object comes into being. That which does not seem to be conducive to me being desired is rejected. This rejection occurs due to the desire for the same.

The above view is put forth by the traditional Nyāya philosophers. In the case of acceptance and rejection I agree with their view. So far as *upeksā-buddhi* is concerned, I personally agree with them. An object, I think, is either accepted or rejected but there is no scope for being indifferent. The indifferent state of mind which is claimed as *upeksābuddhi* would fall under the category of rejection. That is to say, 'being indifferent' is also a kind of rejection in as much as this

phenomenon also depends on the knowledge of the non-conduciveness of the object. In favour of this argument the following form of *Tarka (Reductio-ad-absursum)* may be put forward: 'Had it been conducive to us, it would have been accepted.' As it seems to us to be non-conducive, it may be ignored, which is also a kind of rejection.

That in the case of *upeksābuddhi* there is a sense of rejection is evidenced by the fact that a snake is rejected due to having the sense of *anistasādhanatā*, which is of two types : the knowledge of an object which is capable of doing harm and the knowledge of the absence of the usefulness of an object. In the case of the former, the Naiyayikas have accepted the knowledge of *hāna* (rejection) but in the latter case there is *upeksābuddhi* as the object does not serve our purpose nor does it any harm to us.

The above-mentioned notion of 'sense of indifference' (*upeksābuddhi*), I think, is not at all *upeksā* in as much as it is in our awareness that the object does not serve our purpose and hence it may be ignored. This ignorance (in the sense of indifference) is not at all *upeksā* in the true sense of the term, but it is also rejection as it is done keeping the knowledge of the absence of its conduciveness in view. *Upeksā*, in the true sense of term, is possible in the case of an object if there is absolute negation of the sense of conduciveness or non-conduciveness. If an individual be indifferent towards an object as it does not suit him, it is a rejection (which is put in disguise of *upeksā*). The real *upeksā* emerges when we have no consideration of such *ista (desirability)* or *anista (undesirability)* which is determined in terms of our attachment. To a seer the whole world is not at all the object of attachment and hence he becomes indifferent. Moreover, an object is not manifested as such to a seer, but it is manifested as the Divine. The true nature of the object is beyond his awareness as his mind is connected (*yukta*) with the Divine on account of which the indifferent state is possible. This indifferent attitude is *upeksā* in the true sense of the term in as much as this state does not

arise out of the sense of *laukika istasādhanatā* (conduciveness to the desire for an ordinary object).

From the above discussion it is concluded that there is no scope for *upeksāsādhanatā* (the means of providing indifferent attitude). How did the *Naiyāyikas* insert it as one of the three types of *Buddhi*? What is the exact state of mind when there is *upeksābuddhi*? In response to this one solution can be given in the following manner. It may be said that when an object is not endowed with name, universal, definition etc., there does not arise any question of accepting or rejecting it. In this situation alone, *upaksābuddhi* arises. The acceptability or rejectibility of a particular object is not determined due to the lack of its determinator i.e., knowledge of conduciveness or otherwise which depends on the *Savikalpaka* knowledge of it. At this stage *upeksābuddhi* comes into being. This type of knowledge which is known as *Avyapadesya* or *Nirvikalpaka* is the producer of *upeksābuddhi*.

Another argument may be forwarded in favour of the acceptability or tenability of *Nirvikalpaka pratyaksa*. The *Naiyāyikas* are of the opinion that an object, just after its coming into being remains attributeless and actionless for a moment.<sup>5</sup> If substance (*Dravya*) and attribute (*Guna*) are produced simultaneously, substance cannot be antecedent and hence, it cannot be inherent cause (*Samavāyi Kārana*) of the attribute(*Guna*). That is why; attribute and action are accepted to be produced just after a moment of the origination of *Dravya*. Let us see whether the indifferent attitude towards an object is possible for a moment. It is true that an object may remain without attribute and action. An object may be described as effect (*Kārya*) by virtue of the fact that it is produced. That which is *Karya* must exist, for as per the *Nyāya* view ‘an object is produced’ means the prior-absence (*Prāgabhāva*) of it is lost and hence, it becomes an absentee of its prior absence (*Prāgabhāvapratiyogi*).

So it is shown that an object exists, but due to its attributelessness it does not come to our direct awareness and hence, it cannot be rejected or accepted.

In this context it would not be completely irrelevant to point out that each and every object is recognised in the light of the impression generated in the previous experience. In order to recognise an object at least one moment is essential. In order to recognise a jar as such the previous experience of it is to be recollected. The recollection needs at least one moment and through this a jar is recognised or known as such. During one moment the jar is not known as such and hence, it remains indeterminate to us. As the object is indeterminate only for this small period of time, the *upeksābuddhi* towards this object arises. Through the experience of *upeksābuddhi* the tenability of indeterminate perception can be determined and this is the extrinsic way of determining its truth (*Parataḥ prāmāṇya*). The forms of the argument leading to it would be as follows: 'The indeterminate perceptual knowledge is true as it can produce the indifferent knowledge towards it' (*Nirvikalpakapratyaksānubhūtiḥ pramā upeksābuddhijanakatvāt*). Here the *Sādhya* i.e., the acceptability of indeterminate perceptual knowledge is inferred on the strength of the *Hetu* i.e., being the producer of *upkesābuddhi* (*upeksābhddhijanakatvāt*).

For the existence of the indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*) the Buddhists argument may be recalled. To them cognition free from mental constructions (*kalpanāpodha*) is a perceptual one. In this case the Buddhists believe in the existence of an object which is free from mental ascriptions as well as non-erroneous (*Kalpanāpodham abhrāntam pratyaksam*). The *Nyāya* concept of *nirvikalpaka* is also free from the concepts, but it cannot be said as non-erroneous (*abhrānta*). Because, in order to understand its validity or truth we need certain extrinsic proof behind it, which is not possible. The indeterminate cognition is taken to be supersensuous and hence cannot be assigned any truth-value to it. It is very difficult to say that this piece of knowledge is either true or

false due to not having a holistic cognition (*vaiśistya*) abiding in two components- qualificand (*viśesya*) and qualifier (*viśesana*). Truth and falsity is available only in the case of relational cognition, but not in the indeterminate cognition which is of non-relational nature. Some think that the indeterminate cognition lies there where the two components, *viśesya* and *viśesana*, remain in a non-relational manner without being bound by a relation (*samsarga-anavagāhi*). If it is admitted, it will lead to another type of contradiction. If *viśesya* and *viśesana* remain without any relation, the *visesya* or *viśesana* cannot be known as such. For, it is relation through which we can know the relata. If there is no relation then there cannot be any relatum like qualificand or qualifier. The existence of such indeterminate cognition has to be admitted as a logical necessity only to avoid the *Infinite Regress* in the case of determinate cognition (*savikalpaka pratyakṣa*).

## REFERENCES

1. *Siddāntanuktavalī* on verse No. 133.
2. “*Nanu trividhā ceha jñānavisyatāprakāratā viśeṣyatāsamsargatābhedāt. Tatra jñānamātrasya svavisayakatvena nirvikalpake’pi kācid visyatāpeksiteticer. Turiyavisyatāyā eva tatrābhhyupagamāt*”.  
- *Muktāvalī-samgrahah* on *Sidhāntamuktāvalī* (Edited by Pt. Panchanan Bhattacharya), p. 280.
3. “*Tathā ca prathamato ghaṭaṅghaṭatvayorvāśistyānavagāhyeva jñānam jāyate tadeva nirvikalpakam. Tacca na pratyakṣam. Tathā hi vaisistyanava-*  
*gahijñānasya pratyakṣam na bhavati – Sidhāntamuktāvalī* on Verse No. 58.

4. "Yadā jñānam tada hānopadānopeksābuddhayah phalam."

- *Vātsyāyanabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.3.

5. "Dravyasya gunakriyāsamavāyikāraṇarvāt <sup>t</sup>gunakriyayorutpatteḥ prāk tatsattvam. Ata evotpannam dravyam kṣanamagunam tistha<sup>ttī</sup> niyamah."

- *Sidhāntamuktāvalī* on verse no. 14.