

STATUS OF ĀKĀMĪKṢĀ (EXPECTANCY), AS A CONDITION OF VERBAL KNOWLEDGE

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We derive verbal knowledge from verbal testimony. Verbal testimony depends on the use of sentences supposed to be true which are written or spoken by competent learned persons. Any combination of words does not form a sentence proper. There are certain rules which are to be followed. It is believed that a competent learned person knows all these rules. The person who imparts and the person who receives verbal knowledge must however belong to the same language community. Even if all these are satisfied communication gap may arise. Actually there are certain conditions for the proper understanding of a sentence. For example, in a conversational situation the competent learned speaker, in order to inform something, utters sentence or more specifically sentence-tokens. If the hearer can understand the speaker, i.e., if he has the knowledge of fact expressed in the sentence uttered by the speaker, then and then only communication becomes possible. But if the hearer is to interpret properly the sentence uttered by the speaker, certain conditions are to be fulfilled.

The Nyāya system of Indian philosophy generally accepts four such conditions ākāmīkṣā (expectancy), sannidhi (proximity), yogyatā (compatibility) and tātparyā (intention of the speaker). To be more precise, the Nyāya philosophers hold that the cognition of ākāmīkṣā (expectancy), the cognition of sannidhi (proximity), the cognition of yogyatā (compatibility) and the cognition of tātparyā (intention of the speaker) are required for the proper understanding of a sentence.

Ākāmīkṣā or expectancy is a kind of syntactic demand. The sequence, Cow, white, is' does not produce verbal cognition, because there is lack of ākāmīkṣā (expectancy). A sentence is a combination of different words. The words refer to different objects. It is only when a relation can be established

among these referents that verbal cognition can be produced. *Ākāmkṣā* (expectancy) helps us to grasp this relation.

Sannidhi is proximity or closeness. Suppose I want to order for a glass of water. I utter the word 'bring' at 6 AM 'me' at 12 noon and 'water' at 5 pm. Can I make somebody understand the order 'Bring me water?' I cannot, because there is no proximity. This proximity has been interpreted in two ways. This may mean proximity of words or it may mean presentation (without delay) of the objects referred to by the words of a sentence.

Yogyatā means compatibility. This, in fact, is related with the referents of the words. If I utter 'Sprinkle with fire', no verbal cognition would be produced, because there is lack of *yogyatā* or compatibility. Fire cannot be sprinkled.

Tātparya is the intention of the speaker. The word 'page' may mean paper or it may mean the boy attending the doors. Now suppose the utterer intends that paper should be meant by 'page' in the sentence 'Where is the page?' and the hearer understands it as the boy attending the doors. No proper verbal cognition is possible. Therefore, the intention of the speaker is very important.

In this paper, I want to deal with the status of a particular condition, viz.: *ākāmkṣā* (expectancy). *Ākāmkṣā* (expectancy) as understood by the Nyāya philosophers is a characteristic associated with the words constituting the sentence. It has been taken as a kind of syntactic demand. But in our everyday vocabulary, we use the term 'desire' as an English equivalent of '*ākāmkṣā*'. Interpreted thus *ākāmkṣā* must be a characteristic associated with the self (*ātmā*) i.e., it must be a characteristic of the hearer, one who is having the verbal cognition from the sentences uttered by the speaker. The view that *ākāmkṣā* belongs to self (or the hearer) tallies with common sense. The hearer desires to understand the speaker. He desires to relate the objects denoted by the words constituting the sentence uttered by the speaker. And this desire is *ākāmkṣā*.¹ Suppose John orders Brown to bring water by uttering the sentence 'Bring water'. If Brown is to carry on the order properly, first of all he has to understand the order and then he must have the will or desire for doing so. In other words he must have *ākāmkṣā*. He must remember the objects denoted by 'bring' and 'water' and he must have the will to relate these objects. These words,

which constitute a sentence, have a certain order and when one desires to relate the referents of these terms, one must not break the order. Otherwise improperly ordered terms would claim to constitute a meaningful sentence if we desire so. For example, instead of 'Bring water' we may desire to grasp meaning from sentence like 'Water Bring.' It is clear that this last sentence violates the syntactic laws and cannot be treated as a proper sentence.

Not only the hearer has to maintain the order, he has to be careful that referents are present either directly by the words (by śakti) or indirectly by the words (by lakāṣṇā) etc. Suppose there is a sentence 'There is water in the Ganges.' The word 'Ganges' refers to the river. Here this is direct reference. But suppose there is a sentence 'There is fire in the Ganges.' If we take into account the factor of direct reference then this sentence means nothing because there cannot be fire in the river. But suppose a learned person who does not commit any mistake has uttered this sentence! So we have to justify his utterance. It may be that though the word 'Ganges' directly refers to the river, here it is referring to the boat which is floating on the river. This is indirect reference. This depends on the speaker's intention. It is required for the hearer to remember that the words must have direct or indirect reference to the objects. These should not designate the objects in any other way. We may take an example. Suppose two objects are present at the same time. In the above case, let those be the river and the sky. The word 'Ganges' must not refer to the sky by the relation of being present at the same time (samakālīna). The hearer must exclude all these. Hence the factor of direct or indirect reference, i.e., vṛttijñāna must be taken into account. The revised characterisation of ākāṃkṣā is like this. Ākāṃkṣā is the will to have the cognition of relating the objects denoted by vṛttijñāna (i.e., direct or indirect reference) by different words constituting a sentence producing verbal cognition.²

But still there is a problem. Suppose I want to drink water and ask for that by the word 'water' implying 'Bring water'. 'Bring' is not uttered. Hence its meaning is not present by vṛttijñāna. Still it plays a role when somebody understands me and brings water. Therefore, it is not necessary to bring in the factor of vṛttijñāna (i.e., direct or indirect reference). To reformulate the definition we should say that not the will, but the capability of having the will to have the cognition of the relation among the objects, etc. should be regarded as ākāṃkṣā³. Though the act of bringing is not present by vṛttijñāna (direct or

indirect reference), I have the ability to desire that this would be present.

The question is : when does this capability originate ? Some philosophers say that whenever we have a prior negation⁴ of the verbal cognition we can say that we have the capability of having the said will, i.e., when the verbal cognition is not produced at all or when its prior negation is there, we can desire to have the cognition. Though the term 'bring' is not pronounced by the speaker, we can have the capability to desire that the objects denoted by 'bring' and 'water' have a relation among them. The reformulated definition of *ākāmkṣā* runs thus : the capability to have the cognition of the relation among the objects etc., should be regarded as *ākāmkṣā* and when we have a prior negation of the said cognition, we can say that we have the capability of having the will.

This also is not sufficient. Suppose we have a verbal cognition from the utterance 'Bring water'. If that particular set is pronounced again, then we should have the verbal cognition again. But according to the above definition of *ākāmkṣā*, there should not be any verbal cognition, as *ākāmkṣā* is absent in the second case. *Ākāmkṣā* is absent because here there is no prior negation of that verbal cognition, as it has already been generated. Some philosophers suggest that to avoid this absurd position, emphasis should be given on the pronunciation of the particular words each time. The pronunciation of the first time is not the same as the pronunciation of the second time. From the standpoint of type it may be the same, but it is not so from the standpoint of token. Therefore we should say that whenever the hearer has the prior negation of a piece of verbal cognition produced by the *pronunciation* of particular words constituting the sentence generating the verbal cognition, the hearer has the said capability.⁵

But if pronunciation is of that importance, then what about the *mounīśloka*s, i.e., the verses which are read silently without any pronunciation. Should we not take *mounīśloka*s to be generating verbal cognition? Or what about the sentences which are uttered partially e.g. 'water' instead of 'Bring water'? Actually pronunciation of the set of words should stand for the knowledge of that particular sentence. It is present in the case of silent verses or in the case of sentence uttered partially. Hence there can be *ākāmkṣā* and verbal cognition can be produced.

The factor of 'prior negation' has been considered with great importance in this discussion. The factor of 'generic negation' has not been taken into

account. Why is this so? Suppose there is a sentence constituted by the words 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd'. In order to have verbal cognition from this, first of all the referent of 'a' would be related with the referent of 'b'. The referent of 'b' would be related with the referent of 'c' and so on. We would get a complete verbal cognition from the total sentence by summing up the partial cognitions.⁶ So when we have the verbal cognition from the whole sentence, there is not the generic negation of the verbal cognition generated by the whole sentence, because partially the verbal cognition is present beforehand. But there is the prior negation of the said verbal cognition.

Again if we take generic negation seriously, another problem would arise. Suppose the speaker has the intention that let there be the same verbal cognition twice. In that eventuality some difficulty will crop up in the second case. There will not be the generic negation of the verbal cognition, though there will be the prior negation of the second verbal cognition.⁷ Generation of this piece of verbal cognition abolishes the prior negation of it. This piece of verbal cognition is called the pratiyogin (counter positive)⁸ of the prior negation. The prior negation differs according to the pratiyogin. But in the case of a generic negation only one pratiyogin is sufficient to negate it. This is not so in the case of prior negation. Therefore, it is clear why during the second time generation of the verbal cognition (mentioned before), its generic negation is absent, while its prior negation is there.

Those who insist that the prior negation of the verbal cognition should be taken into account can put forward another argument. The generic negation of any verbal cognition can reside in self or ātmā. It seems to be peculiar. Self is all pervading. Therefore it can be attached to a body or it can be attached with jar or cloth etc. When the self is attached to the body, cognition can reside in self. But when it is not attached to the body it can be said to be the locus of the generic negation of cognition. This sort of generic negation cannot be considered to be ākāṅkṣā, because in that case the same verbal cognition can be thought to be generated repeatedly, as there always will be the generic negation.⁹ This situation cannot be tolerated. So we cannot take any generic negation of verbal cognition to be ākāṅkṣā.

In Gangeśa's *Tattvacintāmaṇi* an objection is raised against the view of ākāṅkṣā in terms of prior negation. Suppose there is a sentence 'How clear is

the water of the river! The buffalo is grazing on the bank'. The speaker intends that river should be related with water and bank should be related with buffalo. Suppose there are two hearers and one of them does not hear the whole sentence. Suppose he hears the part 'How clear is the water'! The second hearer however hears the whole sentence. For the first hearer there is the prior negation of the verbal cognition expressing the fact that river and bank should be related. The second hearer, however, has the verbal cognition depicting the fact that river is related with water and bank is related with buffalo. But both the hearers have verbal cognition from the same sentence and as such the prior negation present for the first hearer is also there for the second hearer. And an objection may be raised. Let us suppose that due to first prior negation both the hearers have verbal cognition expressing the fact that river is related with bank. This type of situation can arise under some other circumstances. For example, when the hearer has the false cognition about the intention of the speaker or when hearer is deceived by the context that determines the intention of the speaker.¹⁰

Again, there are certain terms which cannot be used singly. These terms always refer to some other terms in order to be intelligible. These are called *svasambandhika* or related terms. For example, 'wife', 'slave' etc. Whenever we use the term 'wife' immediately the question arises - 'whose wife?' Similarly whenever we use the term 'slave' the question arises - 'whose slave?' *Ākāmkṣā* present in the cases, where this sort of terms are used, is called *utthitākāmkṣā*, i.e., *ākāmkṣā* which has already been evoked. Again, there are some other cases, where we call this *ākāmkṣā* to be *utthapyākāmkṣā*, i.e. *ākāmkṣā* which may be evoked. Let us take the sentence 'There is water in the pond.' A question may be raised - 'What is there in the water?' Answer- 'Lotuses.' 'What is there in the lotus?' Answer - 'Bees.' Even if these types of questions are not raised, the original sentence 'There is water in the pond' does not cease to be intelligible. *Ākāmkṣā* present in these cases is called *utthapyākāmkṣā*. If we regard prior negation of verbal cognition to be *ākāmkṣā*. we cannot make any distinction between *utthitākāmkṣā* and *utthapyākāmkṣā*. Because in both the cases there is prior negation of the verbal cognition to be generated. There is no clue as to where there is *utthitākāmkṣā* and where there is *utthapyākāmkṣā*. Hence the difference between these two types of *ākāmkṣā* cannot be captured in terms of prior negation.¹¹ Therefore *ākāmkṣā* should not be explained in terms of prior negation.

If ākāmīkṣā is to be considered to be a feature of self, it needs to be interpreted in terms of prior negation. But we have discussed that this interpretation cannot be accepted. Hence ākāmīkṣā cannot be taken to be associated with self. It is a technical term standing for some sort of syntactic demand in Nyāya philosophy.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Acknowledgement - The help extended by Pandit Viśvabandhu Bhattacharya in understanding the Sanskrit text is gratefully acknowledged.

1. Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897 - '... Samabhivyāhṛtapadāsmāritapadārthajijñāsā' - pp. 186-188.
2. Mathurānātha, *Tattvacintāmaṇi - Māthurī (Rahasya-tikā)*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897- 'Smāritatvañca vṛtyā smāritatvam bodhyam' - p. 188.
3. Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897 - 'Atha jijñāsāyogyatā sā' - p. 189.
4. Abhāva or negation or absence can be of four types- anyonyābhāva, prāgabhāva, dhamsābhāva and atyantābhāva. Anyonyābhāva is mutual absence. For example "The pot is not a house." Prāgabhāva is prior absence. For example, as long as a particular pot is not originated, there is the prior absence or pragabhava of that particular pot. Dhamsābhāva is annihilative absence. The absence of a particular pot after its destruction is the annihilative absence or dhamsābhāva of that particular pot. Atyantābhāva is constant absence. For example the absence of colour in air.
5. Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897 - 'Yogyatā ca śrotarituduccāranajanyasaṁsargavagamāpragabhāvāḥ' p. 190.
6. Mathurānātha, *Tattvacintāmaṇi - Māthurī (Rahasya-tikā)*, '... khaṇḍavākyārthabodhānantaram khaṇḍāvakyarthaghatitamahāvākyārthabodhātpādat' p. 191.
7. *Ibid*, - '... vaktuḥ kramikaśābdabodhadvayecchāyām dhārāvāhikaśābdabodhadvayotpādācca sāmānyabhāvatvamapahāya prāgabhāvatenopādanam' - p. 191.
8. Suppose a pot is not produced yet. Then there is the prior negation of the pot

and the pot is the counter positive of that prior negation. Again, suppose a cloth is not yet produced. Then there is the prior negation of that cloth and the cloth is the counter-positive of that prior negation. So we see that as the counter-positives change, the nature of prior negation changes.

9. Mathurānātha. *Tattvacintāmaṇi- Māthuri (Rahasya-tikā)*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897 - 'Tathāsati tādr̥ṣecchārṇ vināpi dhārvahikaśabdabodhā-patteriti bhāvah' - p. 191.
10. Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintamaṇi*, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1897 - 'Kiñca yatraikovimalaṁ jalamityaśrutvaiva tātparyyabhrameṇa vā nadyāḥ kacchānvayaparavamavaiti, aparah samastameva śrutvā nadyā īālānvayaparavam- avadhārayati, tatrobhayorapi taduccāranajanyasamsargāvagamāt nadyā ityubhayasākṣam syāt' - pp. 192-193.
11. *Ibid.* - '... utthitotthyāpyākāmkṣayorutkarṣāpākarṣauna syātāṁ prāgabhāve tadabhāvat' - pp. 198-199.