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Philosophy

JAINA EPISTEMOLOGY : UMASVAMI'S TATTVADHIGAM-SUTRA.

KEY WORDS: Three gems (Triratna), categories of knowledge, Mati, Sruta, Avadhi, Manaparyaya and, Kevala.

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The Tattvadhigama-sutra begins with the assertion that the path to emancipation consists of (acquiring) Right conviction (Samyak-darsana), Right knowledge (Samyak-jnana), and Right conduct (Samyak-caritra-I/1). Right conviction, Right knowledge, and Right conduct have, therefore, come to be known in jaina ethics as the three gems (triratna) that in a good life. In the very first sutra of Tattvadhigama-sutra, Umasvami state this cardinal teaching of jainism. The path to liberation lies through right/conviction faith, knowledge and conduct. Liberation is the joint effect of these three. When we look at the Tattvadhigam-sutra, we come to know that Umasvami made no difference between the categories of knowledge and the means of valid knowledge. In other words, he did not differentiate jnana and pramana. He observes: Jnana is of five varieties, viz., Mati, Sruta, Avadhi, Manaparyaya, and Kevala. All these varieties are pramana. He did not mention any particular characteristic except 'Rightness' regarding the conception of pramana. He took jnana (right knowledge) and pramana as identical.

Knowledge (jnana) is classified as Mati, Sruta, Avadhi, Manaparyaya, and Kevala (I-9). These are called the means of knowledge (pramanas). The first two, that is, Mati and Sruta, are called indirect (paroksa), and the rest direct (pratyaksa) (I-11,12). Umasvami has confine 'pratyaksa' or 'aparoksa' only to the soul's immediate knowledge without any medium. But, later writers like Hemacandra extend it to ordinary sense-perception as well as most other Indian logicians do. To justify the narrower sense 'aksa' is interpreted as 'jiva' and not 'indriya' as ordinarily explained (vide Gunaratna's com. On sad-darsana, verse, 55)

(1). Mati is either knowledge obtained through the five sense organs (antndriya-nimitta), which latter may be either reflective knowledge (mano-vritti), or general undifferentiated knowledge (ogha-jnana). Umasvami, who gives for the first time the definition of mati jnana. Of course, he does not state anything new, he only gathers up the scattered view of the scriptures in a logical way. He defines Matijnana (sensuous cognition) as 'knowledge caused by the senses and the mind'. Mati includes both perceptual and inferential knowledge. —(I-14, and the Bhasya). The terms mati, smrti, samjna, cinta and abhinibodha are said to be synonyms (I-13). Mati knowledge is further sub-divided into avagraha, iha, apaya, and dharana.

Umasvami define avagraha as 'indeterminate intuitional cognition of their respective objects by the sense-organs. The avagraha cognizes only the general features of an object. It is indeterminate. The object presented in it is indeterminate and free from association with name. Avagraha, graham, grahana, alocana (intuition) and avadhar and (holding) are said to be synonyms. Avagraha can be of two kinds vig, vyanjanavagraha (contact-awareness) and arthavagraha (object-perception). The Nandi Sutra does not clearly define avagraha, but only clarifies the implication by illustration.

Iha (speculation) is a desire to know more particularly and definitely about an object, after it has been indistinctly perceived first (avagrhiya). The Nandi Sutra gives these five as the synonyms of iha: abhoganta (leaning towards), marganata (searching), gavesanata (fathom-ming), cinta (discursive

thought) and vimarsa (enquiry). Umasvami, however, gives quite different synonyms which are: Iha, uha (reasoning), tarka (reasoning), pariksa (invest-igation), vicarana (thinking), and jijnasa (inquiry).

Apaya is the determination by means of reflection of the nature of the perceived object with regard to its perfection or imperfection (samyag asamyag iti) merits and defects (guna dosa vicarana). Apaya apagama, apanoda, apavyadh, apeta, apagata, apaviddha, and apanutta are synonyms.

Apaya (perceptual judgement) is followed by dharana (retention) which means retention of the perceptual judgement for a number of instants, samkhyeye (countable) or asamkhyeye (countless). Umasvami defines dharana as 'final determination of the object, retention of the cognition and recognition (of the object on future occasions), and gives the following synonyms: pratipatti (continued-cognition), avadharan (memory), avasthana (retention), niscaya (continued cognition), avagama (retention) and avabodha (cognition).

The above kinds of knowledge may be further differentiated according to the objects perceived are many, or of various kinds, perceived quickly or slowly, and so on (I,16). They pertain to the objects of sense (arthasya) (I-17). The knowledge of vyanjana, which, as will appear from its description, evidently signifies an invisible object, can be had only through avagraha with the limitation that it cannot be perceived by sight nor by mind. (I-18,19). It is said that thus avagraha is two kinds. (i) of vyanjana, and (ii) of artha. Of these the first does not take place through sight and mind, but it is possible through the rest of the four senses. knowledge of the class iha and the rest pertains only to artha.

The term vyanjana in (I-18) and the Bhasya is very obscure, and it has not been explained directly. It has been usually translated as (intermediation) sensation, or as indeterminable object; neither of which seems to represent the exact meaning of the author. Although the term has not been defined, it appears from the author's own commentary on Sutra-I-18, and 19, as explained above, that a distinction has been drawn between such objects of cognition as can be perceived by means of all the senses including mind and those which can be perceived only by means of the four senses of touch, taste, smell and hearing. The former have been called artha and the latter vyanjana. The underlying idea in regarding knowledge called.

Iha and the rest as applicable to artha only, and avagraha as applicable to both artha and vyanjana is that it is only the visible objects that admit of such determination and definiteness as is achieved by iha and the rest, and invisible objects admit only of such indeterminate knowledge as is signified by the term avagraha. According to the author, these invisible objects cannot also be the object of mind or reflection.

(2). Sruta knowledge is preceded by mati knowledge (I-20). It is the second kind of ordinary knowledge is mostly interpreted as knowledge obtained from what is heard from others. This includes all kinds of knowledge derived from

spoken or written authority. As the understanding of any authority is dependent on the perception of sounds or written letters, Sruta is said to be preceded by Mati. It is of two kinds: (i) that which is external to the Angas (anga-vahyam), and (ii) that which is included in the angas (anga-pravistam). And these are further sub-divided into a number of classes. sruta, aptavacana, agama, upadesa, aitihya, amnaya, pravacana jina vacana are all synonyms.

The difference between Mati knowledge and Sruta knowledge is that while the former pertains to the objects existing at the present time, the latter pertains to the object existing in all the three times, and is also more pure (visuddhataram). Further while Mati knowledge is the result of the activity of the self as the knower, and is obtained either through the sense-organs or without them, the Sruta knowledge, which is based upon Mati knowledge is the result of communication from some reliable authority (aptopadesad bhavati).

(3). Avadhi knowledge is not defined at all either in the sutras or the commentary. It is said to be of two kinds: (i) that which belongs to gods and the denizens of the hell, in whose case it is innate, and (ii) that which belongs to man and other beings, in whose case it is acquired (I,21-23). The latter kind of avadhi knowledge is further sub-divided into six kinds according as it lasts for a short time or long time, etc. In the commentary on I-26, while comparing avadhi knowledge with manah paryaya, the author says that avadhi knowledge has for its objects only some aspect of material substances; and this assertion is repeated (I-28). Further it has already been classed as direct knowledge. Thus, it appears that avadhi is a kind of direct knowledge of material substances.

(4). Manah-paryaya is of two kinds (i) rju-mati; and (i) vipula-mati. The difference between the two is that the latter is purer (visudda-tara) than the former and while the former might cease (pratipatati), the latter cannot (na pratipatati), (I-24,25). Manah-paryaya is compared with avadhi knowledge as follows:

- (i) Manah-paryaya is purer than avadhi, for the material objects which are known by the possessor of avadhi knowledge are known in a purer form and mentally (manogatani) by the possessor of manah-paryaya.
- (ii) While manah-paryaya is confined to the universe inhabited by human being, avadhi can extend to the whole universe.
- (iii) While avadhi knowledge can belong to all being, whether of disciplined lives or not, and in all condition manah-paryaya can belong only to men with disciplined lives.
- (iv) While manah-paryaya has for its object's material substances in all their aspects, avadhi has these only in a limited number of aspects.

(5). Kevala knowledge is perfect (paripurna), complete (samagra), unique (asādhāraṇa), absolute (nirapeksa), pure (visuddha), all-comprehensive (sarva-bhava-jna-paka), that which has for its object both the world and the non-world (lokaloka-visaya), and infinite ananta-paryaya (I-30).

Summing up the author says that the objects of mati and sruta knowledge are all the substances, but in all their aspects (asarva-dravyesu asarva-paryayesu); of avadhi only material substances, but not in all their aspects (rupisvev adravyesu asarva-pariyayesu; manah-paryaya) is a purer and infinitely subtle knowledge of the material substances known by avadhi; and kevala has for its objects all the substances, and in all their aspects (sarva-dravyesu sarva-paryayesu ca) (I,27-30,).

Of the above four kinds of knowledge, Mati, Sruta and Avadhi can be erroneous. Error (viparyaya) is that which is the opposite of knowledge, and consists in a failure to distinguish between that which is and that which is not (sad-asatora avisesad); as for example, to perceive a horse as a cow, and

vice versa. (I-32,33,).

Such is the classification of knowledge as found in the tattvadhigama-sutra and its commentary by the author of the sutra himself. The terms employed are peculiar to the sutras, and their exact significance is far from being clear. The first point to be noted is that what is perceived through the sense is regarded in this earlier jaina logic as indirect (paroksa), and that which is perceived without the medium of the senses as direct (pratyaksa). In this particular work, mati knowledge pertains to the objects of the senses, and is either perceptual or reflective, - the latter also knowledge by inference. Sutra is knowledge by testimony. Avadhi, manah-paryaya and kevala are forms of direct knowledge with such distinction as have been explained above. Avagraha and the rest three kinds of mati are the various degrees of sense-cognition according to its clearness and definiteness.

The Nayas have been described as the various ways of determining the nature of an objects of perception and have been classified in the usual way. It is not necessary to go into a detailed explanation of these; for, in the first place, their meaning is obvious and in the second place, they are of little importance from the epistemological point of view.

The author of the Tattvadhigama-sutra and the Bhasya is aware of the existence of the school of philosophy which holds that the pramanas include inference (anumana), knowledge by similarity (upamana), scriptural testimony (agama), implication (arth patti), probability (sambhava), and negation (abhava). It is maintained that all these are included in the mati and sruta knowledge, for they are based upon a contact between the sense-organs and the object (I-12). This fact indicates that probably Umasvati, while referring to these pramanas, had the Mimamsa school in mind. He does not show any signs of knowing, or being influenced by the Nyaya school, and hence, as has already been suggested, he seems to have lived before the compilation of the Nyaya-sutras. Siddhasena Divakars, the next important writer on jaina logic and epistemology, is much later than Umasvati, and as we shall see, he is distinctly influenced in his doctrines by the works of the Hindu and Buddhist writers.

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