

The Doctrine of *Samavāya* in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika System

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I. INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of inherence (*samavāya*) is one of the most striking speculations in the history of philosophy. Most of the systems of Indian philosophy reject the doctrine of inherence. However, the doctrine of inherence occupied a crucial position in the realistic ontology of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. Inherence or *samavāya* is the relationship between two entities that cannot occur separately, in other words, it is an intimate relation between two things which are inseparable. However, the relation in Indian philosophy plays an essential role. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas with Prābhākaras and Bhāṭṭas accept the real existence of a relation. And without the reality of relation, it is not possible to gain knowledge. The concept of the relation is of utmost importance to maintain the relation between the substrates (*dharmi*) and properties (*dharma*). Of the seven categories accepted by the Vaiśeṣikas the sixth category is *samavāya*, and it is a relation. However, there are some qualities which are also relational viz., conjunction, disjunction, number and separateness. In the Nyāya system, the conception of the relation is objectively real.¹

This relation is found between the part and the whole (*avayava-avayavi*), the quality and the substance (*guṇa-dravya*), the action and the substance (*karma-dravya*), the generic character and the individual manifestation (*jāti-vyakti*), and the eternal substance and the ultimate difference (*nitya-viśeṣa*).² For them, it explains the basic constitution of the cosmic whole. From atoms to binary molecules, and in every such onward step of creation inherence bears the creational nexus in a unique and uniform pattern. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, in the cosmic whole certain reals are inseparably related. As, for example, a table and its colour, the earth and its motion, man and manhood, etc. Inherence establishes relation among first five categories - *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karma*, *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*. As a whole, inherence is a unique device to meet all the predicaments and contradictions involved in the metaphysical structure of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system.³

II. DEFINITIONS AND ITS NATURE

Kaṇāda defines inherence as that combination by virtue of which (arises the intuition) in the form of 'this is here' with regard to the effect and cause. (*ihedamiti yataḥ kāryakāraṇayoḥ sa samavāyah*).⁴ Here Kaṇāda takes the matter of effect and cause as the basis of his approach to inherence. However, the notions of inherence and effect cause are rather two intersecting notions in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. To elucidate, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas make a three-fold division of the cause or *kāraṇa*: i. *Samavāyikāraṇa* or the inherent cause, ii. *Asamavāyikāraṇa* or the non-inherent cause, and iii. *Nimittakāraṇa* or the efficient cause. Among the three types of cause, inherence is required to relate the first two types of causes with their effects, in *samavāyikāraṇa* directly whereas in *asamavāyikāraṇa* indirectly. And it is not necessary to relate the third type of cause with its effect. Further, inherence also holds between two entities which are not cause and effect, for example, cowness and a cow. Hence, one can say that the notion of cause-effect in the context of inherence is brought about not in the spirit of *lakṣaṇa* (definition), but as *upalakṣaṇa* (a feature) and he might have also wanted to bring up the notion of inseparability.

Prāśastapāda defines inherence as the relationship subsisting among things that are inseparable, standing to one another in the character of the container and the contained, such relationship being the basis of the idea that 'this is in that'. (*ayutasiddhānām ādhāryādhārabhūtānām yaḥ sambandha ihapratyayahetuḥ sa*

¹ The Western philosophers hold that the relations of the things are external as well as internal and in Indian philosophy the Sāṃkhya, Bhāṭṭas and Advaita Vedāntins state that *tādātmya* relation is an internal relation.

² Annambhaṭṭa, *Tarkasamgraha-Dīpikā on Tarkasamgraha*, tran. Gopinath Bhattacharya (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1994), 370.

³ Dharmendra Nath Shastri, *The Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Its Conflict with the Buddhist Dignāga School* (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1976), 375.

⁴ *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* 7.2.26.

samavāyah).⁵ In this definition Praśastapāda uses the term *ayutasiddhānām* in place of *kāryakāraṇayoḥ* of Kaṇāda. Here the cause-effect is absent, but it is not rejected altogether because he reveals its full significance that the cause-effect relation virtually refers to the relation between inseparables. The definition of Praśastapāda may be analysed into the following parts: i. Inherence is a relation between inseparables, ii. Inherence holds between two entities standing as the substratum and the superstratum and iii. Inherence is the cause of the cognition 'it is here'.

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa says that there is a difference between the parts and the whole or the qualities and the substance, etc. But the difference of the space between these parts and the whole or the substance and its qualities etc. cannot be accepted. They occupy one and the same space which means that one of them must be subsisting in the other. Hence in such cases, an extraordinary relation (*samavāya*) is accepted to explain the subsistence of one of the pairs in the other (*pratīti-bhedad bhedo'sti deśa-bhedastu nesycate, tenātra kalpyate vṛttiḥ samavāyah sa ucyate*).⁶

Śivāditya defines it as *nityasambandah samvāyah*,⁷ while Keśava Miśra defines it as *ayutasiddhayoḥ sambandah samavāyah*.⁸ Both of these definitions are similar in nature. Viśvanātha defines *samavāya* as an eternal relation (*samavāyatvaṁ nityasambandhatvam*).⁹ Annambhaṭṭa also gives the definition of *samavāya* as an eternal relation.¹⁰

Thus, all these definitions show that it is one, eternal, and it exists in inseparable entities, which are of the nature of a substrate and its content, and has no production and destruction.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMAVĀYA

In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system inherence is held to be one. In support of this view two reasons are given in *Praśastapādabhāṣya*. First, the probans (the cognition 'it is here') through which inherence is inferred presents inherence as one and the same everywhere, as it is in case of *sattā* or being; and secondly, there is no such probans which may stand as a ground for the inference of inherence as many. One inherence can account for all notions 'this subsists in this abode'. So it is useless to assume many inferences.¹¹ One inherence is enough to relate all its relata, substances and their qualities, substances and their actions, wholes and parts, genera and individuals, eternal substances and their particulars.¹² Though, inherence is one, it has a restriction as to its substrate and its content due to the differences in the power of being the manifester and the manifested.¹³

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas hold that inherence is eternal, though its relata are transient. The main ground of this consideration is that inherence is not an effect, namely, it is not produced by any cause. Suppose, inherence is held to be an effect, then it cannot be taken to be eternal, because no positive effect is treated as eternal in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. It is not a temporal relation. It does not pertain to relations in time. If inherence is a produced entity, then it cannot be one, but Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas accept it to be one. Further, there would be also the problem of inexplicability of its origination. Hence, just as *sattā* or being is eternal, so inherence is eternal.¹⁴

Inherence is not *svarupasambandha*. *Svarupasambandha* is that which is capable of generating the *savikalpa jñāna* (determinate knowledge) without any other relations. Inherence is not self-relation for example, if there is *svarupasambandha* between a jar and its colour, the jar itself is the relation of colour to it. Therefore, an infinite number of *svarupasambandhas* must be assumed to account for the relation between countless substances and their qualities and actions. Hence, this will contradict the law of parsimony, therefore for the sake simplicity, inherence, which is one, is to be admitted.¹⁵ Further, the assumption of *svarupasambandha*

⁵ *The Praśastapāda Bhāṣhya with Commentary Nyāyakandalī of Śrīdhara*, ed. Vindhesvari Prasad Dvivedin (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1984), 14.

⁶ *Nyāyamañjarī of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa*, ed. Surya Narayana Sukla (Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1936), 235.

⁷ *Saptapadārthī of Śivāditya*, ed. D. Gurumurti (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1932), 61.

⁸ *Tarkabhāṣā of Keśava Miśra*, ed. S. R. Iyer (Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 1979), 215.

⁹ *Kārikāvalī of Viśvanātha Pañcānana with the Commentaries Mukṭāvalī, Dinakarī and Rāmarudrī*, ed. Ananta Sastri (Bombay: Tukaram Javaji, 1916), 84.

¹⁰ Annambhaṭṭa, *Tarkasaṁgraha-Dīpikā*, 369.

¹¹ *Padārthadharmasāgraha of Praśastapāda with the Nyāyakandalī of Śrīdhara*, trans. Ganganatha Jha (Benares: E. J. Lazarus and Co, 1916), 679.

¹² *Mukṭāvalī*, 85-86.

¹³ *Padārthadharmasāgraha of Praśastapāda*, 680.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 681-682.

¹⁵ *Mukṭāvalī*, 85-86.

between a material cause and its effect would undermine the doctrine of *asatkāryavada*. The whole (effect) is different from its parts (cause). The whole inheres in its parts. Therefore, inherence is not *svrupasambandha*.¹⁶ Inherence is also distinguished from *saṃyoga* or conjunction. Conjunction is a relation between two substances as between a stick and a person while inherent relation is a relation between two substances as in the case of an effect residing in its cause and between a substance and a non-substance as in the case of qualities, actions, universals or particulars residing in a substance. Furthermore, inherence is a relation between two non-substances, as in the case of a universal residing in qualities and actions. Conjunction is a separable relation while inherence is an inseparable relation. Again, in the case of conjunction the relata exist as unrelated to each other before they are conjoined. However, in inherence the relata are always related to each other, when they are related as a substrate and its content. Inherence is eternal while conjunction is temporary that is to say inherence is not produced and the conjunction is produced and destroyed by the disjunction of its relata. Further, in the case of inherence the two entities necessarily stand in the relation of the container and the contained (*ādharma-ādheya-bhāva*). But in the case of conjunction, the two substances connected by it are not necessarily in the relation of the container and the contained. Thus, inherence is a natural and inseparable relation and conjunction is an adventitious and separable relation.¹⁷

One of the major points on which the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas are said to differ from each other is how inherence is known. The Naiyāyikas think that inherence is perceptually known; but the Vaiśeṣikas are of the opinion that inherence is not perceived and it is known through inference. Śankara Miśra states in his *Upaskāra* that the perception of a relation, according to the Naiyāyikas, occurs on the occasion of the perception of its relata (*pratyakṣaḥ samavāya itī naiyāyikāstadapyanupapannaṃ samavāyontindriyah*).¹⁸ That is to say, if the relata of a relation is perceptible, then that relation also is taken to be subject to perception. As, for example, when one perceives a table and its colour both, he perceives also their relation. However, according to Vaiśeṣikas inherence is not perceptible or there is no distinct perceptual cognition of it. The relation between a table and its colour is not perceived rather it is inferred from the notion 'this subsists in this abode'. It is not perceived as an object.¹⁹ It is inferred from the qualified cognition of a substance, an attribute and relation between them. A table is endowed with a colour. The table is a substance; colour is an attribute and inherence is the relation between them. The table and its colour are perceived, but inherence between them is not perceived.

IV. SAMAVĀYA AND THE THEORY OF CAUSATION

The concept of *samavāya* seems to have originated in connection with the theory of causation. It explains the subsistence of an effect in its cause, or in other words, the subsistence of one substance in another substance in such a way that both of them occupy the same space. Kaṇāda does not speak of qualities, actions or universals to be residing in their substances by the relation of inherence rather he defines inherence as "that which produces in respect of cause and effect the notion of this being contained in that".²⁰ The inherence thus makes the relation of cause and effect as that of the container and the contained. It appears that once the relation of inherence was established in connection with the theory of causation, its scope was extended to the subsistence of qualities, actions, or universals in their substances. Visvanātha declares that inherence is assumed as a separate category for the sake of brevity (*lāghava*). He points out if an effect were held to be subsisting in its cause, or qualities, etc., subsisting in their substances by the very nature of their substrata (instead of inherence), then the substrata being endless, relations would also be endless. It would, thus, lead to a needless multiplication of assumptions, hence it was better to assume one separate relation called *samavāya*.²¹

V. SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF SAMAVĀYA

In *Nyāya-Lilāvati* Vallabha offers some arguments about the reality of inherence. Prior to him, Nyāya's view is that perception is the proof of *samavāya*, whereas Vaiśeṣikas held that inferential cognition of inherence. However, he denies the Nyāya view about the perception of inherence and the traditional view of Vaiśeṣikas of inherence. Further, he provides a different way of inference in proving the existence of inherence. According to the traditional view, inherence is said to be inferred from the cognition 'it is here' because the cognition like 'the cloth is in its threads' cannot be accounted for until a relation is assumed to exist in between cloth and the threads. Further, traditional Vaiśeṣikas argued that inherence may be inferred on the basis of the cognition of

¹⁶ *Bhāṣāpariccheda with Siddhānta-Muktāvalī* by Viśvanātha Nyāya Pañcānana, trans. Swami Madhavananda (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2010), 15.

¹⁷ *Padārthadharmasāgraha of Praśastapāda*, 667-668

¹⁸ *Vaiśeṣika-Darśana with the Commentary of Śankara Miśra*, ed. Jibananda Vidyaśagar (Calcutta: Sarasvati Press, 1886), 161.

¹⁹ *Padārthadharmasāgraha of Praśastapāda*, 684.

²⁰ *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, 7.2.20

²¹ Shastri, *The Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, 377-378.

something as determined by universal, etc. When a substance is cognized as determined by quality or by action or by universal, or substance or quality or action is cognized as determined by universal, a relation between the determinan and the determinandum is inferred. For example, inherence may be inferred from the cognition of the man as determined by manness. However, Vallabha refutes both of these arguments: cognition 'it is here' (*ihetibuddhi*) and the cognition of something as determined by universal, etc. (*jātyādiviśiṣṭapratyaya*). He suggests a third view, namely, being an uncontradicted usage of 'the determined' which has only the positive entities, as its objects (*bhāvamātravisayābādhitaviśiṣṭavyavahārah*). The word *bhāvamātra* (only the positive entities) is given in the probans in order to prevent its deviation to the cases of absence. The word *abādhita* i.e. uncontradicted is used to exclude the cases of contradiction. The word *viśiṣṭa* or determined is used as a safeguard against the cases of non-determined. Further, the word *vyavahāra* is used to mean usage or expression. Here he says that the usage as determined by universal, etc. invariably follows from some relation because it is an uncontradicted usage of 'the determined' which has only the positive entities as its objects, as it is in case of the usage 'the jar is on the ground'. It follows from a relation since it is an uncontradicted usage of the determined which has only the positive entities as its objects. Here the word *viśiṣṭavyavahāra* or the usage of the determined is highlighted as it is expressed in language. Expression, perhaps, is the more appropriate mark of the structure of the cognition.²²

Gaṅgeśa begins the topic of inherence with a doubt. His point of doubt is whether the relation holding between the determinans (*viśeṣaṇa*) and the determinandum (*viśeṣya*) is the object of the cognition or not.²³ Generally, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas admit three objects regarding the construction of *savikalpa jñāna* or determinate cognition and they are: the determinans (*viśeṣaṇa*), the determinandum (*viśeṣya*) and the relation between the above two (*saṃsarga*).²⁴ For example, when we talk about 'the white cloth' the *viśeṣaṇa* is white, the *viśeṣya* is cloth and the relation between the above two is *saṃsarga*. Suppose, if there were no relation between them, then two mutually related entities like two qualities or two actions, etc. might be known to be the determinans and the determinandum. However, they are never cognized. There can be no cognition like a red sound because they are in no way related to each other. Hence, in a determinate cognition a relation is must; otherwise through which something is known to be determined by something else cannot be explained.

However, Gaṅgeśa has a doubt when it comes to the relation between the two. Although it is proved that a relation is involved in determinate cognition as its object, there can be problems in some cases for example, 'the ground is without a jar'. So here Gaṅgeśa clearly states his view that some relation is there in the cognition of the determined as the object of that cognition; but it is neither conjunction, nor it is inherence, nor it is a mere relation, nor it is the determinant relation of that determinate cognition which is distinguished from that which is not the determinate cognition. To emphasize, the said relation cannot be claimed to be inherence, because inherence is yet to be established. That is if inherence were inferred as doing nothing but bringing two terms together, there would be an infinite regress. As an awareness and its intentionality, inherence must be self-linking (*sva-saṃbandha-vyavahāra-kāritva*). Thus, in the above example, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika can neither deny that it is a determinate cognition nor can say that here the relation between the determinans, the absence of the jar, and the determinandum, the ground, is inherence. If this relation is asserted to be a mere relation, then the inference involves the defect of *siddhasādhana* (assertion of the asserted) and *arthāntara* (assertion of something else).²⁵

As a result, Gaṅgeśa presents two arguments in favour of inherence. Firstly, by the help of the following inference, he establishes the inherence. The determinate cognitions of quality, action, and universal have relation with the determinans as contents, which is different from both relata; because, they are determinate cognitions, which have as their determinans, a positive entity devoid of an object, or because they are determinate cognitions which have their determinans not described in terms of something else. Hence, there will be no inconsistency in the case of the determinate cognition of absence etc. One cannot doubt the fault of inconsistency because there is no *upādhi* (extraneous factor) in the relation of *vyāpti* here. If there had been *upādhi* in the probans there would have been an occasion of doubting the contingency of inconsistency.

Secondly, the inherence can also be established as a connection of objects with the sense-organ by this inference. The perception of quality, action, and universal is produced by the connection of objects with the respective sense-organs. Because it is a perception which is produced like the perception of a man possessing a staff. Thus, here a direct relation like conjunction is not possible, so a relation gets established in the object to which the sense-organ is connected and then on the strength of the existence of the probans in the subject and due to parsimony one inherence is established. This relation cannot be that of *svarūpa* of being a qualifier which

²² Vallabha, *Nyāya Līlavatī*, eds. Harihara Sastri and Dhundhiraja Sastri (Benares: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, 1934), 706-707.

²³ Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, Vol. I, ed. Kamakhya Natha Tarkavagisa (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), 640.

²⁴ *Muktāvalī*, 85.

²⁵ Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 642.

exists in that which is connected; because, there is no common property to unite them. For example, in the cognition 'the ground is without a jar' the absence of the jar is the determinans. Here the absence is spoken of and therefore is to be known with reference to the jar. So to speak of the special qualities of the self. In the cognition 'this is known' knowledge is the determinans which has got to be cognised with reference to 'this'. In this way, absence and the special qualities of the self are generally known with reference to something else which they refer to.²⁶

Both of these by their own capacity assert that it is the relation of inherence which stands responsible for certain specific determinate cognition where the qualifier or the determinans is a quality or an action, etc.

VI. CRITICISM FROM ŚANKARA AND CITSUKHA

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine of *samavāya* was very much criticised by many thinkers, however here we shall consider only two important ones. One of the chief critics of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine of *samavāya* is Śankara. He tries to show that self-relatedness of *samavāya* is not logically justified. For example, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika would say that the relation between the atoms and the dyad is inherence. However, for Śankara atom and dyad being two different entities cannot be related by a third entity which is different from the two. Śankara argues inherence being different from its two relata should require another inherence in order to get related with its relata. And if we proceed in this manner, then we shall end up in an infinite regress.²⁷

In support of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Vācaspati Mīśra argues that though inherence is different from its relata, it does not require any other relation in order to get related with its relata, because it is the very nature of inherence to get related with its relata by itself.²⁸ Further, Amalānanda formulates an inference to defend Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's position and says inherence is related with the threads and cloth by virtue of its determinanthood (*niyāmakatva*) as it is in the case of a cause.²⁹

Śankara opposes again, saying that if conjunction needs another relation for its relation with its relata, then inherence cannot be justifiably said to be out of this need, because conjunction and inherence both are in the same position as regards their dependence on another relation. As inherence is always apprehended along with its relata, so conjunction also.³⁰ Amalānanda says inherence is independent of any other relation, because it is a relation and not a quality.³¹ Vācaspati Mīśra defends it with *akāryatva* i.e. not being an effect. Here inherence is not dependent on any other relation because it is not an effect. Thus, the conjunction cannot come to be a counter-instance, because it is an effect. It depends on its inherent cause and non-inherent cause for its production. Further, inherence is not a substance so it cannot be conceived to be related by conjunction, while conjunction holds between substances alone.³²

Citsukha another Vedāntist raises a number of objections against the doctrine of inherence. Firstly, he criticizes the definition of inherence given by Praśastapāda and Udayana. Further, he criticizes the proofs of inherence specially as found in *Nyāya-Līlāvati*. However, we shall consider here only the second portion of the criticisms. Citsukha rules out both the views that inherence can be proved by perception as Naiyāyikas hold or by inference as Vaiśeṣikas hold. Citsukha criticizing Vaiśeṣikas view says that inherence cannot be a proof of inherence because there is no such proban that the cognition of 'it is here' proves *samavāya*. He says it is under dispute because it is an uncontradicted cognition of 'it is here' as in the case of the cognition 'the plums are in the pot'. He says the part 'it is here' is given in order to exclude the cases of self-relation. Thus, it suffers from the defect of asserting the asserted.³³ The Vaiśeṣikas reply is that the inherence is inferred as the basic relation (*mūlasambandha*).

VII. CONCLUSION

The answer to any problem depends on entire metaphysical perspective, it is not isolated rather it is something which is situated in a global perspective. Hence, one cannot say inherence is there or not. Advaita Vedāntins are monist so they do not accept the difference between *dravya* and *guṇa* for them *guṇa* is *dravya* itself, hence, for them without dualism there is no inherence. However, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas are realists and they are also pluralists so the plurality of things may be related or not. It can also be temporal or substantial, hence,

²⁶ Gaṅgeśa, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, 651.

²⁷ *The Brahmasūtra Sankara Bhāṣya with the Commentaries Bhāmāti, Kalpataru and Parimālā*, Vol. 2, ed. K. L. Joshi (Ahmedabad: Parimala Publications, 1982), 511.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 511.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 511-512.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 512.

³² The relation between conjunction and its inherent cause is a direct relation, but the relation between conjunction and its non-inherent cause is a chain-relation of which inherence is a constituent relation.

³³ S. Chatterjee, *The Problem of Philosophy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1964), 202.

there is a distinction between conjunction and inherence. Conjunction comes and goes whereas inherence remains. It mostly depends on the way one perceives the reality.

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