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Liberation in Nyaya and Yoga Philosophy: A Brief

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Abstract:

Everyone knows that the Nyaya Philosophy has acquired an important place among other systems of Indian Philosophy. Its logic and arguments are too much acceptable to all. It also admits mokṣa as ultimate goal like other spiritual systems. It is dualistic and realistic system. On the other hand, Yoga Philosophy is an ancient spiritual system. Both the systems have admitted liberation as ultimate goal and it is possible through removing false knowledge through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga. Mokṣa is called in Nyaya as apavarga where in Yoga as kaivalya. The form of right knowledge after the Yoga is vivekakhyaṭi and in the Nyaya system is niḥśreyasa. According to the Yoga Philosophy, liberation is called kaivalya whereas Nyaya system defines it as apavarga. Though we find that in the Nyaya system attainment of liberation is possible through the right knowledge of sixteen kinds of padarthas, yet it will not be possible only through reading of Nyayasutra, it will be possible only through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga. This paper is attempted to show how both the systems prescribe us the means for attaining liberation and which system is more effective for every mumukṣu.

Keywords: Apavarga, Moksa, Kaivalya, Vivekakhyaṭi, Astanga-yoga, Nihsreyasa.

Introduction:

Vahe jābe śunyapathe sakarun sure
Ananta-jagat-bharā yata duḥkha śoka.
Viśva jadi chale jai knādite knādite,
Āmi ekā bose raba mukti-samādhite?

-R. N. Tagore

Nyaya is another important system among six-systems of Indian Philosophy. The great Indian sage Aksapada is the founder of this system. The main text of this system is 'Nyayasutra' was written by the great Indian sage Goutama. This text is preceded of Brahmasutra of Vedavyasa. It is also called *anviksikiṭidya*. According to some, this system is not only called spiritualistic but also logical system. In praise of this system Kautilya says in his 'Arthaśāstra', "Pradipaḥ sarvavidyānāmupāyaḥ, sarvvakarmmanām. Āśrayaḥ sarvvadharmmanām".¹ It is very true that men are rational being in born. They can think,

plan and analyse any fact or mystery. In this regard, we are completely separate and higher than other living being. We feel pleasure, pain, desire etc. and we seek the source of any feeling. The nature of any living being is to acquire pleasure and to avoid pain etc. The lower animals do not know how the pain has to avoid. For avoiding pain or suffering of life men have tried to find the way from the beginning of civilization and that has taken as the form of Philosophy. Almost all the people like to enjoy a happy and peaceful life. As a result, they search pleasure in different kinds of worldly object and other sources but, they actually not aware that there is no source in the world where eternal pleasure will be found. It remains only in self-knowledge which is eternal truth. So, Upanisad says, know thyself (*Atmanam Viddhi*). Like the other system of Indian Philosophy, Nyaya have explained the cause of suffering and liberation from bondage. The term 'bondage' commonly meant the process of birth, death, rebirth and the enjoyment of various miseries of the individual self where the term 'liberation' means the stoppage of birth-death and rebirth circle. We know that there is nothing which can give us pleasure without sorrow in this world. We may acquire pleasure from any worldly non-eternal entity initially, not permanently. Only liberation can free us from all kinds of sufferings permanently. Both the systems Yoga and Nyaya have admitted *mokṣa* or liberation as highest goal in our life. In the next chapter, we shall try to know the meaning of yoga and how we can attain liberation and also try to compare both the systems regarding the attainment of liberation and the process about it.

I

We know that Samkhya and Yoga are allied systems. They have admitted twenty-five entities in their theories. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* are two main entities among those. Only *puruṣa* or self is conscious. The chief aim of the both Samkhya and Yoga are to attain *kaivalya* of *puruṣa*. This *kaivalya* can be attained through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga. The state of *kaivalya* is arrested of mind. Though the mind is accomplished by three ingredients viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, yet due to ascribe of conscious *puruṣa*, it becomes conscious like *puruṣa*. The mind has five states viz. *ksipta*(restless), *mudha*(stupefied), *vikṣipta* (distracted), *ekāgra* (one-pointed) and *niruddha* (arrested). The main aim of any individual self is to attain *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is attained in the state of *ekāgra* mind. First three states of mind mentioned above are not at all conducive to yoga, where last two states are conducive to it. The *ekagrabhumi* is the state of *samprajnata samadhi* and *niruddhabhumi* is the state of *asamprajnata samadhi*. Hence, here, we find two types of *samadhi* viz. *samprajnata* and *asamprajnata*. Again, *samprajnata samadhi* is of four kinds according to the nature of the object of concentration viz. *vitarka*, *vicāra*, *sānanda* and *sāsmīta*.² In the state of *samprajñāta*, mind is concentrated upon different miraculous powers viz. clairvoyance, thought reading, knowledge of past and the future, of the distance and subtle things and so on; and last of all, the knowledge of the self.³

Yoga is the arrested state of mental modifications (*Yogaścittavrittinirodhaḥ-Yogasutra*, 1.2). We find it in the *Gītā* where Sri Krishns says, “*Yatraparamate cittamniruddhvam yogasevayāḥ, Yatra caivātmānatmanampasyannātmani tusyati*”.⁴ Here, a question may be arisen that is in the state of yoga, all modifications are arrested or some modifications? If it

means the cessation of some modifications, then all men become yogi; for each man has the cessation of at least one modification. On the other hand, if yoga is called all modifications are arrested, then only as *asamprajñāta samādhi* will be allowed as yoga. As there it does not mention in definition of yoga in the *Yogasutra* that all modifications have to be arrested. So, according to the Yoga Philosophy both *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta* are called yoga.

The *samādhi* (the main aim of yogi) can be attained through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga with respect and for a long time.⁵ Those eight steps are *yama* (restriction of conduct), *niyama* (restriction of mind), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇayāma* (breath -control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses from their particular object), *dhāranā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (fixation of mind) and *samādhi* (trance).

II

There is no living being who wants to remain in bondage. If you ask a bird who is bound in a golden cage that do you want to stay in the cage? He must reply no. Men as a rational being, when they could understand that this world is a cage where money, woman, wealth, property etc. are like gold, will try to be free eternally after realizing sorrow, anxiety etc. behind these. Each and every person suffers pain, miseries etc. for whole life due to his or her fruits of action. This is called bondage. Goutama has mentioned sorrow as the term ‘*vādhanā*’ in his book “*Nyayasutra*”. He has mentioned second category *prameya* is divided into twelve. All of those are related with the sorrow except self and *apavarga*. As the cause of bondage, He has noted false knowledge (the absence of right knowledge). Here, the cause of sorrow is shown with an equation in the following:

Cause ↔	Effect
Sorrow →	Birth
Birth →	Effort
Effort →	<i>Doṣa</i> (<i>rāga</i> , <i>dvesa</i> and <i>moha</i>)
<i>Doṣa</i> →	False knowledge (<i>Mithyajnana</i>)

All of those attributes mentioned above are related to each other. We see that if we are able to cease the false knowledge, sorrow will be removed. The ultimate goal of every human being is realization of truth and absolute cessation of suffering. Feeling this main necessity, Goutama has mentioned a verse for attaining liberation in his Book: “*Pramāna-prameya-samśaya-prayojana-drstānta-siddhāntāvayava-tarka-nirnaya-vāda-jalpa-vitandā-hetvābhāsa-chala-jāti-nigrahasthānānīḥśreyasādhigamaḥ*”.⁶ That is to say, he has admitted sixteen kinds of categories by whose knowledge *niḥśreyasa* is entailed. The term ‘*niḥśreyasa*’ refers to ‘liberation’. ‘*Niścitamśreyoniḥśreyasa*’, that is to say, *nihśreyasa* is certain good. In the Nyaya Philosophy, liberation has been mentioned as different names viz. ‘*apavarga*’, ‘*abhaya*’, ‘*ajara*’, *ksemaprāpti*’ etc. There may arise a question that who is able to attain *apavarga* and how? In reply, it may be said that every bound self can attain *apavarga* and through the right knowledge of twelve *prameyas*. In the Nyaya system, *apavarga* has been defined as eternal cessation of suffering (*Tadatyanta vimokṣahapavargaḥ-Nyāyasutra-1/1/22*).

Let us give now the answer of second question that how we can attain *apavarga*. According to the Nyaya, self is divided into two viz. the individual self and supreme self. The supreme self is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresence; also, is above of space, time etc. where the individual self holds fourteen attributes like volition, aversion, delusion, effort, feeling of pleasure, pain etc. According to them, though the individual self is ubiquitous yet consciousness or knowledge is its accidental quality. The great sage Goutama says that the knowledge of twelve *prameyas* is the direct cause of liberation. Those twelve *prameyas* are-self, body, senses, objects, intellect, mind, effort, fault, rebirth, fruits of action, sorrow and eternal cessation of suffering.

III

Let us see now how we can attain liberation through the right knowledge according to Nyaya system. Here, a question may arise that is it sufficient to know the twelve *prameyas* through the scripture only? We find that if anyone may attain the nature of self, must go to a real teacher for study the Nyaya and other scriptures through *śravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. Then he will try to understand that it is the soul which is completely separate from body, mind etc. and it is eternal. Is it sufficient? No, it is not sufficient. Till he does not justify the previous hearing or learning (*manana*), he could not realize the nature of self. After *manana* that aspirant's I-feeling has to be destroyed. Hence, Goutama says, “*Doṣa nimittānām tattvajñānādahankāranivrittiḥ*”.⁷ Then he must practice *nididhyāsana*. Here, the term ‘*nididhyāsana*’ refers to ‘*samādhi*’. It is very true that without practice of *samādhi* no one can attain right knowledge or truth. Hence, Goutama says to practice *samādhi* and its previous steps (*Samādhivīśeasābhyāsāt*).⁸ It is birth through which an individual enjoys various sufferings in livelihood. Birth implies connection of the self with a particular body, which is selected in accordance with the results of action. If the individual is not born again, there will be no possibility to suffering pains. The present birth of the individual will come to an end after the enjoyment of this *prāravdha karma*. Again, it is the time when he attains *apavarga* which is the ultimate goal and the permanent cessation of suffering. Thus, an individual comes to the stage of complete cessation of suffering and it is called *apavarga*.

Avidyā and false-knowledge are similar terms in respect of their imports. Both the systems means knowledge consisting in the misunderstanding the ‘not self’ as self. Therefore, the lack of true knowledge of one's self is the fundamental cause of bondage. The yogis and the Naiyaikas are opining that *avidyā* or false knowledge is the generating principle of *klesas* (*doṣas*).

IV

Let us show now a comparison regarding liberation in Yoga and Nyaya in this chapter. We know that liberation is to be attained from bondage. In both Yoga and Nyaya bondage consists in pain. This pain can be prevented by accomplishing *apavarga* in this life. Both the systems have adopted the law of karma. Both provide reasons in support of the view -all is suffering. The reasons regarding change and anguish are conceptually similar. We saw in the

previous chapter that without attainment of samadhi right-knowledge is not possible. In the Nyaya system, MaharsiGoutama has mentioned *samādhi* for attaining right-knowledge but without practice of seven pre-steps of eight-fold means of yoga, it is not possible to attain *samadhi*. Hence, He says later to practice eight-fold means of yoga in his ‘*Nyayasutra*’, “*Tadartham yamaniyamābhyamātma-samskāro yogacchadhyātmavidhyupāyaiḥ*”.⁹ That is to say, for attaining right-knowledge of twelve *prameyas* we have to practice *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prānāyama* etc. for a long time with firm effort. We find it in the ‘*Yogasutra*’ also where Patanjali has mentioned: “*Sa tu dīrghakālnairantarya satkārāsevito dridhabhumi*”.¹⁰ Again, we find in the Yoga Philosophy as the other means for attainment of liberation God’s grace through the complete surrender to Him.¹¹ It has been admitted by many Naiyakas, even Gautama also admits that the knowledge of God is mandatory for the attainment of liberation¹² where Varddhamana Upadhyaya has mentioned rightly: ‘*Isvaramananca moksahetuh*’.

Avidya and *mithyājñāna* are similar terms in respect of their imports. Both the systems indicate that the knowledge consisting in the misunderstanding the ‘not-self’ as self, impurities as purity, non-eternal as eternal etc. Therefore, the lack of true knowledge of one’s self is the fundamental cause of bondage. Both the systems opine that *avidyā* or *mithyājñāna* is the principle of troubles.

In both the systems admit that true knowledge removes false knowledge. The form of true knowledge in Yoga system is *vivekakhyāti* and after attaining it aspirant remains in its own essence. On the other hand, in Nyaya system, an aspirant can know its own essence after attaining right-knowledge through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga. The concepts of *Asmita* and *ahamkara* also are similar in both the systems. Both the systems have admitted *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*.

V

Critical remarks and Conclusion: We know that though an aspirant attains the right knowledge in the present life, yet he cannot attain liberation till his *prāravdha karmas* are not dissolved through the enjoyment. When an aspirant can attain the right-knowledge, must attain *jīvanmukti*. After enjoying his all the *prāravdha karmas*, he becomes *videhamukta*. It is very important here that no right knowledge can destroy *prāravdha karmas* without enjoying it. Due to *prāravdha karmas* an aspirant though attains *jīvanmukta*, yet he may take rebirth. But, here, a question may be arisen that is there any way by which an aspirant may attain *videhamukti* in this present life? In reply, it may be stated that if any aspirant follows the yogic method, must attain *videhamukti* in this present life. We find it in the Yoga Philosophy that a yogi can make *kāyavyuha* (similar bodies) through the yogic power. A yogi may enjoy his all *prāravdha karmas* through his two or three similar bodies. As a result, he can attain *videhamukti* in this present life which is the ultimate goal to every human being.

In conclusion, we may say here that for the attainment of liberation the yogic methods are very easy and useful to every aspirant. Thus, almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy have admitted eight-fold means of yoga in their theories for attaining liberation.

Notes and References:

- 1) PhanibhusanTarkavagisa, 'Nyayadarsana', Vol.1, Paschimvanga Rajya Pustaka Parshad, P.5
- 2) Yogabhasya,
- 3) Yogasutra, Vibhuti yoga
- 4) The Gita, verse no. 6/20
- 5) Yogasutra, verse no. 1/14.
- 6) Nyayasutra, verse no. 1/1/1.
- 7) Nyayasutra, verse no. 4/2/1
- 8) Nyayasutra, verse no. 4/2/38
- 9) Nyayasutra, 4/2/46.
- 10) Yogasutra, verse no. 1/14.
- 11) "Isvarapranidhanadva", Yogasutra, verse no. 1/23.
- 12) Tarkavagisa, Phanibhusana, (Bengali translator) of 'Nyayadarsana', vol. 5, Paschimvanga Rajya Pustaka Parsada, p., 31.