



VALIDITY OF VEDAS IN INDIAN DARSANAS

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Abstract: Indian philosophical systems are the intellectual and systematized expression of the spiritual experience of the Vedic and Upanisadic and saints like Kapila, Patañjali, Vyāsa, Buddha, Śankara and others. The word 'Darśana' derived from the root 'drś' and 'lyut' pratyaya has been added to it in the sense of instrument. The Indian philosophy is classified as Āstika and Nāstika. Nāstika schools are – Cārvāka, Buddhism and Jainism. The Āstikas are Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsa, Vedānta, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. Veda literally means divine Knowledge. The term Vedas primarily signifying knowledge from vid to know designates sacred lore as a branch of literature. Vedas are eternal and that, there were revealed to the blessed ones from time to time by God. The Nāstika class does not believe in the testimony of the Vedas. The Āstikas are those systems of Indian philosophy which believe in the testimony of the Vedas. This class includes six systems of Indian philosophy which are collectively known as 'ṣaddarśana'. Mīmāṃsa does not believe in God. Hence the meaning of Āstika is believer in the Vedas.

Key Words: Vedas, Āstika, Patañjali, Āstika, sutras.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Philosophy literally means love of wisdom. It is an attempt to arrive at a rational consumption of reality as a whole. It is the rational attempt to have a world view. It signifies a natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and move and have their beings. Philosophy enquires in to the nature of human soul and its destiny and these natures of God. It is the art of thinking all things logically, systematically and persistently. Indian philosophical systems are the intellectual and systematized expression of the spiritual experience of the Vedic and Upanisadic and saints like Kapila, Patañjali, Vyāsa, Buddha, Śankara and others. The word darśana derived from the root drś and lyutpratyaya has been added to it in the sense of instrument. The Indian philosophy is classified as Nāstika and Āstika. The Nastikas do not regard the Vedas as infallible; they are Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism. The Āstika schools are six in number such as Sāṃkhya, Yoga Mīmāṃsa, Vedānta, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika.

2. THE SCHOOLS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY :

The orthodox schools do not recognize the authority of the Vedas. The heterodox schools do not recognize their authority. The Cārvāka, the Buddha and the Jaina are the heterodox schools. They are called heterodox not because they are atheists, but because they reject the authority of Vedas. The Sāṃkhya, the Yoga, the Mīmāṃsa, the Vedānta, the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika are the orthodox schools. They believed in the authority of Vedas. Among them the Samkhya and the Mīmāṃsa are atheists. The Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika, the Yoga and the Vedānta are theists.

The Sāṃkhya advocates dualism of Prakṛti and Puruṣa or individual selves. The Vedānta advocates in spiritualistic monism and recognizes the reality of Brahman or the absolute spirit. It regards the world and the individual selves as their appearance or parts of attributes, modes or accessories of Brahman. The Nyāya, the Vaisesika advocate the reality of God, plurality of individual souls and the world of diverse objects. They consider the world to be composed of eternal atoms of earth, water, fire and air existing in self-existent and eternal time and space. The Mīmāṃsa recognize the reality of individual selves and the self-existent material world. The Sāṃkhya and Mīmāṃsa reject the concept of God as the creator of the world. The Yoga grafts the notion of God on the Sāṃkhya dualism of Prakṛti and Puruṣa and makes it theistic. So it is called the theistic Sāṃkhya.



CĀRVĀKA DARŚANA

Cārvākadarśana is also known as lokāyata. Its proponent is Bṛhaspati, who presented a kind of pure materialism, in which powers had no place. However his composition, the Bṛhaspatīsūtras was destroyed by opponent. The only way to get a glimpse of cārvāka philosophy is from the criticism of it by the followers of other darśanas. According to Cārvākadarśanas, the only means of knowledge is perception. They do not accept the things that cannot be known through direct experiences. Thus the concepts of God, heaven, liberation, afterlife etc, have no worth in Cārvāka philosophy. Liberation is nothing but the fall of the body.

BAUDDHA DARŚANA

Gautama buddha is the proponent of bauddhadarśana. His teachings are compiled under the name Tripiṭakas, which include vinayapiṭaka, suttapiṭaka, abhidhammapiṭaka. The bauddha accept two pramaṇas, pratyakṣa and anumāna.

JAINA DARSANA

Mahāvīra is the proponent of jainadarśana. It is related to Buddhism. It adhered to non-violence. The three tenets of Jaina philosophy known as the three gems are: samyagdarśana, samyagjñāna and samyagcāritra. They upheld the value of self-restraint to attain this goal; they proposed the five great vows via ahimsa, satya, aṣṭeya, brahmacharya and aparigraha.

SĀMĀKHYA DARŚANA

Sāṃkhya propounded by Kapila is the earliest āstikadarśanas. The principles of Sāṃkhya have been described in the upaniṣads, the Mahābhārata, the bhagavadgīta and the puranas etc. It advocates the dualism of Prakṛti and Puruṣa which are the two eternal, co-existing co-operating realities. It says that the universe comprises twenty five vital principles including puruṣaprakṛti and the products of prakṛti, Sāṃkhya enumerates and analyses the principles of this universe.

Sāṃkhya has much philosophical worth due to its theory of causation known as Satkaryavāda. According to it the effect is not a new creation, but only a manifestation of the cause itself. The world evolves from the insentient prakṛti when the equilibrium of the Guṇas is upset in the proximity of puruṣa. Sāṃkhya does not accept God, since the process of evolution is natural according to it. It is a materialistic school of thought. It accepts three pramaṇas: pratyakṣa, anumāna and āptavacana.

YOGA DARŚANA

Yoga is related to Sāṃkhya. Patañjali, the author of Yoga sūtras. It accepts God as a distinct Puruṣa, while Sāṃkhya does not accept God. By Yoga, Patañjali means the control of mental activities (cittavṛtinirodha), which is the essential pre-requisite for attaining deliverance. The means of mind control are Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhara, Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi. Yama consist of Ahimsa, Satya, Aasteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. Niyama comprise śauca, santoṣa, tapah, svādhyāya and īśvaraprāṇidhāna. Āsana means posture. Prāṇāyāma is concerned with breath control. Pratyāhāra denotes the reversion of the senses from their activities. The process of concentration of the senses, thus reverted from acting on a particular object, is known as Dhāraṇa. Dhyāna means meditation. The constant positioning of the intellect on the object of meditation is Samādhi.

PURVAMĪMĀMSA

Mīmāṃsā means desire for knowledge or rational thinking. The basic work of this school is the sūtras of Jaimini. It deals with various sacrifices, their purposes, the Vedic injunctions regarding rituals, the rules of interpretation of texts etc. It regards the Vedic portions that do not have ritual purpose as invalid. Mīmāṃsā accepts the concepts self, but views heaven as the ultimate goal. It regards Tamas not as a category, but only as the non-existence of light. Mīmāṃsā holds word meaning relation as permanent.

Later Mīmāṃsā developed in to two schools under Kumārilabhaṭṭa and Prabhākaramiśra. The former is the Bhaṭṭaschool. It accepts six pramaṇas: viz, Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, Upamāna, Śruti, Artāpatti and Anupalabdhi. The other is known as Prabhakaraschool. It does not admit Anupalabdhi as a pramaṇa. Thus it accepts only five pramaṇas. They say that in every cognition, there are three constituents, viz, the knower, the knowledge and the known object.

VEDĀNTA DARŚANA

Bādarāyana the author of Brahmasūtras, is the proponent of Vedānta. It deals with the eternal reality of Brahman as proclaimed by the scripture through the Mahākāvya like Tatvamasi. It attempts to realize the ultimate truth through the method of Adyāropa and Apavāda.

The literal meaning of the term Vedānta is “the end of Vedas, the concluding parts of the Vedas, the culmination of the Vedic teaching and wisdom”. Among the six systems of Indian philosophy, the Vedānta signifies literally in Sanskrit. The final section of the Veda; in common use, however, the word is used with reference to the concluding portions of the Vedic literature, known also as Upaniṣads.

Based on the different interpretations presented to the Prastānatraya. Vedānta has been divided in too many schools. The major schools of Vedānta are Advaita of Śankara, Viśiṣṭadvaita of Rāmānuja and Dvaita of Mādhava. The other schools of Vedānta are Suddhādvaita of Vallabha Dvaidādvaita of Nimbārka, Bhedābheda of bhāskara and Acintyabheda of Caitanya.

NYĀYADARŚANA

Nyāyadarśana gives emphasis to logical reasoning. Gautama the author of the Nyāya sutras. It deals with the study of matter. It depends on Pramanas and accepts four pramanas. Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, upamāna and Śabda. Nyāya gives importance to Anumāna based on everyday experiences. Nyāyadarśana was originally atheistic in nature. But later, theism was infused in it by scholars like Udayana, the author of Nyayakusumāñjali. Liberation is the absence of pain, which can be attained through the knowledge of the sixteen padarthas.

VAIŚEṢIKA DARŚANA

Vaiśeṣikadarśana gives importance to viśeṣa or particularly. Kaṇāda, who wrote the Vaiśeṣikasūtras, is its proponent. Praśastapāda wrote a commentary on it. Vaiśeṣikadarśana stresses on the study of matter which is made of atoms. The Vaiśeṣikas presented an atomic evolution, which says that everything exists in the form of a single atom that is later divided in too many. Thus the word is evolved out of atoms.

The knowledge of Vaiśeṣapadārthas is necessary to attain bliss. According to Vaiśeṣikapadārthas are of two kinds. Bhāva and Abhāva. Bhāvapadārthas are again divided in to six viz., Dravya, Guṇa, Karma, Sāmānya, Viśeṣa, and Samavāya. Abhāva is the category. The modern Nyāyaschool regard it as the seventh category. Later Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika combined together.

3. VALIDITY OF VEDAS IN DARŚANAS :

Veda literally means divine knowledge. The term Vedas primarily signifying knowledge from “vid” “to know” designates sacred lore as a branch of literature. It is the Hindu belief that the richas of the Vedas are eternal and that there were revealed to the blessed ones from time to time by God. When the number of richas became numerous, it is believed that ṛṣi Vedavyāsa arranged or redacted all the Vedic subject Atharvaveda. These are in way the canonical scriptures. Vedas are in Sanskrit with the same meaning and similar pronunciation from the time immortal.

Vedas are the earliest text in the history of human civilization on the earth. As regard the age of Vedas and Vedic culture is concern, it has been regarded that the Vedic hymns have been formulated around 2000 to 4000 years B.C Vedas are available ancient epic literature.

Philosophy is generally considered to be grown by speculation. The word Darśana is delivered from the root ‘dr̥ṣ’ with the affix ‘lyut’ and means the act of perception. The development of Indian philosophy take the long time which explained reality, meaning and purpose of life, it exhorted the people to think clearly, act effectively and live decently.

The earliest records of most profound knowledge and the highest wisdom are contained in the hymns of Ṛgveda, in the later saṃhitas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. It is from the Upaniṣads that the founder of the systems, draw their inspiration. So philosophy is Darśana a vision of truth.

The idea of liberation (mokṣa) is common to all philosophies is to attain liberation and the liberation is attainable only by knowledge therefore every philosophy accepts the means of knowledge also.

Barring the Cārvaka and Buddhas all other philosophies accepts the verbal testimony as one of the means of valid knowledge. Cārvaka accepts only perception and Buddhas add inference to it. The validity of Vedas is discussed where testimony is accepted.

Here it is to be noted that though Vaiśeṣikas accepted only two pramāṇas i.e., perception and inference they do not deny the validity of testimony. They include testimony in inference itself.

VALIDITY OF VEDAS IN HETERODOX SCHOOLS

In the heterodox schools do not accept the validity of Vedas as they mostly speak about the non-perceivable objects such as, heaven, puṇya and pāpam. Cārvākadarśana is also known as Lokāyatha. Its proponent is Bṛhaspathi. According to Cārvākadarśana, the only means of knowledge is perception. They do not accept the things that cannot be known through direct experience. Thus the concept of God, heaven, liberation, afterlife etc. have no worth in Cārvaka philosophy. Liberation is nothing but the fall of the body. The philosophy of Buddha arose refuting the sacrifice and

hence naturally accept the validity of Vedas. The Buddha accepts pramānas, Pratyakṣa and Anumāna. They regard the world as transient one thing appears only when another is destroyed. This is known as Pratīyasamutpāda. Nothing is permanent in this world. Everything is divided in to five skandhas; vijñāna, vedana, saṃjāna, saṃskāra and rūpa.

Though the Jain philosophy, which accepts Ahimsa in its original sense, accepts testimony as valid knowledge, they do not recognize the authority of Vedas. According to them testimony in their own words; Āgama is the knowledge of objects derived from the words of reliable person, Tīrtankarā. They do not accept the authority of Tīrtankaras who attained perfection and become omniscient.

VALIDITY OF VEDAS IN ORTHODOX SCHOOLS

All the orthodox schools accept the validity of Vedas, but everyone in their own way. For Sāṃkhya Vedic testimony is authoritative but not the secular(loukika) testimony as it depends on perception or inference. The principles of Sāṃkhya have been described in the Upaniṣads, the Mahābhārata, the Bhagavatgīta and the Puraṇas. Sāṃkhya does not accept God, since the process of evolution is natural according to it. It is a materialistic school of thought. It accepts three Pramānas Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, and Āptavacana. The Vedas are revelations of sages. They are impersonal (apauruṣeya) but not eternal. The Vedas of previous cycle were remembered by sage Kapila at the beginning of the next cycle. They are self-evident.

According to Yoga system of Patañjali a trustworthy instructor communicates his valid knowledge to another person for the latter's attainment of good and avoidance of evil. Sāṃkhya and Yoga focus on liberation that can be attained through discriminative knowledge. Both accept Pratyakṣa, Anumāna and Upamāna or śrutipramānas. In this philosophy the God is the original instructor who is omniscient. So the Vedas are neither created are composed by seers. The literal meaning of term Vedānta is "the end of the Vedas, concluding part of the Vedas, the culmination of the Vedic teaching and wisdom, the Vedānta is the most popular and the best studied. Mīmāṃsā means desire knowledge or rational thinking. The basic work of this school is the sūtras of Jaimini. It deals with various sacrifices their purposes, the Vedic injunctions regarding rituals, the rules of interpretation of texts etc. Mīmāṃsā accepts the concepts of self but views heaven as the ultimate goal. Mīmāṃsā holds word meaning relation as permanent. The Vedas are unproduced and eternal. Their denotative power does not depend upon any convention determined by the God or human. They are self-sufficient and independent. So Mīmāṃsakas accept the validity of Vedas as they are impersonal and eternal.

Of the three main Vedānta systems the Advaita admits Vedas as an independent testimony. They are impersonal and eternal their reality is only in the empirical state God begins the creations according to Vedas and after the destruction they remain the mind of the God and he expresses them in the next creation. They are self-evident.

In the Viśiṣṭādvaita, everything other than Brahman as an effect, so words are also effects and therefore they are non-eternal. Yet they consider Vedas are eternal because they are uttered in the same order. They are impersonal and God reveals them in the same in each creation.

According to Dvaita philosophy the Vedas are valid as they are impersonal and eternal. Nyāyadarśana gives emphasis to logical reasoning. Gautama the author of the Nyāyasūtras propounded. Nyāya deals with the study of matter. It depends on pramāṇasie. Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, Upamāna and Śabda. Nyāya gives the importance to Anumāna based on everyday experiences.

Vaiśeṣikadarśana gives importance to viśeṣa or particularity. Kaṇāda who wrote the Vaiśeṣikasūtras is its proponent. The Vaiśeṣika emphasizes the seven categories; substance, quality, action, community, particularity, inherence and negation. It discusses the nature of time space, ether and the different kinds of qualities and action. It specializes in the philosophy of nature.

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika have common idea of nature, soul and God. They are blended with each other at a later stage to form a synchronized school called NyāyaVaiśeṣika. Both consider the word as non-eternal. As Vedas are made of sentences they are also non-eternal (vedavakyānīpauruṣeyānīvakyātvaḥbhartadivat). Hence they are personal. The validity of testimony depends upon the reliability of the speaker. The Vedas are the words of God who is reliable, so they are valid. (tadvacanātāmnāyasyapramānyam).

The NyāyaVaiśeṣika philosophy admits the reality of the external world independent of the perceiving selves. It advocates dualism of matter and souls and of the individual souls and the supreme soul. It recognizes the plurality of the individual souls and the finite objects. It admits the reality of God as transcending the world. It advocates realism, dualism, pluralism and deism.

Here Cārvāka objects that Vedas not be regarded as means of knowledge because they have defects such as false contradiction and tautology (tadapramāṇyamanrūtavyāgatapunaruktidoṣebhyaḥ) here that particular kind of word says bhāṣya. On commenting this Udyotakāra says that particular kind of word meant is that which has been held to conducting to the attainment of man's highest purpose and such a word is Veda itself.

Coming to the sutra again the Vedas have no validity as texts contain false statements for e.g. A Vedic text says that one who desires a son should perform Putreṣṭi. Yet we find that a son is not born after the sacrifice has been performed. But even after the performance of the said sacrifice we find no result so if a text which shows a visible purpose is proved to be false then all the other texts which deals with invisible (transcendental) purpose such as one should perform Agnihotram for the attainment of Mokṣa are also false. So all Vedic texts like the text laying down Putreṣṭi.

Secondly Vedic texts are contradictory to each other. For example with regard to Agnihotra there are three Vedic injunction "oblations should be offered after the sunrise, oblations should be offered before the sunrise but after the stars are invisible. Having said this the text criticize all the three times stating " if one offers oblation before the sunrise ṣabala will take off those oblations and if one offers those oblation Samayabhūṣita "ie, before the sunrise after the stars are invisible, both syāva and ṣabala take those oblation. Thus the contradiction is obvious.

Lastly tautology is also seen in Vedas there is text which means that one should repeat the first and final words thrice. But a tautological assertion is made by a demented person. There is want of agreement among some Vedic texts. There is incompatibility among others. Because of these three faults Vedas are not the means valid knowledge says Cārvakas. So the Vedas have no validity as a source of knowledge. The rites and ceremonies enjoined by the Vedas are the inventions of the Brāhmanas.

Naiyāyikas refutes these arguments. The text on Putreṣṭi cannot be regarded as false because the failure may be due to deficiency in the actions or in the agent or in the means. From the Putreṣṭi text it is clear that by the performance of the sacrifice the parents give birth to a son. Hence the sacrifice is the instrument, the parents are the agents, and the connection with the sacrifice is action. When all these three are perfect the result is gained. If anyone of these is imperfect there will be no result. With regard to sacrifice deficiency in the action means non-performance or mission of it details, deficiency in agent is the performer is illiterate or immoral character; deficiency in the means where the materials offered is not sanctified etc. with regard to the act of procreation, deficiency in the means wrong intercourse, in agent is impotency and in the means is described in connection with the sacrifice. So the first fault is rejected.

Regarding the second, after accepting the particular time for oblation, if one offers it in the time other than that, then the offer may be taken by syāva or ṣabala. Regarding the third oblation, if the repetition is meaningful then tautology will not be there. In the said example it is said that one has to recite fifteen mantras so in order to make it fifteen the first and the last are recited thrice. Thus all the three oblation are rejected.

Cārvakas says Vedas are invented by Brahmins who cheats other casts to earn their livelihood. The Vedas are mere incoherent ramblings of knaves; the religious rites simply invented to earn their bread so they are not authoritative. Udayanāchārya refutes this in Nyāyakusumāñjali saying that Vedas are authoritative as they are accepted by valid knowledge by great saints , who practiced the Vedic sacrifices with earnestness, untainted by such vicious causes as intention to deceive, secret designs eagerness for false disputations desire for livelihood etc. One cannot cheat himself and take pains to cheat others. Vedāntachārya in his Nyāyaparisuddhi gives the same argument.

Here arises a doubt that if the validity of Vedas depends on the words of God and the God is known by the Vedas then there is mutual dependence. Only to avoid this Naiyāyikas first prove the existence of God through the inference and then accept the validity of Vedas as they are his words. That is why Udayanāchārya in the fifth stabakam of Nyāyakusumāñjali first states the anumāna such as karyayogana.. etc., and then quote a passage from Veda or smṛti.

To sum up even though, all the orthodox systems accept the validity of Vedas, the method of its validity differs in every darśana.

4. CONCLUSION:

The Nāstika class of Indanpilosophical system includes the Cārvakas, the Jaina and the Bauddha systems, these not believe in the testimony of the Vedas. As a matter of fact they owe their origin it the reaction against Vedic traditions.

The philosophers have openly abused the Vedas. They say that the Vedas are full of lies and repetitions; they

have been created by cunning priests who intended to play their own game by misguiding ignorant persons. The Cārvāka incapable of being the means valid knowledge. They are false because they make statements, which are false. They are contradictory because they make statements, are incompatible with one another. They are tautologies because they repeat the same statements several times.

Again the Jainas also do not believe in the Vedas instead they believe in th words of Tīrtaṅkaras. The Buddhist philosophers have also condemned blind faith in the Vedas. But neither Jainas have abused the Vedas nor shown utter disrespect to them as Cārvāka has done. As a matter of fact despite their belonging to Nāstika class, they are nearer to the Āstika systems as compared with Cārvakas.

Thus Āstikas are those systems of Indian philosophy which believe in the testimony of the Vedas. This class includes six systems of Indian philosophy which are collectively known as ṣaddarśana. These are Mīmāṃsa, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. It must be noted that of these systems. Mīmāṃsa does not believe in God. Hence the meaning of Āstika is beleiver in the Vedas.

Now in the ĀĀstika class itself there are two types of philosophical systems.

- a. Those which are directly based upon the Vedic scriptures. These include Mīmāṃsa and Vedānta of these, the first emphasizes the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas and the second , the knowledge aspect. As they are directly based upon the Vedas, both these types are sometimes called Mīmāṃsa. To make a distinction Vedānta is known as Uttaramīmāṃsa and the other is known as Pūrvamīmāṃsa. Both these systems accept Vedas as apauruṣeya mean not written by a person and they are eternal. Both have their own value in Indian philosophy.
- b. Those which are not directly based on the Vedic scriptures but have an independent basis. These however accept the testimony of the Vedas and try to show the harmony of their own thought with that of the Vedas. These include Sāṃkhya and Yoga accept Veda as eternal and apauruṣeya, but Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika accept Veda as pauruṣeya they accept the validity of Vedas as they are the words.

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