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Pada And Padārtha –A General Outlook

Dr.P.N.Sudarsanan

Associate Professor for Sanskrit Vyakarana

Govt.Sanskrit College

Tripunithura, Kerala, India.

Abstract

The Scholars from East and West together agree that word as a thing, having power or significance in it. But what is this power? or śakti? In their opinion, all words have a certain power; and this power is a unique existence in things like a seed. Seeds are the cause of plants; and these seeds have the power to produce plants. But when some insect has bitten the seed, it is incapable of growing plants. They say that there is some hidden power in the seed, which is not sensed yet, and it can produce the plant. But an insect can take away this power of seed to grow the plant. From this example¹ we can say that words have power to mean and this power of meaning is inherent in them. It cannot be shaken by any external force, These words are meaningful by their very nature²"; and there is no word which is not meaningful.

Key Words –Philosophy, Mimamsakas, Grammarians, Nyaya School

Introduction

In India, speculations about the nature of this relation subsisting between word and meaning has been a controversy among the Philosophers, Grammarians and Rhetoricians. These scholars have assumed a direct relationship between word & meaning (sabda & artha) and they have made a deeper and more thorough analysis of this relation than the Western scholars. In Indian philosophy, there are two main schools, Mimamsa and Nyaya school support to the origin of this sabdartha relation. Of these two main views - one is natural (nitya) and the other is conventional (sāmāyika or samketika). The first view is propounded by the Mimāmsakas and the second by the Naiyayikas

Views of Mimamsakas.

According to the Mimāmsakas, the significative power is inherent in the words themselves. In their opinion, the relationship between a word and its meaning is eternal in the sense that it stands ever fixed by nature without a beginning or end"³. They believe in the perennial continuity (pravāhanityata) of the word and meaning. They also assert that we learn language from our elders, who in their turn learn it from their elders and so on. Thus it could be traced back to any conceivable period of human society and it is not possible to trace the origin of the relationship to a person"⁴. So the Mimamsakas conceive that language and for that reason the relation between the word and its meaning is anādi or eternal, and the signifying power is inherent in the words themselves. So they call this power as 'Sakti' and maintain it as an independent reality"⁵.

Views of Grammarians.

The Grammarians also agree with the Mimamsakas that the permanent nature of the relation between word and meaning is to be understood from popular usage itself"⁶. They also say that this relation is fixed and permanent. Right from Vyādi upto Nāgesa, all of them have given a serious thought to it. Bhartrhari propounds the theory of identity-in-difference between the word' and its meaning and he also agree with this natural relationship between word and meaning⁷. This natural relation between word and meaning has also been explained in terms of yogyata or the innate capacity of the words. Bhartrhari suggest that just as the indriyas or the organs of perception have a natural power to perceive what comes into their purview, so also words have a natural capacity for conveying words⁸. Kātyāyana has admitted the relation of the word and meaning as eternal⁹ and Patanjali has given a long discussion on it in his Mahābhāṣya¹⁰. According to the Grammarians, not only the relation between word and meaning is eternal, but the word and its meaning are inseparable also. As soon as a word is pronounced, the referent, it stands for, is denoted; and as soon as we think of a referent, it makes us pronounce the word. That is why Kalidasa says that word and its sense are in close union (samprktau)¹¹.

Views of Navya Naiyayikas

In the opinion of Navya- Naiyāyikas, śakti is an important factor because without this Sakti, they cannot explain the connection between a word and its meaning. Generally speaks that 'Sakti means Samarthya'¹². They do not accept sakti as a category. But in the context of a sentence, it is a type of power which conveys the meaning of a word. According to the Naiyāyikas, 'sakti or 'power' is the convention made by God, that a certain word has certain meaning¹³. Laugākṣi Bhaskara opinions that convention (samketa) is existing from eternity, such and such a thing is to be understood from such and such a word¹⁴. So they concluded. here that language is the creation of God, and each word is capable of conveying a particular sense because God has no will in it. In the opinion of Navya Naiyāyikas, the meaning of a word is determined not only by the will of God, but also by a simple will of the person, who names it. e.g:-On the eleventh day of the birth of a child, the father names him and henceforth the child is known by that name. So they essentially propounded the name theory of meaning so far as single words are concerned

The Pracyā logicians deny this later types of sakti: but they named them simply conventional (paribhāṣika) and on the other hand those words derived from God are sakta. According to them, a word can have both the origins- ie human as well as divine. Because of this reason the author of Tarka- prakāśa defends the old Naiyāyikas view". Athalye and Bodas were accepted the Navya- Naiyāyikas view and they deny the divinity of language origin" Annambhatta, the author of Tarka dipika' defined this sakti in another way. According to him. power is the relation of a word and object that always serves to revive the memory of that object", whenever the word is spoken. Visvanatha also agree with him".

The Naiyayikas do not agree to the view of the eternal relationship between word and meaning. If there were an eternal relation between word and meaning, a word would have expressed the same meaning at all places and at all times. More over, by accepting this theory, different words should not be used to express a single meaning. So they considered it as conventional and is based on the will of God or mere will.

Conclusion

So we can conclude that this is a common experience that everyone firstly hears a word, then they understand its meaning. The meaning which is manifested by a listener is only due to the sakti and this sakti, which lies in that specific word. This relation between word and meaning i.e sakti, which give rise to sabdabodha.

In short, there are different views on the relation between word and meaning.

Some of these are given below:

1. The older Naiyāyikas hold that the relation is dependent on the will of God (Isvareccha)"
2. The Neo-Naiyāyikas are of the view that this relation depends on mere will (whether divine or human (icchāmātra)"
3. The old Naiyāyikas are of the opinion that the sakti (primary denotative capacity) does not lie in ādhunika sanketa

eg:-Such proper names as 'Deva Datta' are non- connotative".

4. The Neo-Naiyāyikas are of the opinion that even such words possess śakti"
5. The Vaiyakaranas regard the relation between word and meaning as one of revealer (vācaka) and revealed (vācya) as determined by the potency (Sakti) of the word".
6. Some older Naiyāyikas take the relation between word and meaning as avinābhāva (i.e. non-existence of the one without the other)"
7. Patanjali is of the view that the relation between word and meaning is one of identity (tādātmya). That which is the word is also the meaning and vice versa".
8. Some Mimāmsakas regard the denotative capacity (abidhā sakti) of a word as a separate entity.
9. According to Kumarila, the relation between word and meaning is neither one of difference (bheda) nor one of identity (abbedā) but one of identity in difference (bhedabheda)"
10. According to Prabhakaras and his followers, the potency (sakti) of a word is of two kinds viz.
 - (i) Anubhāvikā i.e. that which gives the meaning of word
 - (ii) Smārikā i.e. that which arouses the memory of objects signified
11. According to Buddhist Logicians, the fakti of a word lies in what they call Apoha. They do not recognise any eternal universal (nitya jāti) like gotva (cowness) or ghatatva (potness). According to the Apohavadins, when we call a number of objects by the same name, eg: ghata (pot) what happens is the cognizance of likeness with and unlikeness from other objects.

For example, the word blue (nila) means that which is different from non blue (anila). Thus what we call by the name of blue colour is nothing but that which is different from what is different is known as atadvyāvṛtti or tadbhinna bhinnatva. It is this that constitutes the real meaning of the word. The Buddhist Logicians call this power (Sakti) of word by the name of apoha. It is a negative concept as it explains the meaning in negative terms.

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