

The Need of Suggestive Power of the Word: A Nyāya Overview.

Research Paper by - Dr. Pankaj Jaje

Abstract

Poetry is a combination of words and their meanings. The listeners of the language comprehend the meaning of the words uttered. This common meaning is generally the primary meaning of the words. But some more senses of the words have been explained well by Indian poetics. Such as the secondary meaning e.i. Lakṣaṇā and suggestive meaning e.i. Vyañjana. According to some schools of Indian philosophy, there is no need of considering a separate Vyañjana Vṛtti. In this paper, an effort is made to examine the views of poetics and the Navya Nyāya school of philosophy in the context of Śabdavṛtti. It will be a topic of interest to observe how Nyāya school handles those examples of suggestive power which are elaborated by poetics.

Keywords: Indian Philosophy, Nyāya, Śabda, Suggestive meaning, Verbal Testimony.

Introduction

Common people and critical thinkers utter sentences having the intention of conveying thoughts that their listeners are yet to know. Wise people use language to enquire about different objects that existed in the outer world. This language is generally known as Śabda which makes human life possible to converse. The knowledge generated by this Śabda is called Śābdabodha. Although Śābdabodha or verbal testimony is one of the four valid forms of knowledge. Indian poetics along with other Indian philosophical systems elaborated the concept of Śabdaśakti which means 'Word Power', Which is an essential concept in understanding the concept of Śābdabodha or verbal testimony.

This śabdaśakti is divided into three types Abhidhā, Lakṣaṇā, and Vyañjana. Respectively, the primary sense, secondary sense, and suggestive sense. Indian poetics elaborated or explained these three-word powers enormously. But some Indian philosophical systems like the Nyāya school do not agree with the thought that suggestive function is a separate power of the word. Here, it is explicitly explained how the Naiyaīka's (scholars of the Nyāya school of philosophy) included suggestive power of the word in Abhidhā and Lakṣaṇā. The concept is explained with a few examples and observed the problem occurred if any.

Verbal Testimony

Theory of knowledge/Epistemology is a rich genre of Sanskrit literature, carried out in texts belonging to distinct schools of philosophy. Classical Indian epistemology is dominated by theories about pedigree i.e. views about knowledge-generating processes, called Pramaṇa, knowledge sources. The principal candidates are perception, inference, and testimony. Ancient and medieval era texts of Indian philosophies include extensive discussions on ontology, reliable means of knowledge, epistemology, value system, and other topics.

Pramaṇa itself is the definition that is the instrument for pramaṇ. Pramaṇ is valid knowledge. Valid knowledge will be a special form of cognition. All cognitions are not valid knowledge. Hence to understand the nature of the method of valid knowledge Pramaṇa has to consider first the nature and different forms of cognition or knowledge Jñāna as such.

In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy cognition (Buddhi) is taken to mean the same thing as apprehension (Upalabdhi), knowledge (Jñāna,) and cognizance (Pratyaya).

Hence knowledge means awareness or apprehension of objects. Knowledge consists simply in the manifestation (Prakaśa) of objects. All things are made manifest or revealed to us when they become objects of knowledge.

Various schools of Indian philosophy have put their thoughts in the context of meaning. They systematically explained a logical & linguistically relevant issue. Amongst them is a concept of śabdaśakti. To understand the concept one needs to understand the rich genre carried out in classical Indian epistemological texts belonging to various schools of Indian philosophy. These schools such as Nyāya & Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, prominently dealt with different views regarding the concept of meaning while discussing the concept of Pramaṇ. Pramaṇ is valid knowledge. This knowledge is a special form of cognition. 'In the Nyaya-Vaisheshik Philosophy, common people as —.' As said previously, common people as well as thinkers of the system utter sentences. They want to convey their intentions or informations; with the use of a language, speakers convey their ideas to their listeners who do not yet know but wish to know. Language make human life possible. Without language it would have been like dark night. Hence poet Dandin remarks the following point -

इदमन्धतमं कृत्स्नं जायेत भुवनत्रयम् । यदि शब्दहवयं ज्योतिरासंसारं न दीप्यते ॥2

‘All these three worlds would be engulfed in blinding darkness unless this light called śabda had shone all around us.’

Intelligent, insightful people do not wish to know or communicate to others over and over again about the things that they already know well. If they did so, their statements would not be worth heading. Thus everybody admits that it is only fresh information that figures as sentence meaning to convey. For which communicators utter words, that makes up intelligible sentences.

The awareness generated by such śabda in the form of a sentence is called Śābdabodha cognition of the sentence meaning or awareness of the relation of word meanings. There are different causes of Śābdabodha, among which Vr̥tti or Śabdaśakti is one. According to the Navya-Nyāya there are two śabdaśaktis one is Abhidhā and another is Lakṣaṇā, but one more is accepted by the poetics known as Vyañjana. There arises a curiosity that how the Vyañjana or the examples of Vyañjana are included by the Navya-Nyāya. In this work, an attempt is made to interpret the examples of Vyañjana according to the Navya-Nyāya.

The Nyaya Definition of Śabda and its causes

The literal meaning of Śabda is verbal knowledge. It is the knowledge of objects derived from words or sentences. All verbal knowledge, however, is not valid. Hence Śabda, as a Pramaṇa, is defined in the Nyāya as ‘Valid Verbal Testimony’ आतोपदशः शब्दः।

.A Verbal statement is valid when it comes from a person who knows the truth and speaks the truth about anything for the guidance of other person. But it is a matter of common observation that a sentence or statement is not by itself sufficient to give us any knowledge of things. Nor again does the mere perception of the words of a sentence lead to any knowledge about objects. It is only when one perceives the words and understands their meanings that he acquires any knowledge from a verbal statement. Hence, while the validity of verbal knowledge depends on its being based on the statement of a trustworthy person, its possibility is conditional on the understanding of the meaning of that

statement. Hence, Śabda or testimony as a source of valid knowledge consists in understanding the meaning of the statement of a trustworthy person. It appears from the above definition that the first step in Śabda or testimony is the perception of the words of a sentence or proposition set forth by some trustworthy person. In the case of a spoken sentence, we have an auditory perception, and in that of a written sentence, we have a visual perception of the constituent words. Secondly, there must be an understanding of the meaning of the words perceived by us. It is through this understanding of the meaning of words that we come to the final step, namely, the verbal knowledge of objects or the truth about certain objects.

Thus the Karana or the special cause of Śabda or valid verbal knowledge is the knowledge of words (padañāna) which leads to the knowledge of objects through its function (Vyāpāra) of recalling to our minds the meanings connected with words or sentences. A Kārika from Nyaṣiddhāntamuktāvali can be seen as follows-

पदज्ञानं तु करणं द्वासां तत्र पदार्थधीः । शाब्धबोधः फलं तत्र शक्तिधीः सहकारिणी ॥४

Thus, aḥkaṇkṣa, yogyata, sannidhi, taṭparya, padañāna, padaṛthopasthiti and śaktijñāna are counted as essential causes of verbal testimony. The Śakti from the above list is interpreted as Vr.tti. Because only Śakti/abhidha is not sufficient to give the desired meaning. The definition is वृत्तिश्च शक्तिलक्षणान्यतररूपा 15 Though these two abhidha and Lakṣaṇa are accepted by Navya-Nyaṣya one more śabdaśakti is added in the poetics, which is Vyañjana. According to Indian poetics, a word has three types of powers to highlight the meaning or referent.

- It signifies or denotes - अभिधा
- It indicates - लक्षणा
- It suggests - व्यंजना

Abhidha (Primary Sense) - The meaning, which is comprehended immediately after the word is uttered, is the Primary meaning. This can be known as dictionary meaning or literal sense of a word. मुख्योर्थस्तत्र मुख्यो व्यापारारोस्याभिधोच्यते 16 घटादिविशेष्यकघटादिपदजन्यबोधविषयत्व-प्रकारक-ईश्वरसंकेतः ।

Lakṣaṇā̄ (Secondary Sense) - In certain cases where a particular word is not capable of conveying the desired sense, another power that modifies the word to produce the fitting or suitable meaning is called the indicator function i. e. Lakṣaṇā̄. शक्यसंबंधो लक्षणा। 7

Vyañjanā (Suggestive Sense) मुख्यार्थबाधनिरपेक्षबोधजनको मुख्यार्थसम्बन्धसाधारणः प्रसिद्धसिद्धार्थविषयको वक्त्रादिवैशिष्ट्यज्ञानप्रतिभाद्युदबुद्धः संस्कारविशेषो व्यंजना। 8 - The suggested sense/the essence of the word. It is founded on the principle that the meaning of a word is not limited to its literal sense. The word which converts the suggested sense through the suggested two functions is named Vyañjaka. The relation between the suggestive word and suggestive meaning is described as Vyan̄gya-Vyañjaka Sambandha. However, this suggested meaning is not explicit, it is considered as the essence of poetry. It is not seen everywhere or it can not be visible directly. 'To put it in another way: it is not the direct literal and obvious meaning that is very significant in poetry, but it is the suggested, indirect and emotive meaning that matters. Hence, though the words of a Kāvya and the literal sense must be given their due importance, they are but a medium for emotive and indirect meaning to flash forth. In good poetry, this suggested meaning dominates over the words and their literal meaning. As per Añandavardhana: The latter is compared to a woman's body and the former to her grace and beauty which is a subtler manifestation and a more profound meaning of womanhood.' Thus Vyan̄gyārtha suggested Sense is not explicit. It becomes the object of awareness. So it is considered as the essence of the poetry. Añandavardhana advocates the Dhvani School. In the Kāvya he focuses on the potential power of a word. In short, it is suggested that emotive or indirect meaning that matters in the poetry, not literal meaning which is explicit. Dhvani school considers suggested meaning as soul of poetry or Kāvya. It is designated as Dhvani. ध्वनिरात्मा काव्यस्य। 10

Observations

This Vyañjanā is mainly of two types शब्दशक्तिमूला 11, 2. अश्रुशक्तिमूला-तात्पर्यविषयीभूतार्थस्य या तात्पर्यविशेषबोधकतारुपा शक्तिः सैव मूलं यस्यः सा। 12

This third type named Vyañjanā is not accepted by the Naiyayikas as separate. They say that it is included either in Śakti/abhidhā or in the Lakṣaṇā̄ or in Anumāna etc. व्यंजनापि शक्तिलक्षणान्तर्भूता शब्दशक्तिमूला अर्थशक्तिमूला च अनुमानादिना अन्यथासिद्धा। 13 Lets understand this with some examples.

1. शब्दशक्तिमूला व्यंजना – गङ्गायां घोष is the best example of जहल्लक्षणा frequently taken in the Nyaya texts. As per the poetics, although it is possible to say तीरे घोष. But still when गंगायं घोषः is said it shows that there is something which is suggested. The speaker wants to say शैत्यपावनत्वविशिष्टतीरे घोषः। But, according to Nyāya तात्पर्यानुपपत्ति is one of the major causes of Lakṣaṇā, so one can simply include this example of Vyanjana in Lakṣaṇā, saying that Taṭparya of the speaker is to say शैत्यपावनत्वविशिष्टगङ्गातीरे घोषः. Hence speaker uttered गङ्गायां घोषः in spite of तीरे घोषः. शब्दशक्तिमूलायाः व्यंजनायाः लक्षणायाम् अन्तर्भावः। 14.
2. अर्थशक्तिमूला व्यंजना – दूरस्था भूधरा रम्या Here the word Bhudhara represents two meanings. One of them is the Mountain and another is King. According to poetics, the meaning Mountain is Abhidheya which is the primary meaning and they state that the meaning King is suggestive. But the word Bhudhara explicitly gives the meaning King or Nripati which is the primary meaning of the word. The power of the suggestive function can be replaced by the Primary function of the word. Hence, these types of examples convey the meaning with their primary functions only and can not be categorized into suggestive functions.

Conclusion:

An easily comprehended meaning of a word is the primary or natural sense. The other powers of a word are needed when the perception of a primary meaning gets obstructed. by that, the exact meaning of such an uttered word is analyzed. On the contrary, when the natural sense is not obstructed, the suggestive power suggested by the politicians stands for worthlessness. This suggestive power of a word is well explained and defined in all areas of poetics. but the Nyāya's opinion explains that this suggestive power can be included in the primary two functions of the word or Anumaṇ. Hence this paper also held their view and explained how Vyanjana can be included in the different types of categories stated by logicians. Hence they disagree with the view of considering Vyanjana as a separate word power.

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Assistant professor & HoD
Department of Sanskrit,
Government College, Daman
Gujrat, India