

CĀRVĀKA SCHOOL AS IN ṢAḌḌARŚANASAMUCCAYA OF HARIBHADRASŪRI

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Abstract

Darśana in Sanskrit is the term denoting philosophy which means spiritual perception of that which helps in the acquisition of knowledge. *ṢaḌḌarśanasamuccaya* of Haribhadrasūri is the earliest available compendium on six important schools of Indian philosophy. According to Haribhadrasūri the Cārvāka school of philosophy alone is designated as the *nāstika* since the Cārvāka do not believe in Vedas and God. They believe only in *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*— what is seen and they are materialistic in their outlook. The present article shall highlight the important features of the Cārvāka school of philosophy as elaborated by *ṢaḌḌarśanasamuccaya*.

Traditionally *Darśana* or the Indian philosophy is divided into two groups the *āstika* school – which believes in the authority of the Vedas and the *nāstika* school – which does not believe in the Vedas and their authority. Many systems of philosophical thoughts have emerged from the Vedic times and scholars have taken interest in the study of various schools of thoughts as evident from their refutations. Thus need for compendiums on different schools of thoughts arose and the earliest available text on important schools of thoughts is the *ṢaḌḌarśanasamuccaya* of Haribhadrasūri.

Haribhadrasūri is believed to be a Brahmin-priest of Jitāri, king of Chittaud, near Chitrakuta mountains. According to a popular story he is said to have embraced Jainism. Many Scholars opine that he lived in the 6th Century C.E¹.

He is famous as the author of 1400 *prabandhas* or *prakaraṇas* as referred to by the commentator Maṇibhadra, in his commentary *Laghuvṛtti* on *Ṣaḍdarśana-samuccaya* as— *caturdaśa-śataprakaraṇo-pakṛta-jina-dharmah*. Some of the well known works ascribed to him are— *Anekāntajaya-patāka*, *Caityavandana-vṛtti*, *Darśana-saptatikā*, and *Lilitavistara*.

Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya

Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya – as the title suggests is a compendium of six systems of philosophy viz. Bauddha, Jaina, Naiyāyika, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya and Jaiminiya. In eighty seven simple *anuṣṭubh* verses the author captures the tenets of all these schools. The author clearly states that the six systems of philosophy differ only on the basis of fundamental differences with regard to *devatā* (deity) and *tattva* (principles) (v.2):

*darśanāni ṣaḍdevātra mūlabheda-vyapekṣayā |
devatā-tattva-bhedena jṣātaavyāni manīṣibhiḥ ||*

According to Haribhadrasūri, Sugata and Jina are considered as the Supreme deities of Bauddha and Jaina schools respectively, while Śiva is the deity of Nyāya, Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika schools. It is also mentioned that no Supreme deity is accepted to the Jaimini school (v.68c) - *devo na vidyate ko'pi yasya mānam vaco bhavet*.

The author includes the Cārvāka school as the sixth system of philosophy justifying the title and by stating that the Vaiśeṣika is considered by some as a part of Nyāya school and not as a distinct school of thought. In order to justify the title of his work, he has discussed the Cārvāka though they do not believe in the concept of deity and are called the *nāstikas* (*Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*, vv. 8-9):

*naiyāyikamatādanye bhedaṁ vaiśeṣikāiḥ saḥ |
na manyante mate teṣāṁ paścaivāstikavādināḥ ||
ṣaḍdarśanasāṅkhyā tu pūryate tanmate kila |
lokāyatamatākṣepātkathyate tena tanmatam ||*

The author gives all the important tenets, *pramāṇyas* and special points of all the systems dealt with by him, including the Carvaka philosophy, without bias or criticism.

Cārvāka philosophy

The Cārvākas are also called the Lokāyatās. The *Maitrī Upaniṣad* VII.9² has a reference to the tenets of this school, stating Bṛhaspati to be its founder. The principles of this school are collected from the arguments posed against it in other schools of philosophy. Even during the times of Haribhadrasūri no independent work³ was available on the Cārvāka school and he must have collected the information from the rival schools⁴.

Cārvāka philosophy according to *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*

Haribhadrasūri enumerates the main tenets of the Cārvākas in eight verses (*Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*, vv. 80-7). In understanding the import of some of the ideas presented there in, the commentary, *Laghuvṛtti* of Maṇibhadra, is of great help.

Opening the section on Cārvāka philosophy, the author states succinctly the proclamation of the Lokāyatās, namely, there is no God, no liberation, no *punya* or *papa* and no fruits of action, which form the crux of their philosophy (v. 80):

lokāyatā vadantyevam na devo na nirvṛtiḥ |
dharmādharmau na vidyete na phalaṃ puṇyapāpayoḥ ||

They believe only in the world that is perceivable by the sense organs. In explaining this statement Haribhadrasūri cites the simile much used by the propagators of this school “Behold, O good lady! this is the paw of a wolf” (v.81):

etāvāneva loko'yaṃ yāvan indriyagocarḥ |
bhadre vṛkapadam paśya yadvadanti bahuśrutāḥ .

Explaining the simile, commentator Maṇibhadra (pp.65-6) ⁵ elaborates that a wily lover drew something similar to the claws of a wolf with his fingers and showed it to his innocent beloved, making her believe that to be the claws of a wolf. Citing this the materialists proclaim that the *dharmaccadma-dhūrtāḥ* or the religion-clad rogues mislead the innocent people regarding what is to be done or shunned, what could be eaten or not and so on, holding forth a temptation of the enjoyment of pleasure on attaining the other worlds that are only inferred or by verbal testimony. The materialists do not believe in the existence of other world and hence they ridicule the acts of penance, and religious practices.

Their way of life is easy living and agreeable to all, for they believe that the world seen alone is real. The purpose of life according to the Lokāyatas is to enjoy and gratify the senses. They propagate that what is lost never comes back hence every moment has to be enjoyed by drinking, eating and enjoying all the pleasures in this world (v.82) ⁶:

*piba khāda ca jātaśobhane yadtītaṃ varagātri tanna te |
na hi bhīru gataṃ nivartte samudayamātramidaṃ kalevarin ||*

Contrary to the well accepted facts, the Cārvākas believe that the body is made up of only four elements - earth, water, fire and air. They do not take ether (*ākāśa*) as it is only inferred and not perceived (v.83):

*kiṃ ca pṛthvī jalaṃ tejo vāyur-bhūtacatuṣṭayam |
caitanya bhumireteṣāṃ mānaṃ tu-akṣajameva hi ||*

The commentator explains that according to the Cārvākas everything including the mind exists only due to a particular combination of these four elements. The soul too is a combination of body and consciousness⁷. The consciousness or *caitanya* vanishes when the body disintegrates. They believe that the consciousness arises from matter just as the intoxicating power of wine arising

due to fermentation⁸. Hence they consider *caitanya* as a by-product of matter and soul is nothing but the living body (v.84):

*prthvyādi-bhūta-samīhatyām tathā dehādi-sambhavaḥ|
madaśaktiḥ surāṅgebhyo yadvat-tadvat-sthitā'tmatā||*

The only *pramāṇa* accepted by them is the *pratyakṣa* or the perception. Everything inferred is rejected by them– the soul, God, other worlds or even the ether or *ākāśa* (v.85):

*tasmād dr̥ṣṭa-parityāgād adr̥ṣṭe ca pravartanam|
lokasya tad vimūḍhatvam cārvākāḥ pratipediṛe||*

They ridicule the logicians as the elephants stuck in the mire of inference. Inference is said to be a mere leap into darkness as the deductive inference is vitiated by the principle of *petition principii* and inductive inference is uncertain because it proceeds unwarrantedly from known to the unknown⁹.

In the main, the Cārvākas are known for *svabhāva-vāda* or naturalism. They declare that everything originated accidentally and from nowhere and that whatever is seen by the eye is real and that whatever is not seen is unreal or non-existent. The Cārvākas do not recognise any other *pramāṇa* (*anumāna* or *śabda*) except the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*.

By way of conclusion the author makes a statement that the meaning and import of the tenets of the Lokāyata school may be analysed and thought of by the wise (v.87):

*lokāyatamate'pyevam saṅkṣepo'yam niveditaḥ|
abhidheya-tātparyārthaḥ paryālocaḥ subuddhibhiḥ||*

On this an interesting note is added by Maṇibhadra, the commentator “the Bauddha principles are to be listened to, the Jaina tenets are to be practiced, the Vaidika rites are to be followed and Lord Śiva is to be meditated upon”:

*śrotavyaḥ saugato dharmāḥ karttavyaḥ punarārhtaḥ|
vaidiko vyavhartavyo dhyātavyaḥ paramaḥ śivaḥ||*

Thus Haribhadrasūri's attempt in collecting together and presenting the principal tenets of Cārvāka school paved way for later writers to develop independent texts like *Tattvopaplavasimha* and *Cārvākaśaṣṭi* ¹⁰.

NOTES :

- ¹ Damodarlal, editor of *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*, also records that the Historians fix the date of Haribhadrasūri to be the latter half of the 5th C.A.D.
- ² *Bṛhaspatir vai śukro bhūtvendrasyābhayāyāsuresbhyah. . . . vedādi- śāstra-himsaka-dharmābhi-dhyānam-astviti vadanti ato nainām-abhidhīetānyathaiṣā bandhyevaiṣā ratimātrañ phalamasyā vṛttacyutasyeva nārambhañīyetyevam hyāha dūramete viparīte viṣūci avidyā yā ca vidyeti jṣātā |....*
- ³ An independent work on this system is found in later times by Jayarāśībhaṭṭa (8th Century C.E) called the *Tattvopaplavasimha* this was published by Gaekward oriental series, Baroda in 1940.
- ⁴ *Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha* of Mādhava (14th Century C.E) is another such treatise giving the summary of the principles of the school collected from the arguments of other systems.
- ⁵ *yathā hi kaśचित्पuruṣo vṛkapadadarśanasamudbhūtakutūhlām dayitām mantharataraprasṃmarasamīraṇasamīkṛtapāmīsuprakārasvāṅgulinyāsena vṛkapadākāratām vidhāa prāha - he bhadre vṛkapadam paśya| ko'rthaḥ yathā tasyā aviditaparamārthatayā mugdhāyā vidagdho vallabho vṛkacaranānirīkṣāgraham karāṅgulinyāsamātrena pralobhya pūritavān. evamamī api dharmachadmadhūrtaḥ paravaścanapravaṇā yat kiścidanumānāgamādidārdhymārśyavyartham mugdhajanān svargādi-prāptilabhyabhogābhogapralobhanayā.....*
- ⁶ Com. on v.82: *gatam na nivartate – sukha-yauvanādīkam gatam na parāvartate; peyāpeya- nirapekṣayā madirādīkam piba adharādīkam vā bhakṣyābhakṣya-nirapekṣayā-māmsādīkam khāda-bhogādyupabhogam kuru . . .This echoes the Epicurean philosophy, 'eat, live and be merry'.*
- ⁷ Com. on v.83: *caitanyaviśiṣṭaḥ kāyaḥ puruṣaḥ*
- ⁸ Com. on v.84: *kiṇvādibhyo madaśaktivad vijṣānam*

⁹ Com on v. 84: *viśeṣe'nugamābhāvāt sāmānye siddhasāadhanāt anumābhaṅgapañke'smin nigamanā vādidantinaḥ.*

¹⁰ Composed and Published in 1928.

Bibliography

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3. V. Varadachari, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Ram Narain Lal Beni Prasad, Allahabad, 1960.