

## “BUDDHYAPEKṢAM” IN KAṆĀDA SŪTRA - 1-2-3

SUSHIT KUMAR SARKAR

In Vaiśeṣika tradition the notion of real Universal makes its first appearance in *Kaṇāda-Sūtra*<sup>1</sup> 1.2.3. It may be noted that the creed of the concept is found even in some earlier *sūtras*<sup>2</sup>. Originally the word ‘*Sādharmya*’, which means a common property belonging to a number of individuals, has been used as a synonym for *sāmānya*. However, in the Vaiśeṣika sūtra 1.2.3 the term *sāmānya* has been used in the sense of a category at par with other five positive categories having an ontological status of its own. According to Kaṇāda the true knowledge of these independent reals along with their common and uncommon properties would pave the way to liberation, the Sumum Bonum of life.<sup>3</sup>

One point to be noted here is that the term *sāmānya* in the sense of category is always found in a double-member compound-the other member of which is *Viśeṣa*. Kaṇāda, thus, defines *sāmānya* as ‘*sāmānyam viśeṣa iti buddhyapekṣam*’ (V.S. 1.2.3). That means ‘*sāmānya-viśeṣa*’ is relative to thought. Much controversy is found among the later interpreters regarding the exact import of the term ‘*buddhyapekṣam*’. The term ‘*buddhyapekṣam*’ ordinarily means dependent on intellect, or on subject, or on thought, or on understanding. A good number of interpreters accepting this literal meaning of the term hold that the above sūtra asserts the subjectivity of universals. They represent Kaṇāda as a conceptualist, rather than a realist. We may mention some of those interpretations in the following way.

H. N. Randle states : “It has been held that Vaiśeṣika Sūtra (1.2.3) asserts the subjectivity of the universal and that therefore the *sūtra* does not teach the doctrine of the real universal<sup>4</sup>. He, however, subsequently refutes such an

interpretation and upholds the bold realism of the Vaiśeṣika Philosophy of Kaṇāda.<sup>5</sup>

Harsh Narain categorically says, 'Kaṇāda or rather the author of the original core of *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* is a conceptualist.<sup>6</sup> According to him, the word *Sāmānya* neither originally, nor in the extant text of *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra* bears the fixed, technical meaning of universal. It is found that the word had been arbitrarily used in the work sometimes in the sense of category Universal, and sometimes in the sense of mere similarity. This, he thinks, goes to show that the concept developed into a cut and dried category much later than substance, attribute and motion on the one hand and existence on the other.<sup>7</sup> Thus he concludes that the word *Sāmānya* by which the category has come to be designated in the *Vaiśeṣika* system was originally a synonym for '*Sādharma*' meaning resemblance or similarity.<sup>8</sup> And if *Sāmānya* is taken in the sense of mere similarity then Kaṇāda, no doubt, appears to hold conceptualistic view of *Sāmānya*.

D. N. Sastri, another contemporary thinker, favours to interpret '*sāmānya*' on the basis of the definition appeared in Kaṇāda aphorism 1.2.3 as a subjectively constructed entity. Dr. Sastri says<sup>9</sup> that in the *Sūtra*, *Sāmānya* and *Viśeṣa* are explicitly declared to be dependent on intellect (i.e. they are mere relative terms). This, he thinks, is a clear evidence to show that Kaṇāda never conceived *Sāmānya* etc. as objective realities. We may quote him here to speak for himself.

"..... there would be ample evidence to show that Kaṇāda did not assign objective reality to the last three categories, *Sāmānya* etc. In the first instance, only three categories: substance, quality and movement, are included in the term '*artha*' which obviously means an objective reality.

Secondly, the highest Universal (*sattā*) which means 'existence' is held to be residing only in the first three categories. Moreover, although *Sāmānya* etc. are included in the list of *Padārtha* (categories) Kaṇāda seems to differentiate between *artha* and *padārtha*. While *artha* seems to mean an objective existence, *Padārtha* seems to have been used in its literal sense, viz. 'the meaning of a word' *Padārtha* therefore, can include even an intellectual entity because it can be expressed by a word."<sup>10</sup>

S. Peeru Kannu<sup>11</sup> also favours the subjective interpretation of the said aphorism of Kaṇāda. Kannu remarks, "Kaṇāda takes generality as that which is associated with cognition. He accepts *Sattā* (existence) as a specific generality

which exists in substance, attribute, and action. He also assumes that generalities such as *dravyatva*, *guṇatva*, *karmatva* etc. are both generalities and particularities.<sup>12</sup> The import of the above passage undoubtedly presents Kaṇāda holding *Sāmānya* as a subjective-entity depending on intellect.

Y. V. Athalye and M. R. Bodas also interpret the *Sūtra* on the same line. Let us quote them to speak for themselves : “The original aphorism of Kaṇāda is ambiguous and conveys a some what different notion. ‘*Sāmānya-Viśeṣa iti Buddhyapekṣam*’ conveys the sense that the notion of generality depends on the operation of our own intellect. A quality becomes *Sāmānya* only if we conceive it as residing in many; while the same is *viśeṣa* when we regard it as differentia. A property for instance exists in a certain number of objects which are so far of one kind; if we use the property for grouping those objects into one class, it is *Sāmānya*; if for distinguishing them from all other objects in the world, it is *Viśeṣa*. Thus an attribute though inhering in the object, cannot become *Sāmānya* until our intellect has recognised it to be so.<sup>13</sup> According to them this was the original conception of *sāmānya*, but they admit that subsequently it appears to have come to be regarded as an external attribute having an absolute and not merely a relative existence.<sup>14</sup>

So far is about the interpretations of Kaṇāda *Sūtra* that tend to be conceptualistic. But these interpretations are undoubtedly antirealistic spirit of the *Vaiśeṣikas*. Let us now take an attempt to interpret the *sūtra* of Kaṇāda at par with the bold realism upheld by the *Vaiśeṣikas*. And that can be better done by paying our attention to the context of the *Sūtra* as well as other associated *Sūtras* where the thrm ‘*buddhyapekṣam*’ and ‘*Sāmānya-Viśeṣa*’ have been used. Let us first take up some latter *Sūtras* that are associated with the *Sūtra* under consideration. In *Sūtra* 1.2.4 Kaṇāda states- “*bhāvohnuvṛttereḥ hutatvāt Sāmānyamev*. Here ‘*bhāva*’ means ‘*Sattā*’ or existence. So the *Sūtra* states that *Sattā* or existence is the *Sāmānya* only, because it is the ground of inclusion only (*anuvṛtti hetutvāt*). In the *Sūtra* 1.2.5 Kaṇāda states, “*Dravyatvam-guṇatvam-karmatvam ca sāmānyāni viśeṣāḥ*”, which means, *Dravyatva* (substance hood), *Guṇatva* (Quality-hood), *Karmatva* (Action-hood) are both *Sāmānya* and *Viśeṣa*.

The point to be noted here is that among the two *sūtras* mentioned above, the latter *sūtra* contains the term *viśeṣa*, whereas the former one does not. But the term *viśeṣa* is used here definitely in a different sense. Here the term is not used to

refer to the fifth category admitted by the Vaiśeṣika. The fifth category of the *Vaiśeṣikas*, though generally known as *viśeṣa*, is prefixed by the 'antya' by the later thinkers.<sup>15</sup> The pre-fix 'antya' has been explained by *Prāśastapāda* in three different ways. But we are not here concerned with those explanations. What is important here is that the prefix 'antya' differentiates the category *Viśeṣa* from other entities meant by the term in other contexts. To express it more clearly, the term '*Viśeṣa*' sometimes means the category '*Viśeṣa*' and sometimes relatively a lower *sāmānya*, and the pre-fix 'antya' before *Viśeṣa* standing for the category is used to perform that distinction. It is explored in the *Sūtra* 1.2.6.<sup>16</sup> It means that *Sāmānya* resides elsewhere then in the ultimate difference (antya *Viśeṣa*). The category *Viśeṣa* is the ultimate difference and that ultimate difference can never be treated as '*Sāmānya-Viśeṣa*', nor that *Viśeṣa* can have the universal.<sup>17</sup>

The greatest *Sāmānya*, or *sattā* resides in *dravya*, *guṇa*, and *karma*. But it is different from them.<sup>18</sup> It means that *sattā sāmānya* is something real over and above the categories of *dravya*, *guṇa* & *karma* although it resides in them. It is also something real over and above *dravyatva*, *guṇatva* and *karmatva*, because it exists even in the reciprocal absence of lower *sāmānyas* like *dravyatva*, *guṇatva* and *karmatva*. The point that concerns Kaṇāda here is perhaps to state that *sattā-sāmānya* can not be treated a *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa*. On the same ground the reality of Subordinate universals e.g. *dravyatva*, *guṇatva* and *karmatva* has been argued from *sūtra* 11-16.<sup>19</sup> The section concludes with the assertion that *sattā* is one, because the character of *sattā* (existence) is not different in various things which are said to exist.

Against the contention that Kaṇāda seems to favour conceptualism or subjectivism in defining *sāmānya* is *sūtra* 1.2.3, the following arguments may be put forward :

In the first place, Kaṇāda mentions *sāmānya* as one of the six positive categories (*Padārtha*) in his *sūtra*. *Dravya-guṇa-karma-sāmānya-viśeṣa-samavāyānām padārthānām-tattvā-jñānam niḥśreyasam*.<sup>20</sup> The category of *padārtha* in *Vaiśeṣika* system is not a subjective construction or dependent on knowledge of it, but is objectively real designated by the term that stands for it. i.e. *Padasya arthah Padārthah*. Thus *sāmānya* being the fourth category of Kaṇāda must be an objective reality designated by the term "*sāmānya*".

Secondly, if *sāmānya* be taken as subjective and that subjective entity as real, then bold realism of the *Vaiśeṣikas* falls to the ground. It is indubitable that throughout the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtras* Kanāda advocated bold realism. Thus the contention of subjectivity is, in spirit, an anti-Kaṇāda contention.

Thirdly, in the Vaiśeṣika system '*Sāmānya-Viśeṣa* has been treated as ontological reality distinguished from *Sāmānyameva* (or *mere sāmānya*) on the one hand and the category *Viśeṣa* (or *antya Viśeṣa*) on the other. In the last section of *Padārtha Dharma Samgraha*, the author, *Prāśastapāda* elaborately, explains the realistic status of *sāmānya-viśeṣa* like *dravyatva*, *guṇatva*, and *karmatava*<sup>21</sup>. Hence the above contention of subjectivity against Kanāda does not stand at all. It is only the designation of an entity as *sāmānya-viśeṣa* that depends on intellect.

Fourthly, it appears that in the *sūtra* 1.2.3 the term *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa* is used in a singular number. If *Sāmānya Viśeṣa* were taken in the sense of dual in number i.e. in the sense of *Sāmānya* and *Viśeṣa* then perhaps the *Sūtra* could have been written as *Sāmānya Viśeṣasca*. So what is relative to knowledge is not the category of *Sāmānya*, nor the category of *Viśeṣa*, but a particular type of *Sāmānya* known as *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa*. Moreover, it is not the knowledge of mere-*Sāmānya* (or *Sāmānyeva* of *para Sāmānya*) nor the knowledge of lower *Sāmānya* (or *apara Sāmānya*) but the knowledge of *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa* or *Parā-Para Sāmānya* which is relative to or dependent on knowledge (*buddhyapeksam*).<sup>22</sup>

In relation to *parā-Sāmānya* the *Sāmānya* like *dravyatva* etc. is known as *Viśeṣa*, while in relation to *apara Sāmānya* it is known as *Samanya*- hence it is designated as *Sāmānya Viśeṣa*. Thus it is the designation *Sāmānya-Viśeṣa* that depends on the knowledge of *para and apara sāmānya* and neither any type of *Sāmānya* nor the Category *Viśeṣa* can be treated as subjective or dependent on intellect.

In view of the above reasons we can in no way consider Kanāda as a conceptualist. In this context we may quote Dr. S.Radhakrishnan who refuses to class Kanāda as a conceptualist. According to him, We cannot class Kanāda as a conceptualist, since he admits *Sāmānya* as an element of the real. Extreme conceptualism holds that Universals exist only in the mind. The general qualities signified by the *Sāmānya* is as real as the particulars, though our thought discriminates the common qualities and gathers them into Universal notion.<sup>23</sup>

Let us now take up an attempt to explain the *Stūtra* 1.2.3 of Kanāda at par with bold realism upheld by the *Vaiśeṣikas* in the following way :

*Sāmānya* is a category or *padārtha* having a real ontological status of its own. It is sub-divided into *para* and *apara*. *Para Sāmānya* contains the greatest number of individuals. *Sattā* is the *para Sāmānya* in this system. (*Mahāvīśayavāt para*)<sup>24</sup>. While *apara Sāmānya* contains relatively lower number of individuals (*Alpa viśayavāt apara Sāmānya*)<sup>25</sup>. That *apara Sāmānya* which covers greater number of individuals than another *sāmānya* that falls under it is known as *Sāmānya-viśeṣa*. The term *Viśeṣa* suffers from an unfortunate ambiguity. In the first sense, it means the ultimate difference which separates unique entities such as atoms from each other. Such *Viśeṣa* is the fifth category of the *Vaiśeṣika*. But in the second sense (as *Prāśastapāda* says) the specific difference or unique distinctness and a class containing less number of entities are called *Viśeṣa*. In this sense all *Sāmānyas* lower than *Sattā* are *Viśeṣas*, because they are common property of a class of things. That is why the category *Viśeṣa* is distinguished from *sāmānya viśeṣa* by pre-fixing *antya*. Such *sāmānya-viśeṣa* is at the same time the cause of both the knowledge of Sameness (*anugata pratīti*) and the knowledge of difference (*Vyāvṛtti pratīti*). Whether the term *Sāmāny-Viśeṣa* will produce knowledge of *sameness* or knowledge of *difference* will be determined by the context, i.e. whether the *sāmānya* is stated in relation to a lower *sāmānya* or to a higher *sāmānya*.

That is why *sāmānya-viśeṣa* had been stated in the *sūtra* as relative to intellect or *buddhyapekṣam*. Only such interpretation, I think can do justice to the bold realistic spirit of the *Vaiśeṣika* Philosophy.

### NOTES

1. *Sānāyam Viśeṣa iti buddhyapekṣam* (Kanāda sūtra 1.2.2)
2. *Drayya-Guṇayoh sa jātiyārbhakatvam Sādharmmyāni*. (1610:1.1:9)
3. *Drayya-Guṇa-Karma-Sāmānya-Viśeṣa-samavāya-nām Padārthānām sādhammya Vaidhammya-bhyām tattva jñānānam niśreyasāni* (*Ibid* : 1.1.4)
4. *Indian Logic in the Early Schools* : H. N. Randle : P -134
5. "But it is quite out of question to assert this in the face of the explicit statement of

- 1.11.8 and of the general sense of the section". (Ibid).
6. *Evolution of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Categoriology* : Harsh Narain : p-175.
  7. *Ibid.* page-179.
  8. *Ibid* : Page-178-79
  9. *The Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and its conflict with the Buddhist Dignaga School*, D.N. Sastri.
  10. *Ibid* : p 310-11
  11. *The Critical Study of Praśastapada Bhāṣya* S. Peeru Kannu.
  12. *Ibid* p.194.
  13. *Tarka Sangraha* : Annambhatta : Athalye and Bodas : P : 90.
  14. *Ibid* : P-91
  15. *Nityadravya Vṛttayoḥ antyaviśeṣaḥ*. (Praśastapāda Bhāṣya).
  16. *Anyatra antebhyoḥ Viśesebhyoḥ*.
  17. "Rūpahanirasambandha jātibādhaka jātibādhaka Saṃgraha"- Udayana
  18. *Dravya-Guṇa-Karmabhyoḥ arthantarān Sattā* - V.S.1.2.8.
  19. *Aneka dravyavattvena Dravyatvamuktam (11)*.  
*Guṇesu bhāvāt Guṇatvamuktam (13)*.  
*Karmasu bhāvāt Karmatvam uktam (15)*.
  20. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* (1.1.4).
  21. *Dravyatva guṇatva karmatvādi anuvṛtti hetutvāt sāmānyam viśeṣaśeṣa bhavati* (Praśastapāda bhāṣya).
  22. *Anuvṛtti Vyāvṛtti hetvāt Sāmānyā Viśeṣabhāvah Siddhah* (Praśastapāda Bhāṣya).
  23. *Indian Philosophy* : Vol-II : Page 214 (7<sup>th</sup> impression)
  24. *Praśastapāda Bhāṣya*.
  25. *Ibid*.

#### REFERENCES :

1. *Vaiśeṣika-Darśanam* : (Kaṇāda Sūtras) : Beng. Trans : Upendranath Mukhopadhyaya.
2. *Padārth-darma Sangraha* : Praśastapāda : Beng. Trans : ; Shyamapada Nyāya Tarka Tirtha.

3. *Kiranavali* Vol : Udayanācārya, Beng. Tran. Gopinath Sastri.
4. *Nyāya Sūtra with Vātsyāyana Bhāṣya* : Beng. Trans. Phani BhusanTarkabāgish.
5. S. Radhakrishnan. : *Indian Philosophy* : Vol-II
6. H. N. Randle : *Indian Logic in the Early Schools*
7. Y.V. Athalye and Mr. Bodas. : *Tarka-Sangraha of Annam-bhatta*
8. Harsh Narain. : *Evolution of Nyāya Vaiśeṣika Categoriology*
9. S. Peeru Kannu. : *The Critical Study of Praśastapāda Bhāṣya*
10. 'Jatir Jati' : Anadi Kumar Lahiri L: An article Published in *Darsana Journal* (Bengali).
11. D. N. Sastri. : *Critique of Indian Realism*