THE CONCEPT OF JNANA (KNOWLEDGE)

IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY:
AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

An

Abstract

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Abstract

Philosophy is a concept with multiple spectrums of branches and having endless sources. There have been countless philosophers in the world over and India has been leading the world in the area of philosophy. Philosophers have contributed in their own ways to understand the term ‘philosophy’ as also identify its prominent sources. Epistemology is an integral part of philosophy. ‘Epistemology’ is derived from the Greek words 'Episteme' (knowledge or science) and 'Logos' (knowledge or information). The study of the nature of knowledge is one of the core issues in epistemology, there is considerable agreement with regard to acceptability of knowledge as a value, but agreement about the nature of knowledge is not there. Philosophers or thinkers disagree as to what the nature of knowledge is, and how it is acquired. All these issues belong to Epistemology such as what is knowledge, what is the origin of knowledge, what are the various sources of knowledge what is the scope of knowledge and what is the validity of knowledge? The concept of knowledge has been source of attraction for thinkers all over the world. Some Philosophers define knowledge to be an act, some others regard it as a relation, and according to some it is self subsistent and for some others it is a quality Knowledge is quality, which is generated in the soul of man, souls are the loci of knowledge. The Indian term jnana (knowledge) primarily means spiritual awareness and may be employed in a variety of meanings in the Indian context. Knowledge is one of the fundamental issues concerned with life and world knowledge regarding reality and the means of knowledge and the methods of explaining them, these convictions, in general, may be brought under the broad heading of jnana which denotes all kinds of knowledge, true or false. The philosophical school of India grouped as orthodox and heterodox, Astika (orthodox) means one who believes in the authority (testimony) of the Vedas. On the other hand nastika (heterodox) means the opposite of this. All the six Brahmanical systems (Mimamsa, Vedanta, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisesika) accept the Vedic authority and are therefore called astika. In this study, four valid sources of knowledge i.e., perception, inference, comparison, testimony mostly accepted by orthodox School of Indian philosophy have been discussed. When a man comes across various convictions regarding the same thing, he desires to verify their validity through various methods which are termed as pramanas. Valid means of knowledge is a problem, which has been with us, which was with us and which will continue to be with us. Which form of knowledge is valid and what is the
basis for judging whether the knowledge that we have is right one, are some important questions, which have occupied the mind of thinkers in the west, particularly the Greek thinkers. Thus, it is an epistemological problem. No valid knowledge is possible without the study of the pramana's