CHAPTER FOUR

SĀṆKHYA VIEWS IN THE NAṆADHA-CARITA

The Sāṅkhya Darśaṇa is recognized to be the oldest system of Indian thoughts. Its antiquity appears from the fact that the Sāṅkhya tendency of thought pervades all the literature of ancient India including the śrutis, smṛtis, and purāṇas. It is said in the Mahābhārata that there is knowledge equal to the Sāṅkhya.¹ Sage Kapila is known as the propounder of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Īśvarakṛṣṇa in his sāṅkhya-kārikā systematically presents all the concepts of his philosophy. Gauḍapāda’s Sāṅkhya-kārikā-bhāṣya, Vācaspati’s Tattvakaumudī, Vijñānabhikṣu’s Sāṅkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya and Sāṅkhya-sāra and Aniruddha’s Sāṅkhya-pravacanasūtra-vṛttī are some other important works of the Sāṅkhya system. The Sāṅkhya pravacana sūtra written by Kapila is regarded as a posterior work to the Sāṅkhya-kārikā. So, Kapila, the expounder of Sāṅkhya system may be different from Kapila, the author of the said sūtra. In the arena of Indian philosophy, the Sāṅkhya school of thought earns a very good reputation. The main topics of the sāṅkhya darśana are Prakṛti, Puruṣa and the Gaṇas. The theory of causality known as Satkāryavāda of this school deserves a high esteem as well. The Sāṅkhya-system criticizes the sacrificial slaughter and its fruits such
as heaven enjoined by the Vedic scriptures. In the *Naiṣadha-carita*, very few allusions to the *Śāṅkhyā* views are found. Poet Śrīharṣa mainly gives some hints to the *Satkāryavāda*, the Vedic sacrifice and the like. In a very few verses of the *Naiṣadha-carita*, such conceptions are traced out which are discussed herein.

According to the *Śāṅkhyā* theory of causation, the effect exists in its material cause prior to its manifestation. As effect or *kārya* is said to be existent (sat) in the cause before its revelation. This is known as *Satkāryavāda* (theory of pre-existent effect) to contrast with *Asatkāryavāda* (theory of not-pre-existent effect) upheld by the *Nyāya-Vaśesika* system.

To establish the theory of causation, sage Kapila in his *Śāṅkhyā-sūtra*, displays five arguments in support of the theory of causation. Here, sage Kapila states that non-entity like man’s horn cannot be produced. So, it is suggested that if effect does not pre-exist in its cause, then no effort of any agency can produce it; hence it would be a mere non-entity like a flower of firmament or like a hare’s horn. In this respect, sage Kapila describes the causal principle. Thus it is clear that effect is invariably related to its material cause. So, effect cannot be causally connected with what does not exist. That means, all effects are not capable of being produced from all, everywhere and always. A capable effect can only be
produced by a potent cause and effect must be potentially existent in its cause.\(^5\) It is also asserted that effect has the nature of its cause.\(^6\) This theory of causation backed by the five arguments discussed above is identically described in the \textit{Sāṅkhya-kārikā} of Īśvarakṛṣṇa.\(^7\) According to this doctrine, entity cannot be barred and non-entity cannot be produced. In this way, the \textit{Sāṅkhya} system shows the invariable relation of an effect with its material cause (Upādāna-kāraṇa) also called \textit{Samāvēyi-kārana}.

In the \textit{Naiṣadha-carita}, this \textit{Sāṅkhya} theory of causation is found in a verse. The concerned verse contains Nala’s speech towards the four gods namely Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama. Nala on seeing the gods on the way to Damayantī’s \textit{svayamvara}, observes that the gods are nectar incarnate. He says that, between a cause and its effect, there is not much difference. He also adds that the product of food is the person's body. He contends that his eyes are immersed in nectar by looking at the nectar-fed bodies of the gods.\(^8\)

Thus, it is proved that a person’s body is the outcome of food. A body can never be supported without food. \textit{Nārāyaṇa} explains in his commentary that effect is identical with its cause. Regarding a person’s body, he explains that body is not different from food. \textit{Nārāyaṇa} gives an example of ear-ring of gold to describe the semblance of cause and effect.\(^9\)
Mallināṭh also in his commentary explains that effect is not different from its material cause.

While Nala glances at the gods, his eyes immerse in ambrosia. It indicates that his eyes enjoy a great rapture by seeing the nectar-fed bodies of the gods. Here nectar is said to be the cause, and the nectar-fed body is the effect. Therefore, no difference is found between the cause and its effect. Thus, the concept of transformation (parināma)\(^{10}\) of the \textit{Sāṅkhya} theory of pre-existent effect has been given a place of recognition in the present epic.

The relationship between cause and effect of \textit{Sāṅkhya} concept is traced in another place. According to it, an effect manifested from its cause and dissolves in the same. Just a gist of this notion is noticed in a verse of this epic, while Lord Paraśurāma is worshipped and praised by king Nala. This verse is Nala’s speech to Paraśurāma.\(^{11}\)

Here Paraśurāma, the sixth Incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu is depicted as the \textit{Brahman} of the \textit{Vedānta} system. In this context, the Vedic allusion is also marked. In this present verse, it is maintained that the \textit{Kṣatriya} class which is the effect of its cause, i.e. arms of the Supreme Being, dissolves in the very cause and hence its dissolution is appropriate from philosophical angle.
The *Sāṅkhya* system, in its every aspect, sticks to non-violence (Ahimsā). This system finds fault with the Vedic sacrifice and regards it as impure by process of slaying animals. The *Sāṅkhya* system claims that the Vedic sacrifices are contraindicated by vicious animal-slaughter. According to *Sāṅkhya* system, the Vedic sacrifice incurs vice and impurity caused by slaying animate beings as oblations.

In the *Naiṣadha-carita*, such a view of *Sāṅkhya* system is found reflected. In a verse of the *Naiṣadha-carita*, the moon is compared with the sacrifice (ijyā). It is depicted that the rob of the moon with its repository of nectar meant for the enjoyment of gods is pure as a sacrifice; but the same moon has a defiled portion, i.e. its stain just as the sacrifice has an impure phase, i.e. animal slaughter.

In this concerned verse, some words are imbued with literary pun. The circle (maṇḍala) of the moon is said to be replete with nectarrays and it is fair (śuddhā). Sacrifice is also depicted to be pure (śuddhā). Poet Śrīharsa wisely uses the word "deva-vraja-bhojyarddhiḥ". It implies that various oblations like *Soma* juice, *Purodāśa* cake etc. is offered to the deities in case of sacrifices. As such, sacrifice is enriched with ritual offering edible by the gods. Similarly, the moon-circle has the prosperity with the rays of ambrosia to be drunken by the deities. Besides, sacrifice has a ritual portion (aṅga), i.e. vice (himsā, animal slaughter) which is just
like a stain. The moon-circle also bears within itself a limb, i.e. stain (kalaṅka).\textsuperscript{14} In other words, for the well-being of the performer, sacrifice is pure and prolific but yet it has a blemish, i.e. vicious animal-slaying as its own part. In the same manner, though the robe of the moon is fair by its charm, but yet it is contaminated by a stain in itself. This kind of resemblance is in between the moon circle and the sacrifice. On this verse, Nārāyaṇa gives an alternative interpretation regarding the sacrifice. The Vedic religion, as he explains, is naturally pure; so the fault ascribed to it by the Sāṅkhya school is in vain.\textsuperscript{15}

The Sāṅkhya system holds that besides impurity caused by animal-slaughter, deterioration and gradation are ascribed to the Vedic sacrifices. The Sāṅkhya Sūtra asserts that by means of the Vedic activities like other seen means, the supreme goal, i.e. liberation or absolute annihilation of pain, cannot be attained, for the sacrificial acts yield non-eternal fruits like heaven and there is possibility of again coming back to the world after the abatement of merit.\textsuperscript{16} Mathara in his Vṛtti explains that heaven is the effect of an action i.e. sacrificial performance and as such, result of action is impermanent and perishable. Referring to the gradation of sacrificial fruits, i.e. sovereignty and heaven, Vācaspati opines that dignity of one’s opulence dejects the other having less wealth and hence heaven cannot be an abode replete with pleasure. In this way, it is
contended that heaven as the fruit of sacrifice is subservient to deterioration.

In the *Naiṣadha-carita*, this type of view pertaining to heaven is mentioned. Princess Damayanti is inclined to Nala, Lord of earth and so she rejects Indra, Lord of heaven. She indicates some shortcomings of heavenly pleasure and declines to choose Indra as her life-companion.

It is stated that the performers of sacrifices ascended heaven by virtue of their good deeds and again come down to the earth on the expiry of their virtue by enjoyment of fruits. Thus scrutinizing the two characteristic features of heaven and earth, the ultimate consequence of the two appears to be a couple of ‘śarkarā’ i.e. gravel and candied sugar. In the present case, the celestial fruit, as it tends to descent is just like ‘gravel’ and terrestrial fruit, as it aims at ascent is like ‘candied sugar’. A pun is found in the word, शर्कराः which implies both ‘gravel’ and ‘candied sugar’, Nārāyaṇa explains the superiority of earth to the heaven with fickle nature. Mallinātha also explains the transitoriness of heaven which is just like gravel.

Here, it is described that earth is better than heaven. Non-eternity of heavenly pleasure is reflected here. Heaven is attainable when somebody’s life is entirely exhausted. Therefore, in the world of mortals, attainment of heaven is quite impossible as long as life exists. In the present epic, it is maintained that when someone reaches heaven after
death, it does not wait even for a moment. For when merit of the enjoyer of heaven totally expires, he becomes an object of descent from it. As such, heaven inclines towards superficial pleasure and appears just like an unwholesome food. Therefore, no noble person cherishes his yearning for heaven. In this context, Cānduṇḍapandita also explains that for the time being, heaven is superficially charming and is distasteful in the long run. Hence, it is described as an unpalatable food. Nārāyaṇa also refers to the Gītā regarding heaven that has the tickle feature of coming down to the earth. Mallinātha says that the empyrean enjoyment like unpalatable diet accounts for imminent distraction. Thus heaven cannot be a dwelling of absolute happiness. Therefore, princess Damayanti declines to choose Indra as her husband. She does not express any craving for the heaven. The single-minded princess is keenly devoted to Nala alone, Lord of earth. In present case of describing heaven as a wholesome food, poet Śrīharṣa seems to be influenced by the Gītā. The Sāṅkhya system blames the Vedic performance as impure and their fruits transitory. From this perspective, the author, Śrīharṣa of this epic, has thus given some hints to the philosophical concepts with his unfailing muse of literary exposition. Thus from the above, it is seen that Śrīharṣa has very well made reflections to the doctrines of the system of Sāṅkhya.

This is all about how Śrīharṣa has reflected the system of Sāṅkhya in his epic Naiṣadha-carita.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. na hi Sāṅkhya-samam jñānam.
2. nāsadutpādo nṛṣaṁgavat. Śāṅ. Śū. 1/114.
4. sarvatra sarvadā sarvāsambhavāt. Ibid. 1/116.
5. saktasya sākya-karaṇat. SK, 9.
7. asad akaraṇāt upādāna - grahaṇāt sarva - sarvābhāvābhāvāt/
   saktasya sākya - karaṇāt kāraṇā-bhāvācca sat - kāryam // Ibid.
8. nāsti janya-janaka-vyatibhedaḥ
   satyam anna-janito jana-dehaḥ /
   vikṣya vah khalu tanum amṛtādāṁ
   dr̥ṅg-nimajjanam upaiti sudhāyām // NC. 5/94.
9. anna-janyo jana-dehah: asti janya-janakayoh vyatibhedaḥ yasmin asau
   asti-janya-janaka-vyatibhedaḥ; evarhvidho na bhavati kintu annād
   abhinna eva ..... ubhayatāpi suvarṇajanyāṁ kuṇḍalam dr̥ṣṭāntah
   Nārāyaṇa’s commentary on Ibid.
10. satattvato’nyathā prathā pariṇāma ityudiritaḥ. VP, p. 22.
11. kṣatra-jātir udiyāya bhujābhyaṁ
   yā tavaiva bhuvanāṁ sṛjataḥ prāk ;
   jāmadagnya-vapuṣas tava tasyās
   tau layārtham ucitaub vijayetāṁ. NC, 21/65.
12. mā hirṁsyāt sarvā bhūtāni – quoted in the STK under SK, K 2.

13. iṣyeva deva-vraja-bhojya – rddhih

śuddhā sudhā-didhītī – maṇḍatīyām /

hirṁsā yathā saiva tathāṅgam esā
kalaṅkam ekam malīnaṁ vibharti // NC. 22/74.

14. yathā candre kalankaḥ – Mallinātha’s Comm. on the KS.


16. nānuśravikād api tatsiddhiḥ sādhyatvāvṛttīyogād apuruṣārthatvam.

17. sādhorapi svaḥ khalu gāmitādho
ganī sa tu svargam itah prayāne /

ityāyatī cintayato hṛdi dve
dvayor udarkaḥ kimu sārkare na // ṆC, 6/99.

18. praksīṇa evāyuṣi karma - kṛṣṭe

narāṇa tiṣṭhatyupatiṣṭhate yah /

bubhukṣate nākam – apathyā – kalpāṁ
dhīrastam āpāta – sukhonmukhaṁ kah// Ibid, 6/100.
19. kṣaṇa – mātraṁ na pratikṣate punar apy adhogaṁitvat ‘kṣiṇe puṇye’
iti bhagavadvacanāt. – Nārāyaṇa’s comm. on NC, 6/100.

20. apathyānna – bhojaṇa – vad āsanna – maraṇādhikāraḥ nāka – bhogaḥ
kasmī nāma rocate. – Mallinātha’s comm. on NC, 6/100.