

CHAPTER II

VĀCASPATI MIŚRA-HIS LIFE, DATE AND WORKS

INTRODUCTION

Vācaspatimiśra is considered to be one of the great literary geniuses that India has ever produced. He was a versatile genius with encyclopedic learning. He had a wonderful exposition skill and presentation of whatever subject or system he chose to handle. He had a lifelong passion for philosophic truth. A multisided philosophic genius as he was Vācaspatimiśra devoted himself to the task of setting forth authoritative expositions of all the Darśanas. He wrote on all the important system instancing his philosophic objectivity and width. His name is ever associated with the honorific title "सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः" which is a rare honour conferred only upon literary prodigies. He is also known as "द्वादशदर्शनकाननपञ्चाननः।" His literary productions bear ample testimony to the honour and dignity that are always associated with that little.

Life

Vācaspati Miśra is a colossus among the Indian philosophers. One of the great Maithila scholars of the period, Vācaspati Miśra came from a family of Mīmāṃsakas and made his fame as an authority on that

topic, on which he says himself. He was, the teacher of Smārta Vardhamāna, author of Daṇḍaviveka.

Vācaspati Miśra's family appears to have lived in several different villages of Mithila. Bhattācārya provides some telling textual arguments providing that Vācaspati Miśra preceded most of the other early great Maithila Naiyyāyikas such as Yajñapati, Pakṣadhara and Jayadeva, the Āloka-kāra. He agrees that it is likely that Vācaspati Miśra wrote his Nyāya works in his youth, suggesting that, when he found his own stature in his field eclipsed by that of Yajñapati and Jayadeva he retired from Nyāya and spent the rest of his life writing on Mīmāṃsā.¹

The Nyāya works of Vācaspati Miśra appear to have been written in the north, where he must have spent some of his early days. A manuscript of one of his works, the Nyāyaratnaprakāśa indicates that the work was written at the behest of Padmāvati, Pratāparudra's queen of Pāñcālabhūmi. However, Vācaspati Miśra spent the greater part of his days in his native land Mithila.

There is sufficient evidence in Bhāmatī that Vācaspati Miśra was under the patronage of Nṛga, who was a king of generous nature highly famed for his wonderful deeds. He was well established in the court of king Nrga.² He, for a great many years of his life, found aid and comfort under the kind patronage of king Nṛga.

Date

A good deal of scholarly debate has centered on the question of Vācaspati Miśra's date, which is of special interest since his works figure in the history of several schools. Thus, if his date would be firmly established, it would help greatly in determining the chronology of several traditions. Vācaspati Miśra actually gives the date 898, for one of his works, the Nyāyasūcīnibandha. The scholars have debated as to whether this date is to be understood as Śaka or Vikrama 898. If it is the later, then the work was written in Samvat 898, i.e., C.E 841. But there are several reasons why this date is unlikely. Since Vācaspati Miśra quotes and names the work Nyāyamañjarī, he cannot precede Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, thus the date must be Śaka 898 i.e., C.E 976. This argument is shaky, since it seems clear that in the Nyāyamañjari Vācaspati Miśra quotes not Jayanta's but his teacher Trilocana's work.³ Dineshchandrabhaṭṭācārya⁴ gives some additional arguments, the cumulative weight of which would seem to settle the question. His arguments are shown bellow;

1. Since Vācaspati Miśra refutes Bhāskara in his Bhāmatī, he must be 10th century at earliest.
2. Vācaspati Miśra quotes Dharmottara respectfully, so must have lived a century or so after him. Since Dharmottara is 9th century C.E, Vācaspati Miśra must be 10th century C.E.

3. Vācaspati Miśra refers to the Bhūṣaṇa, so must be after Bhāsarvajña.
4. According to Vardhamāna's commentary on Kiraṇāvali, Vācaspati Miśra lived after Vyomaśiva.
5. Srīdhara seems not to know Vācaspati Miśra.

On the other hand, Narahari⁵ argues that for Udayana comments on Vācaspati Miśra's work, and the Udayana lived around the end of the 11th century C.E, the śaka date for Vācaspati Miśra must be wrong, and should opt for the earlier one. The basis for this is in Narahari's opinion that it is extremely unusual for one man to comment on a contemporary's work.

Vācaspati Miśra wrote two works in the Nyāya tradition. One, the Nyāyasūcīnibandha, is merely a sūtrapāṭha and table of contents to the Nyāyasūtras. The other is an extensive commentary on Udyotakāra's Nyāyavārttika. But there are other scholars like Mahāmahopādhyāya Ganganāthjha⁶, S.Subrahmaṇyaśāstri and V.Subrahmaṇyaśāstri were disagreeing with Das Gupta and J.H.Woods. They point out that Nṛga, the real king of Midhila⁷ was the predecessor of the king Nanyādeva, who reigned about 963 C.E or 1019 Vikram era. S.S.Śāstri and V.S.Śāstri opine that Nṛga was a real king and not a mythological figure. This may almost be taken as correct, for

Amalānanda, in Vedānta kalpataru says the following; "आचार्यं यो महीपतिर्महयाञ्चकार तस्य नाम नृग इति"।⁸

Coming to the third factor, from the chronological reference of;

a) Udayana (984.C.E) who has commented upon Vācaspati's Nyāyavārtikatātparyāṭīkā under the name Nyāyavārtikatātparyāṭīkā-pariśuddhi. b) Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, the author of Nyāyamañjari, says that it can be very well discerned that there must have been a good interval of time between Vācaspati Miśra and Udayana and needless to add, Vācaspati Miśra was earlier to Udayana.⁹

Vācaspati Miśra clearly states that the source of his novel interpretations is his teacher Trilocana. Hence it is quite just possible that Jayanta and Vācaspati Miśra were contemporaries, not knowing each other's view. This may be due to geographical distance. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa the author of Nyāyamañjarī, spent most of his life time in Kāśmīr where as Vācaspati Miśra was a native of Mithila. This Jayanta also may be placed in the 9th century C.E¹⁰, and for Vācaspati Miśra the limits 840-900 are all that can be fixed. He cannot have flourished either in the 10th or after the century.

Thus to fix the date of Vācaspati Miśra there is no need to be merely confined to the direction of some scholars like Prof. Cowell,¹¹

Barth¹², Macdonell¹³ at whose hands much of evidence is left untouched.

These dates are unconvincing when compared to Vācaspati Miśra's own statements. So these dates prove a failure. So reference in Bhāmatī which gets strengthened thorough prevents one to place Vācaspati Miśra in the 10th century C.E. Further the priority of Vācaspati Miśra to Udayana prevents one from placing him later than 10th century C.E. All these go to show that Vācaspati Miśra lived in all approximate certainty not earlier or later than the period 841- 900 C.E. However, it should be remembered that there existed a later Vācaspati Miśra in Bengal (1350.C.E) who is supposed to have written a commentary on Śrīharṣa's Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā called Khaṇḍanoddhāra, who has nothing to do with Bhāmatī.¹⁴

Works

Vācaspati Miśra has to his credit nine valuable treatises contributed to different orthodox systems of philosophy. On the basis of the internal evidences provided by these works, modern scholars arrange them in the following chronological order.¹⁵

1) Nyāyakaṇikā: This is a commentary on Vidhiviveka, a Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā work of Maṇḍanamiśra. 2) Nyāyasūtroddhāra: This is a compilation of the Nyāyasūtra fixing the readings of the text of the sūtras. 3) Nyāyasūcīnibandha: This arranges the same Nyāyasūtra.

4) Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā: This work also known by its shorter and more popular name, ‘tātparyaṭīkā’, is an extensive commentary on the Nyāyavārtikā of Uddyotakara Bhāradvāja. 5) Tattvasamīkṣā: It is generally believed to be a commentary on the Brahmasiddhi of Maṇḍanamīśra. But it has been recently suggested that this is also an independent Mīmāṃsa treatise of Vācaspati Miśra. This work is lost. 6) Tattvabindu: This is also an independent Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsa treatise of Vācaspati Miśra. 7) Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī: This work, known briefly as Tattvakaumudī, is a brilliant commentary on the famous SK of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. 8) Yogatattvavaiśāradī known also by its shorter title Tattvavaiśāradī: This work is a commentary on the Pātañjalayogasūtrabhāṣya of Vyāsa. 9) Bhāmatī: The full title of this work is perhaps Śārīrakabhāṣya bhāmatī. This is the earliest known exhaustive and complete commentary on the Brahmasūtraśāṅkara-bhāṣya.

It is interesting to note that in a verse in the epilogue of the Bhāmatī Vācaspati Miśra gives a full list of his own works arranged exactly in the above order suggested by the modern researchers. In the Indian tradition Vācaspati Miśra is again perhaps the first writer to give a complete list of his works, that too in a chronological order. The manner in which these works are clubbed together by compound expressions and common terminology in the verse seems to indicate that

the scholarly career of Vācaspati Miśra consisted roughly of three phases. The first phase saw the author's contribution of the first three works, all being Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā treatises. The middle phase witnessed Vācaspati Miśra's multi-sided contributions, i.e., the next five treatises to the Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, and Yoga Systems. The last phase was devoted solely to the 'Vedāntānām nibandhana',¹⁶ i.e., the Bhāmatī. From the above it would appear that ever in the beginning of his scholarly career, this great philosopher commentator had set up the Advaita Vedānta treatise, Bhāmatī on the Śāṅkarabhāṣya, as his life's mission.

Works on Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

Vācaspati Miśra has actually written two works on Nyāya philosophy. One is Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā and the other is Nyāyasūcīnibandha. Generally, the term Nyāya means argument.¹⁷ The origin of Nyāya can be traced to the disputations among scholars in the interpretations of Vedic texts.

Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā

Dharmakīrti and several other Buddhist logicians¹⁸ having compiled treatises subversive of the interpretations of Vātsyāyana and Udyotakara, Vācaspati Miśra wrote, in support of the Brāhmaṇa commentators, an elaborate gloss on the Nyāyavārtika called the Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā. He has written a lucid commentary on the Nyāyavārtika of Udyotakara. As the author himself says, the aim in

writing his Tātparyaṭīkā on the Nyāyavārtika was to acquire merit by restoring the very old teachings of Udyotakara which had been overwhelmed by the unassailable wrong reasoning of the Buddhist. It is to be noted here that Udyotakara had established a school of his own by subjecting the Buddhist views to criticism. But the tradition established by Udyotakara had almost crumbled due to the severe attacks of the Buddhist logicians like Dharmakīrti and others. It must be stated in the credit of Vācaspati Miśra that the tradition of Udyotakara was restored by his efforts. Thus, it is due to Vācaspati Miśra alone, the search of the Nyāya philosophy could be fully restored to posterity.

In the Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā, Vācaspati Miśra mentions four schools of Buddhist philosophy,¹⁹ viz., Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika and the Vaibhāṣika including the doctrine of the Vātsīputrīya sect; and repeatedly criticizes Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti.²⁰ Dharmakīrti's view that there are only two kinds of the point of defeat (nigrahasthāna) occurs respectively. When one adduces a reason which is not a proper one (asādhanāṅgavacana) and when one alleges a defect in that where there is really no defect (adoṣodbhāvana).

Vācaspati Miśra says that sage Akṣapāda too laid down two kinds of the point of defeat which occur respectively. When one misunderstand an argument (Vipratipatti) or does not understand it at all (apratipatti). While in respect of the division of the point of defeat into

two kinds the view of Dharmakīrti does not differ from that of Akṣapāda, the two kinds as laid down by the latter are clearer than those laid down by the former. For instance non-ingenuity (apratibhāna), which consists in one's inability to hit upon a reply, is recognized as a point of defeat, but it is included rather in the two kinds of the point of defeat laid down by Akṣapāda than in those laid down by Kīrti.²¹

According to Naiyāyikas, the Upādānakāraṇa of the world is constituted by the atoms and God is the Nimittakāraṇa. There is no incompatibility in this statement, even though the carpenter is helped and influenced by the axe, yet the axe is made by him. According to Vācaspati Mīśra, the argument put forward in sūtra 4.1.20,²² has no power against the view of the world, and is the work of God as assisted by men's actions. While it is an effective argument against the view that in creating the world, God does not require any help outside himself. Thus, Vācaspati Mīśra gives a perfect shape to the pūrvapakṣa and the siddhānta view regarding the cause of the world from the point of view of the Naiyāyikas.

Nyāyasūcīnibandha

This work is a valuable contribution to the Nyāyāśāstra, in as much as it presents the correct version of the sūtras of Gautama. As the author himself has stated, this was an attempt at restoring the text of the Nyāyasūtras in their proper form and sequence, when it was subjected to

severe ill-treatment by the Buddhists who tried to distort and twist the sūtras.²³ The aim of the author in writing that book was to have before himself the correct version of the Sūtra work before proceeding to write his commentary on the Nyāyavārtika. This is clear from the following remark at the end of this work:

यदलम्भि किमपि पुण्यं दुष्टरकुनिबन्धपङ्कमग्रानाम्
श्रीगोतमसुगविनां अतिजरतिनां समुद्धरणात्।²⁴

Thus Vācaspati Mīśra has restored the Nyāyasūtras as well as the Nyāyavārtika from the mud of wrong reasoning of the Buddhists through his two works Nyāyasūcīnibandha and Nyāyavārtika-tātparyaṭīkā.

Works on Mīmāṃsā

The term 'Mīmāṃsā' occurs in the sense of desire to understand, inquire into or discussed in the ancient Vedic texts. But, there are no traces of Mīmāṃsā as a separate discipline in the early Vedic literature. Similarly, the words 'Mīmāṃseta' and 'Mīmāṃsā' are found used in the ancient Dharmasāstras such as those of Boudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha. The parallel references among Gautamadharmasūtra, Āpastambha dharmasūtra and Jaimini's Pūrvamīmāṃsā sūtras show that even at early time's rules for the interpretation of the Vedic texts were formulated and generally accepted. It is clear from Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali that the

Mīmāṃsā doctrines were well developed and embodied in aphoristic literature.

The references in Āpastambha's Dharmasūtra to 'Nyāyavitsmaya' and 'Nyāyavid' show that, Mīmāṃsā as a system must have emerged and elaborated before the time of Āpastambha. Further, the fact that Jaimini refers to a number of Acāryas in his sūtras leads one to think that Mīmāṃsā as a discipline must have existed long before the time of Jaimini.²⁵ With this background, a brief account of the Mīmāṃsā literature from Jaimini's Sūtras, the first extant work on Mīmāṃsā śāstra up to the time of Vācaspati Miśra is given as the foreground.

Tattvabindu

Tattvabindu is an independent treatise on vākyārtha.²⁶ It is a short treatise dealing with the important question as to what actually constitute the 'kāraṇa' internal in verbal cognition. Vācaspati Miśra wrote his Tattvabindu for the purpose of elucidating abhihitānvayavāda after meeting the challenges against it from the point of view of other theories such as sphoṭa and especially from the point of view of anvitābhīdhānavāda of Prābhākara.²⁷

Thus, Vācaspati Miśra establishes abhihitānvayavāda as explaining properly the efficient cause of śābdabodha. He has analyzed each of the objections raised by the anvitābhīdhānavādins and answered it from the point of view of abhihitānvayavāda. As shown by him, the

basic stand of the anvitābhīdhānavādins is that the words convey their meanings as well as their mutual relation through abhīdhāna.²⁸ The basic stand is rejected on the ground that one will have to assume two abhīdhānaśakti's for the words, one to convey their meanings and another to convey their mutual relation. This is an undesirable position in as much as it assumes more than what one śakti can give rise to.²⁹ Therefore the abhīdhanavādin as clarified by Vācaspati Miśra, has accepted abhīdhāna in the case of anvitārtha (vākyārtha), on the basis of the conditions of ākāṅkṣa etc. The words in the sentence first convey their meaning and then through the conditions of expectancy etc., the anvaya is established and through that anvaya, the viśiṣṭārtha of the words is conveyed by lakṣaṇā.

The contribution of Vācaspati Miśra lies in the analysis of the objections and the formulation of the answers. The objections are from the point of view of anvitābhīdhānavādins and the answers are from the point of view of abhīhitānvayavādins. Finally, abhīhitānvayavāda has been established as the most satisfactory theory among the theories that are advanced by the different schools of thought in respect of the efficient cause for śābdabodha.

Nyāyakaṇikā

Nyāyakaṇikā³⁰ is a learned commentary on the Vidhiviveka of Maṇḍana Miśra. Vidhiviveka is an exposition of one of the aspects of

Mīmāṃsā School pertaining to the nature of vidhi. It is a learned exposition of vidhivāda in a concise śāstra style. The work by itself is difficult to follow unless one is well-grounded in the history of vidhivāda delving into the discussion about it in the bhāṣya of Śabara and the commentaries of Kumāriḷa and Prabhākara. This necessity is fulfilled by Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary Nyāyakaṇikā. Vācaspati Miśra brings in his versatile knowledge of not only the above mentioned works on Mīmāṃsā but also of the works belonging to other Darśanas, orthodox as well the heterodox. The commentary is a detailed elucidation of the different points made in the Vidhiviveka.

In the course of this elucidation, he contributes his points in support of the main thesis of Maṇḍana Miśra on the significance of Vidhi. It is divided into two parts as Pūrvakaṇikā and Uttaraṇikā. The first one is the Pūrvapakṣa section of Vidhiviveka and the second one pertains to its siddhānta section.

In Vidhiviveka, Maṇḍana Miśra raises the question as to what is vidhi. Three alternatives are first examined in this connection. a) A unique type of śabda is vidhi. b) A special function of the śabda is vidhi. c) A unique type of sense is vidhi.³¹

Vācaspati Miśra contributes the following points by way of elucidation and additional information. When śābdabheda is said to be vidhi, he explains that liṅ, loṭ etc., differ from other śabdās (laṭ, laṅ,

etc.). Hence, śabdabheda is proposed to be vidhi.³² It is to be noted that liñ, loṭ etc., prompt a sentient being in action through the inborn special quality just as the magnet creates movement in an iron piece through its inborn special quality.

The contribution of Vācaspati Miśra is particularly notable in the context of discussing and refuting the pratipatividhivāda of the Prābhākaras as regards the Upaniṣadic statements. As a Vedāntin, he supports another Vedāntin i.e., Maṇḍana Miśra who has contributed like himself to the Mīmāṃsā School.

Work on Sāṅkhya

Of all the philosophical systems, Sāṅkhya has been considered by all to be most ancient. This occupies a prominent place in all the śāstras, since this is either supported or not by every philosophical system. Therefore, the importance of this śāstra is recognized by all the systems. Though the use of the word ‘Sāṅkhya’ is found first of all in the Śv.Up³³ yet Sāṅkhya reflections are found even in the ṚV and the other Upanisads. This proves the antiquity of this śāstra. Sāṅkhya is derived from the word Saṅkhyā. The word Saṅkya is used in the sense of thinking and counting. Thinking may be with reference to basic principles or knowledge of self. Counting refers to the twenty five principles and aśakti, atuṣṭi etc. The double implication of the word has

been set forth by Vijñānabhikṣu in his preface to Sāṅkhyapravacana-bhāṣya, by a quotation from the Mahābhārata.

So, Sāṅkhya means knowledge of self through right discrimination. Garbe is of opinion that the word Sāṅkhya was originally used in the sense of counting, and it was then applied to the system of Kapila which enumerates the twenty five principles. Of the standard works on Sāṅkhya, three of them are prominent. They are “Sāṅkhyasūtras”, “Tattvasamāsa” and “Sāṅkhyakārikā”. Sāṅkhya-pravacanasūtra which is attributed to Kapila is generally regarded by scholars as a work of 14th century C.E. Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s Sāṅkhyakārikā seems to be the earliest available and the most popular work of this system. Besides this Gauḍapāda’s Sāṅkhyakārikābhāṣya and Vācaspati Miśra’s Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī are most important.

Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī

Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī is the famous commentary written by Vācaspati Miśra on Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s Sāṅkhyakārikā. It represents the very soul of the various concepts of the Sāṅkhya Philosophy. This text says that Prakṛti binds the Puruṣa and turns away from him when the purpose is accomplished. Hence, in the ultimate analysis what looks like the bondage of Puruṣa is really the bondage of Prakṛti and what looks like emancipation of Puruṣa is really the turning away of Prakṛti. Puruṣa is left to himself and remain in his ‘Kevala’ state. In such a state, Puruṣa

looks at Prakṛti like a disinterested person. This is the state of Kaivalya. Puruṣa remains in the 'Kūṭastha-nitya-mukta' state. Vācaspati Miśra discusses many points in his elucidation of the concept of Apavarga in accordance with the Sāṅkhya System.

He raises significant objections and answers them with points derived from the Kārikas. He has given an illustration to show how Prakṛti once separated from a Puruṣa does not turn to the same Puruṣa again. A person who is desirous of food takes up the cooking of food. Once that desire is accomplished, the person turns away from it and does not proceed towards it. Similarly Prakṛti proceeds to release the Puruṣa and does not turn to that emancipated Puruṣa again.

When it is said that Prakṛti acts for another's purpose, it implies that Prakṛti should be intelligent (cetana). This is a very significant objection anticipated by Vācaspati Miśra only to answer it in the light of the Sāṅkhya stand that the very pravṛtti of Prakṛti is for the emancipation of Puruṣa and this pravṛtti is innate in her. That is just as the insentient milk flows for the purpose of nourishing the calf, Prakṛti acts as natural for the emancipation of Puruṣa.

Work on Yoga

Patañjali defines Yoga as the restraint over mental dispositions.³⁴ Though the origin and development of Yoga is not clear, it could be traced from the time of Upaniṣads themselves. Yoga as a system was

sufficiently old. The Upaniṣads such as Kena, Kaṭha and Śvetāśvatara etc. show a full acquaintance with the nature and means of Yoga. The classical phase of Yoga as an Orthodox system owes its foundation to Patañjali, author of the Yogasūtra. There is a tradition which identifies this with the Patañjali who wrote the great commentary, Mahābhāṣya, on Pāṇini's grammar, and also believes that he wrote a work on medicine as well. Thus, it is claimed that Patañjali was a triple healer - healer of physical ills, of defects in speech, and of the deformities of mind and spirit. It is with the third aspect, healing of mind and spirit, that the Yogasūtra is concerned.

Yogatattvavaiśārādī

Tattvavaiśārādī is a contribution of Vācaspati Miśra which deals Yoga System in the light of Yogasūtras. It is a commentary on Yogabhāṣya. It cannot be fully appreciated Vyāsa's contribution to Pātañjalayogasūtras without Vācaspati Miśra's TV. It must be stated in the credit of Vācaspati Miśra that the tradition of Patañjali and Vyāsa was restored by his efforts. Thus, it is due to Vācaspati Miśra alone, the secrets of Yogaśāstra could be fully restored to posterity. TV includes four pādas, the nature of samādhi, the means of samādhi and the attainments of samādhi are respectively dealt with. The fourth pāda explains the nature of Kaivalya. The ultimate goal envisaged by the Yogaśāstra is Kaivalya. When the citta realizes that Puruṣa totally

different from Pradhāna and its evolution, it becomes inclined towards the state of Kaivalya coming itself under the pressure of the vivekajñāna. It becomes free from all the saṁskāras as reduced to the state of the burnt seeds by the fire of viveka. This point is brought out by Vācaspati Miśra.

Works on Advaita Vedānta

The term Vedānta is applied to the Upaniṣads since they form the concluding portions of the Vedas. The system of Indian philosophy which is based on the Upaniṣads is also called Vedānta. The first available work which made an attempt of organizing and understanding by the Upaniṣadic doctrine with a logical approach has been the Vedāntasūtras of Bādarāyaṇa. The opinions of three Ācāryas Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi and Kāśakṛtsna as regards the relation between jīva and Brahman are recorded in the Vedāntasūtras. It goes to the credit of Śrī Śaṅkara that his commentary on Vedāntasūtras, has been the first available Vedāntabhāṣya. The doctrine of Vedānta established by Śrī Śaṅkara through this bhāṣya and the bhāṣyas on the Bhagavat Gītā and the Upaniṣads is called Advaita Vedānta. It is well known that Gauḍapāda had formulated some of the tenets of Advaita in his Māṇḍūkyakārikā.

The credit of being the founder of Advaita as a system should go to Śrī Śaṅkara. The most important doctrine in Advaita is that of

adhyāsa. This adhyāsa is called as avidyā. Parabrahman is one and without a second. It is the supreme reality. Everything else is superimposed on Brahman. The superimposition of Ātman on the non-self is adhyāsa. It is this adhyāsa that has been the basis of all the process, of pramāṇa and prameya. In order to elucidate the nature of adhyāsa, the Ācārya has thoroughly examined the nature of the three stages (अवस्थात्रय) i.e., jāgrat, svapna and suṣupti. The conclusion drawn through this illustration is that Ātman is Brahman and everything is Brahman.

The Advaita view propounded by Śrī Śaṅkara is that knowledge alone is the means to Mokṣa. Brahmātmaikattva-jñāna is the only means to Mokṣa. Karma and Upāsanā are not totally rejected by Śrī Śaṅkara. But in his opinion they come under the purview of adhyāsa. The rites of worship are considered relevant as far as they purify the mind. Further, in Advaita two kinds of Mukti are accepted. After the realization of Brahman i.e., the jīva is Brahman, there is no further saṃsāra at all. This is called Videhamukti. But more emphasis is laid on Jīvanmukti or Sadyomukti which is attained in this very life through the realization of Brahman.

These basic doctrines of Advaita propounded by Śrī Śaṅkara have found great elucidation and expansion in the hands of later thinkers on Advaita such as Maṇḍana Miśra, the author of Brahmasiddhi,

Sureśvarācārya, the author of Naiṣkarmyasiddhi and Vārtikas, Padmapāda, the author of Pañcapādikā, etc. On all the basic doctrine of Advaita, Vācaspati Miśra, the author of Bhāmatī and Tattvasamīkṣa has contributed profusely.

Bhāmatī

Bhāmatī written by Vācaspati Miśra, is the most ancient, complete and elaborate available commentary on Śrī Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya. It started the Bhāmatī School of Advaita, though some of the features of this School can be traced back to Maṇḍana Miśra, an elder contemporary of Śrī Śaṅkara, traditionally identified with Śrī Śaṅkara's pupil Sureśvara. The other school of Advaita, called the Vivaraṇa School, is associated with Prakāśātman's Pañcapādikā commentary on the bhāṣya, now available only for the catuṣsūtrī portion. Many of the features of this school can be traced back to Sureśvara.

Prof. S. Kuppuswāmi Śāstri has pointed out³⁵ that 'Most of the distinctive features of Vācaspati Miśra's School have their roots in Maṇḍana's views as set forth in the Brahmasiddhi, and most of the distinctive features of the Vivaraṇa school are derived from Sureśvara's views as set forth in the Vārttikas and the Naiṣkarmyasiddhi. If the Bhāmatī School and the Vivaraṇa School ultimately originate from Maṇḍana and Sureśvara, the tradition about the identity of Maṇḍana and

Sureśvara becomes ridiculous. This is the point of view taken by Prof. Hiriyāṇṇa and Prof. Kuppuswāmi Śāstri. Of course, a convert need not necessarily be consistent with his pre-conversion views.

In the beginning of the Bhāmatī Vācaspati Miśra refers to two kinds of avidyā. Maṇḍana has also recognized two kinds of avidyā non apprehension (अग्रहणम्) and misapprehension (अन्यथाग्रहणम्). According to Maṇḍana meditation or upāsana is necessary for completely removing the second variety of avidyā, and for converting the first indirect knowledge of Brahman (परोक्षज्ञानम्) into the direct Brahman realization (अपरोक्षज्ञानम्).

Regarding the locus of avidyā there is a difference of opinion between the Bhāmatī and the Vivaraṇa Schools. According to Vācaspati Miśra and Maṇḍana, the individual soul is the locus of avidyā, while Brahman is the object of avidyā. According to the Vivaraṇa School and also Sureśvara, Brahman itself is both the locus (āśraya) and the object (viṣaya) of avidyā. According to the Bhāmatī avidyas are as many as the jīvas, but the Vivaraṇa School accepts only one avidyā, with different modes.

Regarding the nature of jīva and Īśvara, Bhāmatī School accepts the avacchedavāda, while the Vivaraṇa School follows the pratibimbavāda. Vācaspati Miśra considers that Brahman conditioned

by māyā or avidyā is jīva, while Brahman that transcends māyā is Īśvara. According to the Vivaraṇa School Brahman reflected in māyā and its product mind, is jīva, while Brahman which serves as the original is 'Īśvara', Brahman undergoes reflection in avidyā or māyā and mind. The Suresvara's view is slightly different. The reflection of Brahman in māyā is Īśvara, and the reflection of Brahman in mind is jīva. Īśvara and jīva being reflected images are indeterminable. This is the ābhāsavāda.

There are many differences between the Bhāmatī School and the Vivaraṇa School, but on one fundamental point they agree, i.e. "ब्रह्म सत्यं जगत्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः।"³⁶ The main tenets of the Bhāmatī School are, Karmas are useful for giving rise to the desire to know the self. The relation of Brahman arises through the instrument of the mind. The locus and content of 'ajñāna' is different. The primal nescience is manifold. The omniscience of Brahman is derived from the essential nature of Brahman. The mind is a sense organ. 'avidyā' is located in 'jīva'. The nature of jīva and Īśvara is explained by the theory of 'avacchedavāda'

Tattvasamīkṣā

Tattvasamīkṣā is a commentary on Maṇḍana's Braḥmasiddhi.³⁷ It is considered to have been lost now, was an authoritative commentary.

Besides these works, Vācaspati is supposed to have written some other works also. Nyāyatattvālokā, Nyāyaratnatīkā, Braḥmatattvasamhitoddīpinī and Vedāntatattvakaumudī are written by Vācaspati Mīśra.

His scholastic genius can be found in the interpretation of Sāṅkhya philosophy. This is really a precious treasure to the entire world to understand the oldest system of Indian philosophy unlike other exponents of this system, Vācaspati Mīśra's study on Sāṅkhya can be divided under the heads of Epistemology, Ontology, Psychology, Phenomenology and Ethics.

Resumé

Vācaspati Mīśra was a great luminary in the history of Indian philosophy. But a little is known about his life. He was a native of Mithila and the generally accepted date of Vācaspati Mīśra is 9th century C.E. This date is based on the references of his own works. He has written important treatises in all the āsthika Schools of Indian philosophy. Among his works the most important one is Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā, a commentary on the nyāyavārtikā of Udyodakara and Nyāyasūcīnibandha. He has restored the Nyāyasūtras as well as the Nyāyavārtika from the mud of wrong reasoning of the Buddhists through the above two works. So he is well-known as tātparyācārya. His work in Advaita is Bhāmatī, a commentary on Braḥmasūtrasāṅkarabhāṣya. It started the Bhāmatī School of Advaita.

Bhāmatī reflects the splendor of the critical analysis of the Śārīrakabhāṣya. His Sāṅkhya work is STK, the most important commentary of SK. It represents the very soul of the various concepts of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. In Yoga philosophy, he has written Yogatattvavaiśāradī, a commentary on the Vyāsabhāṣya of YS. In it, he restored the tradition of Patañjali and Vyāsa. Vācaspati Miśra's works on Mīmāṃsā are Nyāyakaṇikā and Tattvabindu. Nyāyakaṇikā is a commentary on the Vidhiviveka of Maṇḍana Miśra and Tattvabindu is an independent treatise on vākyārtha.

From the study of his works on the different systems of Indian philosophy, it becomes clear how he adheres to the demands and the propriety of the particular system on which he is writing. He elucidates the views expressed in the text of a particular system and contributes his points only in accordance with the doctrinal standards of that particular system. This is the greatness of Vācaspati Miśra as a commentator. This does not mean that he is simply satisfied with the interpretation and elucidation of the text of the different systems. He goes further and enriches the field of each system with his original views. It is to be noted that he introduces his original views by way of interpreting the original texts in such a way to find culmination in new doctrinal points.

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