



Truth And Ethics- In The Viewpoint Of Cārvāka Philosophy

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Abstract: Cārvāka is a major materialistic Philosophical school in Indian Philosophy. Their main point is to emphasis on man`s glorification in this universe. Human life is full of hazardous problems as social, economic, natural and many more. The key point of cārvāka about man`s happiness lies in his own daily days thinking. The problems of social injustice, discrimination of sex, caste are eventually mitigated in their ethical overview. Present life is more important to them and enjoyment in this life is highly appreciated in cārvākas ethical theory.

Keywords: Happiness, material life, perceptual knowledge, pleasure.

In Indian Philosophy Cārvākas are the main heterodox system that not only rejects God as the creator of this universe but any kind of spiritual power that is beyond this world. They do not admit the existence of eternal supreme reality as the cause of this natural world rather they accepted matter as the source of this whole world. In Indian philosophy five elements or bhūtas are considered through which every object either animate or inanimate created. These are Earth(Kṣiti), Water(Apa), Fire(Tejas), Air(Maruta) and Sky or, Ether(Byom). Also, six kinds of Pramānas are considered (Pratyaksa, Anumāna, Upamāna, Śabda, Arthāpatti and Anupalabdhi) as the source of knowledge. In Indian Philosophy, Pramā means right knowledge (Yathārtha Jñana) and by which we get prama jñana is called Pramāna. For example, we perceive a glass through Pratyaksa. So, Pratyaksa is the Pramana to acquire the knowledge of a glass. We taste an ice cream through our tongue or smell a rose through our nose, all these are perception by which we acquire different knowledges.

Cārvākas do not admit the five pramānas except Pratyaksa(perception). That's why, they do not believe in the existence of Ether or, Ākash. To them, Ether or, Ākash cannot be perceived through Pratyaksa. We get the knowledge of Ether or, Byom through Anumāna or, inference. To them Anumāna is not a valid source of knowledge as it is dependent on vyāpti. Invariable relation between hetu and Sadhya is called vyāpti. It is not established through perception. So how can we admit the existence of Ākasa from an invalid source. To them, whatever is knowable is empirical. They have a negative view about the trans empirical entity like heaven, hell, soul on account of those being unknowable empirically.

They accept four Bhūtas or, elements (Kṣiti, Apa, Tejas and Maruta) as they are perceived through our sense organs directly. So, to them all those things that are made of these four elements are true. In Indian philosophy it is considered that every bhūtas has some special qualities and our sense organs are made of these qualities or gunas. Our eye perceives the appearance or, rupa as it is made of the atom of fire or, Tejas and the special quality of the Teja is Rupa. Likewise, our nose perceives smell as it is made of the atom of Earth or, kṣiti and special quality of Kṣiti is Smell. To them, anything in this world we perceive through our sense organs or, through perception is true. Perception is the only source of valid knowledge and anything else cannot be perceived is Aprama or, invalid knowledge. To them the world of existence is true.

“The Carvaka position admits the ordinary objects like land, river, mountain, man, animal, insects as contents of perpetual knowledge. They are viewed as objects of knowledge” 1.

Blind acceptance of anything is not considered in Cārvāka philosophical framework. So, Śabda or, verbal testimony is not accepted by them as it is inferred from the words of a trustworthy person (Āpta Byākti). It is not possible to ascertain that the person is trustworthy or not through perceptual knowledge. In this regard they reject the existence of Soul, God, After-life also as they are beyond our perception. They do not believe in the authority of the Vedas.

In Indian Philosophy we see four types of goals in human life. It is called Puruṣārtha. ‘Puruṣa’ means ‘soul’ and ‘Artha’ means the desired. So, what Puruṣa or, Atma desires for life is called Puruṣārtha. There are four types of desires in life- Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha or the salvation. In everyday life we quest for something in our livelihood and by gratifying these needs we are satisfied. All the Indian Philosophers regarded four goals except Cārvākas. Only Cārvākas accepted Artha and Kāma as the core expectations of human life. However, other branches of Indian philosophy accept Moksha or, Mukti as the ultimate goal. Moksha or, salvation means liberation from the wheel of birth and death. Human life is full of difficulties and quest for wealth, position, sensual pleasure etc. But pleasure cannot satisfy the needs as it lasts for a while only and after the satisfaction of one desire another appears. So, Āstik Sampradaya and Nāstik Bauddha and Jaina Sampradaya accepted salvation as the ultimate goal of life. Although there are different views about attaining liberation among these schools. They defined liberation as the medicine of Tritāp Dukkha (i.e. Ādhyātmik, Ādhibhautik and Ādhidvaibik). These threefold sufferings bound human life in the cycle of birth and death and the victim finds the path in Mukti. Mukti or, Moksha is of two type- Jibanmukti and Videhamukti. When a person aloof himself/herself from the attachments (i.e. Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mad and Mātsarya) finds a new life free from the daily hassles. Now, he/she is free in his livelihood. It is called Jibanmukti. After death a Jibanmukta soul free from life cycle. It is called Videhamukti.

Now, for Cārvākas, they do not believe in the theory of re-birth and after-life. To them, this life is the only life in which we have to satisfy our desires. They value ‘Kāma’ as the supreme goal and ‘Artha’ as the means to attain kāma or fulfilment of desires. There is a misinterpretation about Cārvākas theory of life in various places. ‘Kama’ in a broad sense means desires. We all living beings dwell our lives with kāma. So, kāma has two different aspects- in a broad sense all our love, affections, establishment, brotherhood are the results of kāma. In this regard we can assume Cārvāka Philosophy as Humanitarian. ‘Kama’ not only means sensual pleasures but any kind of good desire for human life. In narrow sense it is considered as sensual pleasure. It is the goodness in Cārvākas as they indicate the path to find out pleasures in daily life apart from the ritualistic outlook.

“The Carvaka stand is opposed to discrimination among individuals on the basis of caste, colour and race. It is clearly against caste/class discrimination of any sort. It is held that such biased and prejudiced distinctions among humans are based on dogmatic superstition and, as such those are unproductive and upset socio-individual solidarity.”2.

Cārvākas do not regard Dharma or moral values as the regulation of life. Man is not only a biological animal but also a moral and rational creature. Rationality is the highest characteristics of a man. A man can never falls down in the stage of a beast. Apart from sensual pleasure man has some psychological needs such as falling in love, care for others, quest for knowledge etc. so, denial of all human values and acceptance of only two Puruṣārthas degrades the worth of Cārvākas.

Cārvākas emphasis on the enjoyment in present life as there is no existence of departed soul after death who enjoy the benefit of good deeds of present life. So, Cārvākas can be defined as secular humanists. There is no discrimination between men and women in performing social work. To them, hypocritical sages made rules for their own benefit and earning in illegal way. There is no benefit of sacrificial offerings in yajña, Tapasyā and man-made crucial dharma. They give importance in present life. To them this life is precious. Only death is the ultimate destination of our Journey. After the end of the journey, there is no existence of life, heaven or, hell. If there is any birth cycle will be existed, no way to carry forward the

whole emotional thinking in present life at all. So, cārvāka announce men to live a happy life and be merry for everything they have. Happiness is the key of great living. They also admit that there is no such unmixed happiness in this material world. If one finds happiness beyond sorrow it is futile. An intellectual person put aside sorrows and enjoy life fully. If anybody laments for sorrows, it will never be possible for him to enjoy the taste of present life and the beauty of nature. Actually, Cārvāka Philosophy glorifies man's position in this phenomenal world. The ethics of Carvaka Philosophy can be regarded as optimistic, practical and quite humanitarian.

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