

THE CONCEPT OF UPĀDHI IN NYĀYA LOGIC

One of the most important factors that are connected with the inferential process is the knowledge of *vyāpti*. Although there is great divergence of opinion among the various schools of Indian Philosophy as to the exact nature, function and formal definition of *vyāpti*, still none of the thinkers believes that there can be inference without the right knowledge of *vyāpti*. Accordingly it has been characterised by eminent authorities like Gaṅgeśa and others as the most efficient or instrumental cause (*karana*) of inferential cognition (*anumiti*)¹. The word *vyāpti* etymologically means pervasion. We say, for example, there is *vyāpti* between smoke and fire, because each and every case of smoke is pervaded by that of fire. In this instance fire is called the pervader (*vyāpaka*) and smoke is called the pervaded (*vyāpya*). But in logical writings the word has acquired the status of a technical term. It is generally used to denote the specific invariable relation that subsists between two terms of an inference, namely, the reason (*hetu*) and the inferable property (*sādhya*), on the strength of which relation the inference of the former from the latter is made possible. As for instance, in the most well-known example of an inference, “the mountain contains fire, because it contains smoke”,² – where ‘smoke’ and ‘fire’ are the reason and the inferable property respectively – the statement of *vyāpti* ‘invariable concomitance’ would be of the form: wherever there is smoke, there is fire.

But what is the exact nature of this *vyāpti* or invariable concomitance? In what does its invariability consist? How is it that one rightly infers fire from smoke, but not *vice versa*? Udayana, the most distinguished and ablest logician of the early Nyāya school, puts the question and answers³ that *vyāpti* is nothing but a natural relation. Again, it is asked, what is exactly meant by the epithet ‘natural’? The answer is: ‘natural’ means the absence of any extraneous condition. In other words, *vyāpti* is a relation which is free from any extraneous condition.⁴

This point requires some explanation. Relation may be of two kinds, natural or unconditional (*svābhāvika*) and adventitious or conditional

(*aupādhika*). When two objects are related with each other because of their very nature, the relation between the two would be a natural one. But if two objects are found related only when an additional condition is present, the relation would be a conditional one. The rose, for example, looks red only because it is red. We have not to look for any other extraneous circumstance which, it may be said, has contributed to the presence of red colour in the rose. The relation between the rose and its colour therefore is an example of the first variety. But consider the case of a piece of glass which, being placed very close to a bunch of red roses, reflects the colour and looks red from a distance. The relation between the red colour and the piece of glass is evidently not a natural one. The piece of glass which is actually white can never by itself look red. It looks red only when something naturally red like rose etc., is placed close to it. Thus redness to become related to a piece of glass requires an additional condition, namely, the presence of something red near it. In other words, the relation between red colour and a piece of glass illustrates the second variety. Invariable concomitance or *vyāpti* also has been defined as a relation free from any adventitious condition. When the relation between the reason and the inferable property is proved to be natural, there must be invariable concomitance between the two and in such a case the inference of one from the other would be justified. It is the absence of any adventitious condition that makes the relation natural and thereby invariable. A reason or *hetu* having such an invariable and natural relation with the *sādhya* is to be recognised “as capable of yielding true inferential cognition” (cf. *gamaka*). One can rightly infer fire from smoke, because smoke and fire have a natural relation. Wherever there is smoke, there is also fire and there is no exception to this. Fire is the cause of smoke and hence in conformity with the universal law of causation, smoke (the effect) must always be accompanied by fire (the cause). It may be said therefore that, in a sense, it is the very nature of smoke to be accompanied by fire. Besides, as Vācaspati⁵ points out, the relation between smoke and fire is ascertained to be a natural one on the ground that in such a case one never actually comes across any adventitious condition. It is useless to argue that in such a case also there may be some adventitious condition which remains unknown, for no contrary instance testifying to the existence of smoke unaccompanied by fire can ever be cited. Now let us examine the relation of fire to smoke. The relation of fire to smoke is not