



Sri Ramanuja's Concept Of Aprthak-Siddhi

Dr G. RAJASEKARAN

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE, CHENNAI - 04

Abstract

The aim of this Paper is to bring to light the significance of Aprthak-siddhi concept in Sri Ramanuja's Philosophy. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the three realities ie; God, soul and world are connected to each other or distinct from each other by means of Aprthak-siddhi. To find out whether external relation or internal relation holds good from the Visistadvaita's point of view is the crux of his philosophy.

Keywords: Aprthak-siddhi, Samavaya, Samyoga, Ayuta-siddha, Svarupa-Sambandha, Cit, Acit, Sarira, Sariri, Visista, Brahman, Jiva, padarthas, Nitya.

Introduction

Meaning of Aprthak-siddhi

Siddhi signifies two things (i) Sthiti or existence and (ii) pratiti or cognition.

Aprthak-Sthiti means substance and attribute which cannot exist separately as two entities like two physical objects.

Aprthak-Pratiti means substance and attribute which cannot be understood separately. Hence, Aprthak-siddhi means an inseparable relation.

Definition of Aprthak-siddhi

According to Sri Ramanuja, Aprthak-siddhi is the relation between the body and the soul, between a substance and its attributes, between parts and whole and may be between one substance and another. It is an inner, inseparable vital and organic relation, God is qualified by matter and souls.⁽¹⁾ They form His body and are inseparable from and utterly dependent on Him.⁽²⁾

Theory of Relations

Aprthak-Siddhi is not a separate relation (sambandha) like samavaya. It is the name given to the inseparable character of the relata. There are two types of entities in the universe (i) separable (yuta-siddha) like a pot and a cloth (ii) inseparable (Ayuta-siddha) like rose and its colour. In the former, if the two entities are combined together by a relation then it is called Samyoga (or) Conjunction. This relation is quite external and will be extinct by the moment when the objects are separated. In the latter, we have to think the relation is internal (or) inherent because Naiyayikas explain this type of relation as samavaya.

Visistadvaitins instead of using the word “samavaya” they are accustomed to the word “Aprthak siddhi” still there is an important difference between the two schools. Naiyayikas say that samavaya is a separate relation and treated it as one of the six independent padarthas or categories which is nitya as it is not produced. For Visistadvaitins, Aprthak-siddhi is a name used to explain the nature of relation that unites substance with attribute and not in terms of a separate relation or separate category. In this sense, it is considered to be unique relation (svarupa- sambandha) that exists between the two inseparable entities. Aprthak-siddhi is thought as a relation and not as nitya or eternal in all cases. If the relata is non-permanent then its relationship is also non-permanent; that is why, any relation exists or lasts as long as the relata exist.

Substance and attribute in terms of Aprthak-siddhi

The Principle of substance and its attribute is correlated with the concept of relation. If substance and attribute are considered to be different then we have to attach a satisfactory explanation for their relationship. The theory of relation takes for granted the importance for supporting the ontological issue related to the relationship between Brahman and the cosmic universe of cit and acit.

Nyaya -Vaisesika accepts the relation of inherence (Samavaya) between substance and attribute. This relation holds Good between two entities which are inseparable (Ayuta Siddha) and hence it is an internal relation. According to the visistadvaitin, substance and attribute cannot be separated since by its very nature, an attribute cannot be separated from the substance. In the example, “A blue lotus” the blueness which is a quality of the lotus cannot be separated or can the lotus be conceived without its blueness. According to the Visistadvaita, looking from the epistemological position, and object cannot be seen without its quality as there is an inherent connection between the object and its quality.

The inseparable character of substance and attribute has been explained through the concept called “Aprthaksiddhi”

Relation between Brahman and universe

In order to explain the organic relationship between Brahman and universe of cit and acit; the Visistadvaitin, affirms that the universe of cit and acit is organically related to Brahman based on the support of upanisadic statements. The body-soul relation is created on the basis of the concept of aprthak-siddhi, the logical and philosophical importance have been gained by this concept. It explains the reason for both unity and difference.

A substance characterized by the attribute is considered to be one; whereas the substance and attribute are considered to be two in number this principle holds good with regard to the relation between Brahman and universe. The two are distinct by their intrinsic character, but Brahman being the inner self of the universe and a visista entity is considered to be one. If any two entities are completely different and are separable, like a pot and cloth, then there is no inborn relation. We have to accept two kinds of bheda or difference, which has two terms related to each other and the meaning is not absolute identity free from any differentiation but a unity in the sense of a visista entity or substance qualified by its attribute.

The idea of Brahman as the Saririn provides the basis to the meaning of visistadvaita. Its essential truth is the concept of Brahman as saririn and of cit and acit as His sarira or sariratmabhava (the relationship of body and soul). Sarira is defined by Ramanuja as a substance, which a sentient soul or self can completely support and control for its own purposes and which stands to the soul in a subordinate relation.⁽³⁾

Brahman is considered to be the metaphysical ground of the world of cit and acit, the inner ruler of the finite self and the goal of life. The main thought of visistadvaita reveals this inner relation between Brahman and the world of cit and acit in terms of sarira-sariri bhava. The concept of Brahman as the saririn and the world as the sarira corresponds to the ontology of Sri Ramanuja which is expounded in sadvidya of sri Ramanuja. According to Sri Ramanuja, cit and acit are eternal but not external to Isvara who is the all-inclusive infinite. The infinite enters the finite and brings out the names and forms of the finite and resides in them as their eternal inner ruler without being touched by their imperfections. Slowly one can come to the exact meaning of Brahman as the saririn and the universe as the Sarira.

According to Sri Ramanuja, atman or saririn is known as the container (adhara) and controller (niyanta) of another and exists for its own satisfaction (Sesi) the sarira is so called by reason of its being in its entirety, the adheya, the niyamyā and the sesa; it is inseparable from the saririn and forms its Aprthak-siddhi- visesana or prakara.

Relation between Jiva and Brahman

Can we think of a subject without the object or an object without the subject? Sri Ramanuja claims that the infinite mind and the finite mind cannot exclude each other. The relation between the object and the subject Sri Ramanuja says must be an organic relation and similarly the relation between the finite mind and the infinite mind must also be organic as one passes from the finite to the infinite.

According to the visistadvaita Vedanta, the jiva's which are infinite in number are not only different from one another but also different from Brahman or Isvara. Isvara and the Jiva are two Spiritual entities which are not only absolutely real but also distinct from each other. This truth is established on the strength of the scriptural texts. The upanisadic text which refers to the nature of reality, speaks of Brahman as different from jiva and also describes that both Brahman and jiva are of different nature. There are many Passages which asserts the distinction between the two realities such as the ruler and the ruled, the all-knowing and the ignorant, the independent and the dependent, the pure and impure etc.

Isvara is vibhu (all-pervasive) whereas jiva is monadic (anu). In view of these facts, the Vedanta sutra also states categorically that Brahman is different from jiva which is subject to karma. ⁽⁴⁾How can we rely upon such texts which give importance to non-difference or identity of Brahman and jiva. If absolute difference maintained by Naiyayikas and Madhvas could be considered then the texts speaking of non-difference must be viewed as unimportant or invalid and monism must be given up. In contrast. If non-difference is defended as the true meaning of upanisads, as advaitins approach, the texts speaking of difference would be either unimportant or invalid. It is possible to overcome both these difficulties by taking up the theory of Bhedabheda; which states that Brahman and jiva are both different as well as non-different.

Sri Ramanuja does not accept the Bhedabheda theory because it paves way for the admission of the defects of jiva in Brahman. He does not listen to the pluralist view which emphasizes only difference or to the advaitins view which claims only non-difference. But in either case the validity of all the Upanisadic texts cannot be maintained based on both Bhedabheda and Advaita's views. Sri Ramanuja attempts to reconcile the conflict and support the validity of all the texts by putting forth a theory that jiva is an amsa or mode of Brahman based on the sruti texts and Vedanta sutra.

The author of the Vedanta sutra, who acknowledges the two conflicting views about jiva and Brahman as different (nana) and also non-different (anyathaca) used the expression 'amsa' to explain the relation of jiva to Brahman. ⁽⁵⁾While commenting on this sutra, Ramanuja states that jiva is to be accepted as an integral part (amsa) of Brahman in order to account for its non-difference as well as difference from Brahman. ⁽⁶⁾The term 'amsa' is therefore defined by Ramanuja as that which constitutes an integral part of an entity. (eka vastu eka desatvam hy amsatvam) what is meant by part of a whole is that it is an essential attribute of a complex whole (visistasya ekasya vastunan visesanam amsa eva). ⁽⁷⁾This could be illustrated by a few examples. The luminosity which radiates from a luminous substance such as fire or sun

is part of that luminous substance the generic characteristic of cow (gotva) as an essential attribute is part of the substance in which it inheres.

In a similar manner, jiva is regarded as part of Brahman by combining the metaphysical category of substance and attribute and the concept of Aprthak - siddhi, Sri Ramanuja explains the relation of jiva to Brahman.

The Correlation between Body(Sarira) and soul (Sariri)

The concept of aprthak-siddhi gains the relation not only between substance and attribute but also between two substances (dravyas) According to the visistadvaita vedanta, the body (sarira) and the soul

(atman) are inseparable though both are considered to be dravyas. In the same way, the universe consists of cit (soul) and acit (matter) which are inseparable from Isvara, the organic relation between the body and soul is explained as sariratma - sambandha. The strength of visistadvaita's view of aprthak-siddhi depends mainly on the depending principles and it should be discussed in detail so that no misunderstanding could arise.

Let us see the relation of the physical body to the soul. How can we prove that the body and soul are inseparable? We may admit that an inseparable relation between the substance and attribute is quite evident in experience. But we cannot extend the same argument for inseparability between the soul and body. The visistadvaitin explains that the body is dependent on the soul for its existence. When the soul leaves the body, the body cannot exist independently as long as there is a physical body the soul resides in the body. The concept of sarira or physical body inevitably assumes its relation to a soul. Visistadvaita's essential truth (saratamam) is the concept of Brahman as saririn and of cit and acit as His sarira or sariratma bhava (the relationship of body and soul). Brahman is considered to be the metaphysical ground of the world of cit and acit, the inner ruler of the finite self and the goal of life. The main thought of Visistadvaita reveals this inner relation between Brahman and the world of cit and acit in terms of sarira-sariri-bhava.

According to Sri Ramanuja cit and acit are eternal but not external to Isvara who is the all- inclusive infinite. The infinite enters the finite and brings out the names and forms of the finite and resides in them as their eternal inner ruler without being touched by their imperfections. Slowly one can come to the exact meaning of Brahman as the saririn and the universe as the sarira. Visistadvaita re-interprets external relations in terms of internal relations and internal relations in terms of the organic relation namely in terms of sarira-saririn.

The three- fold relation between Brahman and the world of cit and acit is explained by the Sariraka Sastra in terms of sarira-sariri sambandha. It means that the finite is rooted in the infinite, sustained by its will and serves its redemptive end as a free agent. This view reconciles the claims of monism and theism and those of transcendence and immanence. Brahman is the saririn in this special sense, is the life of our life and the inner ruler immortal in all beings. Brahman with the attribute of cit and acit in the gross state of

srsti is identical with Brahman with the attributes of cit and acit in the pralaya state, due to the principle of non-difference of cause and effect and the unity of co-ordination. Sri Ramanuja recognizes all the three realities ie; matter, spirit and God to be equally real and they form an inseparable unity. They can only be distinguished without being divided. Thus, we are able to arrive at the meaning of the concepts of Aprthak-siddhi in Visistadvaita.

Evaluation

From the above discussion, we have analysed the relationship between God, soul and world which are inseparable in nature among the three realities and those relationships are internal in nature.

In Sri Ramanuja's philosophy the three entities ie, God, soul and world are considered and accepted as three ultimate realities. Here the soul and world are dependent upon God as part and whole, body and soul and substance and attribute. The purpose of utilizing this aprthak-siddhi concept is to make a difference with Vaisesika School which uses the word samavaya. Samavaya is considered as one of the six categories whereas in visistadvaita, aprthak – siddhi is used to show the internal relations among the three realities which are inseparable in nature.

Sri Ramanuja's Philosophy is a laudable one because it encompasses all the three realities into one organic unity, which shows the inseparable relations in terms of aprthak-siddhi. Sri Ramanuja tries to harmonize the demands of religious feeling with logical thinking by combining one particular philosophical doctrine with a particular religious creed. To sum up, Sri Ramanuja's concept of aprthak-siddhi in visistadvaita philosophy is a boon to the system.

Foot Notes:

- 1 Chandradhar Sharma, "A critical survey of Indian Philosophy" Motilal banarsidass publication, Delhi, Reprint 1987, Page:347
- 2 Ibid, Page:347
- 3 Srinivasachari, P.N, "The philosophy of Visistadvaita." The Adyar Library, Adyar, 1943, Page:95
- 4 Srinivasachari, S.M "Fundamentals of visistadvaita Vedanta" Motilal Bandarsidass publication, Delhi, 1988 Page:213
- 5 Ibid, Page:213
- 6 Ibid, Page:213
- 7 Ibid, Page:214

Reference

- 1 Srinivasachari, P.N, “Ramanuja’s idea of the finite self” longman’s Green and co Ltd, Calcutta, 1928.
- 2 Srinivasachari, S.M, “Vaisnavism – its Philosophy, Theology and Religious discipline” Motilal Bandarsidass publication, Delhi, 1994.
- 3 Chandradhar Sharma, “A critical survey of Indian Philosophy” Motilal Banarsidass publication, Delhi. Reprint 1987
- 4 Srinivasachari, P.N, “The philosophy of Visistadvaita.” The Adyar Library, Adyar, 1943.
- 5 Srinivasachari,S.M “Fundamentals of Visistadvaita Vedanta” Motilal Bandarsidass publication, Delhi,1988.

