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THE CONCEPT OF PRATIBHAJÑĀNA IN NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA AND POETICS

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ABSTRACT: The concept of Pratibhā occupies a significant yet often understated place in Indian philosophical thought. Emerging as a unique doctrine explaining the origins of super-sensuous knowledge, Pratibhā is understood as an innate or acquired faculty that transcends the limitations of ordinary perception and reasoning. The present paper undertakes a comprehensive examination of the doctrine of Pratibhā, particularly focusing on its acceptance and treatment within the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of Indian philosophy. While these systems primarily emphasize realism and empirical knowledge, they nonetheless recognize the necessity of an extraordinary cognitive faculty to explain certain dimensions of human experience that surpass the reach of the senses and intellect. The current study examines the Indian philosophical theory of Pratibha and how the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools have embraced it. An attempt has been made in this work to clarify this viewpoint in order to eliminate some of the difficulties that may arise throughout the understanding process. This is naturally followed by some evaluation observations. in the poetics tradition, prātibha is associated with the concept of dhvani (suggestion), where the poet's intuitive understanding transcends the literal meaning of words, creating layers of meaning that resonate emotionally and intellectually with the audience. Thus, prātibhajñāna is essential for the poet's ability Moreover to create nuanced and powerful expressions of human experience. Prātibhajñāna in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy refers to a rare and spontaneous form of knowledge, while in poetics, it represents the intuitive insight that enables artistic creativity. Both systems acknowledge its significance, though they interpret its role differently.

KEY WORDS: Pratibhā, Prātibhajñāna, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Poetics

INTRODUCTION

In the Indian tradition, many entities such as the Self, God, and metaphysical truths are acknowledged despite being inaccessible to ordinary sensory perception. The existence of these realities implies the presence of an alternative, higher means of cognition Pratibhā. Defined as a "flash of immediate and fresh light" that reveals hidden truths, Pratibhā is not limited to one domain; it encompasses spiritual intuition, poetic inspiration, and aesthetic experience. Philosophers like Sri Aurobindo have likened it to a supramental vision, while Western thinkers like Croce have identified it with a heightened form of intuition.

The article also addresses philosophical challenges regarding the nature of Pratibhā, such as its eternal versus non-eternal status, and offers reconciliations rooted in nuanced interpretations of eternality and sādhanā (spiritual practice). Furthermore, distinctions between different intensities and types of Pratibhā ranging from fleeting flashes of insight to

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stable yogic vision are discussed, especially within the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika frameworks. Both traditions, while cautious in their engagement with mystical knowledge, acknowledge the validity of Pratibhā through their acceptance of Vedic authority (Śruti), the phenomenon of Jīvanmukti (liberatedliving), and transcendental perception.

Thus, the doctrine of Pratibhā serves as a bridge between the empirical and the transcendental, highlighting a profound Indian insight: true knowledge is not confined to sensory data or rational deduction alone but is sometimes gifted by an inner light that reveals the hidden depths of reality. This paper aims to clarify the role, scope, and philosophical implications of Pratibhā, resolving potential misunderstandings and offering critical reflections on its significance within Indian epistemology.

There are numerous things in the world that are outside the scope of the normal senses, as has been noted. The presence of a universe outside the realm of our senses is indicated by the insufficiency of intellectual capacity. Therefore, we conclude that a man possesses a talent that may expose that universe. Pratibha[1] is the name of this faculty. This argument will be supported by the fact that numerous concepts, such as God, the self, etc., are already acknowledged in Indian tradition yet cannot be understood by the sense organs. The nature of them has been proposed by Indian experts, who have also discovered the remarkable methods for achieving them. These can be identified by supersensual power or vision, which originates from a power known as pratibhā rather than the normal mental platform. The use of terminologies like, normal perception, sensuous, prākṛta etc, indicates that there is equivalent opposing ideas like the supernormal perception, super sensual, atiprākṛta etc, therefore it cannot be maintained that there are no items that cannot be disclosed by sense organs. These specific usages assume the presence of the opposing notions that may be understood by pratibhā alone since if there were no possibility of supernormal perception etc., then the uses of such as normal perception etc. would be meaningless.

According to Dr. Kavirāja, the name "Pratibhā" is literally means "a flash of light which reveals the objects." "The wisdom characterized by immediacy and freshness"[2] is the light. This remark brings to mind a specific definition of the Pratibhā, is goes like this. Pratibhā is type of wisdom that has the ability to repeatedly illuminate objects in a new way[3]. Perhaps two adjuncts, "immediacy" and "freshness," have been added to the concept of Pratibhā in light of these points. 'Suprarational apperception'[4] is another term used to characterize it. This claim is very similar to Sri Aurobindo's theory, which holds that brilliance is super-normal since it originates in the mind. According to Aurobindo, "It comes out from something deep within which calls down the world-vision, the light and power from a level above the normal mind (i.e. over mind)."[5] In Western philosophy, this kind of perception is also recognized and referred to as intuition. This intuition, in Croce's opinion, is a unique species that is more different from intuition in general.[6] "Something more" in this context refers to "the suprasensuous and suprarational perception." The knowledge acquired by Pratibhā may be of both higher and lower kind, and there is no need to assume that it is invariably of the latter kind. The telepathy and others is included under second category while the Supreme Wisdom of the saint belongs to the first one.[7]

In other sense, the Highest Divinity is represented by the intuition, or Pratibhā. The Supreme spirit is "the power of self-revelation or self-illumination with which it is essentially and eternally identical."[8]

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Since "eternal" implies having no origin or end, a logical issue will arise if the aforementioned viewpoint is accepted for granted. Pratibhā will not be considered an effect (kārya) if it is believed to be eternally similar since it will not become counter-positive of the prior-absence (Prāgabhāvapratiyogi). Because it lacks prior-absence, one of the prerequisites for being an effect, that which is everlasting cannot have any beginning at all.[9]Since many people become seers or Ṛṣi after gaining Pratibhā by their own sādhanā, even though they were not previously, it is impossible to characterize Pratibhā as eternal. The Sriti also instructs humanity on how to achieve this seerhood.[10] So why wouldn't it have an impact? It must be non-eternal as it is a consequence.

Regarding the issue raised, it can be stated that this viewpoint does not conflict with the one that was previously presented. Because of their sādhanā or adṛṣṭa, certain people who were previously not Ṛṣi or gifted with Pratibhā may now become such.However, he focuses on the fact that certain people are born with brilliance, even if they are extremely rare, and that only the Pratibhā is forever identical with Supreme Spirit in those circumstances.Furthermore, eternality must be interpreted as the antithesis of transitoriness in this context rather than in the technical sense that the sentence above makes clear. The point of saying it like that is that when someone acquires Pratibhā or serenity, it is not for the present, but for the eternal, that is to say, it has a beginning but no end. The point of saying it like that is that when someone acquires Pratibhā or serenity, it is not for the present, but for the eternal, that is to say, it has a beginning but no end.

It should be added to the Pratibhā of the second kind, which describes it as eternally identical with the Supreme Self, when the term "Pratibhā" is used in the meaning of "guru."[11] There, "guru" refers to an initiator, or someone who takes the initiative. Pratibhā is known as the "guru" because it enables man to view the past, present, and future and makes him same with the Supreme Self via the possession of an eternally identical genius.

After this, we may proceed to give some characteristic features of the knowledge arising from Pratibhā. As this suprasensuous knowledge has no spatio-temporal limit, it is considered as transcendental having capacity of revealing past, present and future by a single flash.[12]

The following is one way to draw attention to this topic. The word "Ṛṣi" means "one who sees" in English, meaning that one has transcendental vision and can perceive the past, present, and future. He is the only one who can recognize the Truth in everything. For this reason, Ṛṣi is called kavi in the Upaniṣad,[13] meaning krāntadarśi, or omniscience, meaning that he knows all that exists in the past, present, and future.This kind of vision is similar to a search light in that it can see everything[14]. A man is said to be associated with Brahman, the kavi, if he achieves this vision.

Although some have created a new title for that vision, Samaveda, the Agamas accept the terms Pratibhā, Prajñā, and so on.[15] It is a very important coinage, in my opinion, and based on its etymology, Samaveda means "true knowledge" and which denotes the understanding of anything that is true. Once again, it signifies the knowledge of Truth insofar as Pratibhā is the only source of knowledge of Truth that is eternally true.Furthermore, incorrect cognition persists in a man who is not a seer. Individuals who lack Pratibhā in this realm may make mistakes or have incorrect perceptions of objects. However, achieving seerhood (ṛṣitva) leads to Samaveda. Pratibhā and Samaveda lead to the same notion, hence there is just a terminological distinction between them.

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The aesthetic pleasure can be described by another kind of Pratibhā. After experiencing the joy or sorrow of the hero and heroine, for instance, those who appreciate literary art in the form of theater become either happy or miserable. There is no reasoning that can persuade a guy to do this. This kind of emotional connection has no known source. It can be taken through an extrasensory channel known as Pratibhā as the cause cannot be determined by common sense organs and logic. This joy is disinterested global pleasure since it beyond the bounds of human interest.[16] Since this kind of pleasure is mystic in nature, Pratibhā a diminutive representation of Brahman, according to Abhinavagupta must be the source.[17] Another is a secondary one that may also be found in books. We are always drawn to art items in pursuit of aesthetic pleasure because of a drive brought on by Pratibhā, which emphasizes all activities. This Pratibhā, which creates a flash from inside,[18] is the reason why a man normally feels attracted to or avoids an object after considering it to be either pleasant or unpleasant. The second part of this chapter will address the theory of aesthetic experience.

From the perspective of the Naiyāyikas, a difficulty may be brought up in this regard. We are aware that one's inclination toward or avoidance of an object is influenced by their understanding of its conduciveness (iṣṭasādhanatājñāna) and non-conduciveness (aniṣṭasādhanatājñānaṁ). They contend that pratibhā plays no part at all if awareness of an object's suitability, etc., becomes the source of attraction,etc. It could be argued that the item's conduciveness is determined by its internal knowledge in order to solve this problem. But how can a man tell if it's favorable? A man can recognize it with the help of his inner Pratibhā.

Pratibhā functioning in the context of achieving aesthetic pleasure and that functioning in the context of everyday behavior appear to be identical. However, it is easy to infer from the effect that there is a clear difference between them. The fact that the former is enigmatic while the latter is not lets us know. There would be no distinction between the two situations if Pratibhā had been the same in both. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the difference, at least in terms of Pratibhā degree. The degree of Pratibhā is greater in the former case than in the latter.

It could be said that all kinds of actions, aesthetic or mundane, are caused by the impulse of the Pratibhaj. This impulse can be higher or lower depending on the sacred candle that the individual possesses. It has been stated before that Pratibhajna is one in essence but differs in kind by the way it is produced by constant and constant effort, or produced automatically and by the bare adṛṣṭa (unseen factors).[19] Moreover, this kind of Pratibhajanism may provide temporary spiritual pleasure to the individual. But it's not considered valuable enough to donate to the nonprofit, according to nonpartisan. Thus, the Pratibhajna that can produce a lasting vision or that can make a person a yogi is not clearly emphasized in most philosophical discussions.

Since the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophical systems focus more on discussing the real world, they haven't talked much about Pratibhā, the source of supersensuous knowledge.[20]One could argue that this supersensuous knowledge should not be dealt with. Due to the influence of Advaitins like Sankaracharya and others, Indians used to devote most of their time to discussing and substantiating otherworldly objects. The Naiyāyikas at the time felt compelled to talk about this-worldly items that can provide comfort or other niḥśreyasa to a person. In addition, he can receive unseen niḥśreyasa (highest good) from

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otherworldly objects. They hope to demonstrate that both Adṛṣṭa Niḥśreyasa and Dṛṣṭa are necessary for optimal human development in this way.[21]

After following the Vaiśeṣika -line, two states may arise if manas become completely still: Suṣupti, (dreamless sleep), and yoga (samādhi). In yoga or samādhi, consciousness is elevated into an extraordinary charity of instant intuition rather than diminishing. The manas is confronted, as it were, not only with the pure self but also with the realities of everything, since time, space, and other constraints have disappeared. This vision is known as Ārṣajñāna or Pratibhā.[22]The above view is, in my view, very efficiently represented and well reasoned. It is true that manas stands in the face of the pure self, and that this state of mind alone leads to profound concentration or yoga, which increases the powers of the senses. If the power of the ear is increased by this kind of concentration, you can hear any sound anywhere. If the power of the eye is increased, the same person can visualize any object anywhere. All objects can be realized through the experience that is generated by the union of our minds with the object of knowledge.[23]The Vaiśeṣika argue that this kind of experience is also possible because of the merits of the previous birth or this birth and because of the restraint (yama) and compliance that is required to maintain a proper state of mind and body. This exercise of mind leads to a transcendental yogin meditation.[24]

According to Jayanta Bhatta, Pratibhā is a place where, infrequently, an ordinary person's life suddenly flashes into existence; this is not the case with yoga. Since Pratibhā is produces automatically in a man based on his adṛṣṭa, it is "one in essence but differing in kind" in both situations. What sets Pratibhā apart from ordinary knowledge is its extraordinary power.[25] This yoga or Pratibhā has been accepted by the Naiyāyikas as a Pratyāsatti, or contact. Since this is uncommon, it is acknowledged as an exceptional contact that allows one to understand the entire objective world in a single instant.[26]

Since pratyakṣa pratibhā is eagerly manifested in the context of yogaja, it is referred to as the Supreme Being's wisdom. Some situations are referred to as intuition because Pratibhā is less evident. Intuition or extraordinary perception are the means by which one can learn about atoms, as ordinary perception cannot. Similarly, there are alternative ways to acquire universal knowledge. Using a technique known as sāmānyalakṣaṇa, a man will see the entire class of jars when he perceives a particular jar.[27] Once more, jñānalakṣaṇa is made possible by the manifestation of Pratibhā otherwise, how can a man know other things at the perception of a particular object? For instance, when one perceives the sandalwood, even though it is not in contact with his sense organs, he can immediately detect its fragrance. As a result, in this instance, fragrance knowledge is somewhat intuitive.[28]

Two characteristics of yoga-intuition have been highlighted by Viśvanātha Nyāya Pañcānan, namely. One yogi is eternally connected (yukta), while another is not yet connected (yuñjāna). The former is said to be the mirror of Eternal Light because they are aware of everything, whereas the latter requires some introspection to achieve this awareness.[29] These two phases of seer vision are also explained in a Vaiśeṣika-sūtra. Those who have achieved total control over their concentration are in one stage. While one belongs to those who lack such mastery but occasionally catch glimpses of Pratibhā, vision is ever-present to them.[30]

To shed more light on this area of knowledge, some additional arguments in support of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's acceptance of Pratibhā doctrines could be made. Śruti, which is as well the result of Pratibhā and possessed by the vedic seers, is believed in by both the Nyāya and

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Vaiśeṣika systems. The kavi, or seers, who represent the Vedic mantras, make them poetic. It is common knowledge that both systems acknowledge the Vedic subject matter as authentic. They also believe in Jīvanmukti, or embodied Apavarga, and to believe in Sruti means to rely on the output of the Pratibhā dot.[31] In other words, they think that there is a state where people are no longer in pain. An individual can observe the true nature of the objects is endowed with his Pratibhā in this position. If a person can ride his mind of incorrect thinking, he will be endowed with Pratibhā. When it is eliminated, the mind is liberated, which results in Pratibhā's possession and the revelation of the true nature of the world.

Actually the process of having Pratibhā jfidna in the form of self-knowledge is given in the Nyāya-sūtra and Vātsyāyanabhāṣya. It has been depicted that liberation or apavarga has to be attained through the absolute cessation of suffering which is again removed through the removal of birth. This removal of birth comes into being through the abstention from the work which is again possible after the attainment of the right cognition of the categories. Hence it is said by Gautama; Duḥkhajanma-pravṛtti-doṣamithyājñānā-muttarottarāpāye tadantarāpāyādapavaregaḥ. That is, the intuitive cognition of the self leads an individual to the attainment of another type of Supreme Intuitive cognition called apavarega or niḥśreyasa.

The same theory is accepted by Sridhara in his Nyāyakandali. To him, the right cognition of the categories removes the defect of the objects through which they become the objects of attachment. Through the right cognition of the same an individual can have an idea of the true nature of the objects, which leads him to the path of detachment towards the same. If there is detachment towards external objects, a man can realise the true nature of self. After this he develops a habit of renunciation actions contradictory to the prescription of the śruti, smṛti etc. This habit conjoins him with the matured self-knowledge (paripakvātmajñāna), which may also be described as pratibhajñāna.

Praśastapāda has given a vivid description of pratibhajñāna in his Padārthadharmasaṃgraha. To him an individual can transcendentally perceive with the aid of merit arising from yogic practice the internal space (antarātmā), directions (dik), time (kāla), atom (paramāṇu), mind (manaḥ) and the quality, action, universal, particular inhered in them; and in the inherence itself. One can have the direct apprehension of the essential nature of these (svarūpadarśanaṁ) as they really are (avitathaṁ).Moreover, those who are transcendentally conjoined with their souls can have immediate apprehension of the objects having subtle character (sūksma), hindered (vyavahita), existing in distant places.

He has accepted such intuition (Pratibhā) as of two types: transcendental (rasa) and mundane (laukika). The former belongs to that type of intuitive cognition which arises from the contact of mind and self and the particular merits generated through this. This type of intuitive cognition remains in the seers who have direct vision of an object existing in past, future and present and of an object capable of not being known through ordinary sense organs. Due to this reason the whole vedic mantras are revealed to them. Sometimes in the mundane world such revelation is possible as a small girl generally says “My heart i.e. intuition says that tomorrow my brother will come”. When it coincides with the fact, it is called intuitive cognition in the mundane level (laukikī).

Jayanta Bhatta in his Nyāyamañjarī raised a question: what is the proof for the existence of a yogic perception? To him the proof of such yogic perception lies on the fact of the excellence in the understanding capacity of various beings (darśanātiśaya eva pramāṇaṁ). Jayanta is of

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the opinion that the proof for the existence of the yogic perception is nothing but the excellence in the vision of the yogins. From our day to day experience it is known to us that the ordinary people require sufficient light to perceive an object that is in proximity to our eyes but cats can see in the dense darkness. From this it is proved that there is a variation in degree of the visions. This variation of the degree in vision depends on the excellences of the same which is called atisaya.

Our sense-organs have got natural power initially. If someone has got complete mastery over the yogic process, he obtains an extra power or excellence in his sense-organs. Though the sense organs in the normal condition cannot reveal those objects that are not in proximity with the sense-organs, they with the aid of yogic properties (yogajadharma) can reveal those existing in the remote past and the remote future. This excellence (atiśaya) acquired by the sense-organs is described as 'surplus in Man' by Rabindranath Tagore. The Upanisadic Mantra 'Śrotrasya śrotraṁ manaso mano yad' (i.e. He is the mind of the mind,ear of the ear etc) may be interpreted as the surplus power existing in an ear and existing in the mind. Hence, there is no question of the defect of tautology. The first 'ear' or 'mind' indicates the surplus power existing in it while the second 'ear' and 'mind' indicates the gross ear and mind. In other words, that ear or mind should be taken as a real ear or mind if it can acquire 'surplus power' (atiśaya as coined by Jayanta) in it, which is possible through yogic process.This excellence in the sense organs is taken as the root-cause of intuitive cognition (pratibhajñāna),

The gradual purification of mind through yoga is beautifully described by Jayanta with the metaphor of gold. Just as gold gradually shines more and more due to the purification of it through heat, the minds of the yogins can have immediate apprehension of all knowable through the practice of yoga.The immediate apprehension of atiśaya or excellence in sense organs and intelligence and the authority of the yagavidhis led the Naiyāyikas to accept yogic perception. Yogic power is neither innate nor eternal but it is generated from some collocation of causes, which is acceptable to Nyāya. Due to this ground a yogin is different from God who has nityajñāna; eternal cognition.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the doctrine of Pratibhā stands as a vital acknowledgment within Indian philosophy that not all knowledge is mediated by the senses or logical reasoning. Especially in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools, where empirical investigation and rational analysis are paramount, the acceptance of Pratibhā underscores a profound openness to forms of cognition that are immediate, intuitive, and super-sensuous. By recognizing the existence of Pratibhā, these traditions admit that certain truths particularly spiritual, metaphysical, and aesthetic can only be accessed through a higher faculty beyond ordinary perception. The debates concerning the eternality or non-eternality of Pratibhā further reveal the subtlety with which Indian thinkers approached this concept, ensuring that it remained compatible with their broader metaphysical frameworks. Whether seen as the fruit of intense spiritual discipline or as a spontaneous flash of insight, Pratibhā bridges the gap between the known and the unknowable, offering a direct vision into deeper layers of reality. It serves as a reminder that in Indian thought, ultimate knowledge is not merely accumulated but often revealed, resonating through an inner light that guides seekers toward truth. Thus, the doctrine of Pratibhā not only enriches the epistemology of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika but also provides a philosophical foundation for understanding the mystical, the poetic, and the transcendent dimensions of human experience

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27. “Samanyalaksana iti samanyam laksanam yasya ityarthah, Tatra laksanapadena yadi svarupamucyate, tada samanyasvarupa pratyasattirityarto labhyate. TTatra dhumavatvena sannikarsena dhuma ityevamrupam sakaladhumavisayakam jnanam jayate”- Siddhantamuktavali on verse No.63.

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