

CHARVAKA PHILOSOPHY

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CHARVAKA'S EPISTEMOLOGY

- ▶ Charvaka's philosophy depends on its epistemology.
- ▶ Epistemology is the study of the nature & scope of knowledge & justified belief. It philosophically discusses truth, falsehood, validity of knowledge, limits of knowledge & nature of knowledge, knower & known etc.

PROBLEMS OF THE EPISTEMOLOGY

- ▶ How far can we know reality?
- ▶ How does knowledge originate & develop?
- ▶ What are the different sources of knowledge?

TWO ASPECTS OF EPISTEMOLOGY

1. Constructive Aspect
2. Destructive Aspect

CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECT

- ▶ Perception is the only source of valid knowledge.

PERCEPTION ACCORDING TO CHARVAKA

- ▶ Perception are of two types:-
- ▶ External Perception
- ▶ Internal Perception

External perception is described as that arising from the interaction of five senses & worldly objects while internal perception is described by this school as that of inner sense, the mind.

DESTRUCTIVE ASPECT

Giving credence only to perception. Charvaka philosophy repudiates other means of knowledge like inference & testimony which are regarded as valid pramanas by many philosophers.

- ▶ Inference is not certain.
- ▶ Charvaka do not believe in causation & its universality.
- ▶ Testimony is also Invalid.

REFUTATION OF INFERENCE

- ▶ Inference depends upon Vyapti. According to Charvaka philosophers Vyapti is impossible because firstly, it is not based on perception & secondly it deduces imperceptible from the perceptible. The smoke as an inevitable concomitant of fire cannot be inferred from seeing smoke with fire at some odd places.
- ▶ Vyapti cannot be known by testimony, because the authority of the latter also is based on inference.
- ▶ Vyapti cannot be established on the basis of comparison. Comparison depends on the universal relation between words & objects signified by them. This again is not the object of perception.

CAUSATION IS ALSO NOT VALID

- ▶ Because it also depends upon Vyapti. The two events are found together on many occasion & consequently make us to expect they will invariably go together. But there is, infact,no certainty about their co-presence. The causal relation between fire & smoke from the sight of smoke with fire several times admits of loopholes, as it over-looks several conditions e.g., the wetness of fuel.

TESTIMONY IS ALSO INVALID

- ▶ Scriptures cannot be valid in the case of imperceptible things. According to the Charvaka, the words of reliable persons are authoritative in the case of perceptible things. These words are also known by perception. For the Charvakas, the imperceptible things have no existence.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ The Charvaka epistemology holds perception as the primary and proper source of knowledge, while inference is held as prone to being either right or wrong & therefore conditional or invalid.