

JAINA CONCEPT OF MEMORY

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Modern psychology regards memory as a specific kind of revival or reproduction of past events. It includes the following factors : Retention, reproduction, recognition, and localisation. To remember an event, the event must have been experienced before and the experience must have been retained or preserved in the mind in the form of an unconscious trace. This is called retention. But the mere retention of a percept is not memory. It must be reproduced in the shape of an image. Thus, one may retain the multiplication-table in the mind, but he is not said to remember it until the table is actually revived in consciousness in the form of visual or verbal images. This stage is called reproduction. Again, any vague reproduction cannot be regarded as memory proper. The image reproduced must be recognised as the image of a former percept. The image must be known to be the image of the object which was experienced in the past. This state of cognition is called recognition. Further, in memory the percept reproduced is referred to a particular point of time. This stage of memory is called localisation. Thus, retention implies the process or power of preserving the unconscious traces or dispositions of past percepts. Reproduction is the revival of past percepts in the form of images and ideas that pre-supposes the retention of those percepts in the shape of mental traces. Recognition means the cognition of an object knowing it to be old and familiar or as something perceived before. Localisation is the recognition of the object having a temporal and spatial reference to it. In the light of this process, it will be easy to explain the Jaina concept of memory.

Retention follows in the wake of perception. At this stage the determination that took place at the stage of perception

is retained. The Nandi-sūtra defines retention as the act of retaining a perceptual judgement for a number of instants, numerable or innumerable.¹ According to the Tattvārtha-bhāṣya, retention is the final determination of the object, retention of the cognition, and recognition of the object in the future.² Thus, according to the opinion of Umāsvāti, retention develops through three stages. Firstly, the nature of the object is finally determined, secondly, the determination of the object is retained, and thirdly, the object is recognised on future occasions. Jinabhadra defines retention as 'the absence of the lapse of perceptual cognition.'³ At this stage the judgement which has been acquired in perception, becomes so firm that it does not lapse. Like Umāsvāti he also admits three stages of retention. As he says : "The absence of lapse of the perceptual judgement of the object, the formation of mental trace, and the recollection of it again in the future constitute retention. All of them follow in the wake of perception."⁴ Puṇyapāda defines retention as 'the condition of the absence of forgetting in the future of what has been cognised in the state of perception.'⁵ Akalaṅka defines it as 'the absence of forgetting the same of what has been cognised by perception.'⁶ Vidyānanda defines it as 'the condition of recall'.⁷ Vāḍideva gives a different definition. According to him, retention is the consolidation of perception.⁸ It is the gradual consolidation and the absence of the lapse of perceptual cognition for some time because of the mindfulness of the cogniser.⁹ He criticises the view of those who regard retention as the condition of recall in the future. It has been observed by him that retention is nothing but the consolidation of perception for a certain length of time. It is not the condition of recall in the future, since it is a category of perceptual cognition and, hence, cannot last up to the time of recollection. Furthermore, if it were to last up to that time, it would be impossible to cognise anything else during that interval.

inasmuch as even the exponents of the said view are not prepared to admit the presence of two conscious activities at the same time. Thus, how can retention be defined as the condition of recall ? We recollect our past experience on account of the special capacity of the soul to remember past events. The faculty of retention cannot be regarded as the cause of recollection. Retention, however, can be admitted as a remote cause of recall, and not as the immediate one, since it is not an impossibility to admit so many remote causes of an event.¹⁰ According to Hemacandra, 'retention is the condition of recollection'.¹¹ This condition is nothing but the causal stuff capable of change into the effect called recall that consists in the recollection of past events. To express the same idea in a different manner, retention is nothing but the latent mental trace left over as legacy by previous experience. It is, thus the continued existence of a particular perceptual judgment for a certain length of time. Hemacandra further remarks that this latent mental trace should be admitted as a species of cognition on the ground that it is a category of comprehension. It should not be supposed that it is different from cognition as such, because if it were not cognitive in character, it could not produce recall which is a category of cognition. One kind of existence is impossible to be transformed into another kind of existence which is opposite in nature. If retention in the form of hidden mental trace were not cognitive in nature, it could not be an attribute of the self, inasmuch as the attributes of a conscious entity cannot be non-conscious in nature.¹²

Recollection is the cognition that has the stimulus of a latent mental trace for its condition. It refers to its content by a form of the pronoun 'that'.¹³ The latent mental trace is nothing but the disposition retained by our past experience. Its emergence to the surface of consciousness constitutes the

stimulation of recollection. The emergence of recollection is necessarily conditioned by this sort of stimulation. Unless and until this type of stimulation is present, recollection cannot emerge. But how does the latent mental impression serve as the stimulus for the emergence of recollection ? It required another stimulus. The disposition of past percepts, though it may have continued for a certain length of time, does not operate as the cause of recollection unless it is awakened by another stimulus. The stimulus to excite it is admitted to be two-fold by the Jaina.¹⁴ First of all, the person reproducing his past experience must be competent to do so. Now, what is this competence ? It is nothing but the destruction-cum-subsidence of the obscuring karmic veils. The second factor is nothing but the external conditions that bring the disposition to maturation. It includes the observation of similar objects and the like. Now, mere observation of similar objects and such other conditions are not enough to arouse recollection, since sometimes it happens that such conditions as the observation of similar objects and the like being present recollection does not arise. All the external conditions may be there to arouse recollection, and yet, recollection does not emerge because of internal incompetency. Unless the mental make-up is efficient enough to recollect what has been experienced in the past, no emergence of recollection is possible. Mere external causes cannot give rise to internal activities. In coopertion with internal states only external conditions can produce certain mental functions. For this very reason the Jaina thinkers admit both internal and external conditions as the cause of recollection. One without the other is incapable of giving rise to it. However, when the requisite conditions such as the destruction-cum-subsidence of the obstructive veils, observation of similar objects, and the like, are at work to bring the latent mental trace to maturation, the disposition produces recollection. The contents of rec-

ollection are expressed by a form of the pronoun 'that', inasmuch as it refers to our past percepts. Thus, all the cognitions that point to their contents as that jar, that cloth, that ear-ring, and the like, are the cases of recollection. The line that distinguishes recollection from perception is that perception always refers to its content as existing in the present, whereas recollection always has reference to its content as existed in the past.

Recognition is a synthetic judgement born of perception, i.e., direct sensory observation and recollection. It is represented by such forms of deliverance as 'that necessarily is it', 'it is like that', 'this is dissimilar to that', 'this is different from that', and so on.¹⁵ Recognition is a complex mode of cognition. It includes both perception and recollection. Perception is the direct observation of the objects existing before our sense-organs. Recollection is reproduction of the latent mental trace. These two are the conditions of recognition. Thus, recognition is a kind of synthetic judgement. When perception and recollection are combined in a particular form, recognition emerges. As recollection refers to its content by a form of the pronoun 'that', recognition delivers its contents in forms like the following : 'That necessarily is it' is one of the forms. It is the judgement of identity. All such judgements as 'this is necessarily that jar', 'this is necessarily that cloth', 'this is necessarily that man' are the cases of this type. When the same object is cognised on different occasions, such judgements occur. 'This is like that' is the judgement of similarity. When we happen to come across an object which is similar to another one that has already been experienced, such judgements as 'this is like that' emerges. All such judgements as 'this book is like that one', 'my watch is like that of yours', are the cases of the judgement of similarity. There are certain judgements that are just reverse

to the judgements of similarity. 'The buffalo is dissimilar to the cow', 'the horse is dissimilar to the ass', and the like can be mentioned as examples of this variety of judgement. This is called the judgement of dissimilarity. There is also the judgement of difference. All such judgements as 'ten is less than twenty', 'five is more than three', 'the elephant is heavier than the camel', are cases of the judgement of difference.

Now, an objection may be raised against the very notion of recognition. We do not come across any phenomenon called recognition, which is given out as an independent category of cognition, as anything different from the two cognitive acts, viz., 'recollection' indicated by the form 'that' and 'perception' indicated by the word 'this'. When both these mental processes are in fusion, we derive the notion of recognition. Thus, strictly speaking, recognition is not a separate factor of our cognition. This contention is not a sound one. Recognition is not merely a combination of recollection and perception but something more. The object of recognition is the entity that stands out as the identity in and through its precedent and subsequent states.¹⁶ This identity cannot be the content of recollection, since recollection cognises only what has been perceived before. As has been stated : 'Recollection cognises only what has been known before and refers to its content as 'that', whereas recognition establishes the identity of a past datum with a present one in the form 'that is this'. Therefore, the content of recognition is certainly different from the datum of recollection.¹⁷ Nor can this identity be the content of perception which is confined to the present state of an object only. In other words, the province of perceptual cognition is limited to what is actually present and given to the senses. 'That which is in direct contact with the senses and actually present, is directly grasped

by the senses of sight and the like'.¹⁸ Hence, the identity of a past object and a present datum cannot lie within the jurisdiction of sensory perception. Therefore, we are justified to conclude that the province of recognition is different from that of recollection and perception. No doubt, recognition is a synthetic judgement born of perception and recollection, but it cannot be regarded as the mere combination of the two, inasmuch as it is a new state of the mind as a unitary cognition.

Foot-notes

1. Nandi-sūtra, 35.
2. Dhāraṇā pratipattiriyathāsvaṁ matyavasthānamavadhāraṇaṁ ca. Tattvārtha-bhāṣya, I, 15.
3. aviccui dhāraṇā tassa. Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya, 180.
4. Ibid, 291.
5. Avetasya kālāntare avismaraṇakaraṇaṁ dhāraṇā. Sarvārthasiddhi, I, 15.
6. Nirjñātārthāvismṛtirdhāraṇā. Tattvārtha-rāja-vārttika, I, 15, 4.
7. smṛtihetuḥ sā dhāraṇā. Tattvārtha-śloka-vārttika, I, 15, 4.
8. Sa eva dṛḍhatamāvasthāpanno dhāraṇā. Pramāṇa-naya-tattvāloka, II, 10.
9. Syādvāda-ratnākara, II, 10.
10. Ibid.
11. Smṛtiheturdhāraṇā. Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, i, 29.
12. Commentary on Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, i, 29.
13. Vāsanodbodhahetukā tadityākārā smṛtiḥ, Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, 2, 3.
14. Āvaraṇakṣayopāśamasadṛśadarśanādisāmagrilabdhaprabodhā tu smṛtiṁ janayati, Commentary on Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, 2, 3.
15. Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, 2, 4.
16. Pūrvāparākāraikadhurīṇaṁ hi dravyaṁ pratyabhijñānasya viśayaḥ. Commentary of Pramāṇa-mimāṃsā, I, 2, 4.
17. Pūrvapramitamātre hi jāyate sa iti smṛtiḥ. Sa evāyamitiyaṁ tu pratyabhijñātirekiṇī. Tattva-saṅgraha, 453.
18. Sambaddhaṁ vartamānaṁ ca gṛhyate cakṣurādīnā. Śloka-vārttika, IV, 84.