

ĀNVĪKṢIKĪ: THE PHILOSOPHICAL ESSENCE OF HETU, TARKA AND VĀDA

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Abstract:

प्रदीपःसर्वविद्यानाम्उपायःसर्वकर्मणाम्।
आश्रयःसर्वधर्माणांशश्वद्दानीन्वीक्षिकीमता ॥ (Ch. 1, *Arthashastra*)

Kautilya says, *Ānvīkṣikī* is the lamp illuminating all knowledge and the means of all actions. It is the foundation of all dharma.

Reengaging with the conceptual understanding of Kautilya's *Ānvīkṣikī* is essential in present times. Thinking about thinking has become a rare practice in the human domain! The irony is, humans known as rational beings are succumbing to the pressures of their own irrational thinking. What does it mean to know one's thought? Can one capture this thought and engage with it? Are there some of the perennial enquiries for which we are seeking answers. Cognitive thinkers in the discipline of both philosophy and psychology have theorized that imbalance between one's thought and emotion is causing complexities resulting into biases, negative prejudices eventually forcing us to choose difficult terrains to climb up the ladder of self-realization. As Kautilya rightly states, "Before you start some work, always ask yourself three questions-why am I doing it, What the results might be and will I be successful? Only when you think deeply and find a satisfactory answer to these questions, go ahead!"

The paper is divided into three sections. The first part gives a historical preview of the concept of *Ānvīkṣikī* and its philosophical significance. The second section engages with formal epistemological understanding of Nyaya logic that unfolds the gamut of thought into finding reasons (*hetu*) for thought to take place, further to put forth arguments (*tarka*) in favour of it and lastly to engage in a dialogue (*vāda*) with the arguments formulated in order to assure clarity, discretion and virility in one's own thought with respect to the state of affairs in life. The third section emphasizes to bring out Kautilya's practical implications not only essential in a leader but also in every ordinary individual.

Key words: *Ānvīkṣikī*, *Hetu*, *Tarka* and *Vāda*

Introduction

In our voyage through the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century we require flexible and creative thinkers who can adapt to an increasing pace of change. We need to educate ourselves in the same way as we want to act; i.e., ingeniously, collaboratively, constantly rehearsing and initiating to deliver with structure and logic. On one hand the problem is as much about how we are taught, as much as, it is about what is being taught. On the other hand, it is about the difficult ways in which we need to manage our self, health, relationships and even our finances. So, our concern is more so with human thinking as we are skillfully training not only job seekers but also job makers. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says, "Humans as substantial beings are interacting with a whole environing system of things." It is an ongoing practice among humans to establish through reason the truth of anything. In fact, *Darśana* is regarded as one such thought system in which all logical attempts are made to gather the floating notions of the world into a great general idea. Especially in India, it was realised very early that logical analysis and reasoning both enable to arrive at complete theoretical understanding of reality and this developed the content in philosophy.

We understand that the aim of philosophy is both to have a mediate knowledge of the real and an immediate awareness of it. The six systems broadly classified as – Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā & Vedānta along with the Āraṇyaka, Jaina and Buddhist traditions constitute certain commonalities in their methodology, metaphysics and practical teaching that makes them uniquely Indian. "Even prior to the rise of the formal systems of thought one can find traces of intense philosophic

activity amidst the poets of Vedās, the seers of Upaniṣads, the sages who composed the epics and the Purāṇās and also other thinkers who contributed in the early millennia of Indian History to the growth of a rich philosophical heritage,” states T.M.P. Mahadevan. More so as a methodology, reasoning and intuitive thinking gave rise to a logical, immediate, indubitable, supra-rational, self-established experience of reality that is intelligible. Such a knowledge serves as the special function of right inquiry and reasoning. ĀdiŚankara, as aptly observed that knowledge which is accepted or believed without sufficient inquiry is not only bad philosophy, but also prevents from reaching the goal of perfection and results in evil. So, an aspirant’s ultimate goal in seeking philosophic wisdom is to intellectually and morally be prepared to acquire logical methods of learning, guided study, rational reflection and contemplation of the content studied. In short multi-dimensional progress of all human beings became the sole objective of Indian civilization.

I

Ānvikṣikī- its historical and philosophical significance

The ancient Indian polity, facing all the uncertainties of violence, friction and self-promotion, was strongly based on the principles of love, honourable conduct and disciplined behaviour. Bhanwar Lal Dwivedi writes, “the geographical conditions such as rich soil, the genial climate and absence of any kind of struggle for existence have tended to make Indian people meditative, philosophical and non-violent.” Life had a definite aim, an ideal and the attainment of which was thought to transcend all barriers in order to achieve both material and spiritual success. On one hand, the learner who was engaged in the material knowledge was considered as the axis of the social structure, for in one’s development lies the well-being of the society. On the other hand, spiritual knowledge has been regarded as the means of attaining the core values of life such as truth, good and bliss. In this pursuit ancient education system had been evolved strictly on the foundations of Indian epistemological and philosophical traditions. The subject of interest in the Indian Classical studies involved *Kāvya* (literature), *Nāṭaka* (drama), *Alamkāra* (rhetoric), *Tarka* (logic) and *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar). *Tarka* (Logic) became the basis of all studies and an essential preliminary course for interpreting correctly the Vedic teachings. We can distinguish different stages in the development of logical studies in Indian thought systems. Each hold unique place in their fundamental inquiry. But amidst all, Nyāya distinctly treats the metaphysical objects of knowledge with critical and logical proofs that makes it hold a pristine position. Firstly, the focus of the paper is to trace this relevance of *Ānvikṣikī* in Nyāya logic.

The fundamental principles of the Nyāya logic served as an introduction to all systematic philosophy. *Ānvikṣikī* is quite often synonymously used with Nyāya school of logical realism and is given a separate place. The etymological meaning of the word *ānvikṣikī* suggests what is provided to us by verbal means or written scriptures or through the evidence of our senses and all other sources of knowledge must be submitted to a critical inquiry. Further, it is emphasized through reason alone anything can be established as true knowledge. Nyāya establishes an intimate relation between logic and life. According to early Naiyāyikas, logic can ascertain the normative forms of thought only in relation to the content of thought. The *NyāyaSūtra* of Akṣpada Gautama expounds the logical side which became identified with *Ānvikṣikī*.¹ Similarly, Buddha’s teaching too being eminently rational and there are references found to individuals skilled in logic. The name *AnumānaSūtra* of MajjhimaNikāya indicates the use of the word “*anumāna*” in the sense of inference. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* refers to the analysis of words and things. In the *Questions of Milinda* the Nyāya system is perhaps referred to under the name *Nīti*. *Lalitavistara* mentions logic under the name of *Hetuvidyā*. The *JainaĀgamas* too stand as the testimonial to trace Indian logic to antiquity. Thus, *ānvikṣikī* which was used for long in the general sense of systematic philosophy became narrowed down significantly in Sage Gautama’s works. The erudite scholar systematised the principles of reasoning, distinguished the true statements from the false ones and gave an elaborate account of the various forms of argumentative tricks. Thus, enabling intellectual pursuits of seeking wisdom that gave rise to theorizing metaphysical concepts through science of reasoning.

¹ Prior to Gautama’s work, *ānvikṣikī* has been more broadly referred to as *Vākovākya* in ChāndogyaUpaniṣad, as *Tarkaśāstra* and *ānvikṣikī* in Mahābhārat. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I.

The philosophical significance of *ānvikṣīkī* has been explicated in the *NyāyaSūtra* of Akṣpada Gautama and is divided into five books, each containing two sections and forms as the first written text account of the Nyāya. According to Vatsyāyana,

this treatise engages with the method of enunciation, definition and critical thinking. *NyāyaSūtra* in its original form was known as *Ānvikṣīkī-vidyā* or the study of logic (History of Indian Logic, pp. 49-50)

we find a mention of five subjects, namely, 1) *pramāṇa*, source of right knowledge; 2) *prameya*, the object of right knowledge; 3) *vāda*, debate or discussion; 4) *avayava*, the propositions of the syllogism; and 5) *anyamataparīkṣā*, an examination of philosophical doctrines. The study of these subjects formed as the nerve centre of debates and discussion in the classical Indian Philosophy. So, *Ānvikṣīkī-vidyā* initiated a long history of public debate in ancient India. In this context an indication is made towards the ascendancy model proposed by Bhikhu Parekh, namely, tradition of public debate ascending from Vedic Period upto the Contemporary Indian Intellectual Thoughts.² The urge is to further this proposal as an ongoing process never letting it die, as it assures humans as autonomous beings, interdependent and encouraging a remarkable scope for freedom of thought and expression.

II

Nyāya concept of *Ānvikṣīkī*

The rational discussions paved the way to the discipline of *Vādvidyā* or *Vādsāstra* which further gave rise to the development of logic in ancient India. *Vāda* was understood an appropriate way to arrive at the right understanding of subject for several related reasons. Just as the Jain story of seven blind men describing the elephant, points to the fact that human intellect is fallible and our thinking is not free of defects. As a result, if our thinking is not tested by logical reasoning, then it could lead to rigid ideas, possessiveness, pride, fear, anger, dogmatic certainties that overload the mind and delay its capacity to pursue right knowledge.

Nyāya concept of *Ānvikṣīkī* is a specific method to draw logical conclusions. It is more so of training of the mind for right or just reasoning. “*Nyāya*” in the narrow sense stands for syllogistic reasoning, while in the wider sense signifies the examination of objects with the help of evidence. Nyāya deals with supreme conditions of knowledge called the *pramāṇa* and is popularly called as *pramāṇasāstra*. A right apprehension of objects establishes both formal and material validity and helps to infer consistency and truth within it. We all possess the knowledge of reality, rather we are programmed to perceive objects, identify their resemblances and draw inferences. So, through logical theory we unfold and interpret the prevailing facts and express its nature in general principles. Just as in any field of scientific investigation a scientist draws the working mechanisms underlying in the fields like physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, etc. Similarly, a logician more responsibly states the laws governing the process of knowledge. Nyāya adopts the inductive method of science to discuss the ways to acquire knowledge. It gives importance to *pramāṇa* or source of knowledge as it is the operative cause in making one realise the valid knowledge. For Nyāya there are four sources through which valid knowledge can be acquired: *pratyakṣa* or perception (including intuition), *anumāna* or inference, *upamāna* or comparison and *śabda* or verbal testimony. In its pursuit to enunciate, define and examine, Nyāya considers *anumāna* or inference as the fundamental element of reasoning. The validity of an inferential argument depends on the knowledge of one that follows after the other, which is also called as the science of reason or *Hetuvidyā*. According to this view, logic is the theory of inference or *anumānavāda*. In other words, Nyāya gives a psychological account of the four sources of knowledge or cognition. It affirms the power of one’s mental capacity to engage with one’s own thought formulation and indulge in various ways through the thought in order to produce adequate results. So, the human mind assimilates, develops, interprets and expresses logical truths. *Pramāṇas* thus become the measures to evaluate the knowledge already existing in us. And *ānvikṣīkī* is a science of proof that operates within the purview of doubt raised with respect to an object of inquiry.

Nyāya syllogism consists of five members, namely, *pratijñā* or the proposition; *hetu* or the reason; *udāharaṇa* or the examples; *upanaya* or its application; *nigamana* or the logical conclusion. The

²Bhikhu Parekh, *Debating India*, chp. 1, p.3 – 5.

philosophical significance of *hetu, tarka and vāda* in Nyāya syllogism is to determine the direct proof, indirect proof and having a dialogical (respectively) possibility of errors in the ascertainment of truth.

III

Kauṭilya's *Ānvikṣikī* and its practical implications

Arthasāstra, the ancient thesis about Indian Polity focuses on the great master's discoveries about public administration in ancient India. Based on the textual evidence, in the form of the mantra practice, deities, and urban layout, we hold that the *Arthasāstra*, as we have it, comes from a time close to that of Viṣṇugupta. It is either his own text or that of his near successors. Kauṭilya, the most prominent teacher at the ancient Takśaśila University adopted *Ānvikṣikī-vidyā*s one of the foremost teaching pedagogy to resurrect sincerity, integrity, responsibility, accountability, efficiency, diligence, perseverance in a leader. For this, he says, one need to engage with *Samkhya, Nyāya* and *Cāravāka* ways of philosophical inquiry. So, there was a shift taking place in the ways of thinking of an individual in relation to the society which was from religious orthodoxy to philosophical thinking to participatory governance. Indian civilization by now was flourishing magnanimously in the field of trade and commerce. Kauṭilya opined for the need to educate and train young minds in developing one's mental strength. He profoundly discusses the role of the King with an immense political, ethical, economic, strategic and constitutional responsibility. As a result, The King had to be chosen one who underwent tremendous rigorous training. He had to skilfully emerge as a master of languages, governance, warfare and very importantly ethically directed, to execute trade and commerce. So, the King had to qualify as an articulate controller-in-charge of not only his personal self but also the society and its essential organizational foundations. Kauṭilya believed, ***Hetu, Tarka and Vāda* as a componential element of rational discussion and established the philosophical significance of *Ānvikṣikī-vidyā*s the core module of public leadership course.**

Bhikhu Parekh rightly states, "Public disputes and debates were not limited to religion and philosophy, rather extended to other areas such as medicine, law, politics, grammar and even literature."³ For instance, in *Carak Samhita* it is recorded, under the chairmanship of Atri, doctors debated on causes and their respective diagnoses of different diseases, writers of *Dharmaśāstras* and *Arthasāstras*, debated on overall design of moral and social order, its method of investigation, to determine the structure and presentation of its work (in today's context, writing of a thesis?). Kauṭilya too logically debated with many erudite masters in relation to choose a King. He was discursive that it is not by birth or by legacy, or by wealth, or caste one determines the role of a King, rather it is the virtue that qualifies the potential skill, ability, technical training, determination and efficiency to serve for the welfare of the state. So, the classical education system accepted interdisciplinary influences. Hence different schools of thought, especially Buddhism and Jainism took concern for human intellectual well-being, so they influenced each other and agreed on the rules and methods of public discussion. *Carak Samhita, Nyāya Sutra* and *Asanga's Bodhisattva-Bhumi* are good examples of it.

From a voluminous work of such a great state-craftsman, who had explored the limits of knowledge, we are going to extract in brief the lore of his wisdom. This section of the paper briefly considers the description of Kauṭilya's ontology of ancient traditional knowledge that expresses the vivid images of complex nature of life. For this, *Manana Shakti* was identified as the thinking principle.

What is Kauṭilya's *sānvikṣikī*?

The opening lines of *Arthasāstra* states:

ānvikṣikī trayī vārtā daṇḍa-nītiś caitividyāḥ || (AS 1.2.01-12):

Kauṭilya strongly holds that the branches of knowledge are of four kinds: logical analysis, the three-fold ritual chants [The term *trayī* stands for the three types of vedic *mantrās* not three vedās – the *ṛig-s* or the

³Ibid. p.4

metrical chants; the *yajus-s* or the prose chants and the *sāman-s* or the musical chants with 6-7 tones], business and political science.

The defining feature of all branches of knowledge is that by knowing them one can learn of *dharma* and *artha*.

Logical analysis by means of proper arguments of *dharma* and *adharma*, which belong to the realm of the *vedas*, profit and loss, which belong to the realm of business, good and bad policies, which belong to the realm of political science, [as also] the strengths and weaknesses of each branch of knowledge, benefits the people, keeps the intellect steady both in dire situations and good times, and generates expertise in the spheres of mental, verbal and physical activity. Human knowledge no doubt praised for intellectual reflection but we can see this being also part of our social constructs, which can exist only as a consequence of political organization.

Later in the *Arthasāstra*, Kauṭilya explains his position on *daṇḍanīti*, while not according to it the status of being the sole knowledge system, he accepts the basic tenet of the importance of *daṇḍanīti* in the maintenance of knowledge, *dharma* and business:

ānvīkṣikītrayivārtānām yoga-kṣema-sādhanodaṇḍaḥ Itasyanīrdaṇḍanītiḥ lalabdha-lābhārthālabdhaparirakṣaṇīrakṣitavivardhanīvrddhasyatīrthepratipādanī ca || AS 1.4.03

The *daṇḍa* [is the power] by which the application and the growth of the systems of logical analysis, the *vedas* and business are upheld. Its management is known as political science. It is the means by which new acquisitions are made, profits are gained [in business], the acquisitions are kept secure, security and growth [are achieved] and the fruits of growth are redistributed among the deserving.

Nevertheless, with respect to the actual application of *daṇḍa*, Kauṭilya advocates **the path of moderation.**

śūsṛṣāśravaṇagrahaṇadhāraṇavijñānānūhāpohatattvābhiniṣṭabuddhiṃvidyāvinayatinaitaram || AS 1.5.05

The acquisition of knowledge can only culture those whose intellect is endowed with the abilities of discipline, learning from verbal instruction, grasping concepts, memory, discrimination, inference and applying falsification, but not others [those who lack these]. Indeed, then, education is a reflection of social change, it must be constantly re-examined. What is progressive and advanced in educational theory, at one time, may not totally be adequate during testing times. One can see in Kauṭilya's conceptualization of *ānvīkṣikī* influence of Charavaka account of cosmological materialism that assumes the title of *bhūta-caitanya-vāda*.⁴

So, relearning the method of *ānvīkṣikī* gives the power of enthusiasm, increase in morale, escalation of financial success and the intellectual upgradation to humans, says Radhakrishnan Pillai in his popular book titled *Inside Chanakya's Mind: Aanvikshiki and the Art of Thinking*.

Conclusion

Kauṭilya's analysis of knowledge is one of the most appealing among those we encounter in early history. Hence, it is believed knowledge is preserved by diligent practice. Indeed, *ānvīkṣikī* is one's ways of thinking about thinking that started from religious orthodoxy to philosophical thinking to participatory governance and today it has to shift further with a pre-requisite in discursive ascendancy towards both individual and collective good. We posit that the *ānvīkṣikī* method has been the most successful approaches to knowledge, though it eventually declined compared to some of the other schools. It is not something widely inculcated in modern education. In the evolutionary thinking and philosophy that has progressed in understanding the nature of general physical universe, biological systems, societies and languages, we have failed to grasp the significant meaning of *ānvīkṣikī*. We are truly receiving an informational overload and struggling hard to maintain a discretion, a self-identity and simultaneously trying to bridge the gap between knowledge and wisdom. We are constantly rewiring vast amounts of readily retrievable, well-classified, and usable information available in our mental "hard disks" through application of discipline. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear in the modern education systems that information is merely cluttered, and that rather they

⁴Pradeep. P. Gokhale, *Lokayata/Carvaka - A Philosophical Inquiry*, p. 128-130

strive to impart logical thinking. No doubt with the help of technology one can extend the mental “hard disks” with those made of silicon, but even to use the latter effectively, one needs to have the discipline of information acquisition and storage. Only then is logic of any value. It is clear that Kauṭilya realized and emphasized the importance of being widely informed. Reengaging with Kauṭilya’s *sānvīkṣikī* method gives rise to practical and implicative take home lessons that teach and inspire. Today success is not an independent achievement, it is rather a collection of extraordinary interdependent minds, hence the urge is to creatively collaborate to find solutions to our personal, social, political, economic and global problems.

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