



From Knowledge to Emancipation: Vision of Nyāya Philosophy

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Abstract

This paper delves into the core of Nyāya philosophy by exploring the sixteen categories (*ṣoḍaśa-padārthas*) outlined in Gautama's *Nyāya-sūtra* and their pivotal role in achieving liberation (*niḥśreyasa*). While it provides the fundamentals of the ultimate goal, liberation (*niḥśreyasa*), it would also provide the foundation for why Nyāya philosophy is not merely a spiritual philosophy but has a longstanding logical set-up for acquiring knowledge. Hence, the paper provides the philosophical and epistemological analysis underpinning the connection of the categories in the *Nyāya-sūtra* (1.1.1) for true knowledge (*pramā*) and how true knowledge helps in achieving liberation (*apavargah* in *Nyāya-sūtra*-1.1.2 as the ultimate means of inquiry).

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Introduction

Maharshi Gautama, the founder of Nyāya philosophy in his *Nyāya-sūtra*, provided a way of attaining liberation or *niḥśreyasa*. We would take an exposition of the concept of the sixteen categories given by Gautama in detail to understand the dynamism of Nyāya's understanding of knowledge. He states that the knowledge of categories leads to the ultimate good. Gautama tried to identify the reason behind birth, death, and suffering in his *Nyāya-sūtra*-1.1.2. The goal of *Nyāya* philosophy is to enable us to attain the highest goal of life, which is liberation from suffering. According to the Naiyāyikas, the world presents itself as a chain of consequences that needs to be broken in order to attain liberation from suffering. This is the chain through which one has to pass, i.e., Misapprehension (*ajñāna*) to Imbalance (*doṣa*) to Activity (*karma*) to Rebirth (*janma*) and finally to Suffering (*duḥkha*). One can break the chain in the same sequence, though this is not the only concern of Nyāya philosophy.

Vātsāyana gave an introduction at the very beginning of the commentary regarding *Nyāya-sūtra* to define a successful activity, i.e.

Pramānato-artha-pratipattoh

Pravṛitti-sāmartha-arthavat-pramāṇam. (Tarkavāgīśa, 1981, p. 1)

According to him, every successful activity is cognised by the 'instrument of valid knowledge' (*Pramāṇa*). Hence, the instrument of valid knowledge is invariably connected with the cognised object. Without having the instrument of true knowledge, it is impossible to have the cognition of an object, and without having the cognition of an object, it is impossible to have any successful activity. And with the help of an instrument of valid knowledge, the knower decides to get an object or to avoid it. The effort of getting or avoiding a particular object depends on the result because it is up to the person to decide how much is necessary for them. Vātsāyana mentions the context of the desire to get or avoid a particular object as the only cause of human suffering. However, for an existing human being, it is necessary to be desirous about getting or avoiding a particular object. Therefore, getting an object is supposed to be a pleasure (*sukha*), but the final effect in the long run is suffering (*duḥkha*). However, without desire, one cannot perform an activity. An activity is performed by a person only when he knows the nature of an object as it exists. For this reason, every object is known through a valid source (*pramāṇa*); hence, objects of

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pramāṇa are innumerable. We know that acquiring knowledge of an object depends on various sources. This is one of the reasons for why we would see all schools of Indian philosophy accept various sources of valid knowledge. In the Nyāya system, Naiyāyikas accepted four *pramāṇas* (i.e., *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, and *śabda*) through which one can get the true cognition of an object.

Since *pramāṇa* is invariably related to the object, *pramātṛ*, *prameya*, and *pramiti* are also related in the same way to the object that a person desires. Let us know how these are related. *Pramāṇa* is a valid source of knowledge. *Prāmātṛ* is cognised by the person who is guided by the desire to seek or ignore the object, which leads to activity. Therefore, *pramāṇa* is the instrument through which the knower (*pramātṛ*) rightly knows the object. *Prameya* is the object of valid knowledge. *Pramiti* has the right knowledge of the object. With these four *tattvas*, one can arrive at one's desire. If an object is known as positive, then a person must know that object without any contradiction. Then, it becomes *tattva*, and the process is called *sat* or *bhāva*. Again, when a negative object is known as negative, which is its actual nature, too, it becomes *tattva*, and the process is called *asat* or *abhāva*. Thus, objects are classified under two heads: positive (*bhāva*) and negative (*abhāva*). Positive objects are those that are determined by *pramāṇa* as existing, and negative objects are determined by *pramāṇa* as not existing. Therefore, "being determined by *pramāṇa* as existing constitutes the intrinsic nature of the positive object or its positivity. Being determined by *pramāṇa* as not existing constitutes the intrinsic nature of the negative object or its negativity."(Chattopadhyaya & Gangopadhyaya, 1967, p. 9)

It is well-known that an object must be ascertained by a *pramāṇa*. Otherwise, it cannot be called an object (*padārtha*). Here, Vātsyāyana raised a question regarding the negative object. He pointed out that a negative object, too, is a type of object. Then, the question is how to know the negative or *asat* by a *pramāṇa*. He resolved the issue by asserting that a similar *pramāṇa* that reveals the positive object also reveals the negative object. He produced an example to clarify the particular doubt regarding the negative objects. He wrote:

“After the escape of the thief, a mere boy can, with a lamp, find out what is in the room as well as what is not there. What exists is seen, what exists not is not seen; thus, the latter is known as not existent. Such awareness of the non-existent is common to all. Being awareness, it necessarily points an object. The object pointed

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by it (i.e. by the awareness of the not existent) is the negative object. So, the awareness of something as not existent is the awareness of the negative object.”

(Ibid., p. 9)

However, it is Vātsyāyana who classified objects under two heads, namely, the positive and the negative. But Gautama, in his first *sūtra* regarding sixteen categories, didn't mention the negative object. That is why later commentators obliged themselves to offer some explanation for Gautama's silence over the negative objects. And there are two necessary explanations which could be offered. Firstly, the awareness of the negative object is presupposed by the reference to its positive counterpart, and as such, Gautama is primarily concerned with the latter (Ibid., p. 9). Secondly, Gautama discussed only those objects the knowledge of which directly produces the *summum bonum* (*niḥśreyasa*) (Ibid., p. 9). Though there are many other objects, the knowledge of which doesn't lead to the *summum bonum*. That is why Gautama didn't mention those objects in his *sūtra*. He also refrained from mentioning the negative objects. However, Phanibhūsana argued that Gautama implicitly mentioned the negative objects: “In the list of sixteen categories occurs *prameya* (object of knowledge), which includes *apavarga*. The meaning of *apavarga* is the absolute non-existence of suffering and as such is a negative object” (Ibid., p. 9). Therefore, in this way, the claim regarding Gautama's silence about the negative object is resolved.

Gautama's First *Sūtra*: An Analysis of Its Essence

Vātsyāyana begins his analysis of Gautama's first *sūtra* by mentioning that true cognition of the sixteen categories is instrumental to the *summum bonum* (liberation). The categories that comprise the acquisition of true cognition are:

1. Instrument of valid knowledge (*Pramāṇa*),
2. Object of valid knowledge (*Prameya*),
3. Doubt (*Samśaya*),
4. Incentive (*Prayojana*),
5. Corroborative Instance (*Drṣṭānta*),
6. Proved Doctrine (*Siddhānta*),
7. Inference- components (*Avayava*),
8. Hypothetical Argument (*Tarka*),

9. Final Ascertainment (*Nirṇaya*),
10. Discussion for the final Ascertainment (*Vāda*),
11. Debating Maneuver (*Jalpa*),
12. Destructive Criticism (*Vitaṇḍā*),
13. Pseudo-probans (*Hetvābhāsa*),
14. Purposive Distortion of the opponent (*Chala*),
15. Futile Rejoinder based on mere Similarity or Dissimilarity (*Jāti*) and
16. Point of Defeat (*Nigrahasthāna*) - (*Nyāya-sūtra*-1.1.1)

Right knowledge of these categories is conducive to attaining the highest good (*Niḥśreyasa*). Vātsyāyana took up the discussion by clarifying the structure of the first *sūtra* given by Gautama. He argued that the *summum bonum* is obtained by the true cognition of the (twelve) objects of knowledge, namely, *ātman*, *śarira*, *indriya*, etc. This is explained in the second *sūtra* given by Gautama. Vātsyāyana identified that one can acquire *summam bonum* by the true cognition of the four human concerns or ‘*arthapāda*’. These are as follows:

- “(i) Suffering (*heya*, lit. ‘which is to be avoided’) and its cause,
- (ii) Right knowledge (*ātyantika-hāna*, lit. ‘the cause of the absolute cessation of suffering’),
- (iii) The means of attaining that right knowledge (i.e., the present *sāstra*) and
- (iv) Liberation (*adhigantavyo*, lit. ‘the ultimate goal’).” (Ibid., p. 10)

Vātsyāyana’s commentary suggests that four human concerns underlie the ultimate goal of liberation (*summum bonum*). For this reason, the question arises of whether the categories given by Gautama directly help *summum bonum*. If so, then how can that be possible, and how is the right knowledge of *jalpa*, *vitandā*, or *chala* directly responsible for the *summum bonum*? Vātsyāyana’s commentary on Gautama’s first *sūtra* argues that the true cognition of the sixteen categories is the path to liberation (*summum bonum*). However, he makes a crucial distinction: while all sixteen categories are necessary, they do not all contribute to liberation in the same way. He writes- “of these categories, the knowledge of what Gautama technically calls *prameya*

(*prameya* means object of valid knowledge) is directly conducive to the *summum bonum*. But Gautama restricts its use to only twelve such objects,” (Ibid., p. 11).

According to Vātsyāyana, the *prameya* (objects of valid knowledge) are the direct means to liberation. These are the twelve objects of knowledge, such as the *ātman* (self), *śarīra* (body), and *indriya* (senses), which are described in Gautama's second sūtra. It is the direct knowledge of these specific *prameyas* that leads to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*). The other fourteen categories (e.g., *jalpa*, *vitandā*, and *chala*) are considered indirect causes of liberation. These categories serve as tools to establish the truth and refute false arguments. Therefore, their role is to protect and support the valid knowledge of the *prameya*. In essence, they are instrumental to the ultimate goal, but they are not the goal itself.

Following the above interpretation, there might be challenges that can arise from Vātsyāyana's commentary on the point that the original sūtra (1.1.1) does not explicitly state that the *prameya* is a direct cause and the other categories are indirect. This raises the question of whether Vātsyāyana's interpretation is truly what Gautama intended. I support the interpretation that Vātsyāyana's commentary provides a structured framework for understanding Gautama's sūtra. Even if we acknowledge the interpretive gap, his analysis helps to resolve the apparent contradiction of how categories like *Jalpa*, *Vitandā*, and *Chala* help us gain knowledge of the *prameyas*. By establishing the direct and indirect relationship, Vātsyāyana offers a logical and coherent explanation that makes the entire system of categories intelligible within the context of attaining *summum bonum*. Thus, understanding the significance of these categories requires attention to Vātsyāyana's nuanced and clarifying commentary.

The Significance of Categories in Gautama's Nyāya-sūtra-1.1.1

In Nyāya philosophy, *pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge) and *prameya* (objects of knowledge) are central to knowledge acquisition and the attainment of *apavarga* (liberation). *Pramāṇa* refers to the reliable instruments through which true knowledge is acquired, namely perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), and verbal testimony (*śabda*). These serve as the means to dispel *mithyājñāna* (false cognition), the root cause of bondage and rebirth. *Prameya* includes twelve fundamental objects of knowledge, such as self (*ātman*), body (*śarīra*),

senses (*indriya*), objects of the senses (*artha*), knowledge (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*), activity (*pravṛtti*), defects (*doṣa*), rebirth (*pretyabhāva*), result (*phala*), suffering (*duḥkha*), and liberation (*apavarga*). Right cognition of these objects enables one to negate ignorance, overcome *doṣa*, and break the cycle of action, birth, and suffering. Thus, the interplay of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* provides the epistemic pathway to *apavarga*, the ultimate cessation of suffering. While *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are the direct determinants of *apavarga*, the inclusion of other categories makes the Nyāya tradition distinct from others and demonstrates its logical as well as practical relevance.

Vātsyāyana's commentary suggests that the separately mentioned other categories (except *prameya*) also lead to the highest goal (*summum bonum*) of life, but these are indirect causes. Here, one can raise a question of why we should pay so much attention to other categories and why Gautama mentioned those categories separately if other categories (except *prameya*) are the indirect cause of liberation. Vātsyāyana anticipates the objection that if only the *prameya* directly lead to liberation, why does Gautama bother to list the other fourteen categories separately? The argument is that it would be “useless” to give them separate prominence if they don't have a distinct and definite causal role in the path to liberation. In response to these questions, Vātsyāyana provides a clear rationale. According to him, for the sake of human beings, there are branches of study, and each has its special subject matter. There is also positive justification for separate mentioning of doubt, etc., in the *sūtra*. In the interest of human welfare, four branches of studies are offered in this particular category. These are, namely, the three Vedas (*trayī*), state-craft (*dandanīti*), agro-economy (*vārttā*), and logic (*ānvīkṣikī*). Each of these branches has its unique subject matter (*prasthāna*). Veda persists to preserve some ritual activities, like the ‘*agnihotra* sacrifice’ etc., and state-crafts (*dandanīti*) are the king, minister, etc. Agro-economy (*vārttā*) consists of a large farming implement. This implement uses one or more blades, which are fixed to a frame, drawn over the soil to turn it over and naturally cut furrows in preparation for the planting of seeds. It also involves some other activities related to the functioning of human needs. Logic (*ānvīkṣikī*) also has its unique subject matter, including the fourteen categories (doubt and others). “The specific mention of the topic coming under the subject matter of logic is necessary so that logic is not confused with some other branches of learning. Thus, e.g., the real nature of *ātman* is discussed in Logic, but it really forms the unique subject matter of Upanishad (included in Veda).” (Ibid., p. 12) Therefore, without the separate mentioning of doubt, etc., it would have

been merely a study of the self (*adhyātma-vidyā*) like the Upaniṣad. (Ibid., p. 12) Finally, it can be said that the separate mentioning of these shown categories has its unique subject matter. We will see in the forthcoming discussions how these categories are necessary here.

Doubt (*saṃśaya*) as a Category

In pursuit of the nature of knowledge of an object, one must know about the facts of *nyāya*. In *nyāya*, there is no relevance for unknown objects, nor is there any relevance for those that are known for sure. It is relevant only to those objects that evoke doubt. In his *Nyāya-sūtra*, Gautama wrote (*Nyāya-sūtra*, i.1.41): “final ascertainment (*nirṇaya*) is the ascertainment of an object through (consideration of) thesis (*pakṣa*) and anti-thesis (*pratipakṣa*) which result from doubt (*vimaṃśā*)” (Ibid., p. 12). Here, the meaning of *vimaṃśā* is doubt, which is considered as the thesis and anti-thesis for the application of *nyāya*. And the ascertainment of acquiring an object means *nirṇaya* or right knowledge (*tattva-jñāna*). On the other hand, doubt is recognised as the experience of something with a definite description, but the actual nature of that is not yet discovered in particular. To ascertain the true nature of an object, we need to examine the sources of the acquired knowledge. The nature of an object is to be discovered by the *pramāṇa*-s through the re-examination of the object by claiming what we acquired earlier. The entire process is considered through applying doubt to acquire true knowledge. That is why doubt is put into an exercise in Nyāya Philosophy.

Incentive (*prayojana*)

An incentive is a means through which one can decide how to attain a particular activity or avoid it. Thus, incentives have a major role to play in the success of an activity. Therefore, we could say that all living beings, their activities, and all the branches of knowledge (*vidyā*) are to be penetrated by incentive. Traditionally, four incentives are mentioned, namely, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. However, Uddyotkara critically mentioned that the presence of incentives for every human being is the attainment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain because this is the only cause of human activities (Ibid., p. 14). According to Vātsyāyana, incentives involve undesirable objects also, i.e., the objects shunned. The nature of pain and its cause can also be considered as an undesirable object. Thus, it can urge action that needs to be avoided. Here lies the need for the separate mentioning of incentives. Without the incentive of removing doubt, there is no scope for

nyāya (*anvikṣiki-vidyā*) (Ibid., p. 14). *Nyāya* is also taken into employment only because of its basis or its own incentive (*prayojana*). If there is some definite cause for the employment of *nyāya*, then the question is how it stands in considering a discussion and what it means for *nyāya*. Vātsyāyana defined the nature of *nyāya* in his *Bhāṣya*, i.e.

“*Nyaya* is the examination of an object with the help of the instrument of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa-s*). The inference which is not contradicted by the perception and scripture is called *anvikṣā*, that is, the knowing over again (*anu*, literally ‘after’) of that which is already known (*ikṣitā*) by perception and scripture. *Anvikṣa* = *anu* (after) + *ikṣā* (knowledge). This branch of knowledge is called *ānvikṣiki* or *Nyāya-vidyā* or *Nyāya-śāstra*, because it is propagated for the discussion of that (i.e., *anvikṣā*). The perception which is contradicted by either perception or scripture is *pseudo-nyaya*.” (Ibid., p. 13)

Thus, *nyāya* is concerned with correct thinking, and its methodological task is to acquire valid knowledge through correct reasoning. Gautama, in his sutra (1.1.24), defined incentive: “It is the object pursuing (*adhikṛtya*) which one is led to activity” (Gautama, 1982, p. 35). Vātsyāyana pointed out that by incentive, one can understand an object for the attainment or avoidance through which one can decide whether he should acquire it or avoid it.

Ways of arriving at the final ascertainment (*Nirṇaya*)

The process of acquiring knowledge depends upon true observation, experience, and verification. For having valid cognition, it is mandatory to have an examination to verify the experience of what the knower knows. Therefore, the verification method plays a major role in investigating true cognition. An observation would be accurate if there were a certain number of arguments that support it. *Nyāya* philosophy also follows a similar method from the beginning of the discussion on sixteen categories for attaining *summum bonum* (liberation). And, as mentioned by Gautama, liberation depends on the true cognition of categories. The process of verification determines the discussion of the categories. Final ascertainment can be employed only when the claim raised in *vāda* (discussion on the final ascertainment), *jalpa* (debating on manoeuvre), *vitandā* (destructive criticism), and *tarka* (hypothetical argument) is resolved. To resolve the issues raised in *vāda*, *jalpa*, *vitandā*, and *tarka*, we need to produce some supporting instances by which one can understand

the true nature of an object. That is why Gautama produced favourable occurrences in his *sūtra* as a category of acquiring true knowledge (e.g., *dr̥ṣṭānta*, *siddhānta*, *avayava*). Let us know the process of the ascertainment of how it works for true cognition.

In the process of acquiring knowledge, *dr̥ṣṭānta* is used as an instance for proving a particular claim. For example, if one has to establish the existence of ‘fire on the hill’, then one should produce evidence by which the claim would succeed. To prove the claim, we need to have an instance, i.e., ‘in the kitchen we have seen that there is smoke in relation to fire’, and it proclaims that ‘wherever there is smoke there is fire’. Without the existence of fire, we can’t imagine the existence of smoke, though fire can exist without smoke. Therefore, it is about the perception of an object, which doesn’t conflict with the layman’s approach as well as the expert’s, because the perception of that object would be similar for everybody. The inclusion of *dr̥ṣṭānta* in the object of valid knowledge would be valid for the inference and verbal testimony. Without the existence of *dr̥ṣṭānta*, inference (*anumāna*) and verbal testimony (*Śabda*) cannot be established. It is also the basis of the application of *Nyāya*. “By (showing) the contradiction of the *dr̥ṣṭānta*, the position of the opponent can be declared as refuted. By the substantiation of the *dr̥ṣṭānta*, one’s own position is well-established.” (Gautama, 1982, p. 35) It indicates that somebody who is sceptical and does admit a corroborative instance should surrender to scepticism because if the person doesn’t admit it, he cannot remain silent to his opponent. Further, the mentioning of *dr̥ṣṭānta* in Gautama *sūtra* could be justified by saying that “*udāharana* is an instance which, being similar to the subject (*sādhyā-dharmin*) possesses its characteristic or *tat-dharmabhāvin* (*Nyāya-sūtra* i.1.36).” (Ibid., pp. 5-9) Therefore, by the application of *dr̥ṣṭānta*, the position that has clear perceptual evidence in reality could be established. However, it can also be acceptable that many scriptures in our culture are justified when it is based on verbal testimony (*Śabda*). With the justified truth based on verbal testimony and other grounds, we must discuss its methodology in *siddhānta*.

Siddhānta in *Nyāya* refers to a principle or doctrine by which one can differentiate how various forms of assertions and truth claims are different from one another. For example, if we look into *Nyāya* philosophy, we can see that it is an acceptable subject matter about the self, which is a substance, and consciousness is the external quality of the self. Gautama emphasised how *siddhānta* is used to examine the means of the object in the form that ‘exists’. It is a dogma resting on the authority of a particular school, hypothesis, or implication. In *Nyāya-sūtra* Gautama defined

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that “*siddhānta* is of four kinds owing to the distinction between ‘a dogma of all schools’ (*sarva-tantra*), ‘a dogma peculiar to some school’ (*prati-tantra*), ‘a hypothetical dogma’ (*adhikarana*), and ‘an implied dogma’ (*abhyupagama*).” (Vidyabhusana, 1971, p. 59) A dogma of all schools is something that is not opposed to any school and is claimed by at least one school. For example, all schools accept the existence of five elements or five objects of sense. A dogma peculiar to some schools is accepted by similar schools that agree with their ideological states but are rejected by the opposite school (e.g., a thing cannot come into existence out of nothing). A hypothetical dogma is a *siddhānta* ‘which, if acceptable, can lead to the acceptance of another *siddhānta*’ (Ibid., p. 60) (e.g., ‘there is an existing soul apart from the senses because it can recognise one and the same object by seeing and touching’). On the other hand, an implied dogma is a kind of *siddhānta* ‘which is not explicitly declared as such but follows from the examination of particulars concerning it, e.g., the discussion of whether sound is eternal or non-eternal presupposes that it is a substance’ (Ibid., p. 60). From these four kinds of *siddhānta*-s, one can state that *siddhānta* is about the exemplification of a state by which one can acquire the valid cognition of a particular and can make the distinction between two relatives. It is included in his *sūtra*, because without having the difference among the proved doctrines, *vāda*, *jalpa*, and *vitandā* cannot be employed as categories. Here, we have discussed the doctrines that are acceptable to different parties. By holding any position, they have their own ideology for accepting a particular truth. That is why the upcoming discussion will be about the position accepted by their different sources of knowledge (perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony, respectively).

Avayava is used as a component of inference. The ‘components of an inference’ are characterised as *pratijñā* (that which is to be established), *hetū* (reason), *udāharaṇa* (an explanatory example), *upanaya* (an application of the example), and *nigamana* (a statement of the conclusion). “Each of the five propositions (namely *pratijñā*, etc.) with which the desired thesis is conclusively established (*siddhih parisamāpyate*) is called an inference-component (*avayava*) in relation to their totality” (Ibid., p. 60). The four *pramāna*-s are collectively present in these five components. The primary statement (*pratijñā*) of the thesis is verbal testimony (*āgama*). The probans (*hetu*) is inference (*anumāna*). The exemplification (*udāharaṇa*) is perception (*pratyakṣa*). The application is comparison (*upamāna*). The demonstration of all four components or propositions is used to derive the central thesis, which is called the conclusion (*nigamana*). Though inference components

are cognised as the specific forms of words and, as such, included in the object of valid knowledge, this is also a reason for separate mentioning of *avayava* (*Nyāya-sūtra*- i.1.1.) as a category. However, we know that the investigation process does not only depend on certain sources of cognition; it could also be possible through true reasoning and argumentation.

‘Hypothetical argument’ (*Tarka*) is characterised as the process of ascertaining the real nature of a particular which is yet to be known, and the actual nature is revealed through the process of reasoning by showing the absurdity of all the contrary characters. For example, *tarka* plays a role in acquiring true knowledge when we say ‘the soul is eternal or non-eternal’. Here, *Tarka* is employed by way of adducing some reason. Now, one can show a reason to support the statement that ‘soul is eternal’ by saying that “if the soul were non-eternal, it would be impossible for it to enjoy the results of its own action, to undergo transmigration, and to attain final emancipation. But such a conclusion is absurd because such possibilities are known to belong to the soul. Therefore, we must admit that the soul is eternal”(Ibid., p. 61). So, *Tarka* facilitates the knowledge of the truth because it judges the plausibility of true knowledge. On the other hand, it also helps to establish one’s own thesis and refute the opponent in a debate with correct reasoning. With the correct reasoning, one can establish a truth that would be acceptable to all. But, if an opponent still tries to establish his view, then it would be a mere fact to give him space to produce correct reasoning to ascertain a particular truth.

‘Final ascertainment’ (*Nirṇaya*) is the final result of the instrument of valid knowledge, and *vāda* ends with this. *Jalpa* and *vitandā* are intended to nurse it (*pālanārtha*). Vidyabhusana wrote in his book *A History of Indian Logic (Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern School)*, explaining the nature of *nirṇaya*:

“A person winks and doubts if certain statement advanced to him is supported by one of two parties, but opposed by the other party. His doubt is not removed until by the application of reason he can vindicate one of the parties. The process by which the vindication is effected is called ascertainment. Ascertainment is not, however, in all cases preceded by doubt, for instance, in the case of perception things are ascertained directly. So also we ascertain things directly by the authority of scriptures. But in the case of investigation (inference), doubt must precede ascertainment.”(Ibid., p. 61)

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From this quote, we can assert that *nirṇaya* is the determination of a question laid for the removal of doubt, and there is also a space for the opposite sides, which are willing to propose their own views. By listening to all sides, one can acquire a reasonable and well-ascertained position. Therefore, it is a process of acquiring the truth of knowledge by which one can pursue one's life. It is separately mentioned as a category in *Nyāya-sūtra* because it deals with the actual situation of the people.

Vāda, Jalpa and Vitandā

‘Discussion for the final ascertainment’ (*vāda*) is offered by more than one party, each trying to establish its own thesis. Their debate stops by the ascertainment of one of the positions contended. Therefore, the discussion process laid by *vāda* determines the truth, which is to be established by the true debate and the position, which deals with the reasonable account.

Later, ‘the processes of debating manoeuvre’ (*jalpa*) is considered acting to achieve a goal fixed into the subject matter by the debater. In this process, one intends to build one's own thesis by rejecting one's opponent. There is no intention to find out the real truth about a subject. Therefore, it is a process by which one considers the truth inherent only in his thesis, nowhere else. For example, in the case of the judicial process, every lawyer tends to establish their own argument and, thereby, is supposed to be true and gain victory.

Vitandā (cavil) “is a kind of wrangling which consists of a mere attack on the opposite side” (Vidyabhusana, 1971, p. 63). Therefore, it is a process where one has no endeavour to establish anything, being only critical of their opponent's argument.

The fallacious *Hetū* (*Hetvābhāsa*)

Before discussing *hetvābhāsa*, it is necessary to raise a question on what correct reasoning or *sat hetū* is. Correct reasoning (*sat hetū*) is associated with the presence of *pakṣastya*, *sapakṣastya*, *bipakṣastya*, *asatpratipakṣastya*, and *abādhitatya*. If in reasoning there is the absence of any of these characteristics, then it would be called *hetvābhāsa*. *Hetvābhāsa* (fallacy) or invalid reasoning occurs only when certain conditions of reasoning are violated. It is mentioned in the Nyāya philosophy that an inference (*anumāna*) becomes fallacious when a certain material condition is violated. According to Gautama, there are five fallacies of reason, namely, *savyabhicāra*, *viruddha*,

prakaransama (satpratipakṣa), *sādhyasama (asiddha)*, and *kālātita (bādhita)*. If in reasoning there is the absence of *bipaksāstyā*, there would occur *vyabhicara dosa*, and this fallacy is called *savyabhicāra*. If there is the absence of *sapakṣasatyā*, there would occur *virodh dosa*, and the fallacy is called *viruddha*. If in reasoning there is the absence of *pakṣastya*, there would occur *asiddhi dosa*, and the fallacy is called *sādhyasama (asiddha)*. On the other hand, if there is the absence of *asatpratipaksatyā*, there would occur *pratipaksatyā doṣa*, and the fallacy is called *prakaransama (satpratipakṣa)*. If there is the absence of *abādhitatya* characteristics in reasoning, there will occur *badha doṣa*, and the fallacy is called *kālātita (bādhita)*.

Chala, Jāti, and Nigrahasthāna

Chala (purposive distortion of the opponent's statement) occurs when one deliberately misinterprets or distorts an opponent's response to derive a meaning different from what was originally intended. For example, when somebody says a word like 'navakambala', one can react in two ways: (1) he has a new blanket or shawl, or (2) he has nine blankets. Therefore, when somebody reacts after hearing the word *navakambala* as 'he has nine blankets', it can be said that the person has used *chala* to answer the same because the actual meaning of *navakambala* is associated with a new blanket or shawl. In this process, *chala* is used to answer somebody's question in an expected way or otherwise. However, one cannot deny that there is no space to reply differently. To look into the difference between the two, we have to go through the analogue (*jāti*) process, which we shall discuss in the next section.

Jāti (analogue) is technical terminology in Nyāya philosophy to deal with the similarity or dissimilarity with something. For example, if somebody says that sound is non-eternal because it is an effect like *ghata*, then one can also say that sound is eternal because it is immaterial, as the sky (*ākāśa*). In this case, it would be an analogue or argument that does not function properly because there is no universal relation between immaterial and eternal (e.g., happiness and suffering are immaterial but non-eternal). However, to avoid some views, it is necessary to produce a certain reason that reflects the view that is accepted as a reasonable argument.

Nigrahasthāna (point of defeat) refers to the cause of losing in an argument. It may also occur due to a deficiency in comprehension. Therefore, if an individual dismisses the primary rationale of an argument and resorts to a flawed argument, one must concede t

loss. “It is also called clincher, an occasion for rebuking or a place for humiliation, when one misunderstands or does not understand at all” (Ibid., p. 66). For example, if a person argues in a way that betrays his ignorance and continues to show that he understands the matter, then there is no point in making a counterargument. He is quiet, only to be argued against by him again, and there is nothing left for his opponent, who will eventually turn himself out of his company, rebuking him as a knave. Therefore, we can say that the opponent should quit the company of a person who argues in this way.

Now, one can ask a question of whether, after having the true knowledge of these sixteen categories, one can immediately get the *summum bonum*. Similar questions have been raised by Uddyotkara in his book *Nyāyavārtika*. However, Gautama gave his answer related to liberation from a negative perspective in his second *sūtra*. Now, we will discuss how he answered those questions in the next section.

Significance of Gautama Nyāya-sūtra (1.1.2) in Achieving Apavarga

Gautama answered whether one gets liberation immediately after having the knowledge of the sixteen categories in a negative way. He mentioned the way of acquiring *summum bonum* in his second *sūtra* as follows:

“*Duḥkha-janma-pravṛtti-doṣa-mithyājñāna-namūttaroṭtrapāyetadantarāpāyāvarga* (Nyāya-sūtra, 1.1.2.)” (Gautama, 1981, p. 63)

The *sūtra* explains the causal sequence through which *tattva-jñāna* ultimately leads to liberation. This *sūtra* provides a brief emphasis on suffering (*duḥkha*), birth (*janma*), activity (*pravṛtti*), evil (*doṣa*), and false knowledge (*mithyājñāna*). When each previous one mentioned in this series is removed in consequence of the removal of the one immediately following it, liberation is attained. Gautama suggested that *tattva-jñāna* leads to the removal of *mithyājñāna*. *Mithyājñāna* being the cause of *doṣa*, its removal leads to the removal of its effect, namely *doṣa*. *Doṣa* being the cause of *pravṛtti*, its removal leads to the removal of its effect, namely, *pravṛtti*. *Pravṛtti* being the cause of *janma*, its removal leads to the removal of its effect, namely *janma*. *Janma* being the cause of *duḥkha*, its removal leads to the removal of its effect, namely *duḥkha*.

<i>Duḥkha</i> (result)	(cause) <i>janma</i>	Knowledge of truth (<i>tattva-jñāna</i>)	Removes	<i>mithyājñāna</i> (false knowledge)
<i>Janma</i> (result)	(cause) <i>pravṛtti</i>	<i>mithyājñāna</i> (false knowledge)	Removes	<i>Doṣa</i> (evils)
<i>Pravṛtti</i> (result)	(cause) <i>doṣa</i>	<i>Dosa</i> (evils)	Removes	<i>Pravṛtti</i>
<i>Doṣa</i> (result)	(cause) <i>mithyājñāna</i>	<i>Pravṛtti</i>	Removes	<i>Janma</i>
		<i>Janma</i>	Removes	<i>Duḥkha</i>

Table: The cause of life (left) and the process of liberation (right)

Gautama, in his first *sūtra*, discussed the nature of sixteen categories and their aim for the attainment of liberation. With this very fact, he mentioned the way one can achieve liberation. But this can be valid only through the critical examination. According to him, the ultimate cause of life and suffering is *mithyājñāna*. He also pointed out that because of the false knowledge one gets at birth. The essence of *mithyājñāna* is about the kind of knowledge when one thinks that the soul is nothing but his body. These kinds of false knowledge cause the birth. According to Gautama, the removal of *mithyājñāna* leads to the removal of *dosa*, *pravṛtti*, *janma*, *duḥkha*, and ultimately results in liberation. The suffering of life is only because of birth (*janma*). One gets into birth because of the merits and demerits of his past actions (*karma*), which lead to the motivation (*pravṛtti*) of life. The word *pravṛtti* is used here to mean virtue (*dharma*) and vice (*adharmā*). The cause of this motivation is the kinds of evils (*doṣa*) that belong to everybody's life (i.e., *rāga* or attraction, *dveṣa* or repulsion, *lobha* or greed). The occurrences of attraction (*rāga*) are because of the favorable (*anukula*) and repulsion for the unfavorable (*dveṣa*); all these are followed by the false knowledge. That is why one gets into different activities with their own motivations. We have seen that through evil (*doṣa*) one gets into motivation (*pravṛtti*) which results in the birth (*janma*), though there are such motivations which result in virtue, for example charity (*dāna*), rescue (*paritrāna*), service to others (*paricarana*). There are also words which lead to virtue (truth or *satya*, benevolence or *hita*, attractiveness or *priya*, the recital of the Veda or *svādhyāya*) and minds

(mercy or *dayā*, detachment or *asprhā*, and reverences or *sraddhā*). When false knowledge is eliminated by the knowledge of truth, evils are also removed because of the removal of false knowledge. For the removal of evils, motivation too is required to be removed. Because of the removal of the chain, consequent motivation, birth comes to an end. With this cessation of birth, suffering also disappears. Thus, through this disappearance of suffering, the final liberation or *niḥśreyasa* is attained.

According to Vātsyāyana, knowledge of truth is the very opposite of false knowledge and, as such, negates the latter. However, one can say that false knowledge is also opposed to the knowledge of truth, and it may also negate the knowledge of truth. In reply to this, Uddyotkara mentioned that though false knowledge is generated first, it is weaker than the knowledge of truth because false knowledge has no basis in reality. By contrast, knowledge of truth has the basis of the reality of an object as well as the instrument of valid knowledge (like scripture). Therefore, false knowledge cannot negate the knowledge of truth. Regarding false knowledge, Gautama subsequently mentioned in *Nyāya sūtra* 1.1.9 that the false knowledge of twelve *prameya*-s is the root cause of the worldly existence of individual selves. The true cognition of twelve *prameya*-s essentially leads to the attainment of liberation.

Conclusion

Gautama mentioned that the sixteen categories aim at liberation. Later on, he accepted the fact that it is not the case that after having the true knowledge of sixteen categories, one cannot get liberation immediately, though it cannot be said that for acquiring liberation, there is no role of the sixteen categories. As we have seen before, the knowledge of truth seeks to remove false knowledge (*mithyajñāna*). That is why we need to have true knowledge of sixteen categories to remove the false knowledge of the object's reality. For the cessation of everything else, one must remove false knowledge. The cessation of everything else is a state where one gets the ultimate bliss (*śānta*). Through the true cognition of situated objects, this reality moves towards the aim of bliss, where all activities turn to an end. And there would be no possibility of rebirth. Therefore, 'knowledge of truth' is the only cause of the cessation of suffering and freedom from all consciousness of suffering.

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