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Usage of Tarka, Nyaya principles in Sri Hayagriva stotram of Sri Vedanta Desika

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Abstract

Of the many erudite Sanskrit scholars, some stood above others for their uniqueness and their significant contributions to the world. The most prominent among them is the unequalled versatile genius and greatly honoured poet of the thirteenth century Svāmī Śrī Deśika.

At the age of twenty, Svāmī Śrī Deśika exhibited an astounding ability to compose poems, spontaneously combining Philosophy and Devotion. The vastness of his knowledge can be compared to that of an ocean. Those who delve deep into the realm of his compositions can gather numerous pearls ancient legal principle being one among them. This paper deals with one concept of Tarka and Nyaya revealed through the sloka nine of Sri Hayagriva stotram of the Lion of Poets and Logic namely Kavi Tārkika Kesarī, ie Svāmī Śrī Deśika.

Keyword: Charvaka, Tarka, Nyaya, Brihaspati, Hayagriva stotram, useful to modern lawyers

Introduction

Svāmī Śrī Deśika, an unequalled Vaishnavite Ācārya of the 13th century, mastered all branches of learning as we find in his remark in one of his works thus:

Vimśatyabda viśruta Nānāvidha-Vidyāḥ (Sankalpa Sūryodayam - Act 1)

Meaning: One who has mastered various branches of learning at the age of twenty.

At the age of twenty, Svāmī Śrī Deśika exhibited an astounding ability to compose poems, spontaneously combining

Philosophy and Devotion. The vastness of his knowledge can be compared to that of an ocean. He has been rightly honoured as 'the Lion of Poets and Logic' thus Kavi Tārkika Kesarī. He has carved himself a 'niche' as an expounder of Prapatti Mārga to the world which was already revealed by the great philosopher Śrī Rāmānujācārya. Those who delve deep into the realm of his compositions can gather numerous pearls, ancient legal system, being one among them.

Śrī Hayagrīva Stotram is Hymn in thirty-two stanzas on Lord Hayagrīva, the Supreme form of Lord Viṣṇu known for learning, composed by Svāmī Śrī Deśika. When the poet had divine Darśan of the Lord in the hills of Thiruvahindrapuram, he went into raptures and the most popular and powerful hymn known as the "Śrī Hayagrīva Stotram" started flowing like nectar in praise of Him. The strength of this stotram is to enhance the learning faculty.

Apart from profound Vaishnavite scholar he was master of Nyaya, Tarka, legal principle of ancient Indian Knowledge system. Since he was victorious in intellectual debates by applying Principle of Tarka and Nyaya. Aptly he was called. Kavitarika Kesari. It is a Sanskrit title that translates to "Lion among Poets and Logicians."

- Kavi (कवि): Poet
- Tarkika (तर्किक): Logician
- Kesari (केसरी): Lion

This title is often used to describe individuals who are highly skilled in both poetry and logical reasoning.

This paper tries to reveal a concept of Tarka, Nyaya principle used to change the mindset of Brhaspati who was immersed in Charvaka philosophy

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In Śloka nine,

वितर्कं डोलां व्यवधूय सत्वे
 बृहस्पतिं वर्तयसे यतस्त्वम् ।
 तेनैव देव त्रिदशेश्वराणाम्
 अस्पृष्टं डोलायितं माधिराज्यम् ॥ ९ ॥

Transliteration

vitarka ḍolām vyavadhūya satve
 bṛhaspatiṁ vartayase yatastvam |
 tenaiva deva tridaśeśvarāṇām
 asprṣṭa ḍolāyita mādhirājyam || 9 |

Meaning

Śrī Hayagrīva, God of the Supreme knowledge, steadied the Deva Guru, Bṛhaspati from deviating from the righteous path. He is the great teacher and son of Angirasa Prajapathi, one of the ten offspring of Brahma's mind. He is known for his great intellect and power of speech and of impeccable ancestry and progeny, at one time, Bṛhaspati himself got into trouble while interpreting the Dharma Shastras. His mind started oscillating, and he was so confused that he ended up creating a worldly system that completely denied the existence of God. Sri Hayagriva intervened and stabilized Brihaspati's mind, putting him on the Saatvik Maarg (path of righteousness).

Śrī Hayagrīva went on to save both, Bṛhaspati and his followers like Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, etc. from going down the wrong path. His timely intervention prevented the kingdoms of the Devas from wild oscillations and falling under the influence of the Asuras. Bṛhaspati was saved from the wrong Logic and regained his divine knowledge. He accepted Śrī Hayagrīva as his timely protector and benefactor. Because of Śrī Hayagrīva's intervention, Indra, Lord of Devas, and others were destined to enjoy power and position without any disturbances.

Śrī Hayagrīva conferred on the Guru of Devas, Bṛhaspati, an impeccable knowledge that was free from doubt, misconstruction, or confusion. In Nyāya and Tarka Shastra, the concept of argumentation is well-developed. Nyāya is a school of logic and epistemology, and Tarka Shastra refers to the science of reasoning or debate. Here are some common mistakes that can occur during arguments according to these traditions, along with aspects of a perfect argument:

Common Mistakes in Arguments (as per Nyāya and Tarka Shastra):

1. **Hetvabhasa (Fallacy of Irrelevant Reasoning):**
Presenting an irrelevant reason as evidence for a conclusion.
Example: "This medicine is effective because the doctor wears a white coat."
2. **Sādhāraṇa Dharma (Fallacy of Ambiguity):**
Using ambiguous terms or words with multiple meanings.
Example: "Vehicles should be banned on the road because they cause accidents. A bicycle is a vehicle, so bicycles should be banned too."
3. **Asiddha (Fallacy of Unproved Assumption):**
Making an unproven assumption or stating something without providing evidence.
Example: "All students prefer studying at night because my friends do."
4. **Viruddha (Fallacy of Contradiction):**

Presenting contradictory statements within the same argument.

Example: "Fire is cold because it produces heat."

5. **Savyabhicara (Fallacy of Irregularity):**
Inconsistency in the application of terms or principles.
Example: "Stealing is always wrong, but it's okay to steal food if you're hungry."
6. **Satpratipakṣa (Fallacy of Counter-thesis):**
Introducing a counterargument that is not relevant to the main issue.
Example: "I know I didn't submit the assignment on time, but other students also submitted it late."
7. **Elements of a Perfect Argument:**
 - **Pratijñā (Proposition):** Clearly stating the proposition or thesis that you are trying to establish.
 - **Hetu (Reason):** Providing a valid and relevant reason or evidence in support of the proposition.
 - **Udāharana (Example):** Offering examples that illustrate and strengthen the presented reason.
 - **Upanaya (Application):** Demonstrating the applicability of the reason to the proposition.
 - **Nigamana (Conclusion):** Drawing a logical and sound conclusion based on the proposition, reason, example, and application.
 - **Sambandha (Connection):** Ensuring that there is a clear and coherent connection between the elements of the argument.
 - **Virodha (Rebuttal):** Anticipating and addressing potential counterarguments or objections.
 - **Siddhanta (Established Doctrine):** Aligning the argument with established principles or doctrines.

In Nyāya and Tarka Shastra, a perfect argument adheres to these elements and avoids common fallacies, leading to clear and valid reasoning. The goal is to engage in rational discourse and arrive at a well-supported and logically sound conclusion.

In Nyāya philosophy, वितर्क (vitarka) refers to a type of doubt or uncertainty regarding the validity of knowledge. The term is often used in the context of epistemology, the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature, scope, and limits of human knowledge. Vitarka is associated with a particular kind of doubt that arises when conflicting pieces of evidence or reasons are presented in an argument.

Nyāya recognizes several types of doubts (samshaya), and Vitarka is specifically characterized by a situation where two contradictory reasons are presented in support of a single proposition. It is a form of uncertainty that arises when there is a clash or conflict between different lines of reasoning.

The resolution of Vitarka typically involves a careful examination and analysis of the conflicting reasons to determine which one is valid and should be accepted. In the Nyāya tradition, the process of resolving doubts and arriving at correct knowledge involves critical examination, logical analysis, and the application of various epistemic tools.

Nyāya philosophy provides a systematic framework for understanding knowledge, inference, and reasoning, and the concept of Vitarka plays a role in highlighting the need for discernment and critical thinking in the face of conflicting evidence or arguments. Resolving Vitarka is essential for establishing certainty and arriving at valid conclusions in the pursuit of knowledge. It may note that Bṛhaspati was preaching Chārvāka principle, and the key elements are below.

चार्वाक also known as Lokāyata, is an ancient school of Indian philosophy that is primarily characterized by its materialistic and atheistic views. Chārvāka philosophy is associated with skepticism, hedonism, and a rejection of metaphysical concepts, including the existence of God and the afterlife. The name "Chārvāka" is derived from the Sanskrit root "chāru," meaning pleasing, and it is often translated as "pleasure-seekers" or "materialists."

Key tenets of Chārvāka philosophy include

1. **Epicurean Pleasure Principle:** The pursuit of pleasure (sensual pleasure, in particular) and the avoidance of pain are considered the primary goals of life.
2. **Materialism:** Chārvāka rejects the existence of metaphysical entities such as gods, souls, and an afterlife. The philosophy is rooted in a materialistic understanding of reality.
3. **Empiricism:** Chārvāka emphasizes empirical perception as the only valid source of knowledge. It rejects inference, verbal testimony, and scriptural authority like vedas as reliable sources of knowledge.
4. **Skepticism:** Chārvāka is sceptical of metaphysical and supernatural claims and encourages individuals to rely on their direct sensory experiences.

Regarding the reference to Bṛhaspati, it is important to note that Bṛhaspati, is considered the guru (teacher) of the gods. There are historical and mythological references to Bṛhaspati being associated with Chārvāka philosophy, and he is portrayed as a proponent of materialism and skepticisms.

The promotion of Chārvāka philosophy by Bṛhaspati could be interpreted in several ways. Some consider it as a means of presenting diverse philosophical perspectives within the broader Indian philosophical tradition, while others view it as a critique of materialism and atheism. It is crucial to approach these narratives with an understanding of the historical

It is worth noting that Chārvāka philosophy, while historically significant, did not gain mainstream acceptance in the broader Indian philosophical tradition. Most other schools of thought in India, such as Vedanta, Nyāya presented alternative views that included metaphysical and spiritual elements.

Śrī Hayagrīva removed all deficiencies in Brihaspathi's mind and changed his Chārvāka Philosophy to the believer of Vedas and God वितर्कं डोलां व्यवधूय सत्वेबृहस्पतिं वर्तयसे यतस्त्वम् (vitarka ḍolāṁ vyavadhūya satve bṛhaspatim vartayase yatastvam) and he was stationed on the sound mind as a result, the chief of Devas like Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, etc. who acted as per sane advice of Brihaspathi were able to enjoy a stable seat of Power. Their fortunes were made intact, and they were destined for power and position without any perturbation. This is valuable advice for lawyers to have sure knowledge about the pieces of evidence and line of arguments that they produce before the court based on which judgments are delivered Nyāya principle useful to lawyers

Thus, an in-depth analysis of Śrī Hayagrīva Stotram itself will, not only explore traditional source of ideas and knowledge, but also fetch variety of novel materials hitherto unknown to even Modern legal system.

Conclusion

A reader of Svāmī Śrī Deśika's works will identify him as not only a colossus in philosophy of Srivaishnavism and a prolific author in many languages, but as one of the greatest legal luminary ever lived if he delves deep into the realm of his literature.

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