



## Exposition of 'V?da-Kath?'in'V?di-Vinoda'

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**Abstract:** *In the Indian philosophical tradition 'Ration' and 'Intuition' are generally two accepted tools to liberate self; to accomplish the ultimate goal of life 'SummumBonum'. While the former can be acquired by meticulous effort and unbridled practice, the later comes with monistic lifestyle and tireless meditation and with God's grace. Some philosophers have incessantly believed in the ration and some other devoutly hopeful in intuition. Ancient Indian Philosophical tradition renders 'Intuition' as upper hand; perhaps because intuitive knowledge sounds more philosophical. But between these two extremities, there can be a way forward for blending of these two tools which deserves better attention. It could be a matter of the debate but this is an undeniable fact that Indian tradition gives 'Ration' very high and dignified position. 'Ration' manifests itself in the form of logic and debate is a process where logic gets utmost prominence.*

**Key Words:** Philosophical, Tradition, Intution, Liberate, Accomplish, Ultimate, Goal, Summum,.

Logic is an inalienable part of any debate. If we strip the logic off the debate, it will reduce to a pandemonium. A constructive debate has potential to address wide array of issues ranging from the problems created out of daily chores and perils of mundane worldly affairs to the quest for "Ultimate reality". As expressed in the Indian tradition

"v?de- v?de hi j?yate tattvabodha?".

Basically debate is a tool which can be used amicably for any discourse irrespective of anything philosophical sect. It can be said that the debate is used to be a preferred form of rationality in our philosophical tradition. Our Ancient Philosophers have paid great respect to this aspect of knowledge. Being a champion of Realism the Ny?ya School firmly believes in robust reality of the world and worldly affairs. Accordingly Ny?ya-Metaphysics recognizes sixteen categories (pad?rthas). The attainment of Supreme felicity ie Mok?a hinges upon the right knowledge of these sixteen pad?rthas and to obtain the proper understanding and conceptual clarity of these said pad?rthas, the relevance of the debate and dialectical discussion (?str?rtha) is beyond any apprehension.

The Ny?ya philosophical system designates the term Kath? to convey general idea of debate.

This term is etymologically derived from the kath which signifies to tell, to express, to converse etc. Basically we Indians are much more inclined towards oral conversation and are relatively hesitant to scribble down in order to express or propagate our ideas. Prolixity is not alien to us. It is evident from the general observation that whenever two persons meet or many persons gather together they tend to discuss something about some important religious events like Ram- Kath?, preaching etc. or discussion regarding random social affairs. During the discussion they quote some stanzas or ?lok?s from the scriptures to corroborate their point and sometimes even they become aggressive while trying to prove their version valid and right. Thus it can be said that in the Indian perspective the concept of formal debate germinates from the conversation and later came to be called Kath?.

In this context it is important to mention that it is quite astonishing that the sage Gautama has not adduced any definition of Kath? in the Ny?ya -S?tra. Like him neither the V?tsy?yana in his Bh??ya nor the Uddyotkara in his V?rttika has done any attempt to define the same. It was the V?caspati Mi?ra who pioneered in his T?tparya- T?k? to define the Kath?. The definition provided by him is as



follows:- "Kath? is a sort of discourse where more than one participants venture to establish their thesis and to refute the counter-thesis pertaining to a central theme by presenting syntactically connected sentences."

The text V?di-Vinoda which is composed by the renowned Nai?yika ?a?kara Mi?ra is an important treatise (prakara?a text) on art of disputation and specifically aimed at debating maneuvering to conquer the opponent. As the author explicitly declared his motive 'Upakartu? vijig??napakartumaha?gat?n vidu?a? v?vinoda? k?yate'. To accomplish this purpose he has divided the text into five Ull?sas and in the first Ull?sa he had dealt with the exposition of Kath?. Here he has commenced the discourse with the presentation of the definition of Kath? as propounded by the V?caspati Mi?ra without referring his name and debunked it severally. He says- 'tatra militairbahubhirvic?ra? k?yate tatr?tivy?pte' . since the essence of the definition is already discussed so now we may proceed to the further discussion. According to the ?a?kara Mi?ra the proposed definition is porous and is afflicted with multiple defects. We will now discuss the every objection successively that has been raised by the author against the definition.

?a?kara Mi?ra says that the proposed definition is inappropriate because if we adopt this its characteristics would also occur in the cases where more than one individuals just do general cordial discussion regarding any subject without restricting themselves to a specific position which means without a proper view of either being a proponent only or an opponent only and many a time switching their respective positions. Thus, the proposed definition is fallacious and is afflicted with the error of over application (Ativy?pti Do?a) . Moreover 's?dhana' and 'Du?a?a' are relative terms. An argument which is s?dhana from a particular perspective itself becomes Du?a?a from the different perspective i.e. a condemnatory statement itself plays the role of corroboratory indirectly in terms

of complementary to the other and vice-versa. That's why the employment of the two terms is not appropriate.

Furthermore, when disputants just reproduce the opponent's either condemnatory or corroboratory argument before proceeding to counter it, then the definition of the kath? would transgress in those reproduced portions also. Such transgress would be certainly undesirable. As a matter of fact, according to the standard operating procedure of a formal debate every disputant is bound to reproduce the opponent's argument by saying 'as you said' before refuting it. But, in the anuv?da Section, there subsists neither any attribute of corroboration nor any attribute of condemnation, so an inexpediency would occur in the form of ativy?pti if we adopt this definition. In addition to that, the proposed definition is afflicted with the fault of narrow application (avy?pti do?a) . It is quite possible that having adduced the proponent's proposition the opponent couldn't produce his counter-thesis owing to his sheer incompetence. Since in the this case there is no 'du?a?a-v?kya', thus, the definition of Kath? will not be applicable here. Moreover this proposed definition is afflicted with the fault of no application (asambhava do?a) . This is because every argument which is a constituent part of the Kath? whether it is condemnatory or Corroboratory, it assuredly is to be presented by an individual disputant and not collectively by the both disputants, thus the employed term 'n?n? pravakt?ik?' would imply impossibility of any Kath? altogether. After demolishing the definition rendered by the V?caspati Mi?ra, he has also refuted two other definitions of Kath? in which one is defined by the Ma?ika??ha Mi?ra (Ny?ya Ratnak?ra) . Finally he has expressed his predilection for a definition propounded by the Vardham?na Up?dhy?ya in his text Anvik?- ?nayatattvabodha? which is as follows:- "The kath?tva subsists in that particular cluster of sentences, which operate to attain a definite purpose of expression of argument set forth to establish the thesis and expression of the counter argument to



refute the same and where these expressions have to be presented only by the proponents and opponents respectively and it encompasses each and every case where either the proponent or the opponent or both expresses either the validatory or condemnatory statement or both".

As it is apparent from the above discussion Vardham?na has tried vehemently to eliminate all those defects from the definition which had afflicted the definition of the Kath? defined by the V?caspati Mi?ra This definition encompasses all the probable cases that might be possible regarding a formal debate and excludes all those cases which shall not be incorporated owing to not conforming the designated norms regarding a formal debate.

But despite having all this indicated porosity in the definition provided by V?caspati regarding Kath? we should be grateful to him, who has entered into an uncharted territory and endeavoured to define the Kath? which was hitherto undefined by his esteemed predecessors. Basically V?caspati has framed a strong basic foundation on which the latter logician like vardham?na has developed the profound concept of Kath?.

Following the footprints of his predecessor ?a?kara Mi?ra has also accepted three varieties of Kath? which are V?da, Jalpa and Vita???. As expressed in the Bh?? ya-

'Tisara? kaph?? bhavanti v?do jalpo vita??? cheti'- Ny? ya-Bh??ya- 1.2.1

?a?kara Mi?ra has expounded the rationale behind the above mentioned division. He explicitly declared that a disputant can have only one out of two motives which is either earnest desire for ascertainment of truth or fervent desire for conquest. Following these two motives one can have any one of these three objectives viz. obtainment of the truth which is not yet determined or preservation of the determined one and constant practice of the preserved one and finally appropriation of the same. Corresponding to these three objectives there are provision of three types of debates namely V?da, Jalpa and vit???. For accomplishment of the

determination of the truth there is a V?da-Kath?, and for attainment of the preservation and sustainment of the acquired knowledge Jalpa-Kath? begins, and the proper appropriation of the acquired one by repudiating the wrong believes of others there is a provision for Vita???-kath?. But there is a divergencence of opinion among the philosophers of different schools regarding the plausible number of types of Kath?. Philosophers like s?n?tani and Tara?i mi?ra (Ratnako?ak?ra) hold that Kath? is of four types. According to them in addition to the said three kinds of Kath? there is distinct variety of Kath? which is called V?da-Vi?a???. They contend that it is very likely possible that a disputant with a profound desire to know the truth presents his proposition and his counterpart just refutes the same without establishing any proposition of his own. On the other hand, the Buddhis?a hold that there is only one variety of Kath? and which is V?da-Kath?. The author rebuts this view and says that this view is not well articulated as it is contrary to the general observation. The author argues that we certainly find two different motives of the disputant which are Tattvabubhuts? and Vijig?s? and these two motives cannot exist concurrently in the single disputant. Thus there is not any possibility of single type of Kath?.

In the present context it is worthwhile to mention that there is another methodology to categorise the different types of Kath?. Taking into account of the heterogeneity of mental disposition and motives which propel any disputant to take part in two-fold division of Kath? has been accepted. Out of the two, the first one is 'Tattvabubhuts?-Kath?' where the driving force is longingness for the ascertainment of the true knowledge and out of the three types of Kath?, V?da-kath? comes under this category while the second one is called 'Vijig?s?-kath?' for those kind of people who just want to assert his superiority regarding his knowledge over others, rest of the two viz. Jalpa and Vita???-Kath? have been kept under this category. As previously mentioned, in accordance with recognised or



accepted principle of the Ny?ya school, ?a?kara Mi?ra had also accepted the three forms of Kath? which are V?da, Jalpa and Vita???

After gaining some basic ideas regarding the Kath? we may now proceed to discuss regarding the characteristics of the V?da-Kath?. It is the first form of Kath?. This kath? can be held either between an accomplished preceptor and a pupil who is eager to know the truth or between the two pupils who desire to determine the truth.

In the first adhy?ya of Ny?ya-s?tra the Gautama has defined the V?da-Kath? which is as follows:- "V?da is a sort of debate where two participants endorse the thesis and counter-thesis by corroboration and condemnation through the instrumentality of 'Pram??a' and 'tarka' without being contravened by the established doctrine and by employing the five factors of reasoning." In the text V?di-Vinoda the author has defined the V?da-Kath? as- "A sort of Kath? which is promulgated to assuage the quest for knowledge of the Supreme reality."

In this context, if we compare the definition of Kath? as rendered by the ?a?kara Mi?ra and Gautama, we can easily observe that while the former has defined it in terms of its prime objectives and the latter's definition is expository in nature with more emphasis on the functional aspects of the V?da-Kath?. ?a?kara Mi?ra has presented another definition of V?da-Kath? as defined by an anonymous philosopher and refutes it subsequently by indicating the subsistence of redundancy in the certain sections of the same. The refuted definition is 'Tattvanir?ayam?troddesa prav?ttakath?tva?' which means V?da-Kath? is a kind of Kath? that commences with the sole purpose of ascertainment of truth. He contends that here the employed term 'm?tra' is futile and serves no purpose as when the objective is already mentioned in the definition, it unfaillingly implies the non- applicability of the other. Furthermore if any misguided folks attempt to accomplish both of the objectives simultaneously, it is not admissible because no such reference is

found in any scripture pertaining to the art of disputation.

Thereafter the author had dealt the fundamental criteria that dictate the terms regarding any disputant being entitled to take participation in V?da-Kath?. He recommends that only those debaters are worthy for V?da- Kath? who have a hankering for ascertainment of the truth and who pronounce only what is pertinent to the theme of the debate. In addition to that, he must not be treacherous and should be spontaneous while replying to the imminent queries. The debater must be cordial and credible who doesn't hurl any unreasonable accusation with the spurious intention. Further he should be benevolent enough to willingly embrace what is determined by reasoning. Moreover the author cautions that a Tattvajijñ?su should indulge in a V?da-Kath? only with a person having concordant mental disposition and share the common goal. Otherwise, a non-worthy counterpart can jeopardize the prospect to accomplish the long cherished goal.

By convention usually four a?gas (component factors) have been considered necessary for the conduction of a debate in a seamless manner. Apart from a proponent and an opponent 'Stheya' and 'anuidheya' regarded as part and parcel of any debate. They both play vital roles regarding fulfilment of the procedural aspects of any debate. Stheya is basically an arbitrator. The author says that he must be an impartial person. The prime responsibility of the Stheya is to supervise and maintain the decorum in a debate and to record and analyse the arguments adduced by the disputants, and finally on that basis to deliver the final judgement of the entire debate. But the author argued that, since in the V?da-Kath? both of the disputants are dispassionate and free from any malice therefore here the role of the Stheya is minimal, thus designation of a Stheya is not mandatory in the V?da- Kath?. But if any Stheya comes to the debating assembly coincidentally he should not be ignored as well. Similarly here the



role of an Anuvidheya who is a powerful king or the like is not very important as the disputants are not desirous of any fame and other material gain as they are dispassionate people.

The general procedure of debate proceeds in this way. In the V?da-Kath?, at first, the proponent proposes his proposition and the corroborative argument in this regard. Thereafter he proceeds to fulfill the formality of 'Ka?-?akoddh?ra' (extrication of the thorn from his reasoning). Ka??akoddh?ra is basically set of statements through which a disputant advances to prove the veracity of his employed argument by anticipating some probable objections and refuting them subsequently. It thus, is a method of self-certification regarding the soundness of one's argument and possesses the potency to substantiate his assertion.

For instance, if the two disputants like a Naiy?yika and a Mim??saka starts a V?da-Kath? to ascertain the true character of 'Sound' whether it is eternal or non- eternal. To start with, in the first stage the proponent presents (Naiy?yika) his proposition with the method of reasoning through five inference factors. Naiy?yika contends that "sound is non-eternal (pratijñ?) because it is produced (hetu). whatever is a product is non-eternal, too like a pitcher (ud?hara? a), this 'word' is like so (upanya) thus it must be non-eternal, too (nigmana)". Having said this he proceeds to present the Ka??akoddh?ra and vigorously says that the employed proban is not fallacious at it is not plagued by any of the five fallacies of proban. Moreover it is also free from any errors that render any proban inefficacious. Then come to the turn of an opponent. First of all, he reproduces the censurable portion of the proponent's reasoning and argues that the adduced Proban 'being a product' is an inefficacious to prove the non-eternality of the sound. The reason behind it, as he argues, is 'sound' is not a product in the sense of 'originated' as applicable in the case of a 'pitcher' but it only expresses itself after an effort. Thereafter, he presents his proposition. In

this regard, he says "sound is eternal because it is an attribute which resides only in the 'Ether' and any attribute which resides solely in the 'Ether' and is permanent in nature like the 'ektva' thus being the same, the 'sound' must be eternal, too." In this way the debate advances until the final judgement. It is apparent from the above discussion that the author had dealt with each and every aspect of the V?da-Kath?. In this regard he has presented and analysed almost every prominent view that was prevalent upto his time period. Obviously he has adopted a critical approach. Although his expressed views are to the greater or lesser extent in sync with the thought patterns of the traditional Ny?ya-School and he is immensely influenced by the Uday?n?c?rya. However, on some occasions he presented his original opinions. For instance, the provision of Ka??akoddh?ra in the V?da- Kath? is his original conception; it is not available in Bh??ya, V?rttika and T?tparya-t?k?. Finally we may conclude the discourse with a remark that for every curious mind pertaining to the Indian art of disputation the author's elucidation is self-reliant.

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