THE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION IN INDIAN TRADITION

KUNCHAPUDI SRINIVAS, PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY, INDIA

This paper attempts to bring out the salient features of methodology adopted in the Indian philosophical tradition. The ancient Indian philosophers did not blindly support any philosophical position without proper rational scrutiny. Thus reason is treated by them as a most important input in the art of philosophizing to establish their standpoint as free from dogma and blind faith and to get into the deeper structures of philosophical reasoning. Dialogue, debate and argument have an inbuilt investigating mechanism which aims at eliciting rationally justifiable answers. Therefore the art of investigation unearths various layers of knowledge. Its role is more positive and constructive, rather than negative and destructive. Since it is not possible to provide an exhaustive survey of the entire Indian philosophical tradition in a brief paper, I restrict myself to those schools of thought that attract my immediate attention.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally viewed that what is called Indology is an academic study of the languages and literature, history and cultures of the Indian sub-continent. More specifically, Indology deals with the study of Sanskrit literature and Hinduism and other religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, and other indigenous religions of India. It can be said that Indology as a discipline owes its existence to the Persian anthropologist and historian of eleventh century al-Biruni, whose researches on India covered the political, cultural, scientific and religious history of India. Apart from that, the contributions made by the British orientalist Henry Thomas Colebrook, German Indologist Max Müller, and British Indologist Arthur Berreidale Keith made it an interesting discipline. Since it is not possible to deal with all aspects of Indology in a paper like this, I would like to focus my attention on the philosophical traditions of India which become part and parcel of Indic cultures. As aptly held by P. T. Raju (1985, p. XI), 'the philosophical traditions of India represent the philosophy of life and of spirit'. When we talk about philosophy of life, diverse disciplines such as language, literature, history, philosophy and culture become part and parcel of it. In other words, although they have their own subject-matters to deal with, ultimately they contribute to the identity of a tradition in general. Thus one can see the interdependence among these branches. The philosophy of any people is represented by their thinking, living and reflection. Our thinking and philosophy find their expression in language and experience respectively.

The art of philosophizing is one of the most important and distinguishing features of any philosophical tradition. In other words, a philosophical tradition is identified with

its art of philosophizing. The art of philosophizing differs from one tradition to another. It is largely dependent on the metaphysical presuppositions of a given tradition in the sense that the method of investigation must be appropriate enough to establish sthe metaphysical presuppositions under investigation. The ancient Indian philosophers did not blindly support any philosophical position or standpoint without proper rational scrutiny. Thus reason is treated as one of the most important factors of the art of philosophizing by the ancient Indian philosophers, in order to enable their philosophical standpoint to be free from dogma and blind faith and to get into the deeper structures of philosophical reasoning. Philosophical dialogues, debates, and arguments have an inbuilt investigating mechanism which aims at eliciting rationally justifiable answers. Therefore the art of investigation, which involves healthy dialogues, debates, and arguments, only unearths the various layers of knowledge. Thus its role is more positive and constructive, but not negative and destructive.

The art of philosophizing is successfully employed in the *Upaniṣads.* The major systems of Indian philosophy have been categorised into the heterodox (*nāstika*) and the orthodox (*āstika*) camps. The unique feature of this distinction is that the systems such as Cārvāka, Jainism, and Buddhism are known as heterodox systems not because of their inbuilt atheism, but because they oppose Vedic authority. What is peculiar to Jainism and Buddhism is that in spite of their atheism they are treated as religions. And as religions they have a considerable following in India. On the other hand, the orthodox systems such as Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, and Uttara-Mīmāṃsā (Vedānta) are so called not because of their theism, but because of their allegiance to Vedic authority. Therefore, when we talk about the Indian philosophical tradition our talk in general covers all those systems of philosophy that took birth on Indian soil. Therefore, one must be circumspect enough to distinguish Indian philosophy from Hinduism. The latter is only an offshoot of the orthodox Indian philosophical systems and it does not owe its allegiance to the non-Vedic philosophical systems of India. Also, it needs to be mentioned here that philosophy and religion are not segregated from each other in the classical Indian tradition.

The development of the Indian philosophical tradition is largely attributed to the commentarial tradition practiced by the various system builders. The art of philosophizing, by and large, starts with the exposition of the position of an opponent or the system to be criticised (*pūrvapakṣa*), the criticism levelled against the system (*khaṇḍana),* and the thesis arrived at (*siddhānta*). This is a healthy practice. One has to understand the philosophical position of one's opponent thoroughly before criticizing it. Theory building in philosophy is different from that of science. If theories in science are built with the aid of the experimental method, theories in philosophy are built with the aid of reason and experience. What is experienced is more authentic than that is arrived at by mere reason and experimentation. But the fact remains that what is experienced by an individual remains as a private experience and it would not be possible for others to share it. This remains as a chief obstacle for establishing truths in philosophy. Such an obstacle cannot deter philosophers from constructing theories on the basis of experience. In this paper an attempt is made to show that the art of investigation is inbuilt in the Indian

philosophical tradition. Since it is not possible to provide an exhaustive survey of the entire Indian philosophical tradition in a paper of this kind, I restrict myself to those schools of thought that attracted my immediate attention.

THE *UPANIṢADS*

The Vedas, which are the main source of the orthodox Indian philosophical systems, are called *Śruti,* which means 'what is heard'. The Vedic wisdom was orally transmitted to the eligible by the great seers and sages. The process of transmission is not one-sided. The receiver often poses questions whenever and wherever he/she is not convinced by any standpoint. 'The Vedas may be full of hymns and religious invocations, but they also tell stories, speculate about the world and – true to the argumentative propensity already in view – ask difficult questions' (Sen 2005, p. XI). Some of the questions raised in the Vedas are: Who created the world? Did it emerge spontaneously? Did God know what really happened? One may come across questions of different types. There are questions which are simple and are asked to seek clarifications. There are also questions which are complicated. Reflection of highest kind is expected in answering them. The dialogues and the arguments of philosophers cannot bypass the method of investigation through the art of questioning, for they intend to establish what appeals to rationality. Irrespective of their allegiance or non-allegiance to the authority of the Veda, the Indian philosophical systems posed the following questions: What is man's life? What is its meaning and purpose? How is man to plan his life so that he can attain his ideal? If life is part of reality, who is he to know this reality? The questions may be both philosophical and religious. The very purpose of this questioning is to get philosophical insights into the fundamental issues concerning human life. The philosophers of India are of the opinion that philosophy is nothing but philosophy of life. As a matter of fact the *Upaniṣads*, which belong to the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of the Vedas, are written in dialogical form. The dialogues always take question–answer form. Let us examine some of the *Upaniṣads.*

In the *Praśna Upaniṣads* the sage Pippalāda answers six different questions raised by six different enquirers. The word *praśna* in Sanskrit means 'question'. Of course, the questions and answers are mixed up with some mythological material. What we call mythology was history at one time or the other. When certain historical facts become completely unconvincing, they become part of mythology.

The first question asked by one of the enquirers is: How were creatures created? The answer to this question is – by Prajāpati, the creator God. It appears that he did penance through which he created pairs of opposites (polar opposites or polar concepts), which in turn created the world of beings. The couples were *rayi,* the material stuff, and *prāṇa*, the life principle (Raju 1985, p. 29). The life principle is known as *Vaiśvānara,* the Cosmic principle. And this life principle is one's own Ātman.

The second enquirer asks: Who are the gods and who among them is the greatest? Pippalāda answers that there are Ether (*ākāśa*), Air (*vāyu*), Fire (*agni*), Water (*ap*), Earth (*pṛthvī*), Speech (*vāk*), Mind (*manas*), Eye (*cakṣu*), and Ear (*karṇa*). And the

greatest of the Gods is *Prāṇa*, the life force. Here *Prāṇa* should not be understood as mere physical air or physiological *bios.* It is the Cosmic principle which integrates the universe and the psycho-physical constituent of individuals. When the life principle deserts the body there remains nothing. All other gods perform their functions only when there is life principle. This answer indirectly suggests to us that the gods who were treated as natural forces turned out to be cosmic entities and man's senses (*jñānendriyas*) and organs (*karmendriyas*). In other words, the gods were both cosmic entities and man's senses and organs.

The third question is with regard to the origin of *prāṇa*, the life principle. How did *prāṇa* originate? How did it transform itself into senses and so on? *Prāṇa* is born out of Ātman like a reflection and employs its divisions for performing different functions in the human body.

The fourth question is about the gods. What happens to the gods in sleep and who is it that sleeps? During sleep all the senses become one with the god of mind. Only the *prāṇa*, the life force, is active during sleep. In dreams, the agent experiences both whatever is experienced and whatever is not experienced during the waking state. In a dreamless state (deep sleep) the agent is overpowered by a psychic force, *tejas*, the illumination of his conscious being or its intense light and does not see dreams. Like birds resting in a tree everything else rests in Ātman.

The fifth question is about the word *Om* (*Aum*). This word is the same as Brahma. It is a combination of both the manifest and unmanifest.

The sixth question is about the *Puruṣa* (Ātman) and its sixteen phases/functions. What are they? They are: the life force (*prāṇa*), conviction of existence or being (*āstikyabuddhi /viśvāsa*), aether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*ap*), and earth (*pṛthvī*), senses (*jñānendriyas*), the generative organs (mind – *manas,* food – *anna,* semen – *śukra*), penance (*tapas*), sacred word (*vaidika*), ethical action (*karma*), the words (*pada*), and the name (*nāma*). All of them are fixed in Ātman like spokes in the wheel. Ātman is regarded as both the centre and the circumference of the universe. It is the source of functions and process within the universe. It is the consciousness of all of them.

The six questions raised in the *Praśna Upaniṣad* throw light on the fundamental philosophical issues. The six enquirers are given to understand that Brahma/Ātman is the ultimate source of everything. It is the One and only reality. Therefore, it is aptly regarded as the life force. All other gods function in accordance to the direction of life force. All the sixteen functions of Ātman (*Puruṣa*) listed above virtually take care of everything required for the smooth functioning of the universe (Raju 1985, p. 30). The answers given by Pippalāda may appear to be very crude and raw. But these answers found their way into the philosophies of the various orthodox Indian philosophical systems in a refined manner. For instance, the five elements that constitute the material world are ether, air, fire, water and earth. Similarly, the five senses are vital for leading a normal human life. The word (*logos*) is responsible for speech. Each of them is regarded as a god for every function is treated as something sacred.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* it is stated that Brahma is the smallest yet is the largest and 'everything is verily the Brahma' (p. 4). This *Upaniṣad* states that in the beginning

there was only Non-being, then it became Being, and then the Cosmic Egg. And everything ultimately emerged out of this Cosmic Egg (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, p. III, xix).[1] The same *Upaniṣad* contradicts its earlier statement by holding that Being cannot come out of Non-being, and so there was originally only Being (IV, ii,1–2). In one of the contexts, Uddālaka Āruṇi, the great seer, teaches his son Śvetaketu that in sleep speech enters mind, mind enters the life force (*prāṇa*), the life force enters the psychic force (*tejas*) and the psychic force enters the supreme deity. Ultimately all these belong to Brahma/Ātman, and 'That art thou' (*tat tvam asi;* ibid. VI, viii,1–7). Just as different streams get merged into a river, and different rivers into an ocean, everything ultimately enters Brahma/Ātman (ibid. VI, x, 1–2).

There is another interesting narration in this *Upaniṣad*. Vairocana, the king of the demons, and Indra, the king of the gods, approach Prajāpati, the creator God, to teach them about Ātman (Self) which is free from disease and death. Prajāpati tells them to adorn themselves and look their reflections in a pot of water, and they can see Ātman in that reflection. Vairocana, following the advice of Prajāpati, saw the reflection of his own body in a pot of water and indulged in all the sensuous pleasures of the body. Indra too followed the advice of Prajāpati and started looking at the reflection of his body in a pot of water. But he doubted whether the reflection of his perishable body can be equated with imperishable Ātman. He comes back to Prajāpati for further instruction. Prajāpati tells him that one has to distinguish the physical person from the dream person. When the physical body gets hurt the dream body does not get hurt. But the dream body gets hurt when he suffers from dream experiences. Indra was not satisfied with this explanation. Prajāpati further illustrates that the person in a deep dreamless state is Ātman. This explanation does not convince Indra, for the person in a state of deep sleep knows nothing. He is unconscious, and he is not master of himself. In addition to that deep sleep has an end. Then Prajāpati reveals to Indra that Ātman is the seer of all. It is beyond deep sleep and bodiless. It is beyond pleasures and pains. What we notice in this *Upaniṣad* is that one's quest for knowledge leads one to the highest. Unlike Vairocana, Indra kept on questioning Prajāpati to get into the deeper structures of reality.

Another major *Upaniṣad* is the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. This *Upaniṣad* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* I, iv, p. 10) states that in the beginning there was only Ātman, and it asserted 'I am'. This 'I am' became the 'I'. The 'I' felt lonely and was afraid. Who is it afraid of? There is none other than it. It could not rejoice in its loneliness and wanted something other than itself. Then it became two, male and female. The entire human race is attributed to the state of love and embrace, which is unmanifest between male and female which resulted in the world of empirical objects, which is manifest. The empirical world consists of name, form and action (ibid. I, vi, 1–3). The name is uttered by speech, the form is seen by the eye, and the action originates in Brahma/Ātman. All these three have Being for they are manifestations of Brahma.

There is an interesting dialogue between King Ajātaśatru and Bālāki in which the former tells the latter that Ātman has been found in deep sleep. There is another

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1   Here Non-being has to be interpreted as the Indeterminate or the Unmanifest.

interesting dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyī. He says that no one wants an object for the sake of mere pleasure, but for the sake of Ātman. Therefore, we must first know what Ātman is. By knowing this everything else is known (ibid. II, iv, 5). Everything is Ātman (ibid. II, iv, 6). Yājñavalkya also teaches many enquirers about Ātman. To King Janaka he says that Ātman is neither subtle nor gross. It is imperishable. It is the guiding light of human beings.

What I wish to point out here is that the dialogues between the great *Upaniṣadic* personages lead to the knowledge of the ultimate. These dialogues involved questions of deep philosophical significance. They cannot be simply brushed aside as something unwarranted and irrational.

THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ*

The *Gītā* is an important *Smṛti* text that tries to establish what is found in the *Śruti*, the Vedas. It brings out the quintessence of the dialogue that took place between Prince Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, and the Lord Kṛṣṇa, who acts as Arjuna's charioteer, before the great war between the forces of righteousness (*dharma*) and the forces of evil (*adharma*). Ultimately the forces of righteousness led by the Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna destroy the forces of evil led by the Kauravas, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. After seeing the huge army of his opponents, Arjuna develops cold feet and tries to evade the war and tells Kṛṣṇa that he is no more interested in any kingdom and wants to retire to the forests for penance. Moreover, the opponents are none other than his own teachers and kith and kin. The ethical question here is not whether the warriors on the other side are our kinsmen, but whether we are doing our duty. Why should we do our duty if it leads to the destruction of our own kinsmen? Our duty as an obligation must not be based on our likes and dislikes, but upon the nature of our *dharma.* First of all, Kṛṣṇa reminds Arjuna of his duty (*svadharma*) as a warrior. It is his responsibility as a warrior to protect his kingdom and the safety of his people. If we do not discharge our duty we are totally cut off from reality. We are not true to our selves. We become strangers to our own Being (Raju 1985, p. 527). Against this background the entire dialogue takes place. Let us examine it.

One of the most important things that the *Gītā* suggests is that human life is like a barren field in the absence of activity. Thus the *Gītā* emphasises the philosophy of action or activism. Every individual having taken the birth of a human being must resort to some action or other. This is what it calls the duty for duty sake. Such a view of the *Gītā* is often compared with the deontic ethics of Immanuel Kant. All our actions, according to the *Gītā,* are broadly classified into two kinds. They are: motivated actions (*kāmyakarmas*) and not motivated actions (*niṣkāmakarmas*). The former are performed by the individual for attaining personal or self-centred benefits and the latter are performed for the benefit of the community. Hence they are altruistic. In other words, the motivated actions are said to be the actions to fulfil one's desire, and the non-motivated actions are said to be desire-less ones. Sometimes these translations

may mislead us for no action is ever said to be desire-less. Every action, whether it is performed for self-centred benefits or for the sake of community in general, is a motivated one. An unmotivated action is something aimless. If a person indulges in an action which is aimless then he would not be legitimately called a responsible moral agent. Every action is purpose oriented. If the sole motive of the *Gītā* is to establish the desire-less action, then the teachings of the *Gītā* are unnatural. Let us not be misled by the superficial translation of the Sanskrit word *niṣkāma*. As rightly held by Henri Bergson, translators are traitors for they often mislead us with regard to the content and the intention of the text in question.

To put it more succinctly, the dialogue between the Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna suggests that we resort to two different types of action. They are non-obligatory and obligatory actions. It is not correct to translate them as desire oriented and desire-less actions. By performing non-obligatory actions an individual enjoys the fruits of his actions. Individuals may perform non-obligatory actions (some rituals to appease the God or the Goddess of their choice) to obtain children, wealth and so on. On the other hand the obligatory actions, as enjoined by Mīmāṃsā, include the sacrifices to gods, ancestors, to teachers, and to all living beings, the duties performed by the individuals pertaining to one's social status and stage of life. The performance of these duties is desirable for the well being of all the individuals living in any society. In a way, by performing these duties as obligations an individual does not desire anything for himself in the form of a reward. They are non-egoistic actions. Instead of calling them desire-less actions, it is better to call them non-egoistic or self-less actions. In the absolute sense there is no desire-less action, for every action is performed with a desire. But the nature of desire varies from action to action. The action that is desirable is a self-less action. The *Gītā* also makes a distinction between the actions that are rational and the actions which are irrational. The former are guided by reason (*buddhi*), hence all the rational actions are performed in one particular way and their motive is altruistic. The irrational actions are not guided by reason (*buddhi*), hence they are performed in ever so many ways and their motives are purely self-centred (ibid. p. 531). Apart from right action and wrong action, there is also non-action (ibid. p. 532). Only the wise know what non-action is. The wise see action in non-action and non-action in action. Ethical non-action is bereft of any egoism. One who performs the ethical non-action does not get affected by the merit or demerit of such action. Ultimately, the *Gītā* preaches that we must perform all our actions skilfully so as to surrender the fruits of our actions to the supreme Lord. This is what is called *niṣkāmakarma*. This self-less or non-egoistic action is often compared with Kant's deontic ethics, which stands for duty for duty's sake. The just action is that which is performed with a view to establishing *dharma* by defeating *adharma*.

The significance of the dialogue between the Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the *Gītā* is that it forces the latter to realise that fighting the war is not unjust. 'It is a just cause, and, as a warrior and as a general on whom his side must rely, Arjuna cannot waver from his obligations, no matter what the consequences are.' (Sen 2005, p. 4). In fact the arguments provided in the *Gītā* are quite relevant to the present day context in

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which one must realise there is nothing higher than performance of one's own duty. The consequences following from one's duty must be analyzed and reflected upon. Skilful performance of one's duty always leads to desirable consequences.

THE DIALOGICAL ETHICS OF NYĀYA

The school of Nyāya developed dialogical ethics long before Habermas did in his *Theory of Communicative Action.* As aptly remarked by Amartya Sen (2005, pp. xiii–xiv), it is unfortunate that: 'The nature and strength of the dialogical tradition in India is sometimes ignored because of the much championed belief that India is the land of religions, the country of uncritical faiths and unquestioned practices'. It is also unfortunate that those who dub Indian philosophy as a form of religion or occultism hardly realised the fact that both in heterodox and orthodox systems of Indian philosophy we come across logical arguments advanced by each system against its opponents. One such system which provided the tools of logic for Indian thinking is the *Nyāya-sūtra* of Gautama, who is also known as Akṣapāda. 'The atmosphere in which Gautama's logic appeared was that of controversy or debate, which was at that time mainly oral between rival schools. So he built up his architectonic of logic with reference to the context of debate, in which two different schools enunciate different doctrines as hypotheses and argue for establishing their truth' (Raju 1985, p. 193). Although the ultimate aim of Nyāya philosophy is to attain salvation (*niḥśreyas*), it is attained through the right knowledge of the sixteen categories listed below. The right kind of knowledge is possible through right effort. And our effort can be treated as real only when it is in accordance with reality (*dharma*). Therefore, our knowledge has to be realistic and logically valid. It is only through logically valid forms of reasoning that we can ever attain genuine knowledge of reality. For this purpose, Gautama (ibid.) recognises sixteen important categories (*padārtha*s) that are required for proper argumentation. They are as follows: (1) the valid means of cognition (*pramāṇa*), (2) the knowable (*prameya*), (3) doubt (*saṃśaya*), (4) purpose (*prayojana*), (5) example (*dṛṣṭānta*), (6) established doctrine (*siddhānta*), (7) the members of syllogism (*avayava*), (8) the negative modal of counterfactual conditional (*tarka*), (9) ascertainment (*nirṇaya*), (10) controversy or discussion or debate (*vāda*), (11) wrangling (*jalpa*), (12) destructive dialectic (*vitaṇḍa*), (13) fallacies of syllogism (*hetvābhāsa*), (14) quibbling (*cala*), (15) futile argument (*jāti*), and (16) grounds for defeat (*nigrahasthāna*).

All the above mentioned categories, with the exception of the second one, deal with logic and epistemology, with special reference to debate. However, the commentaries on the *Nyāya-sūtra* have further categorised them into categories dealing with epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and salvation. The categories that serve as tools for epistemological and logical debates are: (10) controversy or discussion or debate (*vāda*), (11) wrangling (*jalpa*), (12) destructive dialectic (*vitaṇḍa*), (14) quibbling (*cala*), (15) futile argument (*jāti*), and (16) grounds for defeat (*nigrahasthāna*). Let us examine the nature of controversy or debate as expounded in Nyāya philosophy.

All right debates are enquiries and all right enquiries have a purpose (*prayojana;* ibid. p. 194). The purpose of every right enquiry is to arrive at something desirable. What is desirable is valuable to the entire society. Without any purpose a debate is insincere and lacks seriousness. The cause of any right debate is doubt (*saṃśaya*). Just as later Wittgenstein held that doubt for the sake of mere doubting is not acceptable in his work *On Certainty*, the Nayāyikas too held that doubting something without valid reasons cannot be taken as a basis for any meaningful debate. A logically meaningful doubt has valid reasons. Such doubt arises when two opposed propositions, 'S is P' and 'S is non-P' are said to have equally valid grounds. In the process of debate over the right position many new things may emerge. 'When two rival parties offer proposed hypotheses, we should not simply stop at accepting or doubting both, but proceed to enquire which of the two is true or whether a third one has to be accepted in preference to both' (ibid. p. 195). The end product of a valid debate leads to an established doctrine (*siddhānta*). It is no more a hypothesis. Of course, the established doctrine may be acceptable to all the schools of thought or may be accepted by a particular school. Whatever may be the status of an established doctrine, the debate which resulted in such a doctrine must be free from all prejudices such as insincerity, dishonesty, passion, emotion, deception and so on. Any healthy debate between two parties, in all its fairness, presupposes that the faulty assumption(s) of one of the rival schools must be abandoned and the party which advanced such assumption(s) must admit defeat.

The fallacious debates are of four types. They are: (1) wrangling (*jalpa*), (2) destructive dialectic (*vitaṇḍa*), (3) unfair criticism (*cala*), and (4) futile argument (*jāti*).Let us discuss them in detail. In wrangling each of the parties aims at victory over the other. The rival groups use valid methods in the form of cognition, the negative modal or counter-factual conditional, and the syllogism. Apart from these, they also employ equivocation and false or improper analogies for pointing out the grounds for defeat in each other's position. Destructive dialectic indulges in criticism of the rival without advancing one's own position. Here both the rivals may not have any standpoint of their own, but are only interested in refuting each other's claim. Such a debate is not conducive to proper enquiry. The third type of debate indulges in unfair criticism of the rival through misleading interpretation of his statement. This argument is a form of equivocation (ibid.). It is of three types:

(1) If a given word has two or more meanings, the opponent may criticise one's position by taking into account then unintended meaning of the word.

(2) When one makes a categorical statement like 'This book is brown', the opponent may interpret this statement as a statement of necessity and may ask: 'How can you infer from its being brown its being a book?' or 'How can you infer from its being a book its being brown?'

(3) If a word has both a literal and a metaphorical meaning, when someone makes a statement using the word only in one sense, his opponent may criticise him by taking the other sense into account.

We tend to use metaphorical expressions in philosophy for the sake of style. But our rival uses it to his advantage and criticises our position by attributing a literal

meaning to our metaphorical expression and claims victory. The fourth type of debate consists of futile argument (ibid.). This argument is developed on the basis of accidental similarities for refuting the standpoint of the rival. If we say 'The elephant is a mammal', the opponent may say that elephants and horses have nothing in common, therefore, an elephant cannot be a mammal. If we say: 'Humans are ethical beings', the opponent may say that humans and other animals are coloured beings and other animals are not ethical beings. Similarly humans are also not ethical beings.

The sixteenth category which deals with the grounds for defeat (*nigrahasthāna*s) is very important, according to Nyāya, for it goes much deeper into the debate. Gautama highlights that the grounds for defeat are mainly defects in one's argument and secondarily the mischievous ways that one adopts for defeating the opponent. When they are pointed out by one's opponent, one has to admit defeat or will be declared defeated by the judge. Such defects are many and the grounds for such defects are also many. In the main these defects may arise out of two important sources. The first source is non-understanding or lack of understanding (*apratipatti*) and the second source is wrong understanding or misunderstanding (*vipratipatti*). Of course, Gautama takes care of these issues in his *Nyāya-sūtra.* In fact, he advances as many as twenty one different consequences of defeat by fair means. To list a few, the defeat of one's opponent's view amounts to the defeat of his hypothesis. In that case he has to abandon the existing hypothesis/thesis (*pratijñāhāni*). The second consequence is to change his hypothesis and give new reasons for it (*pratijñānāntaram*). The third consequence lies in giving reasons that prove the opposite hypothesis (*pratijñāvirodha*). The fourth consequence is to disallow one's thesis forever (*pratijñāsannyāsa*). The fifth consequence is to offer a new hypothesis with modified reasons (*hetvanantaram*). For instance, no political party would ever attribute its defeat to its poor ideology. Instead it tries to give apparently valid reasons such as that the opponent indulged in vote rigging, poor voter turnout, booth capturing by the opponent, opponent bribing the voters, opponent threatening the voters. These are some of the interesting illustrations advanced by the Nayyāyikas.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion clearly brings out that the art of investigation is not new to the Indian philosophical tradition. The philosophers, mainly the sages and the seers, encouraged the art of investigation in India from its simplest form to its most complicated form. This is exhibited in the *Upaniṣads*, in the *Gītā*, and in Nyāya. Dialogues, debates and arguments consist of queries of various types. A dispassionate and open approach is needed to answer philosophical questions. A dialogue is a conversation or a talk through which a given philosophical standpoint is highlighted. We can notice this in the dialogues of the *Gītā,* in the dialogues of Plato, and in the dialogues of Berkeley. The interlocutors taking part in a dialogue must come with an open mind. Normally the dialogues intend to, as in the case of the dialogues of Plato and Berkeley, convince

the questioner about a given philosophical standpoint. Normally a dialogue takes place between two individuals. But there are always exceptions. When we talk about interfaith dialogue we cannot restrict it to two individuals or parties. There are many participants representing different faiths. On the other hand, a debate presupposes a topic to be debated. For instance, there can be a debate on the issue whether a parliamentary form of democracy ensures good governance or not. The debate may be held between two or more parties. It can be called a polylogue. There is no restriction with regard to the number of debaters taking part in a debate. It is something thrown open. A debater argues either in favour of his or her position or against the position of his or her opponent. Therefore arguments do not exist outside a debate, but they necessarily form part and parcel of a debate. To put it in the language of Wittgenstein, dialogues, debates, and arguments are cousins, for they all intend to highlight a philosophical standpoint. Whatever may be the case, the art of questioning is an integral part of dialogues, debates and arguments.

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