

A Critique of Epistemology

Devendra Nath Tiwari

Abstract: Epistemology is a natural urge of a metaphysics that have no other way to convince about the reasonability and justifiability of the systems. Metaphysics cannot survive without epistemology and both taken together form a system. It constructs a number of entities and produces a number of epistemic proofs and justification to justify them. Metaphysicians claim to know the entities by perception, inference, resemblance, presumption, authority, implication, non-apprehension, practice, unseen power and several other means of knowledge. If they do not find any popular proof to prove a certain kind of reality, they give evidences and logical justification to convince about the veritable myth of their assumptions. Even in some cases they accept imagination also as a proof. Epistemological proving scheme, based on metaphysics or on a theory about thing –in-itself which is beyond the grasp of reason, falls short in checking metaphysical construction either from their own contradiction or from their incapability of encountering with the reality. Such proving is based on creating confusion between the object they intend to prove, the object reached by their arguments of proving and the object beyond the limit of the arguments. More clearly, they intend to prove the object of knowledge, which they grasp, and their arguments prove the object that they do not grasp that is beyond the grasp. Such amalgamation has caused great harm to philosophy. The paper views the epistemological ideas and their gradual turning points in the east and west theories. What is the object that needs proving and what object the epistemic proofs prove? Why this epistemological proving fails in its aim that is, the limit of epistemology. It discusses the nature of knowledge; is it substance, quality, an activity, *úñya* and the later part critically analyses and examines the epistemological tools generally used by epistemologists for proving their metaphysical assumption. Popular definitions of sources of knowledge in view of Western and Indian perspective are critically analyzed and their inconsistencies have been well pointed out to further new researches in the field.

Keywords: Noetic dependence, ontic dependence, *Bhùtavastu*, *Bhâbyavastu*, verity, validity, *abhyasa*, *âgama*, Faith, inference, intuition,

Epistemology concerns with investigate into the origin, nature, method, validity, theories and limit of knowledge. Philosophizing reasoning and faith even passions and emotions also needs cognitive ground and epistemic justifications. Why should we discuss knowledge? Knowledge is light, the light of consciousness; it is the consciousness of the consciousness or self-

consciousness; it illuminates the objects and itself; it is because of it that human life and his surroundings have existence value ; it is the highest value because it causes incentive to action; it is the nucleus of the philosophical reflections. Philosophy occupies with reflecting on and investigating into the knowledge for clarity, conception and resolve. Philosophers concern more with knowledge expressed in language and similar is our concern with epistemology that occupies study of the knowledge systems.

If we go through the History of Western Philosophy we find gradual development of thinking on the knowledge. In Greek epistemology, intuition is given primacy as the source of highest knowledge and reasoning is relative and subordinated intuition. In medieval philosophy faith replaces intuition and reason has to serve the mission of faith; it is not free to sport independently from faith. With the growth of Science, the reason got its primacy in the hand of rationalistic current of thinking of modern philosophy of which Descartes is called the father. Modern philosophers accepted three category of knowledge namely- i. sensory the source of which is sensation and imagination all that we know by our senses, that form memory by which we experience. Such type of knowledge is personal and is relative, ii. the knowledge of the concepts or conceptual knowledge; it is universal or rational knowledge that is ubiquitous. Rational knowledge according to rationalists, are self-proved. Deductive reasoning is also included in it and finally, intuitive knowledge. It is most authentic knowledge because it is immediate and independently from sensory. It is different from rational knowledge in which the sensory knowledge can serve as ground. It is the highest category of knowledge. the knowledge of soul of which consciousness is primary quality, the innate ideas, like knowledge of some of the qualities of God, and some ethical and natural laws. However like Plato the rationalist accept the real knowledge as conceptual and in Leibnitz all knowledge is innate and ubiquitous. The mind can know even the substance. This extreme view about knowledge is innate gives the birth of empiricism according to which no knowledge is innate and all knowledge is derived by experience. The mind is nothing but a bundle of experiences we derive through senses and it by birth is tabula rasa; nothing is innate there.

Empiricists gave utmost importance to knowledge by senses. Our mind can know only the ideas formed by the mind through the impression acquired by senses. The idea culminated to an extreme in David Hume who perceived that External world, physical or divine, if any is beyond the limit of our knowledge.

Development of the thinking on knowledge is parallel a development of thinking on the

nature of sentences divided usually as analytic and synthetic. The knowledge means determinate and certain and that is the knowledge we get by analytic sentence. Such theories of knowledge gave importance to deductive arguments and accepted that induction cannot work for knowledge without knowledge analytic sentence. Here is certainty and as rationalists accept knowledge by analytic sentences is certain. Empiricist's refutation of knowledge of innate concepts was an attempt of refuting rational knowledge to give proper place to synthetic knowledge. Knowledge being an experience is always new. Novelty and not certainty is the criterion of knowledge. However, Immanuel Kant comes forward with a critical view that knowledge is synthetic a priori judgment. Like Indian philosophy he accepts that knowledge is new and certain (anadhigata abâdhitavicayatva yathârtha jñânanam).

Critique of Epistemologist's Approach to Reality:

Epistemological thinking in East and West is popularly developed as the offshoot of a metaphysical system whose purpose is to show that assumptions of metaphysical entities are well supported by measures of knowledge that is, they are based on true knowledge of the reality, proved by arguments and demonstrated by logical justifications and evidences. Such attempts in the field of epistemology are centered mainly on two different views, i- 'reality is dependent on knowledge' that paves ways for a noetic dependence epistemology and ii- 'knowledge is dependent on reality' that served as the basis of ontic dependence epistemology. In Indian philosophical systems, the aforementioned views form the controversy of '*mânadhînâ meyasiddhih*¹' and '*meyadhînâ mânasiddhih*²'. Indian philosophical systems have held fast either to the former or to the latter of these two positions in a way that they frame arguments for refuting each other as their opponents. How philosophy should gives high importance to knowledge as nucleolus of the philosophical thinking. The simple answer is it is light and the light is real. It illuminates darkness, removes ignorance and from ethical point of view it is not only highest value but purest virtue because it causes incentive for the action. There may be conflicting situation between the persons claiming highest knowledge in their field that concern with different objects but there is no conflict with pure knowledge Let us see, what different systems say about knowledge.

Attitude of Epistemology about Knowledge: There are three popular attitudes³ about knowledge that have played central role in determining the direction of epistemological thinking in Indian Philosophical systems.

- i. Had all knowledge been true, there would have been no need of epistemology. Epistemology

is required for determining nature of knowledge, truth and falsity of knowledge and the conditions involved therewith. *Mīmāṃsā* school of Indian Philosophy is an exception to this ideology. It accepts all knowledge true and then develops a theory of knowledge that merits maximum number of epistemological proofs.

- ii. Contrary to the former, the view that there is the need of epistemology because the truth and falsity of knowledge cannot be worked out without an epistemology. Epistemology is developed in our attempt of knowing the truth of knowledge about reality. Reality comprises not only the thing existents (*bhūta vastu*) but those that can be brought into existence (*bhāvya vastu*). Accordingly, two sorts of epistemology –descriptive and prescriptive came into light. Out of the two, the former is only popular in the theories of knowledge. With the contemporary Western efforts, especially in the field of moral and religious language, the latter is also developing as theories of knowledge and justification.
- iii. All knowledge is true therefore; there is the possibility of theories of knowledge and logic. The knowledge expressed beforehand serves as the foundation of not only different theorizations of it but also of proving its truthfulness or falsity on the basis of epistemological measures and logic based on availability or absence of the corresponding things. This view gives importance to the verity of knowledge. All knowledge is determinate and veridical. Validity and invalidity, truth and falsity, cohering and non-cohering, consistency and inconsistency of the verity are logical measures through which the verity is verified. Here in the present discussion, I am concerned with the view for which the knowledge expressed by language is veridical and the measures of knowledge, theorization of knowledge are possible only if it serves as the foundation of epistemological and logical activities.

Metaphysics and the need of Epistemology: Had metaphysicians not been giving high importance to epistemological scheme of proving, I would have not been prompted to note my address to reality. Metaphysics cannot survive without epistemology and both taken together form a system. Epistemology is a natural urge of a metaphysics that have no other way to convince about the reasonability and justifiability of their systems. They construct a number of entities and produce a number of epistemic proofs and justification to justify them. Some of the entities they claim to know by perception and others by inference, resemblance, presumption, authority, implication, non-apprehension, practice, unseen power and several other means of knowledge. If they do not find any popular proof to prove a certain kind of reality, they give evidences and logical justification to convince about the veritable myth of their assumptions.

Even in some cases they accept imagination also as a proof. I shall discuss the point at later part of the present discussion. Epistemological proving scheme, based on metaphysics or on a theory about thing –in-itself which is beyond the grasp of reason, falls short in checking metaphysical construction either from their own contradiction or from their incapability of encountering with the reality. It may realize its limitation and may leave such things as beyond for religious meditation. They do not succeed in proving the reality either they intend to prove or in proving that which is not the object they intend to prove, thus, they are misled to an unwarranted conclusion. Such proving is based on creating confusion between the object they intend to prove, the object reached by their arguments of proving and the object beyond the limit of the arguments. More clearly, they intend to prove the object of knowledge, which they grasp, and their arguments prove the object that they do not grasp that is beyond the grasp. Such amalgamation has caused great harm to philosophy. What is the object that needs proving and what object the epistemic proofs prove? I shall shift on the issue after a few steps. Here, I want to point out the metaphysician's undertaking of the reality with specific instances from Indian Philosophical systems.

Metaphysics is taken as a theory that involves determining the real or ultimate nature of things, world preoccupied with the concept of existence and reality. The term 'metaphysics' nowadays, is taken in several senses. It includes questions about the reality of external things, their kinds, modes and epistemology based on proving them. Modern thinkers take the term for the study of things, separate from and transcendental, to the empirical world of things but having more intrinsic reality and value than the things. More precisely, I take the term 'metaphysics' in the sense of a mode of thinking in which the thought and the reality or the essence of thing –empirical or transcendental- are considered independent and exterior to language that refers to or represents them. However, in both senses metaphysical things- transcendental or empirical- are not only independent from but also are beyond the grasp of thoughts and language. Both the empirical and transcendental things are in a sense transcendental- one is transcendental to the sensory data we acquire from contact or experience and the other to the data and world of things we sense as well.

Metaphysicians discuss reality as the reality of the world of experience and the absolute as well with an unsteady and illegitimate difference of empirical and transcendental. The former out of them are the things existing independently of knowledge but are taken popularly as the objects we perceive by senses and the latter as existence beyond the grasp of human reason. We

very often use the words thing, object, being, interexchangeably. I perceive these concepts different and find that interchangeably use of them may cause confusion. By the term 'thing' I always mean the thing –in-itself in Kantian jargon. A thing is an object when it is sensed or it concerns with knowledge or a theory of it. Some metaphysicians accept that, ultimate reality/ absolute reality/ Brahman is not the objects of our senses; it does not fall in the category of things; it is the object of direct knowledge; it may be the knowledge itself as *Úânkara Vedântins* accept but that is not the object of senses; that is immediacy.

Is knowledge substance? If it is substance then substance = knowledge. There will be no difference between knowledge and substance. This theory is advocated by Advaita Vedanta and *Sâmkhya*. Now the question: Do the theorists accept the two as synonymous? Those who accept that substance is knowledge and that is consciousness try to escape from the real philosophical problem of substance as ontic entity and it is epistemological or more accurately cognitive entity. Ontically, substance is a thing –in-itself that mind cannot know rather that is beyond the grasp of mind and what the mind knows is not a substance as ontic being but it as an intelligible being.

Ānkarā and Buddhists are very talented. They say that substance is beyond grasp and what the mind grasps is just appearance and even so the appearance as appearance is fake. How can this contrast be reconciled and resolved -the substance is knowledge and beyond the knowledge the mind grasps only the appearance.

If substance is knowledge and that is consciousness then the consciousness in itself and the awareness, that is, flashes of consciousness are the same? The flashes of consciousness being intelligible are known as object of knowledge and the cognition in itself is beyond and that beyond is known to us only as it figures in mind then what figures in the mind are only known. that is, the language, consciousness and its flashes. Even then there is a problem: Is the substance separate from knowledge or the same. Substance, if taken separate from knowledge then it can be indicated by the pronouns 'this' and 'that', presented as distinguished from others. It is like others then otherness will be the criteria of knowledge. There is no possibility of otherness in knowledge. Otherness is criteria of objects of knowledge and not of the knowledge itself. Substance is defined as that for which pronouns are used and the pronouns indicate the substance in general. Knowledge is not a substance because it cannot be indicated. Substance is that which is expected as different from other and it is knowledge that knows the difference and in that knowledge of difference the knowledge is not different from it then knowledge cannot be

substance.

Is knowledge a quality? Unlike the earlier theory there are theorists who accept that knowledge is the quality of souls and it is emerged when the soul is proportioned with matter. Consciousness and knowledge are related as substance and quality that emerges from the consciousness that is soul. *Cārvāka, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣikas* and *Prabhākara Mīmāṃsakas* are supporters of this theory. However, it is beyond imagination that there is possibility of consciousness without knowledge. If quality is taken out from the substance there is all possibility that substance will be deformed and if substance is deformed there is no possibility of emergence of knowledge. Quality is the object we know if knowledge is a quality it requires to be known by knowledge and thus ad infinitum. Knowledge is foundations in the matter of knowledge of the substance, how can it be the quality of substance. A quality is called so because it is subordinated to substance but the substance even then will be subordinated to knowledge in order to be known so. Thus, the contrast of the knowledge is quality needs no further analysis.

Is knowledge an action? According to this view knowledge is an action of which soul is substratum. The expression 'I know the book' shows that knowledge is action. It is a product of soul having an agent 'I', the book is object and, hence, transitive and the knowledge is the action (*Jñānakriyā hi sakarmikā (Uāstrādīpikā, Pārthasārathī Mishra)*) If knowledge is an activity as some theorists namely *Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas* perceive, it will be a product of time and it will produce some fruit. In former case it will be just but then what then will be the cognitive ground of sequence? Is the cognitive ground of sequence is also an action then what will serve as the incentive to action. It is the knowledge that serves as the cause of incentive to an action. And the action and the cause of incentive to an action cannot be the same. If knowledge is action it will produce some fruit, which is called effect. The knower of the action and the fruit of the action both cannot be action and then what will be the cognitive ground for acknowledgement of the two discretely different. This will lead to a position that can establish neither knowledge as action nor acknowledging knowledge of the fruit of the action.

Is knowledge Ūnya? According to *Mahāyāna* Buddhists knowledge is *ūnya*; it is not substance, quality and action. By *ūnya* does not mean negation but that it cannot be interpreted in terms of being that is beyond the categories of language. It is *catuṣkoṭi vinirmukta*, where language, number, gender, quality etc., are not applied. In this definition, knowledge ceases to be knowledge and thus, it cannot be an object of knowledge and investigation. It is true that it cannot be put in the categories of the object of knowledge but this in no way amounts the

úúnyatâ of the knowledge is the knowledge of an objects of knowledge. No knowledge of the object of knowledge can be taken *Úúnyatâ* because it is the awareness of the awareness of objects. It is not a being but the cognitive ground of the knowledge of the beings. It cannot be known *úúnyata* even without knowledge. Had it be *Úúnya*, the memory, recognition of the knowledge of the objects would have not been possible. These philosophers contend that nonexistence cannot be converted into existence: nor can that which exists be exclusively destroyed.

The philosophy that has a firm resolution that everything is divine, the same spirit, needs no monistic God that is necessary neither logically nor cosmologically. To give all power to a concept that is hypostatized and treated as having an ontic form beyond the approach of the mind and which the monists take as the highest reality, the primordial existence that causes all others is just a misuse of the power of mind, a weakness or a sport of mind and even so for a simple purpose to form and institutionalize imperialistic mode of conduct for convincing others that the ideology they institutionalize have no option and alteration. Such ideologies suits for exploiting the uncritical feeble minds with the fear and lust in the name of one God. Morality in fact is concerned with human conduct to others. The monists adopt a religious criterion of our conduct based on a book that contains the final word according to which what God likes is good and the opposites are bad. There is no need of intruding the concept 'God' responsible for giving the fruits of our actions in the heaven and hell. These thought refrain us from our original experience that heaven and hell are here in this life and not anywhere other than this world.

Philosophy of Epistemology: While reflecting on the problems of language, being and cognition, we must be well aware of the limits of philosophical reflections which are confined to the intelligible beings. Analysis of language neither needs a support of ontic substratum nor follows a stereotyped epistemology because they do not serve any primary purpose in a philosophical reflection. Philosophy, discussed here in investigates the cognition by language in order to clarify the right conduct established by the scripture and to remove the impurities of language and of verbal cognition that deviate, confuse and corrupt the right conduct established by scriptures. Right conduct is not established by reasoning without association with scripture. Even the knowledge, which the sages possess, has the scripture as authority⁴. For a language Philosopher (*úâbdika*) for whom language is the guide and what the language expresses/reveals is the authority in the matter of knowledge, language infuses cognition and philosophical objects are confined to the intelligible beings the language expresses independently and that is why

knowledge is determinate and veridical.

Because of being infused by language knowledge is determinate. Since it is directly known when flash, it is veridical knowledge. It is for the sake of interpreting the knowledge in terms of validity and invalidity that the means of knowledge, epistemological proofs and the issue of validity and invalidity and other logical devices based on them get importance. Nevertheless, even in those cases, the knowledge revealed by language serves for the cognitive ground of those activities.

We are not concerned more with some or the other sort of epistemology as the term is taken popularly but with a philosophy of epistemology. We analyze knowledge as and when it flashes, its different sources and proofs given by different systems of philosophy. One cannot fail to appreciate the novelty of *Bhartrhari* 's reflections on the criticism of the knowledge derived through means of knowledge viz. visual perception, inference (including imposition and implication) reasoning (*tarka*), etc. and view knowledge independent from language. He provides secondary importance to sources of knowledge except scripture (*āgama*) that is directly revealed knowledge.

Sensory perception or the data derived by senses are only means in helping the manifestation of the language (*sphoṭa*). Manifested by them, the language expresses its own nature first from which its meaning is expressed. In precise, in the active theory, knowledge is not confined to the acts of perceiving, hearing of verbal utterances, etc which are only tools in the manifestation of the language; It is active theory of knowledge because language expresses first its own nature in knowledge and expresses meaning and thus identical cognition is accomplished well determinately. Epistemology of reasoning and inference defines the structure of knowledge independently of language. But for active theory, no knowledge is possible isolated from language.

Perception, inference, similarity, imposition, non-apprehension, unseen power (*Adṛṣṭa*), practice (*Abhyāsa*) and others taken by epistemologists as independent sources of knowledge are inadequate. Perception, inference, etc., sources accepted by metaphysicians as the proof of objects separate from knowledge, are the objects of experience and trans-experience and the proving or disproving on the basis of experience does only indicate the objects and indication in no case is either knowledge or proving that cognition of the objects. In cognition, perception, inference, and other sources of knowledge serve as means in the flashing of cognition, that is,

not indicated but revealed or expressed by language.

Interested and Disinterested Knowledge:

- i. The views of knowledge as interested and knowledge as abstraction mentioned above are not free from privatism. Conclusively, it can be said that philosophers not only humanists but epistemologists also have found themselves incapable of philosophizing knowledge as free from our allegiances with physical and mental entities, mental state of the knower and other cultural allegiances, and, that is why a modern critique of epistemology finds no disinterested basis of the empirical evidences and epistemic-justifications for the certainty and belief in the knowledge, and hence, ‘The Recent Obituaries of Epistemology’⁵.
- ii. ‘All our knowledge is interested knowledge’ says *Jürgen Habermas*⁶.
- iii. Devaraja, N.K. has very fittingly showed that all human knowledge for humanistic disciplines is interested knowledge and that for the accomplishment of the disinterested knowledge one is required to be free from selfish motives, ambitions, passions and other cultural allegiances⁷. Similarly, most of the religious and moral philosophers are of the opinion that knowledge is interested and for the accomplishment of disinterested knowledge one has to get freedom from one’s personal interests, motives, etc. and that one cannot get rid of them if one does not realize one’s religious-end or the moral well-being.

II

We know *Nâgârjuna* and his tradition of dialectic reasoning that attempts to unsettle the metaphysicians device of epistemological proving, *Jayarâui* and *Ūriharṣa* refuted epistemological arguments for proving or disproving anything. They show that the arguments given by epistemologists fail to prove what they intend to prove. *Vâkyapadîya*, analyses the epistemological arguments and very beautifully points out the flaws of the knowledge by sources of knowledge. It’s philosophically interesting and relevant to present an account of *Bhartrhari*’s criticism of their arguments against the sources of knowledge and the validity of the knowledge acquires by those sources.

Two Types of Perception – Sensory and Direct:

- i. Indirect perception is perception through the medium of sense organs and is not free from defects of the sense and of the entities ontic in nature. The same object is perceived at different times differently; its perception varies person to person. Even the same person perceives the same object in a different form on a different occasion. External things which,

we perceive is changing and simultaneous perception of changing moments is not possible.

Perception varies with the difference of time, space and the changing form of the object⁸. In this connection, *Bhartṛhari* has suggested that a wise should see, even a thing that he perceives with his eyes, through the eyes of settled reasoning (*yuktitaḥ*) that is scripture (*Āgama*). Let one not determine a thing on the evidence of his/her physical perception⁹. Senses can acquire only data but knowledge is not data. The data of a thing we perceive is not the knowledge of the thing as pot or cot and it is no knowledge unless the object of knowledge is not expressed as pot or cot.

- ii. Direct perception, that is, the knowledge by language. In case of such a perception, the data acquired by other sources of knowledge i.e. by sense-object contact, serve as instruments in the manifestation of the intelligible being of language that expresses the knowledge. This kind of perceptual knowledge is irrefutable as it is directly flash by the language it. When a man does not doubt the perceptual knowledge of a reliable person as if it were his own, how can another one (given to reasoning) make him who, thus, stands on the side of perception, turn back¹⁰.

Criticism of Reasoning and Inference: Reasoning can work with language; it is not an independent source of Knowledge not because of its logical flaws only but also because of the unsteadiness of the knowledge inferred in ascertaining truth. Reason (*hetu*), on the basis of which something is inferred, alters. In the situation of changing reason, inference cannot be accepted as a valid source of knowledge. There is difference between reasoning (*tarka*) and inference. Indian tradition described two types¹¹ of reasoning.

- i. The conjectural reasoning which is without an indication (*liṅga*) is called reasoning (*tarka* or *auṣkatarka*) that is erroneous; it is implication while the reasoning drawn on the basis of an indication and furnished for convincing others in a syllogistic form is called inference (*anumāna*). I shall discuss *Bhartṛhari's* criticism of inference after few steps. Presently, I think it necessary to say that conjectural reasoning is erroneous and is just a guess.
- ii. There is another sort of reasoning (*Tarka*) that functions as authority. Reasoning which is not contradictory to the Veda and the scriptures is an eye to those who do not possess the vision into the significance of scriptures (*Vedas*). The sense of a Vedic sentence is not obtained from its form alone¹². Human reasoning is the power of language. The reasoning that is in accordance with the language (scripture) is not based on anything other than the scripture¹³.

Knowledge is not merely reasoning; it is virtue as well. In the context of scripture as the source of knowledge, I have already referred to the argument according to which ‘if knowledge were reasoning (*Svābhāvika Jñāna*) then scripture is of no use but if virtue is the cause of knowledge then the scripture (*Veda*) is the foundation (*Jñāne svabhāvikenārthaḥ úāstraiḥ kaēcana vidyate. Dharmo jñānasya hetuícet tasyāmnāyo nibandhanam*)¹⁴. I have taken the term ‘*Svābhāvika Jñāna*’ for reasoning. K. Pillai¹⁵ has translated the term as instinctive knowledge. Bhartṛhari in his *Vṛtti* has defined the term in the sense of knowledge revealed independently of scripture. It stands for a purpose of demonstrating or proving one’s own interests and avoiding disadvantageous one (*Ahitapricedhārthānām hitapratipādanārthānām copadeúa úāstrānam Vaiyarthyam Prasajyate*). The *Vṛtti* supports my stand of the meaning of the term ‘reasoning’ derived through the senses and which is naturally fixed in the objects of their own.

In the light of knowledge as virtue, Bhartṛhari has criticized reasoning (*Tarka*) including hypothetical reasoning specifically in verses VP 1/30-31, 1/136-138, 2/78 and inference in VP 1/30-42, 136, 138, 2/299, 2/352, 2,368, as the sources leading to erroneous cognition on the basis of which communication cannot be established.

Criticism of Inference: General Points : The basic argument given by *Bhartṛhari* for the refutation of inference may be collected from his verses VP 1/32, 34, 37- 42 and *Harivṛtti* on them. It includes presumption, implication, etc, also for there is no separate mention of them as sources of knowledge in *Vākyapadīya*. He has refuted inference for two reasons firstly, inference is not a valid source of knowledge and secondly, it cannot function as a source of knowledge independently and isolated from scripture.

Let us examine those points one by one–

- I. An imperceptible object (*lingī, sādhyā* or *anumeya*) is inferred on the basis of visible reason (*liṅga* or *hetu*) only if that imperceptible object (*sādhyā*) is perceptible at some place. By inference, we do not know a thing that is not known earlier and, thus, inference does not give us new knowledge¹⁶
- II. Even if we accept that the imperceptible object (*lingī, sādhyā* or *Anumeya*), which is perceptible at another place, is inferred on the basis of visible reason or indication, it requires to be ascertained by perception or by scripture (*āgama*). For example, after seeing the ‘pot’ put on the hearth in a state that indicates that cooked rice is there or that something is being

cooked, someone may infer, thus, but his inference may not be true as in case of the hunters who for the purpose of killing crows, use the method for attracting them to their pots and some other persons use the method for misguiding the beggars coming to the door of the person for want of food respectively. Thus, the inference of 'cooked' or being cooked, in those cases are incorrect if not ascertained by perception or by language.

- III. Co-existence that we observe invariably in between the two relata serves as the basis of the inference as valid knowledge, for example, the relation of smoke and fire accompanied by the smoke. We infer fire on the hill by perceiving the smoke. This inference is based on an invariable relation established in between the smoke and fire, on the basis of observation of the cases of smoke invariably accompanying fire.

The relation is not a fixed principle because there is possibility that it may vary. It may be possible that on the hill, there may be smoke but that may not be the smoke of a fire but dust. There are cases where we find that some insects are born from dung and they generate the same sorts of insects as well.

The properties of substance change with the change of their status, time, space and association with some specific substance¹⁷ on account of which the inference in which we overlook or that which is not based on the changing situation, stands unsteady. Let me illustrate the issue.

- IV. **Change of status:** - Because of the change of properties of the substances, the invariable relation between the reason of inference and the thing to be inferred or invariable concomitance, on which inferential knowledge is based, cannot be steady. For instance, green long pepper if taken, causes cough while the dried pepper removes the three sorts of defects of the body (*tridoṣas*). The seed of paddy usually germinate but it does not germinate if the mole or the mouse smells up the seed.
- V. **Change of space:** Water flowing from the *Himālayas* is cool but the same lodged in some place or put separately in some pot, is hot in summer.
- VI. **Change of Time:** The water in the well is hot in winter but is cool in summer.
- VII. **Association with some specific substance:** Inferential knowledge alters if a thing, of which some inference is established, is associated with some specific substance. For example, the fire is naturally fit to burn the wood but the burning power of the fire is restrained if there

is application of some medicinal liniment on the wood or if the sky is deeply clouded. It is clear that with the change of state, etc., the quality of objects alters and, thus, it is not possible to establish identity of the relations occurred in different position.

Refutation of Asatkâryavâdin's Arguments of Inference: In the *vṛtti* of VP. 1/37, *Bhartrhari* has refuted the possibility of inferential cognition as accepted in the theories of *Asatkârya* and *satkârya*. While discussing the arguments of *Asatkâryavâda*, he has not mentioned *pûrvavat*, *ûṣavat* and *sâmânyatodrṣṭa* sorts of inference. In his *vṛtti* on verse 1/37 he writes 'Tattrotpattipakṣe tâvatkathamapadamavastu nirâtmakamadṛṣṭâp ratiniyatakâraṇa ûaktiparigrahamadhigantum ûakyate'. It means that which is non-existent (*apada*) cannot be associated in any case and is not present there as a potency because it, at that state, has no form (*nirûpâkhyâ*). The irregular and unseen causal potency of that thing is not known by inference. *Ambâkartrikâra* has tried to clarify the issue with the specific mention of the cases of inference with reference to *Sâmkhya* and has concluded that none of the three sorts of inference namely *Pûrvavat*, *ûṣavat* and *Sâmânyatodrṣṭa* are possible. An account of the discussion in the light of commentaries is given here below.

Pûrvavat type of Inference: Inference of a *Pûrvavat* type in which the effect yet to take place or to be known is inferred on the basis of perception of the cause which is present (*Pûrvam arthât kâraṇam asyastîti Pûrvavat*) for example, the inference 'it will rain' on the bases of perception of clouds present in the sky. The inference of the capacity acting on effect is possible only if the effect is perceived. The effect yet to take place is non-existent at the time of inferring and, thus, there is no actual presence of the reason (*hetu*) for inference of the object. In the absence of the *hetu*, the inference of a *Pûrvavat*, type is not possible.

ûṣavat type of Inference: The inference of a *ûṣavat* type is described as the inferential knowledge of the cause based on effects perceived in the past (*ûṣo'syastîti ûṣavat*). *Vacaspati Mishra* defines¹⁸ it as 'ûṣyate parîûṣyati iti ûṣaḥ Sa eva Vicayatayâ yasyasty anumâna Jananasya tat ûṣavat,' for example, the inference of saltiness of the rest of the water of an ocean on the basis of tasting only a few drops of it as salty. The salty taste of the drop is a past effect in the inference of saltiness of the rest of the water of the ocean. The effect, being past, is non-existent in case of present and cannot serve as reason (*hetu*) in the inference of the rest of the water, the reason in the inference of which has yet to take place and, thus, in the absence of

reason (*hetu*) there is no possibility of the inference of a *æṣavat* type.

***Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa* type of Inference:** In *Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*, apart from the cause and effect, the inference of necessarily related two things, present in different time and space, is derived on the basis of a necessary relation observed in between two things (*liṅga*) in a particular space. For example, only based on perception of cluster of blossoms on a mango tree in a particular space and time we infer the clustering of blossoms in the trees related to different spaces at the same time. This type of inferring is not possible in cases of things related with past and future. Let us quote the lines of *Vṛtti* “*kathamapadamavastu nirātmakamadṛṣṭāpratiniyata kārāṇaæaktiparigrahamadhi gantum æakyate*”. By the qualifier ‘*adrṣṭa*’, *Bhartṛhari* has refuted the knowledge inferred by *pūrvavat* and *ūṣavat*; in the former the effect inferred is yet to take place and in the later the cause inferred is unseen and it is clear that by the qualifier ‘*apratiniyata*’, he has refuted the *Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*, for example, clustering of mango tree in different regions is differ with place and time. In the theory of *asatkārya*, the things in its past and future state are without a substratum (*apada*). They are non-related with anything and, thus, they are non-existent or absent (*nirupākhyā*) for an inference. The form of the past and future thing is not determined and thus, their imperceptible and irregular causes are not knowable by inference.

Refutation of *Satkāryavâdin*’s Arguments of Inference: After refuting inference in the theory of *asatkārya*, *Bhartṛhari* in his *Vṛtti* has refuted inference as established by *Satkāryavâdins* who accept the non-manifested prior position of an effect because the effect, in this theory as he observes, is imperceptible (*adrṣṭa*). He writes ‘*pakṣântare ca viiṣmavyaktirûpatirobhâvâd vyavahâramprati tadavijñeyam vastu nirupākhyaireva tulyam*¹⁹. The effect before its production is not capable of being used. That past or future effect is not different from the unreal and non-existent. If an effect is accepted as existent even if it is not produced or yet to be perceived, the effect unperceived is not capable of being a reason (*hetu*) in an inference and, thus, that non-manifested effect is non-existent for the purpose of an inference.

Overall, inference has its limitation. It is applicable to a limited sort of objects. There are objects beyond the reach of inference, for example, the objects known by constant practice, the parental excellence imparted to one since birth and other super natural powers²⁰. As we have seen earlier, *Bhartṛhari* establishes that inference is erring not only in its field proper as prescribed to it by the logicians but is ineffective in the field beyond its scope also. Moreover, it is merely a tool in the manifestation of the cause. He writes ‘Long technical terms used in grammar

depend on their form in conveying their meaning. In addition, inference manifests the presence of causal factors by proximity²¹.

The basic reasoning lying behind the refutation of reasoning and inference (*Tarka and Anumāna*) is that they are subjective and are dependent upon means by the defects of which the knowledge acquired by them is corrupted. The power that a substance is well known as possessing towards a particular activity is obstructed when it comes into association with another specific power. VP. 1/33. Not only that but they need a cognitive ground that is to be proved by them also and, thus, they cannot work independently of the language that serves as the cognitive ground of reasoning and inference as well. Considering the matter in view of *vṛtti*, we can easily say that *svārthānumāna* is not different from implication and *parārthānumāna* is the knowledge expressed by the sentence put in the form of subordinate clauses i.e. syllogistic form. In precise²², even a conclusion inferred after great consideration by expert logicians is decided to be otherwise by other more qualified logician.

Scripture (Āgama) : There are objects, which the epistemologists cannot claim to know by perception and inference. For example, the knowledge of the comparatively less or more value of diamonds, etc., which is based on practice (*abhyāsa*) and parental training; the knowledge that the ancestors are demanding alms by putting their hands out of the hole of the wall, knowledge about the things hidden in the earth which we know by the unseen power (*adr̥ṣṭa*). Scripture is the proof in these and many more similar objects in the knowledge of which popular sources of knowledge fail.

Bhartrhari writes ‘If knowledge were reasoning (*Svabhāvika Jñāna*) then scripture is of no use but if virtue is the cause of knowledge then the scripture (*Veda*) is the foundational. (VP.1/134). The scriptural truth is of equal use to all humanity down to the *Cāndālas* in their judgments ‘this is virtue’ and ‘this is vice²³’.

Inference (*Anumāna*) and reasoning (*tarka*) are refuted in so far as they are accepted by the theorist as a means of knowledge independently of language and have accepted their importance as far as they are based on the scripture (*āgama/Veda*). He criticizes inferential reasoning in the following verse ‘Like a blind man running along on an uneven path obtaining his knowledge of the path only from feeling from his hand, the knowledge of he who relies on inference will speedily fall. (VP.1/42), and elucidates the importance of reasoning based on scripture. He who has the Vedic knowledge that shines like unbroken consciousness is not influenced by

inferential arguments²⁴. Scripture is the established knowledge, the right conduct expressed by language (*vākya*) that infuses knowledge. Isolated from the language, knowledge ceases to be so²⁵. *Bhartṛhari* writes ‘Right conduct is not established by reasoning disassociated from scripture. Even the knowledge which the sages possess has the scripture for its evidence (VP. 1/30). No one can refute by reasoning or by arguments of empirical obviousness those unbroken and traditional paths of right conduct²⁶.

Practice (*Abhyāsa*): It is also accepted as one among the sources of Knowledge. He has not given any detailed description of it but has tried to clarify it on the basis of an instance of the knowledge of value of diamond, iron, etc. It is such a knowledge that discriminates values of different diamonds, coins, etc., a knowledge that cannot be described to others but that arises in those who possess it, only from practice and not from inference²⁷.

Super-natural Power (*Adṛṣṭa*): *Bhartṛhari* has mentioned it at least, in one verse as a source of knowledge. The supernatural power that transcends the perceptual and inferential knowledge, that demons, departed souls and ogres possess, are the results of their actions done in their previous births²⁸.

Flash of Consciousness (*Pratibhā*): *Pratibhā* is the flash of consciousness. Sense data, verbal noises, gesture and written marks help in manifesting it; manifested by them it flashes itself. Each of the flashings is new in each moment and it does not exhaust in any of the flashings. *Bhartṛhari* has admitted six kinds of such flashes. If we observe those kinds, we can very easily get that direct perception, practice (*abhyāsa*) and supernatural power, which are generally enumerated by the scholars of *Bhartṛhari* as separate sources of knowledge, are included among them. It is the basic source of knowledge and scripture is not different from it because of the reason that scripture is direct knowledge revealed by language. Nothing is known if *Pratibhā* is not revealed and it is *Sphoṭa* that reveals it. The *Sphoṭa* is a flash revealed by itself from which *Pratibhā* is revealed non-differently. The same flash from the point of view of the expresser is *Sphoṭa* and it is *Pratibhā* from the view of meaning expressed non-differently by the *Sphoṭa*. Different sources of knowledge in different cases serve as the tool helping the manifestation of *Sphoṭa* through them. Our knowledge is confined to and is based on intelligible beings of *Sphoṭa* and *Pratibhā*. *Pratibhā* in itself is known by implication as the ontic substratum of the object expressed by *Sphoṭa* in the mind. It in –itself, is a subject matter of *ūabdāsāadhanā* but it as flash is directly revealed, a matter of (*ūabdabodha*).

As knowledge is expressed by and is infused by language²⁹; it is veridical. There is difference between verity and valid knowledge. Verity does not require any extraneous proofs in order to be proved so; it is verity. This verity for the sake of understanding through perception, reasoning, etc. is interpreted in terms of valid/invalid, truth/false, etc. In a scheme of evaluation in terms of valid and invalid, proved and disproved knowledge on the basis of sources of knowledge, proofs, evidences and justifications, the veridical cognition, revealed by language, serves as their cognitive base. If, otherwise, in the absence of that cognitive ground, there will be no cause of incentive, base and purpose of proofs for validity and invalidity. Except language, there is nothing in built in the cognition that may direct those proofs and sources of knowledge and thus, isolated from the knowledge expressed by language, they cease to function for validity or invalidity.

Precisely, all knowledge is knowledge of intelligible objects, the cognition of which is always veridical. Different sources of knowledge, popularly accepted by different theorists as independent means of knowledge, perform secondary function useful for making the veridical knowledge revealed by language understandable to those who can understand the verity through those means in terms of validity, invalidity, truth and falsity. The verity serves as the ground not only for the exercise of those means but also for deciding the case of affirming or denying the same base. If those means affirm the same cognition, it is accepted valid and if otherwise, invalid. Veridical cognition revealed by language is the knowledge on which not only communication is established but which serves as the substratum of those activities also. In one line, his criticism of reasoning aims to elucidate that the knowledge revealed directly by the language is veridical and the *âgama* and the grammar (the Veda & the Loka) are not only authority but also foundation in the matter of reasoning. Reasoning based on *âgama* is uncontradicted in the scheme of thought and the truth presented by that reasoning is unsublated. Reasoning, independently of language, is unfounded (*œṣka tarka*).

What is that determinate knowledge? Is it the objects of knowledge-external or internal or the mind? They cannot, because they are determined by the knowledge itself. Philosophers of the East and West commonly accept that knowledge is determinate but they do not involve much as what determinates knowledge.

In very brief, we observe primacy of the language in cognition. As a thing is determinate by the qualities like its form color, length and width there are no such quality that determinate knowledge. Language determinates knowledge. As knowledge is expressed by language, it is

always a determinate knowledge. Veridical knowledge serves as the cognitive basis of the understanding of it, in terms of the sources of knowledge viz. perception, inference, implication, etc. The understanding of the verity of knowledge, revealed by language, in terms of inference is also the knowledge expressed by the language in sequence of subordinate sentences (syllogistic form). The knowledge is an indivisible unit that for the understanding of beginners is analyzed artificially and presented in a syllogistic form.

Notes and References

1. *Mānadhînâ meyasiddhirmânasiddhiûca lakṣaṇât, Tattvapradîpikâ, ûloka 18,p.356, Udasina Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Kâûi,1956,*
2. Buddhists and more than them *Vaiyâkaraṇas* value this theory.
3. Devendra Nath Tiwari, Language, *Being and Cognition*, Astha publication, Assam, India. pp.324-325,2014.
4. VP.1/30.
5. Susan Haak, '*Recent Obituaries of Epistemology*', American Philosophical Quarterly, 27, No. 3, July, 1990.
6. J. Habermas (English Trans.): *knowledge and human Interests*, London, 1772.
7. Devaraja N.K., Limits of Disagreement, IAS, Shimla,1993,pp.157-97.
8. VP.2/136, Edited by Bhagirathi Prasad Tripathy, Sampurnanaanda Sanskrit University, Varanasi.1976
9. VP.2/141.
10. VP. 1/39.
11. *Harivṛtti* on VP.1/1.
12. VP.1/136.
13. VP.1/138.
14. VP.1/134.
15. *Vâkyapadîya* Vol.I &II. Eng. Tr. By K.Pillai, Verse 1/134. Motilal Banarasidass, Varanasi.1971.
16. *Tasmâd drṣṭâd[cmamanugamyata ityavirodhât siddhametat. Vṛtti* on VP.1/34.
17. VP 1/32.
18. *Vâcaspati Mishra, Sâṃkhyatattva Kaumudî, P. 57.*
19. *Vṛtti* on VP.1/37.
20. See, VP 1/37-41.
21. VP.2/367.
22. VP. 1/34.
23. VP. 1/40.
24. VP. 1/41.
25. VP.1/123.
26. VP.1/31.
27. VP. 1/35).
28. VP.1/36.
29. VP.1/123.