



## Pramana and Naya in Jaina Logic

V. K. Bharadhwaja

Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.



(1) *Pramāṇa* and *Naya* are two cardinal concepts in the Jaina theory of knowledge of what there is or what the Jainas say there is. It is almost impossible to say as to what the Jaina thinker is doing in the vast literature on the methodology of knowledge without our having a reasonably clear idea of his usage of the terms *Pramāṇa* and *Naya*. But when one wants to seek clarity on the issue of distinguishing *Pramāṇa* from *Naya* and the two from their related concept *syāt* one feels simply baffled. At least, this is how I felt when I found myself confronted with the following statements of the Jaina position on the question whether *Naya* is or is not a *Pramāṇa* and what after all is the connection, if any, between the two :

- (T<sub>1</sub>) The class of *Pramāṇa* sentences includes the whole class of *Naya* sentences. Only when the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* is prefixed to a *Naya* sentence that it acquires the logical status of a *Pramāṇa*.<sup>1</sup>
- (T<sub>2</sub>) The *Naya* consists in the particular intention of the knower who, suspending his judgment about the other parts, takes notice of one particular aspect of an object which is known through the *Pramāṇa* of the scriptures.<sup>2</sup>
- (T<sub>3</sub>) The *Naya* sentences are used to communicate knowledge, but they cannot be said to be either *Pramāṇa* or *Apramāṇa*.<sup>3</sup>

The above three theses T<sub>1</sub>, T<sub>2</sub>, and T<sub>3</sub>, it seems to me, are quite different from one another. The thesis T<sub>1</sub> suggests that, unless a *Naya* sentence is prefixed by the word *syāt* or *kathamcit*, the *naya* sentence will not qualify to be a *pramāṇa-vakya*. The thesis T<sub>2</sub> treats a *naya* sentence as a claim to knowledge, that is, a *pramāṇa*, and when it is conjoined to the thesis T<sub>4</sub>.

- (T<sub>4</sub>) As *Pramāṇa* adds to knowledge by removing ignorance, so does *Naya* adds to knowledge by removing ignorance.<sup>4</sup>

The obvious thing that strikes one's mind is that a *naya* sentence communicating as it does knowledge of only one aspect of any thing must itself be a *pramāṇa*. It is plain then that if you accept the thesis T<sub>1</sub> you just cannot subscribe to the thesis T<sub>2</sub> conjoined to the thesis T<sub>4</sub>. And conversely also. Faced with the dilemma of choosing one or the other alternative you are offered the thesis T<sub>3</sub>, namely, that a *naya* sentence cannot be said to be either *pramāṇa* or *apramāṇa*. Apparently, the Jaina thinker has a way out of this discomfoting situation. He may point out that we have misunderstood his position altogether. Prefix the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* to the *naya* sentence.

- (A) A *naya* sentence is a *pramāṇa*  
and to
- (B) A *naya* sentence is not a *pramāṇa*  
and you obtain three perfectly consistent sentences



- (C) *Syāt*, a *naya* sentence is a *pramāṇa*  
and  
(D) *Syāt*, a *naya* sentence is not a *pramāṇa*  
or  
(E) *Syāt*, a *naya* sentence is *pramāṇa* as well as *apramāṇa*.<sup>5</sup>

I do not think that this way of going about one's business in a discussion on the methodology of knowledge or the logic of evidence with which the Jaina thinker obviously is concerned will solve or help to solve the problem. My own feeling is that one feels cheated when a solution of this kind is presented to one who is seriously engaged in understanding what the Jaina thinker is really doing when he makes the two notions of *naya* and *pramāṇa* as the core concepts of his theory of knowledge. I propose therefore to follow a different tack to explicate the distinction exploiting of course whatever the relevant texts there are that are available to me.

(2) Consider a few examples that the Jaina thinker<sup>6</sup> has given in order to illustrate his conception of the notion of *naya*, *pramāṇa* and *syāt*. To say that "Sadeva" or that "This object has existence as its only property" is to exemplify a *durnaya* sentence. Again, to say that "Sat" or "This object has existence" is to exemplify a *naya* sentence. Finally, to assert "Syāt Sat" or that "This object has existence as one of its infinite properties" is to make a statement which properly belongs to the class of *pramāṇa* sentences. These examples do throw some light on what the Jaina thinker had in mind when he used the words *naya* and *pramāṇa*. But, at the same time, these raise the question, *namely*; If prefixing *syāt* or *kathamcit* to any sentence make it a *pramāṇa* sentence, then how are we going to reconcile this with the other position, *namely*, that while in a *naya* sentence one only aspect or property or relation of something is asserted to be known, while in a *pramāṇa-vākya*, the whole of something is asserted to be known? This question arises because the logical form and function of a *naya* sentence does in no way suggest that the sentence is used to communicate information about the object of knowledge as a whole, that is, about whatever aspects, properties, or relations that object may have either in itself or as it is related to the other objects. And, this is one condition which a *pramāṇa vākya* is supposed to satisfy. It is possible that the way I have stated the condition which distinguishes a *pramāṇa vākya* from a *naya vākya* makes it a very stringent requirement to be satisfied by a *pramāṇa vākya*. And, hopefully, it is very likely that the Jaina thinkers never meant it is exactly the way as I have put it. However, in the rich philosophical literature which deals with the question of differentiating a *naya vākya* from a *pramāṇa vākya*, they have tried to exploit the notion of *ādeśa* in outlining the features which are distinctive of a *naya vākya* but not of a *pramāṇa vākya*, and also those which are distinctive of a *pramāṇa vākya* but not of a *naya vākya*.

(3) The relevant Dictionary meaning of the word *ādeśa* is 'advice, instruction, precept, or rule'. But by an *ādeśa*, the Jaina thinker means a 'point of view'. We can look upon some particular thing from different points of view. Observing an object from one and only one point of view to the exclusion of every other, according to the Jaina thinker, does not enable us to describe an object as adequately as one may wish it to be described. It is a different thing altogether that we may be interested in knowing and describing only one aspect or property of the object. But, knowing and describing only one property of the object does not mean knowing and describing its other properties also. This idea of differentiating a *specific description* of only one property from a *general description* of an object of knowledge is of the fundamental importance to the Jaina thinker. He employs this idea to divide<sup>8</sup> all *ādeśa* sentences into two sub-types: First *sakalādeśa* sentences and secondly, *vikalādeśa* sentences. A *vikalādeśa*<sup>9</sup> sentence is used to describe one and only one *dharma* or property of *sat* or what is real, while a *sakalādeśa*<sup>10</sup> sentence is used to give a general description of *sat* or what is real. To put it differently, a *sakalādeśa* sentence describes what is real *synthetically*; it communicates information about the entire, undivided reality, while a *vikalādeśa* sentence describes the various *dharma*s or properties of *sat* *analytically* it communicates information about an *aṃśa*, an aspect or

a part of what is real. This is how the Jaina thinker differentiates a *sakalādeśa vākya* from a *vikalādeśa vākya*. This distinction, however, is expressed in the traditionalistic jargon ; but it may be stated in the ordinary language as the distinction between a *specific description* and a *general description* of what is real. A *sakalādeśa* sentence is used to give a general description; while a sentence is employed to give a specific description of what is real. Both the types of sentences, however, are used to describe what the Jaina thinker calls *sat*<sup>11</sup> or reality. And, it seems to me that differentiating these two types of description sentences is a perfectly legitimate thing to do for purposes of describing reality. But unfortunately the distinction cannot be exploited to explicate the logical difference between a *Pramāṇa vākya* and a *naya vākya*. Logically, both a *sakalādeśa* sentence and also a *vikalādeśa* sentences are bearer of true (of course, contingently true) information. Whether the information communicated by means of them in true or false is something which depends entirely upon what *pramāṇa* is adduced in support of them. If the sentences are well-supported by one or more *pramāṇa* they are said to be true, and if they are ill-supported they are said to be false. The Jaina assertion<sup>12</sup> that a *sakalādeśa vākya* is a *pramāṇa vākya* while a *vikalādeśa vākya* is a *naya vākya* is simply untenable. Differentiating a *pramāṇa vākya* from a *naya vākya* on the basis merely of the extent or quantum of information they are used to communicate, will not do. We need a different criterion for distinguishing a *pramāṇa vākya* from a *naya vākya* from the criterion on the basis of which we differentiate a *sakalādeśa vākya* from a *vikalādeśa vākya*. The Jaina thinker, it seems to me, has failed to see that the distinction between the first type of sentences necessarily requires the notion of truth or confirmation, while the distinction between the second type of sentences really does not. And if he uses the same criterion of division in both the cases, the Jaina logician could then be accused of having committed what in the traditional logic is known as the fallacy of cross division.

(4) Now, consider an example of a *vikalādeśa* sentence :

(F) This object has existence.

Consider also an example of a *naya vākya* :

(G) This object has existence.

If you look at (F) and (G), both are identical sentences ; and logically also they have the same status. The Jaina thinker, however, classifies them differently. Why he does this, is not at all clear. It is not clear at least to me. He may have very good reasons for doing this ; but no where, so far as I know, does he state or even suggest what reasons he has to characterise them differently. At the same time, he would not identify them as the same sentences. If he did this he will have to say that, as a *naya vākya* when prefixed by the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* becomes a *pramāṇa vākya*<sup>13</sup> so in the same manner a *vikalādeśa vākya* when prefixed by the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* would acquire the status of a *sakalādeśa* sentence. But, I do not think that this consequence is acceptable to the Jaina thinker. This can be shown as follows. Consider an example of a *sakalādeśa vākya* :

(H) This object has infinite properties.

This sentence satisfies the condition of a *sakalādeśa* sentence.

Prefix now the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* to the *vikalādeśa* sentence an example of which is the sentence (F) above, and the resulting sentence would be

(I) This object has the property of existence as one of its infinite properties.

The two sentences (H) and (I) are in no way logically equivalent ; nor are they semantically equivalent. Besides, the sentence (I) gives more information than the information given by the sentence (H). It follows that even if the prefixing of the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* to a *naya* sentence turns it into a *pramāṇa vākya*, the same device does not turn a *vikalādeśa* sentences into a *sakalādeśa vākya*. The point of the argument is that the criterion of distinguishing a *pramāṇa vākya* from a *naya vākya* must be different from the criterion of differentiating a *sakalādeśa vākya* from a *vikalādeśa vākya*.



(5) On my analysis, the distinction between a *sakalādeśa* sentence and a *vikalādeśa* sentence is a distinction with respect to the quantum or the extent of information communicated by means of these sentences. A *vikalādeśa* sentence is a specific description of some specific aspect of what is real, while, *sakalādeśa* sentence is a general description of what is real. No question whatever of their truth values is involved in so far as we are concerned with a criterion of distinguishing them from each other. The distinction between a *pramāṇa vākya* and a *naya vākya*, on the other hand, involves a criterion which has to do with the truth values of these sentences. And here also my feeling is that the innocent device of prefixing the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* to a *naya* sentence will not turn it into a *pramāṇa* sentence. Or, for that matter, removing the prefix *syāt* or *kathamcit* from a *pramāṇa* sentence will not turn it into a *naya* sentence. This can be shown as follows :—

The notion of *naya* is tethered to the ways in which *Sat* may be described<sup>14</sup> If we make a distinction between *dravya* and *pariyāya* a distinction frequently made by the Jaina thinker, then *Sat* may be described either according to the *dravyārthika naya* or according to the *pariyāyārthika naya*,<sup>15</sup> in other words, either by emphasising on the *pariyāyas* or properties which an object has, or by emphasising on the *dravya* or substance of which the predicates are asserted to be true or false.<sup>16</sup> The result, however, will be a description of what is real or *Sat*. Giving a description of *Sat* is not saying that the given description is true or false. To show its truth or falsity you have to offer one or more relevant *pramāṇas* or evidences in confirmation of your description of *sat*. It is in this way that the notion of *pramāṇa* is related to the notion of *naya*. Unless *pramāṇa vākyas* are adduced in support of a *naya vākya*, the *naya vākyas* remain what they are, neither confirmed nor disconfirmed descriptions. Merely prefixing the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* does not transform them into *pramāṇa vākyas*. Particularly, under the circumstance that a Jaina statement is a privileged statement in that the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* is always prefixed to it either explicitly or contextually or it is just tacitly understood to have been prefixed.<sup>17</sup> Consider, for instance, the sentence.

(J) *Sat is anekāntika*.<sup>18</sup>

This sentence (J) is a *pramāṇa vākya*. The word *syāt* or *kathamcit* is apparently not prefixed to it. Unless the word is tacitly assumed to have been prefixed to it, the sentence (J) does not qualify to be a *pramāṇa vākya*. Then, how is it that it occurs as such without the prefix *syāt* or *kathamcit* as a *pramāṇa vākya* in the Jaina literature? Our answer is : Not that the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* when prefixed to it transforms it into a true statement; but it is really the *pramāṇa* or the evidence or the argument<sup>19</sup> that is adduced in favour of it that it makes it a true or an acceptable statement. The point of the argument is that it is the *pramāṇa* alone which transforms a sentence like (J) above into a *pramāṇa vākya*; the prefixing of the word *syāt* or *kathamcit* does not do this; the sentence remains where it is, a mere description only or a *naya vākya*.

(6) What I have done in this short paper is briefly this : I have argued for the thesis that a *vikalādeśa* sentence and a *sakalādeśa* sentence logically stand on a different footing from a *pramāṇa* sentence and a *naya* sentence, and that the criterion of differentiating the first pair of sentences is different from the criterion of distinguishing the second pair of sentences. I have held the thesis that the question of How to describe that is real is conceptually different from the question of How to decide the truth values of sentences which are used to describe what is real. I have maintained the view that a *naya* sentence whether the word *syāt* or *kathamcit*<sup>20</sup> is prefixed to it or not, is a sentence which belongs to the set of those sentences that are offered in answer to the first question, namely, How to describe what is real : while *pramāṇa vākyas* with or without the prefix *syāt* or *kathamcit* are evaluated true or confirmed descriptions of what is said to be real.



## Notes and References

- 1 Mallisena's *Syādvādamanjari* with Hemacandra's *Anyayoga-Vyavaccheda-Dvātriṃśika* (Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series No. LXXXIII ; 1933) p. 167.
- 2 Vadideva Suri's *Pramāṇa-Naya-Tattvālokaṃkāra* (Jain Sahitya Vikas Mandal, Bombay; 1967). p. 508.
- 3 Yasovijaya Gapi's *Jainatarkabhāṣā* (Delhi, 1973). p. 21 : Cf. *Tattvārtha-slokavārttika*, 1.6.21.5.
- 4 *Pramāṇa-Naya-Tattvālokaṃkāra* ; p. 538.
- 5 *Jain-Tark-Bhāṣā* ; p. 21.
- 6 *Syādvādamanjari* ; pp. 159-169.
- 7 *Pramāṇa-Naya-Tattvālokaṃkāra* ; p. 508.
- 8 *Anyayoga-Vyavaccheda-Dvātriṃśika* ; St. 23 ; p. 139 of *Syādvādamanjari*, op. cit.
- 9 *Syādvādamanjari*, p. 145. Cf. *Ratnākarāvatārika*, Chapter 4.
- 10 *Ibid*, p. 146.
- 11 *Anyayoga-Vyavaccheda-Dvātriṃśika* ; St. 21 ; p. 133-34 of *Syādvādamanjari*. Cf. *Tattvārtha-slokavārttika* ; V. 29.
- 12 *Syādvādamanjari*, pp. 145-46.
- 13 *Syādvādamanjari*, p. 167.
- 14 *Ibid*, p. 161.
- 15 *Ibid*, pp. 138-48. Also, *Jain-Tark-Bhāṣā*, p. 21.
- 16 *Ibid*, pp. 138-48.
- 17 *Ibid*, p. 245.
- 18 *Ibid*, p. 136.
- 19 *Ibid*, p. 137.
- 20 In this paper, I have not discussed the logic of *Syāt vākyas*. That forms the subject of another paper.

बोवोगे बैसा काटोगे, इसमें कुछ मतभेद नहीं ।  
 चाहे कलियुग हो पर होता, धर्म-कर्म विच्छेद नहीं ॥  
 जिसको सुनकर क्षमा अहिंसा, तप के भाव जगें मन में ।  
 वही धर्म है उसे दीजिये, स्थान स्वयं के जीवन में ॥  
 तत्त्व अहिंसा में सात्त्विकता, सात्त्विकता में सत्य निवास ।  
 सत्त्व सहित जीवन होता, बहुत महत्त्व, विशेष विकास ॥

