



## Some Concepts Underlying Jain Logic and Philosophy

□ Dr. S. S. Barlingay, M. A., Ph. D.

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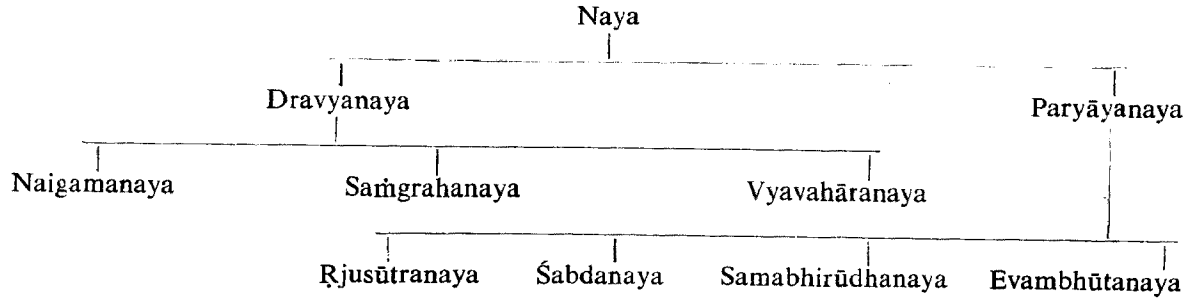
It has been sometimes claimed that Jain Logicians were the pioneers in the field of *Many-Valued Logic*. To evaluate this claim it will be necessary to understand the basic concepts underlying Jain Logic and Philosophy. It appears to me that these basic concepts are expressed through four different words by Jain Philosophers in their Logic and Philosophy. These words are : Anekānta, Naya, Syāt, and Bhanga. In this paper I propose to analyse, though in a very cursory manner, and explicate the concepts underlying Jain Logic. I feel that although the concepts expressed by these words are correlated, they are different. But Jain Philosophers seem to have ignored that these concepts are different. In fact, in many Jain books these concepts are treated as almost identical and the words representing these concepts are used as Synonymous.

Like all other Indian Logics Jain Logic seems to be based on certain Metaphysical pre-suppositions. Just as Advaita takes it for granted that the Reality is one and the ultimate nature of things which appear to be so very unlike one another is not different from the Real so the Jains think that every thing, or the object of knowledge has multifarious nature and it is expressed by a large variety of predicates which can be predicated of it and which are compatible with one another. Since a thing is known along with some predicate any number of judgments are possible in respect of the thing. This of course means that the nature of the thing is known by the predicates and when an assertion is made it is always with regard to the predicate of the proposition. This Theory is named as Relative Pluralism by Dasgupta and it is the basic pre-supposition of all Jain thinking whether it is Jain Logic or Jain Epistemology. In the traditional thought of the Jains this is what is known as Anekāntavāda or Pluralism of Predication. The Jain Metaphysics is centred round this concept *viz* a thing looks different if looked at from different point of view.

Traditionally the *Nayavād* (नयवाद) of the Jains and Jain epistemology are identified. However the *Nayavāda* is a wider doctrine than what the term epistemology denotes. *Nayavāda* is complementary to the fundamental concept *i.e.*, *Anekantavāda*. *Naya* literally means a certain point of vision. Only secondarily, it has come to mean the intention of the knower. On account of the many-naturedness of a thing or the object of knowledge and on account of a particular angle of knowing of the knower the knowledge that is produced is always partial. This is the *Nayavada* of the Jains. Jains believe that all the systems of Philosophy have emerged out of such partial points of view. As I shall see later, in a formal structure, these points of view would be seven only, and the Jain Philosophers also talk of seven points of view mainly. However, the description of the points of view given in different Jain books does not seem to tally (See History



of Indian Logic by Vidya Bhushan). A kind of division or classification of Naya given by Dasgupta is as follows:—



When we perceive something and when we make an assertion with regard to that thing, as for example, it is a pot, we are really having two kinds of knowledge—the knowledge of *this* and the knowledge of *potness*. This is how we are able to express our knowledge in the form—this is a pot. But both these knowledges are fragmentary and we can separate them in ‘this’ and ‘pot’ as in the sentence ‘this is a pot’. These two knowledges are the knowledges of the *Dharmi* or substantive and the *Dharma* or the attribute. When we ignore the attributive character of knowledge and only emphasise on the substantive character, we are following that Jains call *Dravyanaya*. On the other hand if we take into consideration the attributive character of knowledge then it becomes an instance of *Paryāyanaya*. The *Anātmavāda* of the Buddhists and the *Brahmavāda* of the *Advaita*, are according to Jain Philosophers, instances of *Paryāyanaya* and *Dravyanaya* respectively. When we are really concerned with some particular thing if we describe it in terms of something which has generality it becomes an instance of *Naigamanaya*. For example, when I say, ‘I am reading a book’ I am only reading a line of the book ; I am not reading the whole of the book at once. Nevertheless I say I am reading a book. This is an instance of *Naigamanaya*. If we consider only the general nature of a thing, it will be *Saṁgrahanaya* and if we emphasize on the particular character of a thing, it will become *Vyavahāranaya*. *Rjusūtra* means a straight thread. Thus to accept that which we see in the immediate perception would be an instance of *Rjusūtranaya* ; for example, we can never perceive the soul or *Ātman* as a whole at one moment but we experience particular mental states only. Therefore if we say that the mental states are real, then it would be an instance of the *Rjusūtranaya*. *Rjusūtranaya* therefore does not keep in view all knowledge about the past or future. The Buddhist *Kṣaṇikvāda* is given as an instance of *Rjusūtranaya*.

Knowledge is different from language ; but we express our knowledge in language. What is expressed in language is, thus, symbolic. On account of the symbolic nature of the language and on account of the fact that it is expressed in symbols, the knowledge expressed in language becomes fragmentary. This is what is called *Śabdanaya*. According to the Jain Philosopher Umaswati, Naya is only of five kinds and *Śabdanaya* is further sub-classed into (1) *Samprata* (2) *Samabhirūdha* and (3) *Evambhūta* (Page 32 re-quoted from History of Indian Logic by Vidya Bhushan).

Once we accept that a thing can be understood in infinitely different ways and classify the knowledge of things according to *Nayavāda*, we are already on the way to *Syādvāda*. *Syād* (स्याद्) means possibly<sup>1</sup>. It is however, necessary to state that in our language we use the word ‘possibly’ in two different ways. In one sense of the term *possible* is opposed to *actual*. It may mean something which is not existing but which may have the potentiality to exist. In this sense that *something is possible* does not mean that it is existing either partially or wholly. But there is

<sup>1</sup> In this article word ‘possible’ is thoroughly used for *Syāt* (स्यात्) but really in Jain philosophical term ‘*Syāt*’ means a certain point of view.

another sense of 'possible' in which what is actual strictly implies possible. Our partial knowledge always has some truth in it. So the partial knowledge is to be valued not in terms of truth value, true or false—but in terms of possibility. This possibility is not with regard to the nature of things but with regard to our knowledge of the things, and this can be expressed either affirmatively or negatively. When we say of a thing that it possibly is, we are using a model predicate and it refers to our knowledge of the thing and not to the thing. Thus 'possibility' will now become the criterion by which we would measure our knowledge. This kind of possibility, presupposes that some thing can be predicated of some thing; but this means that there would be some thing of which it would not be possible to predicate. This is indescribable or unspeakable. Supposing that the predication of a thing is possible it could be in respect of its existence or its non-existence. (We would get possibly  $p$  and possibly  $\text{not-}p$ ). Thus it appears to me that the Jain philosophers first distinguish between impossible to predicate (which however does not mean impossible) and possible to predicate. That of which it is possible to predicate, that is possible to predicate 'Is' (affirmation) 'Is not' (negation). Thus the Jain philosophers first distinguish proposition at two different levels, although the proposition at these different levels is quite compatible with one another.

When we are saying about possible alone, it can very well be seen that there is no contradiction between the propositions possibly  $p$  and possibly  $\text{not-}p$ , that is possibly  $p$  and possibly not  $p$  can go together. When we are talking of possibly  $p$  and not possibly  $p$  we are talking of contradictions. Both of them cannot be true together, but impossibility of  $p$  and the possibility of  $\text{not-}p$  are not contradictories and they may co-exist. The possibility of  $p$  can be contrasted (1) with Impossibility of  $p$  or (2) with the possibility of not  $p$ . Jain Logic does not take into consideration the modality *viz* : necessarily since 'possibly' alone governs the predicate of a proposition. That is Jain Logic takes for granted the notion of possibility as primitive and works out its logic. But once you accept possibility as a primitive notion it is not difficult to define 'necessity' and also 'impossibility' in terms of 'possibility'. In the two propositions  $X$  is possible and  $X$  is not possible, both the concepts possible and impossible are at work. But if I say  $X$  is possibly  $p$  and  $X$  is possibly  $\text{not-}p$ , the scope of possibility is not limited, the scope of  $p$  alone is limited. Thus whereas  $X$  is possible and is not possible cannot go together,  $X$  is possibly  $p$ , and  $X$  is possibly  $\text{not-}p$  can go together. Jain Logic of *Syādvāda* is based on this second alternative.

However, once you accept this position the only other position which emerges is epistemological whether you can make any assertion about this possibility. That is, the assertion of possibility itself is now further subjected to the modality 'possible'. That is we are now concerned with whether the assertion itself is possible or not. If such an assertion is not possible even if something  $p$  is possible it will not be possible to assert it. Thus Jain Logic first discusses the dichotomy about the possibility and impossibility of assertion and then subjects the possibility of assertion to a further dichotomy of 'is' and 'is not'. The possibility (and its opposite), and assertibility (and its opposite) are the values/modalities with which Jain Logic is concerned. Impossibility as a value/modality is operative in Jain Logic at a level where they are considering whether it is possible to assert or describe. But once it is accepted that something is possible to describe the modality, 'impossibility' is no more applied. All the alternatives are finally judged by possibility and are declared possible. Assertibility or describability is compatible with both (1) the possibility of  $p$  and (2) possibility of  $\text{not-}p$ . Thus the propositions possibly  $p$ , and possibly  $\text{not-}p$  can go together. Similarly, describability and possibility of  $p$  or possibility of  $\text{not-}p$  also can go together. Thus all the alternatives in the Jain Logic of possibility are governed by the logical operator ' $V$ '. Since any predication is possible with regard to an object of knowledge and since all such predications are compatible it is possible that our predication or assertion is true and it is equally possible that our predication or assertion is false. Supposing that we are making this 'possibility assertion' with regard to 'existence or non-existence' of a thing then we shall be able to make a statement of the form, possibly the thing 'exists' or 'possibly' the thing 'does not exist'. It should be noted that possibly something does not exist (*i.e.*, it is possible that



something does not exist) is different from not possibly something exists (i.e., it is not possible that something exists). Both possibly something exists and possibly something does not exist are affirmative statements. On the other hand, in the set, possibly something exists, and not possibly something exists, only one is affirmative and the other is negative. (Here not possible is really equivalent of impossible). These two therefore are non-compatible and cannot be asserted together. How it is possible that something 'is' and it is also possible that something 'is not' and still it is possible to doubt whether we can assert any position about it. Thus it is possible to say that possibly a thing 'is' and it is possible to make an assertion about it and also a thing 'is not' and it is possible to make such an assertion. It is also possible that a thing 'is' and it is not possible to make an assertion and a thing 'is not' and it is not possible to make that assertion. Thus in all you will get the seven compatible alternatives : (1) *possibly p*, (2) *possibly not p*, (3) *possibly p, possibly not p*, (4) *not possible to describe*, (5) *possibly p, but not possible to describe*, (6) *possibly not-p, but not possible to describe*, (7) *possibly p, possibly not-p but not possible to describe*.

Thus possibility has a scope over both describability, (the very word describable means *possible to describe*) is, and is not. This means that all the alternatives which the Jain Logic takes for granted are mutually compatible and can be explained in terms of 'or'. This is what is stated by the Jain Logicians in a formula *Syāt asti*, *Syāt nāsti*, *Syāt Asti-nāsti*, *Syāt avaktavya*, *Syāt Asti avaktavya*, *Syāt nāsti avaktavya*, *Syāt astināsti avaktavya*.

In all these cases the scope of the proposition is determined by the modality 'possibility'. Modality impossibility—impossibility to assert—is finally governed by the modality possibility alone. Jain Logic seems to take into consideration first the predicates 'Asti' and 'Nāsti' and determine the scope of these two predicates by *possible*. As soon as *Syāt* is added to 'Asti' and 'Nāsti' the incompatibility between them is completely got rid of and both of them become possible. Then this new proposition is contrasted with describability or assertibility and its opposite. Describability and its opposite emerge as two values. But these two values are merely the combination of 'possible—impossible' and assertion—negation. Very soon it can be seen that which is impossible to describe is quite compatible both with what 'is' and what 'is not'. This compatibility tells us that it is the modal predicate 'possible' which is governing all these modal propositions in Jain Logic. Finally, the scope of all varieties of possible is determined by possible only. It cannot, therefore, be said that *Syādvāda* as such is an attempt towards the formulation of Many-valued Logic. As a matter of fact the opposite appears to be the case—even to deny the dichotomy between an assertion and negation or describability and non-describability and bring them all under one modality—'possible'.

In Jain Logic we also come across a word called *Bhanga*. *Bhanga* literally means breaking. But it is a symbol of incompatibility. If *Saptabhangi* is taken literally, it really means sevenfold incompatibilities and in such a case *Saptabhangi* would give a Logic of seven or many-values. But what we get in *Syādvāda* is the doctrine of seven fold compatibilities. Perhaps at some stage Jains had something like sevenfold incompatibilities in their mind. We know that one thing is different from another thing. This is due to *Bhanga*. This 'is' and 'is not' will be the two *Bhanga*s and if there is not a certainty about a thing whether it 'is' or 'is not', there will be some indecision and this will be the third alternative or *Bhanga*. But Jain philosophers do not seem to talk about assertions and negations except as a summation of *all possibles*. They thus finally seem to be governed by only one predicate (or value) 'the possible'. When the Jains talk of *Avaktavya* it is true that the concept of indecision must be at least vaguely in their mind. In that case there would be really three values, truth, false, and indecisive. Had the Jains not talked of *Syād*, then *Asti*, *Nāsti* and *Anirvachana* or *Avaktavyatā* would have given us three values and we would have been able to base Logic on these three values. Prof. Dhruva in his 'Introduction to Syādvādamanjari' says that in the *Bhagavatisūtra* only three *Bhanga*s or values (and not seven) are mentioned and perhaps in the beginning this was the case. Instead of saying 'possibly is' 'possibly is not' and 'possibly indescribable' if we say, 'this is possible', 'this is impossible' and 'this is indescribable' we would get the three *Bhanga*s ; but then they will not be compatible, as they will not be governed by the truth function 'V'. *Syādvāda*, as it appears today, does not seem to be the Theory of Many-valued Logic, although perhaps Jain logicians did vaguely consider a set of two values—possible to describe and not possible to describe at one level and another set of values—*is* and *is not* at another level. □