



The Concept of 'Will-generated Cognition' and its Role in Philosophical Enterprise:

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Abstract:

In epistemology, knowledge is the fundamental factor. In order to acquire knowledge, we have to go through various ways of knowing or the means of knowing like perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, presumption, non-cognition etc. In epistemology, knowledge presupposes the knowledge of something. The knowledge without content (*aviśayaka-jñāna*), however, is found in case of Advaita Vedānta. The Advaitins only admit a kind of knowledge which is of without content (*aviśayakajñāna*) in case of Brahman. Brahman is the Knowledge itself. To them this knowledge has no content at all because Brahman itself is Knowledge, but not the knowledge of *Brahman*. In other words, we cannot tell that this is the knowledge of Brahman, but Brahman itself is Knowledge *par-excellence*. Apart from this system all others believe that knowledge has got some content of its own.¹ That is why; knowledge is something through which an object is illumined. There are several ways of knowing as told earlier.

Keywords: knowledge, Advaitins, illumined, *par-excellence*.

Apart from these we normally came across a peculiar type of cognition which is generated through our will, which is technically called *icchājanyajñāna*. It may seem to be peculiar to us how cognition arises through the intervention of desire.

It may be argued that there is no novelty in such cognition by virtue of the fact that all cognitions are generated through will. It may be said that without knowledge there is no inclination for doing any work. Inclination or *pravṛtti* towards certain activity is possible if someone has got a concrete knowledge towards that. And knowledge is possible if there is a tendency for acquiring the same. Will-generatedness in an individual for doing something is the cause of human inclination (*pravṛtti*) or refraining (*nivṛtti*) from certain activity. So, whenever a person is found to do work, it is presupposed that he has knowledge about the object which has been taken as an effect of the desire to know. So, desire is the main thing through which one's *pravṛtti*, *nivṛtti* and *upekṣā* (indifferent attitudes) can be explained.² These are discussed in the following pages.

Moreover, the desire to know is the fundamental factor for knowing an entity which again leads one to the world of activity or otherwise.

The *Naiyāyikas* may come up with the following justifications. To them doubt does not arise at all if there were no reference (*apekṣā*) to particular attributes or peculiarities (*viśeṣa*). First, the *Naiyāyikas* give a description of an instance of doubt. After seeing an object from a distance there arises an uncertain cognition or a wavering judgment (*vimarśa*), which provides an uncertain cognition in the form: 'It is a man or a trunk of a tree'. In this case some common features between



man and a trunk of a tree are perceived. It is justified by the definition- '*tad anavadhāraṇamjñānamsamśayah*'. Secondly, Vātsyāyana explains how the doubt is resolved. To him when the specific characters or differentiating features of a man or a trunk of a tree is known, the doubt ceases due to having certainty in the mind in the form-'It is a man or a trunk of a tree'. Lastly, Vātsyāyana has added a novel feature of doubt. For, the perceived object can be or cannot be a man or a trunk of a tree, as the qualities common to the both are seen. This uncertainty of mind can generate a tendency to search (*apekṣā*) for the specific qualities, which can distinguish an object from the other (*vimarśa*). As soon as these are available, doubt is resolved. As these differentiating factors or 'some features different from that' are searched for, it leads to the presupposition that doubt persists in our minds. The 'looking for' or the search of 'this desire to know' (*bubhutsā*) is the specific feature of the thing is the new element in the Vātsyāyana's definition of doubt (*viśeṣāpekṣahvimarśahsamśayah*). Over all we get three stages: a) perception in a correct cognition or erroneous cognition. b) The perception of special features, which generate the correct cognition and rectify the wrong one. c) There is a third moment when a knower's mind wavers due to the non-ascertainment of the thing perceived, which leads to the look for the specific character. The last one generates doubt in one's mind.

The *Naiyāyika* could say that doubt arises when there is a cognition touching both the alternatives (*ubhayakoṭikajñāna*). When an object is known as either as a man or a trunk of a tree, it is true that there is some lack of cognition. It can be interpreted that when there is cognition of a man, it is due to the lack of cognition of a trunk of a tree. If the cognition of a trunk of a tree arises, it is due to the lack of the cognition of a man. Whatever may be the case we must admit that there is certainly a cognition sometimes taking man as its content and sometimes taking a trunk of a tree as its content. An individual's mind wavers between two cognitions successively, but not simultaneously. That is why; such wavering cognition arises from the mental state metaphorised as the movement of the cradle (*dolācalacittavṛtti*). The cognition of a man may be caused by the absence of the cognition of a trunk of a tree or otherwise, but the existence of the cognition of a man for one moment and the cognition of a trunk of a tree for the next moment must be accepted. In this case, the existence and non-existence of the peculiarities in a man is known in the successive moment, but not simultaneously as accepted by Nāgārjuna. Here in lies the difference between two schools- *Bauddha* and *Nyāya*.

When the determinants are not available in determining the nature of an object, doubt arises there. The absence of determining proof of an entity, which is the object of knowledge, is the cause of doubt. Doubt plays a positive role in generating critical thinking of mankind after removing blind faith from them. In other words, doubt is the revealer of the windows of our critical and open-minded thinking. Considering this aspect Gotama has enumerated it as one of the sixteen categories, the right cognitions of which lead us to the land of success-- mundane and transcendental (*nihsreyasādhiḡama*). To Vātsyāyana doubt has been given a due emphasis in *Nyāya* on account of the fact that logic can alone be applied to the object in doubt, but not to an object which is purely known or unknown. From this statement it is proved that Nāgārjuna's thesis that something is either known or unknown is wrong. If it is known, he says, it is a kind of valid cognition. If it is unknown, it is to be taken as illusion. Vātsyāyana is of the opinion that this is the



ideal case where we can have doubt. To him doubt is a kind of intellectual activity arising out of the confrontation by two different philosophical positions called *pakṣa* (thesis) and *pratipakṣa* (antithesis) at the same time. To think of an entity as both known and

unknown does not lead us to admit its fictitious character, but it is a kind of doubt. This view of the Naiyāyikas will find support in Vācaspati Miśra's *Bhāmatī* where he accepts the dubious character of an object as a criterion of an enquiry about it (*Bhāmatī* on *Adhyāśabhāṣya*).

We may recall Udayana in this connection. To him if there is mistrust among the family-members, social-beings etc, our empirical doubt will not be possible. If, on the other hand, there is no doubt, there does not arise any philosophical enquiry. If there is doubt, there is inferential cognition or an inferential procedure is to be resorted to with a view to resolving doubt. If not, inference is established easily. Such doubt is permissible so long there does not arise self-contradiction (*vyāghāta*). Sometime the method of *Tarka* (*reductio-ad-absurdum*) is taken into account. From this it is proved that doubt has got a positive role in philosophical methodology if it is taken as a category.

Those who are engaged in laboratory for scientific discovery try to dispel some sort of doubt. Had there been no doubt, no discovery is possible. That is why, we get discovery of so many scientific discoveries. There are two types of doubt- positive and negative. The positive doubts are called non-pathological doubts which are otherwise called epistemological or metaphysical doubts. These doubts are virtuous in nature as they lead us to phenomenon of philosophical analysis. At the same time there is another type of doubt called pathological doubts which have no importance in our philosophical enterprise. It has been said in the Bhagavad- gītā- 'samśayātmā vinaśyati'. Those who are possessing doubt are on the way of destruction. For smooth running of our empirical and spiritual life we must have a sense of reliance towards our Vedic and secular codes that are called *vidhi*-s. If we do not have reliability towards our laws formulated by the state machinery, our society would be turned into an anarchic state, which is not desirable. That is why; we must maintain the laws and orders in the society. If we nourish doubt always regarding the efficacy of such laws, we shall refrain from obeying it, which ultimately leads to the world of chaosness technically called *mātsyanyāya*. Just as big fishes can swallow the smaller ones due to having greater physical power, the powerful persons would have killed the weaker section (*śūlematsyānivāpakṣyanduvālānbalavattarāh*)- (*Manusmṛhitā*, Canto-7). If we want to live in a society, we have to maintain civic laws without any doubt on them. We always depend our near and dear relatives and hence some sort of reliability lies on them. Had there been doubt, our life would not have been smooth and steady. In habitual cases we cannot doubt about the efficacy of an object as told earlier. Depending on our past experience we take food when hungry, drink water when thirsty, when sick, take medicines, when tired take rest. These are habitual behaviors grown after repeated experience. If somebody expresses doubt even in these cases, this leads to contradiction. A question may be asked to a person entertaining doubt- if doubt pertains whether water will quench thirst or not then why does he ask for water? Even after this if he doubts about the efficacy of water, food, medicine etc., and this doubt is to be taken a pathological one having no importance in philosophical activities.

This type of doubt is taken as *bhayāvaha* or frightening because the phenomenon of doubting may be treated as psychological disorder.

The *Sāmkhyakārikā* begins with enquiry being hurt by the suffering of three types (*dukkhatrayābhighātādbhavatijjñāsā*). When an individual suffers from sorrow, he will have doubt whether such suffering can be removed or not.

This doubt gives rise to innovation of a way for it. In *Tattvakumudi* it has been explained that a sufferer has got doubt about its removal, because such suffering cannot be dispelled through an ordinary means (*laukikaupāya*). The suffering related to body (*ādhyātmika dukkha*) and suffering caused by external factors like animal etc. (*ādhibhautika dukkha*) can somehow be managed if an individual takes prior precaution. But doubt regarding its removal is more prominent when we see our helplessness in case of suffering arising out of Divine will (*ādhidāivika dukkha*). The calamities caused by earth-quake, draught, flood etc. are not under the control of human being and hence under Divine will. So, the prior precaution cannot help us to remove such suffering. Doubt becomes stronger in such cases regarding the impossibility of its removal. To the Sāmkhya system the absolute cessation of suffering is not possible even through the super-normal means (*alaukikaupāya*). Doubt is clear when Śvarakṣṇa has prescribed a path of its removal (*Sāmkhyakārikā-1*). Most of the systems of Indian Philosophy are found to be worried about suffering and its removal. Hence Indian systems are not free from doubt giving rise to philosophical exercise.

Again, a question may be raised that sometimes over reliance on some authority; person or institution makes no room for doubt which sometimes leads to a chaotic life. Just like over confidence over-reliance is harmful and hence the doubt on some principles of the authority or person or institution makes them self-critical and self-assessing. Others doubt or critical points help them to rectify themselves. This is true in case of philosophical or any type of writing. Had there been doubt giving rise to critical analysis, the writer would be cautious in self-assessment leading to their self-rectification. All these cases are the results of positive or constructive or virtuous or non-pathological doubt and hence its methodological value can never be ignored.

Apart from the above-mentioned arguments we can supply some from common sense point of view. Any discovery, scientific or philosophical, presupposes doubt about something. Newton had discovered the law of gravitation as he had some doubt regarding the falling of an apple downwards. His doubt was why it cannot go up. Before this incident many times apple had fallen down, but no question was raised about it due to the absence of doubt. That is why; doubt is taken as the key of discovery or invention. Doubt prompts an individual to question regarding something. If there is questioning, it is to be presupposed that there prevails a kind of doubt.

From the above statement it is proved no action is possible without the cognition which is connected to an individual's desire to know. So, desire or will can be taken as a universal factor for generation of any activity. In fact, desire to know (*jijñāsā*) is the primordial factor for initiating a discussion of the concern subject. The whole Upaniṣadic literature is created to satisfy the desire of a disciple. So, a strong will comes first or desire to know comes first. Even God has created this beautiful earth due to having tremendous desire to create, so that human beings can enjoy their result of *karma*. It is due to the desire of God (*Īśvarasyasiṣṛkṣā-vaśāt*). Rabindranath Tagore had highlighted the existence of desire or will in an individual's mind as a seed of creation. In a poetry, named with '*janmavṛttānta*' he said that a small girl is asking her mother: 'where have I come from'? Though there were so many probable answers to this question, but mother hinted at the basic thing and replied that she was in her mind in the form of desire or will (*icchārupe chili manermājhāre*).³

If we turn towards the whole Upaniṣadic literature we will see that all the *Upaniṣadas* are written after keeping a particular question or questions remaining in a disciple's mind. In first verse of The *Keno-upaniṣada* stated as:

“*Omkenēṣitaṃpatatipreṣitaṃmanafi
Kenaprāṇafīprathamafīpraitiyuktafi. keneṣitāṃ
vācamimāṃvadanti Cakṣufiśrotraṃ ka u devo
yunakti*”.⁴

The philosophical enquiry starts with the desire or will to know who is the impeller of the sense-organ like eye, ear etc; who directs our mind to go towards certain object, under whose direction we have been able to speak with the help of words? Who is the luminous person who employs the eyes and the ears in their own objects? By whose will matter is distinct from the conscious one? Mind is not independent about *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* because it would seem that which is not acceptable as duty, the mind is preoccupied with that subject or cannot refrain from it. This non-individual mind must have a controller and the question arise who is He? These questions point to the fact that the huge part of creation above the trivial world, which beyond the reach of ordinary people, *Upaniṣadas* helps to understand its nature.

In *Kaṭho-Upaniṣad*, we see that Viśvajit had a son named Naciketā. When he told his father- 'Upon whom you have surrendered me? (*sahovācapitaraṃ, tata kasmaimāṃdāsyasīti*). And his father replied, "you will be given to Yama" (*taṃhovācamṛtyavetvā dadāmīti*).⁵ When Naciketā met Yama, he had expressed his strong will to know the nature of self and the way to get liberation. Since Naciketā had been starving in his (Yama) house for three night, and Yama gave him three boons for each night. The preceptor as Yama wanted to offer him enjoyable worldly properties as a boon; but Nacikatā's will was so strong to know the nature of self leading to liberation. That is why; he gave up all the enjoyable properties and had shown inclination to know the nature of self. Ultimately Yama, the teacher, was bound to tell him the true nature of self and result of its realization which eventually gave rise to the whole literature of *Kaṭha-Upaniṣada*.

The same story regarding will-power is found behind the composition of *Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣada*. *Upaniṣada* is one of the supreme treasures of *Brahma-jñāna* (i.e., the knowledge of self) in Indian culture. Among the famous *Upaniṣads*, *Bṛhadāranyaka* is much older. The great teachings of this *Upaniṣada* come out through the conversation of Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi. Though

we see that all most in all of the *Upaniṣads* only the male voice has been echoed, only in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* we have seen the role of woman. The great teachings of this *Upaniṣad* come out through the conversation of Yajñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi. Only in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣada* we have seen the role of woman. The 4th *Brāhmaṇa* of 2nd chapter in *Upaniṣada* Yajñavalkya has advised the nature of Immortality to his wife Maitreyi. This conversation also found in the

5th Brahmaṇa of 4th chapter in the same book. In these two chapters, it has been shown that the great sage Yajñavalkya had two wives, named Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī. When he decided to go for renunciation (*sannyāsa*) after leaving his domestic life (*gārhasthyāśrama*), he wanted to distribute his assets to both of his

wives. Rejecting this profitable proposal Maitreyī asked him eagerly that if the whole world is filled up by wealth, could she become immortal by having such properties. And Yajñavalkya replied- “No, your life will be same as those of rich people”. There is no hope of gaining immortality through wealth” (*‘yenāhamnāmṛtāsyāntenāhamkimkuryāma’*). ⁷Maitreyī, one of the wives of Yajñavalkya was reluctant to this worldly property offered to her by Yajñavalkya. This could not satisfy her due to transitoriness of these worldly properties. Maitreyī thinks that these worldly properties cannot give her Immortality and hence these are worth-rejectable. Maitreyī told to Yajñavalkya that she has no desire to take those which cannot give her Immortality. From this it is proved that Maitreyī had a strong desire to get that knowledge which can provide her Immortality.

What does Immortality mean here? Does it mean of carrying the worldly-body for eternity? Or to survive in any way, even after death. It is certain that Maitreyī did not want the Immortality of body. Then how did she want to be Immortal?

Yajñavalkya had understood the desire of Maitreyī and started telling the nature of self, realizing which one can get Immortality. Leaving aside economic and other needs Yajñavalkya emphasized on the spiritual knowledge after giving due honor to the desire of Maitreyī. This ultimately leads her to acquire the knowledge of Self which is the main cause of Immortality as discussed in the whole *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣada*.

In fact, in our traditional Indian system a disciple’s desire is taken as seed for any philosophical discussion. In the system of residing in a preceptor’s house (*gurugṛhavāsa*) a disciple being desirous of hearing any academic matter from the preceptor’s mouth starts nursing him. From the fact of his nursing the preceptor comes to know the hidden desire of the disciple of hearing some academic matters from him. That is why; in Sanskrit one-term i.e., *susṛ ūṣā* has been used both in the sense of ‘desire of hearing’ and ‘nursing’. From this it follows that the pre-condition of desiring to know is nursing to the preceptor. This is also endorsed in the ‘*Bhagavad-Gītā*’ that if someone is desirous of knowing he starts questioning, prostrating and nursing (service) (*pariprasnenapraṇipātenasevayā*)⁸. The different chapters of *Gītā* i.e., *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga*, *bhaktiyoga*, *visvarūpa-darsana*--- all of these are outcome of satisfaction of strong desire of Arjuna. When Arjuna starts questing to Lord Kṛṣṇa out of his strong will about the worldly phenomena and as well as the nature of Self. He was answering spontaneously by showing honor to the desire of Arjuna. In eleventh chapter, when Arjuna prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa that, the knowledge of self as he stated was absolutely true. In spite of this he is desirous to see the exhibiting numerous shapes and figures of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Respecting this desire of Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa revealed himself in infinite shapes and figures after Arjuna. And what is this ‘representation of the whole universe’? It’s like a molecular explosion. In this chapter it is stated as: “*divi sūryasahasrasyabhavedyugapadutthitā/yadibhāfi sadṛśī sā syādbhāsastasya mahātmanafi*”⁹ i.e. the splendor of thousands of suns in the sky, everything seems to be torn apart, the whole world is melted, transgression, the huge mouth is like ‘black hole’, infinite unimaginable power of attraction.

The whole animal kingdom is just like a tiny insect, is attracted to that hole and in an instant the whole universe is entering and disappearing.

In Loss Elamas, after seeing the first experimental explosion of an atomic bomb, scientist Oppenheimer was panicked and said: “Good, God, the long-haired boys have lost control” and then he said the verse of ‘*Gītā*’:

“If the radiance of thousands suns
Were to burst into the sky
That would be like
The splendor of the mighty one”.¹⁰

He runs and speaks like crazy on the streets of Manhattan, “thousand suns”. It shows that desire also has significance in the case of any scientific discovery.

In the last episode of *Mahābhārata*, where Kṛṣṇa’s last days are described there is also the role of desire. Lord Kṛṣṇa is sitting under a banyan tree in Prābhāsa. There came a hunter behind the leaves quietly. He can’t see the full form of God. He had thrown the arrow to the red feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thinking it as the face of deer. The hunter approached God and apologized. The arrow – wounded Lord forbade him to be afraid. He did this according to God’s will. The hunter did not return home with the prey. He hunted God and went to heaven. Who can swallow the whole creation? He Himself was defeated by time. He arranged the last chapter of his life according to His own desire. He had no one to Him, no flower, no garland, no sandal wood, no lamp ----nothing was left with Him. All these happened according to His will 11.

These are a number of instances which show that how desire becomes central to human-life.

When there is a debate or curiosity of knowing, the strong desire of it is the pre-condition. Such desire may lead one preceptor’s service or prostration which is taken as marks of having strong will to know. That is why; in every case desire has got a prominent role. Such rule is applicable in case of scientific and technological discoveries also. Strong will sometimes makes a great change in philosophical or literary creativity. Without strong will one cannot engage oneself to create something in original. In order to do this, he must need a strong will coming from within. Strong will leads him to the state of meditation or onepointed concentration leading to a golden philosophical or literary crop. This golden philosophical or literary crop can be treated as a creative one from the standpoint of uniqueness, novelty and originality. It happens so suddenly that people cannot understand with their normal reasoning faculty and hence, they try to impose certain mystic elements or metaphysical analysis like “The grace of goddess of learning” (*Sarasvatīkṛpā*). This has been referred to by great rhetorician Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka*¹².

The above statements prove that for an original creation one needs to have ‘one-pointed concentration’ which is possible only if there is a strong will for it. That is why; each and every cognition or each and every creativity needs a ‘strong will’. All cognitions are the production of strong will. Hence, a question may arise: what is the specialty in ‘will-generated cognition’ (*icchājanyajñāna*)? In other words, if all cognitions are the result of ‘strong will’ what is the specialty of such cognition?

Though ‘will-generatedness’ (*icchājanyatva*) remains in all types of cognition yet,

there are certain cases where ‘desire’ is deliberate. Out of curiosity one can ask questions. Though it is true, sometimes without having proper curiosity, desire may arise in our mind. Here, ‘desire’ is an artificial one. Though someone knows the fact that an object is different from another one yet, a strong desire may arise to make them or to think them identified. This identification is not out of illusion, but out of strong desire. That is why; it is called ‘will- generated’ in another manner.

From the above discussion, it may follow that ‘desire’ is compulsory in the attainment of cognition (for knowing something). Once a person has got desire to know, he is inclined to know. This type of will enables us to have apparent as well as in-depth knowledge of the fact or an object. This particular deriving quality can be traced back to all other subjects also apart from philosophy. If I want to know something, I can know it with help of six means of knowing in Indian schools of thought. Hence, desire is the common cause of knowing a particular object. This is called first order desire. But in our epistemology, interestingly we find a second order desire also, which prompts us to rediscover the object already known. This process of rediscovering is not dominated by any compulsion. This sort of will can be defined as ‘free-will’. This particular kind of will contains a certain kind inherent power that gives our desire of knowing ideas a spontaneous quality. This second type of cognition is called ‘will-generated-cognition’ (*icchājanyajñāna*).

The way of doing philosophy has been changed over a period of time. Epistemological quarries, to a certain truth, a need of concrete justification regarding valid knowledge, linguistic clarification-all these give rise to some new methods and concepts. In the field of epistemology, the great contribution of *Navya Naiyāyikas* can’t be ignored. *Ichhāprajoyajñāna* i.e. cognition arising out of desire has described as one of them. This school of thought has prescribed such concept in order to ascertain truth indirectly which may have following reasons:-

- 1) For self-justification,
- 2) To secure epistemological groundings,
- 3) To strengthen one’s own position
- 4) Pointing out defects of others,
- 5) Linguistic clarification.

So, it is clear from the above discussion that freedom of will has an important role in our daily life as well as in epistemic region. Human being should not be considered as only a rational one. This desire is breaking people and creating them in a new. The source of this desire is the person himself. We have to make desire come true in our own strength.

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