

## II-1. Perception for Shared Knowledge

World is knowable and comprehensible only through human efforts. The totality of our sense experiences is such that by thinking and reasoning with concepts and functional relations we can coordinate sense experience to deal with worlds of our concerns.

Ever since its inception (ca. 3000 BCE) the reasoning g with parts (anugam process) placed importance on the premise that **the world is knowable through human efforts**. It is the assumption behind all shared knowledge that continues to influence the human condition mostly for the better. The tradition of reasoning with parts evolved on the Indian subcontinent. It was an independent development that later came to challenge the *a priori* based approaches based on ad hoc of dogma and dialectic to suit purpose of the chosen few or the blessed ones. Approaches to build shared knowledge from parts also continue to be at odds with virtually all theistic belief systems.

The hall mark of the Jain tradition of shared knowledge is that it is built and validated by active choice, participation, and contribution of the users. Its conceptual foundation is traced to a critical insight of Rishabhath (c. - 3000) about reality (III-26). He observed that the total is a balance of inputs and outputs (Table II-1). Over the next 2500 years this conservation relation paved the way for the Nay reasoning. Omniscience violates this law of material balance, and such an imbalance is the basis for all manners of attenuated and augmented perceptions (#A9-22).

As a *kulagar* (head of the tribe) Rishabhath is said to have organized agriculture, introduced counting, and the Brahmi script

for writing. He introduced four forms of actions (*kar*) as punishment of increasing severity: warning and admonition, (*hakkar*), rebuke and reprimand (*dhikkar*), social boycott and isolation (*makkar*), and banish or exile (*nikkar*). According to an ancient legend Bharat the eldest son of Rishabhath consolidated the various kingdoms into the first empire on the Indian subcontinent. It is the basis for the name ***Bhaarat*** for India.

Mahaveer (- 599 to -527c), the intellectual successors of Rishabhath, emphasized that doubt (*syad*) results from an imbalance of inputs and outputs, and that doubt reflects lack of sufficient information (*agyan*) about the inputs and outputs. Such doubt hinders even the evaluation of the consequences of what one knows. Therefore doubt calls for additional information and scrutiny. It calls for actions that do not contradict (*vyabhicahar*) with the known reality. It also follows that in the absence of complete and valid knowledge it is necessary to avoid irreversible actions such as violence as the basis for the code of conduct. Chances of failure are further minimized with behaviors that are not against (*aviruddh*) what is known to be successful in the past and is relevant for the present. Mahaveer formalized the syllogistic origins of *syad*, and emphasized that doubt is reduced by considering viable alternatives (*anekant*). The process remains relevant for all situations because the real-time decisions are made with incomplete knowledge.

In short, continuity of the reality-based thought and reasoning by the 24 ***Arihant*** from Rishabhath to Mahaveer set the foundation for a secular world-view of shared knowledge in the Ganga valley. It has two key elements: First, valid perception follows from reality-based reasoning. Second, human create knowledge for human and humane use.

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