

## II-22. About Kakka

Concrete and meaningful reasoning is initiated with the rule bound constructs.

- ManikyaNandi

Heera Lal Jain Shastri (1904-1981), my father who I call Kakka because everybody else called him so, saw pursuit of the material of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ang as his calling. He pursued this single handedly with self-reliance. He himself described as dedicated to *itthivay*. It is not about a single-minded pursuit because he was always aware of the parallel developments and open to meaningful suggestions. Although a stickler for detail, for him the context and overview was critically important for the evaluation of the milestones.

To peer into the thought process of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ang one needs an understanding of how we formalize sense inputs and thought through words. These are the concerns of *vacch-nay* reasoning. Unlike the Western logic (or mere syllogism), Nay approach is also concerned with the fairness and completeness of the context, intention and meaning in order to grasp the content as the "whole." These ideas are developed in the nay section on this site.

Ever since his student days Kakka began to focus on the nay aspect of thought. As I understood from him, and also from his writings, the beauty and the intellectual foundation of the thought is that it has to stand on its own, that is its authority comes from what it is and what is based on, rather than where it came from. Moreover, tangible thought remains accessible irrespective of the culture it comes from or its history.

### **What Can a Rupia coin do?**

Ganesh Prashad (1874-1961), at the age of 30 wanted to be apprentice of Jeev Nath Mishr, Professor of Nyay at Queens College, Varansi. Professor literally threw him out when he heard that the applicant was born into a lower caste. And things turned ugly when the Brahmin Professor learnt that Ganesh was interested in the Jain tradition.

After hearing about this incidence a friend Chaman Lal donated as princely sum of one rupee (in those days working wage was 5 rupees per month) with which Ganesh bought 64 postcards and wrote to 64 people about his plan to establish an institution where students of all background could study the Syad Nay. End result was that the Syadvad Vidhyalay was established in 1908 on the banks of Ganga in Varanasi. Soon it came to be a major center of learning that included students of all castes including the Brahmins. During the next decade Ganesh also persuaded Madan Mohan Malviya to establish the Department of Jain Philosophy at the Banaras Hindu University. Although the Vidyalay is still flourishing, the Department has been closed down by the Government.

At this stage, as a prelude to the Dhavla work, a few words about Kakka's background and work philosophy are relevant. He writes in the introduction to Pramey Ratnamala [Heera Lal Jain, 1964] that in 1919 at the age of 15 he studied *Nyay* from a 15th century pandulipi in a temple in Lalitpur. In response to a query from Kakka, his teacher, Ghanshyam Das, encouraged him to someday bring out a modern interpretation of this work. This inspired the young student into keeping notes from around that time. Yet it took him 45 years to bring this work in print in 1964.

Meanwhile, its several hand-written drafts it was widely circulated and placed in Jain Vidyalay at Varanasi (1929) and Beawar (1932) for use by students and teachers. Note that, quite contrary to the tradition of the period, when Pramey Ratnamala was written (around or before 9<sup>th</sup> century CE) its first verse (Manglacharan) does not acknowledge inspiration from a teacher or a deity. It is only befitting that as a primer on Nay should also stand on its own without authority or a priori.

### **Ways to acknowledge inspiration**

Over the millennia acceptable ways to credit creative surges has changed. These have included:

The Divine words (Ved)

The divine insights (Sermon from the mount)

Meditation, and methods of oracles

Astrology and other chance based methods of discourse

Dreams

Logic

Prepared Mind

Spontaneous insight

Response to being wronged

Note the changing attitudes. Creative insights used to be in the realm of divine and omniscience to communicate authority of the ad hoc. May be it shifted responsibility that usually goes with your-word-against mine.

What matters? Usually credits should be given where it is due. But such acknowledgements can also be distracting if they imply a sense of authority. In Nay, human works are about construct that cohere truth-value with the psyche of the listener.

By most accounts Kakka was a prolific writer. He was never in a hurry to push any work in print before he was thoroughly satisfied at a deeper conceptual level. He also earned reputation as a no-nonsense teacher. The attitude also permeated in his talks, as well as in his dealings with other people. As he developed a deeper understanding of Nay, he began to apply its criteria to the available works to verify the consistency of the content, objective and purpose.

Soon after his schooling, Kakka established the working style of a free-lance scholar. He once said that *why drink un-potable water if you can dig a well for better water*. He went to places with ancient libraries. Going through the contents, he developed a knack for comparing multiple copies with a deeper understanding of the style in relation to the content, concepts, and the thoughts leading to the work. Before the days of copying-machines, collecting such material in long hand meant spending months at a given place! However, scribing things in long hand also gave an opportunity to think along and organize thoughts. Such a level of understanding is lost with the xerox-syndrome of possessing a copy without ever having read anything critically. Looking back at many of his preserved hand-written notes and press-copies, now I understand how he also developed a steady-hand for speedy writing without mistakes. As a student, I was always impressed with his letters: a string of well-reasoned thoughts unblemished by scratches. I appreciate it even more now as I work with a word-processor.

To make the ends meet, Kakka would typically teach in Jain Pathshala (religious schools). He preferred to tutor monks and interested layman who often are critical and thoughtful learners. Such short term arrangements offered him flexibility of the working hours and travel. Some of his students also became

his lifelong friends. Some even sponsored his work. As he puts it: *This way I do not have to go begging from the establishment and organizations run by people who do not understand the scholarship or the intellectual work.* It turned out to be a premonition. It also amounted to a vow of poverty against which the establishment offered no benediction.

One event in particular had a tremendous impact on our family. When Abhidhan Rajendra Kosh, an authoritative compendium of the Prakrit usage, was published in the early thirties, Kakka bought a personal copy by selling about 300 grams of the family gold. It did not make him any wiser about the family affairs. My mother was not particularly thrilled, especially because after that from time to time she had to give up her only remaining bracelet and necklace for loan from a pawn-broker. It went on 36 times over the next 30 years, and each time the lucky bracelet and necklace came back!

By mid-1930s Kakka began to be recognized as an expert with a deep understanding of the Nay syllogism with insights into the practical usage of the ancient Prakrit. The investment in the Kosh had a far greater impact on me. All of us siblings in our formative years were impressed with the seven volumes of the Abhidhan Rajendra Kosh of the Prakrit usage. For the Shrutpanchami celebration or Deepawali, we were often asked to move these massive volumes weighing over 25 kilograms.

**Work habit.** The professional expectations often mould personal habits. Usually it is more common the other way. After the Itarsi convention 1933, Kakka made a commitment to himself to work on The Dhavla. It was backed up by Lal Chand, a successful industrialist of Ujjain. Over the years (from 1928 until parted by death) Kakka enjoyed his confidence and friendship. His

responsibilities as a family tutor would provide him free time to do the work. It also had elements of advising, sponsorship, and deep personal concerns for the families of each other. Lal Chand had taken Kakka to Jhalrapatan as a "surprise" to show the copy of Dhavla. Once Lal Chand expressed a feeling that Kakka does not make himself available in the afternoons. Noting that Lal Chand was too busy with his business in the morning, in a politely written letter, Kakka first ruled out the possibility that he was lazy. Then he pointed out that he needed rest in the afternoon.

The habit of afternoon rest did not change until his last days. Through the years we all lived with its "consequences." By the time we got up at 7 AM or after, Kakka had usually completed four to six hours of work. While we were awed as the handwritten pages turned into printed books, we were also inspired that it is after all a human effort. I also learnt from the environment that even I could do something like this someday, that is if I make effort. However, in those years, to me it looked like a near-impossible task because I will have to get up at some awful hours at night. But now I understand and believe in what Kakka once said that *if you do not feel like getting up at 3 AM for something, it is not worth doing.*

Kakka's schedule suited well for his need for peace and quiet – as if it disappeared after we woke up! To us it was inconvenient only because the quiet must also prevail in the household in the afternoon and also after 8 PM. So, in those days without TV and radio, we had plenty of time to study, read, and converse without getting too animated and noisy. It also created an easier line of communication with my mother, who had her own style of doing things. It is probably reflected at its best in her comment after our household acquired the first radio in 1960. She wondered: *why does the evening news always last fifteen minutes.* To

her, if you can complete a task in five minutes it should take only five minutes. And if it requires days to do it well, so be it. Some of my siblings may disagree about these impressions. In any case, we all seem to have such enduring individual impressions. I have not asked them about theirs.

**Peering into Kakka's Mind.** In my later years, even more impressive was Kakka's reasoned tone of discussions and written correspondence with many of the contemporary scholars. At times the same courtesy was also accorded to me if I cared to ask a carefully reasoned and suitably worded question. Even after 50 years, some of these moments are indelible in my memory. Also such instances have guided me in my personal quest and perceptions as a researcher for experimentally verifiable scientific knowledge.

Significance of my interactions with Kakka, and also with his work, did not become clear to me until I began to examine the strengths and limitations of the modern scientific methods for my own work. It forced me to peer into the workings of Kakka's mind, as well as into the meaning of the representation and interpretation. I have been richly rewarded. Some of these insights are interspersed through this site, particularly in the essay and the quotations of others.

I started to puzzle what questions may have intrigued a budding Nay scholar when he first saw the fragments from a copy of the Moodbidri pandulipi. In Pramey Ratnamala, agam is defined as:

आप्तवचनादि -निबन्धनमर्थज्ञानमागमः

"The concrete and meaningful reasoning is initiated from the rule bound constructs from the past. In other words, *nibandh* (the rule-

bound construct) is the key to representation as well interpretation. It applies to the two-liner gatha as well as for the development of a reasoned argument through a matrix of steps as in any scientific proof. As an endorsement of intellectual integrity, here the appeal is for what is communicated by the sum total of the construct. Such a construct is both a source of knowledge and also a means for knowledge. With this understanding I presume Kakka viewed The Dhavla as a synthesis to peer into the mind through words. At least I interpret it that way.

For the students of thought it is noteworthy that Kakka's interpretation of Syad-Anekant-Nay remained at odds with the Varanasi Syadvad School. This group of all-too-powerful scholars interpreted syad-anevant as a relativism verging on rhetoric, figure of speech, or the context-dependent plurality. In their interpretation a person can be a father, son, brother, as well as a thief. They fail to recognize that reasoning is about a defined state, and it has little to do with assertions about multiple states. No matter how one cuts it, a rhetoric invoking multiple state does not pin point the truth value. Resulting confusion has set back the understanding of Syad-Anekant Nay.

Syad or anekant have little to do with Einstein's theory of relativity, or the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, or quantum mechanics. These are constructs or statements about the physical reality that apply only those parts of the reality based on all available relevant evidence. Based on the sum total of the Nay works presented on this site Syad facilitates recognition of liabilities that remain in an inference about a defined concern. Syad calls for a change of inference as new evidence becomes available, and Anekant call for a new inference if the state of the concern changes.

## Contents of Volume II

### People and Places

#### Preface to Volume II

- II-1. Perception for Shared Knowledge
- II-2. People and Places
- II-3. Live, Let Live, and Thrive
- II-4. Millennium of Mahaveer and Buddha
- II-5. Socio-political Context
- II-6. Clash of World-Views
- II-7. On the Ashes of the Magadh Empire
- II-8. Tradition of Austere Monks
- II-9. Who Was Bhadrabahu I?
- II-10. Prakrit: The Languages of People
- II-11. Itthi: Sensory and Psychological Perception
- II-12. What Is Behind the Numbers?
- II-13. Rational Consistency
- II-14. Looking through the Parts
- II-15. Active Interaction
- II-16. Anugam to Agam
- II-17. Preservation of Legacy
- II-18. Legacy of Dharsen
- II-19. The Moodbidri Pandulipis
- II-20. Content of Moodbidri Pandulipis
- II-21. Kakka Takes the Challenge
- II-22. About Kakka
- II-23. Move for Shatkhandagam
- II-24. Basis of the Discord in the Teamwork
- II-25. Significance of the Dhavla
- II-26. Jeev Samas Gatha
- II-27. Uses of the Words from the Past
- II-28. Biographical Sketches