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### Review Article

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## A Review on *Tarka* and *Nyaya* in Ayurveda: Role of Logical Reasoning in Diagnosis and Treatment

Mangesh Ganpat Dimble<sup>\*a</sup>, Gitanjali Deshmukh<sup>a</sup>, Snehal Birajdar<sup>b</sup>, Sachin Kulkarni<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup>Dept of Samhita Siddhant, Sawkar Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Varye, Satara, Maharashtra, India.<sup>a</sup>Dept of Samhita Siddhant, Sawkar Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Varye, Satara, Maharashtra, India.<sup>b</sup>Dept of Samhita Siddhant, Dr. Prafulla Patil Ayurvedic College, Parbhani, Maharashtra, India<sup>c</sup>Dept of Samhita Siddhant, Samata Ayurvedic Medical College, Aland, Karnataka, India.

### Abstract

*Tarka* or reasoning or rational inquiry in *Sanskrit*, is a basic philosophical concept within Indian philosophical schools, especially the *Nyaya* school. It involves formalized argument, profound introspection and sophisticated analysis, making it an invaluable tool for discerning truth from falsity. *Tarka Shastra*, the reasoning science, is a methodical structure for dialectics and argumentation that includes important techniques like *Purva paksha* and *Apara paksha*. Closely associated with *Nyaya* philosophy, *Tarka* is used as a vital epistemological instrument to evaluate sources of knowledge, solve philosophical conflicts, and guide the intellect towards sound conclusions. *Nyaya*, although a separate but ancillary system, provides a detailed framework of sixteen categories for ordering reasoning and acquisition of knowledge. This essay discusses the complex function of *Tarka*, its use in different schools of philosophy, and its inclusion within *Nyaya* to aid the final philosophical objective *Moksha* through proper knowledge.

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\*Corresponding author

### 1. Introduction

Indian philosophical traditions have traditionally underlined the importance of logic and reason thought in the quest for knowledge and liberation. Amongst the intellectual instruments devised for rational investigation, *Tarka* occupies a pivotal place. *Tarka* is an ordered process of reasoning governed by introspection, powers of discernment and dialectics, etc. It is both a useful instrument in disputations on philosophical topics and a means to comprehend the ultimate nature of things. (1-3)

*Tarka's* importance is particularly salient in the *Nyaya* school of thought, which is primarily concerned with epistemology the examination of knowledge. Based on systematic argumentation, *Nyaya* uses *Tarka* to authenticate knowledge by way of perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. The school presents a systematic system of *Padarthas* that lead the seeker from doubt, to discourse, to eventual establishment of truth.

Together, *Tarka* and *Nyaya* constitute a refined system of distinguishing true knowledge, eliminating conceptual confusion, and ultimately leading the mind to freedom from suffering. This article explores the definition, variety, and philosophical importance of *Tarka* and its institutionalization in *Nyaya*, pointing out their continued relevance to Indian metaphysics and logic. (3-5)

### 2. Tarka

*Tarka* is a *Sanskrit* word that can be translated as "reasoning," "inquiry," "logic," "conjecture," or "speculation." As applied to *Yoga* and Indian philosophy, *Tarka* is greater than everyday logical thought it is intense introspection and mental clarity. Through introspection and silencing the mind, an individual can see into reality and the nature of the self. In the Indian school of philosophy called *Nyaya*, *Tarka* is a systematic approach to logical reasoning necessary in the pursuit of valid knowledge. It is used in the formation of logical

arguments and the refutation of contrary opinions, laying prominence on inference and empirical observation. *Tarka* gives rise to analytical thought and logical accuracy, allowing the seekers to discover truth from falsehood.

*Tarka* is concerned with creating and testing arguments to reach rational conclusions. In *Nyaya* philosophy, it is used to evaluate various forms of knowledge and authenticate their origin. It's encouraging critical thinking and helps in solving philosophical disputes by explaining concepts. It conditions the mind to think logically, transcending instinct and inherited assumptions. *Tarka* not only culminates in philosophical awareness but also equips one for intellectual debates. *Tarka* is progressive or step-by-step reasoning that is potentially developing, while *Kutarka* is fallacious or perverse reasoning employed to deceive or criticize and *Vitarka* is higher level of reasoning with intent to grasp deeper truths. (4-6)

*Tarka Shastra* encompasses various aspects such as *Purva paksha* and *Apara paksha*, the very basis of philosophical discussion. These discussions include recourse to authoritative texts as well as a rational exchange in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions. *Tarka*, most commonly translated as "hypothetical reasoning," entails putting forward, exploring, and clarifying assumptions to attain sound comprehension. The notable scholars in *Tarka Shastra* includes *Adi Shankara*, *Udyotakara*, *Vacaspati Misra*, *Jayanta Bhatta*, *Ramanujacharya*, *Udayanacharya*, *Madhvacharya*, *Visvanatha* and *Kumaran Asan*. (5-7)

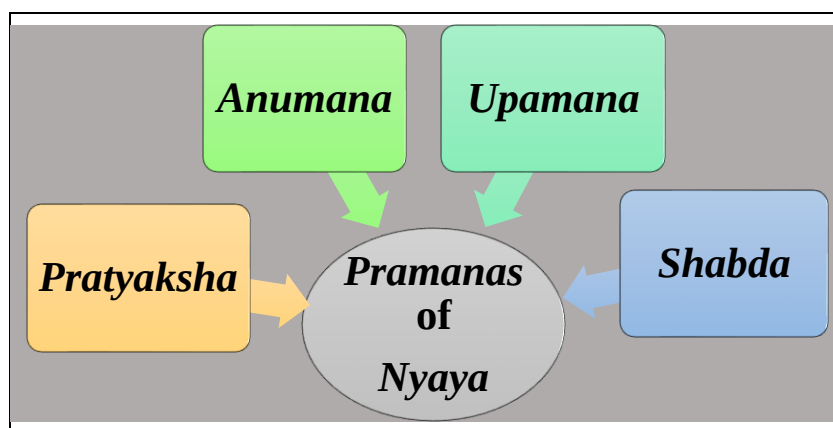
### 3. Nyaya

*Nyaya*, is a school of philosophy whose purpose is to lead the intellect to correct conclusions by rational reasoning. *Nyaya* is concerned with proper methods of thought and right means to gain knowledge, placing great emphasis on empirical reasoning as well as accepting *Shabda* as a means to gain knowledge. *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshika* have a rational, sense-based approach to the world in common,

but differ in emphasis: *Vaisheshika* focuses on the science of being, being closer to empirical sciences, while *Nyaya* focuses on epistemology, providing systematic methodologies for argumentation and debate. The final goal of *Nyaya* is *Moksha*, which is gained not through grace but through rational comprehension of reality through established categories. (7-9)

The philosophical system provides various fundamental categories essential for gaining true knowledge which includes *Pramana*, *Prameya*, *Samsaya*, *Prayojana*, *Drstanta*, *Siddhanta*, *Avayava*, *Tarka*, *Nirnaya*, *Vada*, *Jalpa*, *Vitanda*, *Hetvabhasa*, *Chala*, *Jati* and *Nigrahasthana*. These epistemic tools seek to guide for inquiring truth and emancipation. *Apavarga*, as per *Nyaya Sutra* is the consequence of removing misconception, mental flaws such as desire and hatred, action, birth and misery. It also adds abstract objects such as pleasure, pain and defects, and sanctions eternal entities like space, time, ether, souls, and minds. While *Vaisheshika* designates atoms as unperceptible, *Nyaya* takes them to be the smallest perceptible units, in keeping with its focus on direct perception. (8-10)

Philosophically, *Nyaya* is realistic and pluralistic in that the *Atman* is a substance having non-universal qualities like desire, aversion, pleasure and consciousness that occur only with the body. Consciousness is not inborn but adventitious. *Nyaya* accepts four *Pramanas* as mentioned in **Figure 1**, which includes *Pratyaksha* (perception), *Anumana* (inference), *Upamana* (comparison) and *Shabda* (testimony). Perception is immediate knowledge gained by virtue of contact between object and sense, occurring in two phases *Nirvikalpa* and *Savikalpa*. Inference springs from perception and occurs in three ways including *Purvavat*, *Sheshavat* and *Samanyato Drisht*, each being a patterned five-limbed logical form. *Upamana* assists in discernment of the unknowns by comparing them to known things and is highly prized in *Vedanta*. *Shabda* includes both divine and human witness, accepted if the origin is trustworthy and the statement explicit.



**Figure 1.** Pramanas of Nyaya

*Nyaya* also offers a theory of mistake because it acknowledges that both perception and inference may result in false judgments. Error in perception happens when the mental image does not accord with the existing object and errors in inference are classified as *Hetvabhasa* and comprise irregular, contradictory or perception-

refuted reasons. The *Atman* and *Brahman* are the key metaphysical notions: the soul is eternal, perceivable and inferable, whereas *Brahman* is the wise cause responsible for arranging lifeless atoms. *Nyaya* also embraces *Karma* and *Adrsta* as causal explanations for effects without observable causes. *Nyaya* is a rational, theistic, realistic

school of Indian philosophy that joins together logic, metaphysics, and epistemology as a single quest for liberation. *Nyaya* goes beyond intellectual analysis in providing practical instruments to dispel doubt, confirm truth, and finally liberate the self from suffering by virtue of correct knowledge. (1,5,10)

#### 4. Conclusion

*Tarka*, being a sophisticated mode of reasoning and questioning, goes beyond the limits of common sense logic by combining philosophical acuity, intellectual lucidity, and practical application. In its complete form, it develops a disciplined intellect capable of sorting out truth from falsehood through ordered debate and thoughtful analysis. The *Nyaya* tradition formalizes this faculty of argument, providing a systematic epistemological and metaphysical system based on four reliable sources of knowledge and sixteen categories of examination. The working relationship between *Tarka* and *Nyaya* is a paradigm of rational search for truth that transcends time promoting distinctness, critical consideration and intellectual freedom in both spiritual and academic contexts.

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#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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