

‘**Darshana**’, in *Keywords for India*, eds. Rukmani Vyasa Nair and Peter deSouza, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, pp, 65-66, ISBN-9781350039230.

DARSHANA DARŚANA

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Darshana, in the sense of true philosophical knowledge is first quoted in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* (first century CE) to mean the perfect vision of everything . Etymologically, darshana evolves from the Sanskrit term *Drś*, that is, vision. The contemporary use of the term darshana finds its new dimension in the writings of Haribhardra (eighteenth century CE), who considers different philosophical schools in the cord of darshana in his text *Ṣad-darśana-samuccaya*. Later, eminent Vedāntin Mādhava in fourteenth century CE popularized and expatiated the meaning of *darshana* in *Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha* . The purport of the term darshana is imbedded in the notion of Indianness that caters to an influential uniqueness in Hinduism, Jainism (*Samyak darshana* or liberation consists in right vision) and Mahayana Buddhism (Nagarjuna’s dictum *tattva-darśana*, i.e., the true reality, and Vasubandhu’s use of *darshana marga*, i.e., the conduit of seeing).

Darshanas or the schools of Indian philosophy are orthodox (*Āstika*) and heterodox (*Nāstika*). The *Āstikas* (Mīmāṃsa and Vedānta) have their direct cradles in the Vedic texts . Sāṅkhya, Yōga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika quest for the non -reliant ground; these schools have faith in the doctrine of humanistic thought that celebrates reasoning and experience. *Nāstikas* (Cārvāka, Buddhism and Jainism) defy the authority of the Vedas and are the non-believers of God.

Sāṅkhya is the oldest philosophy school in India. The sage Kapila propounded this school by maintaining the dynamic uniformity of the manifold world and objects that are unconscious . Sāṅkhya’s aesthetic mode brings about the ultimate subtle material cause of the world as Prakriti which remains uncaused (*an unwarranted regressus ad infinitum*) and productive. The evolution of Prakriti is a manifestation, where the imbalance of the substratum (gunas – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) transmits conscious mind to unconscious objects and in the whole process Purusa, the second transcendental reality, stands as an inactive cum inert perceiver. Sāṅkhya believes in the unity of Purusa and Prakriti, which leads to the creation as well as liberation of the empirical self (*Jīva*). The apparent conjecture of Purusa and Prakriti is annihilated through transmigration for the sake of the emancipation of self.

Yōga, the theistic Sāṅkhya , engrafts God as the efficient cause of the world, while the material cause is doubtlessly Prakriti . Patāñjali, the author of *Yōga Sūtra* , synthesizes *Mokshya* (salvation) as attainable through practicing meditation or yōga. Vyāsa’s *Yōga-Bhāṣya* (400 CE), a commentary, defines yōga as a method of knowing oneself and obtaining a kind of discriminative knowledge that can flatten even the potentiality of all afflictions. The eight limbs of *Yōga* in its fourfold stage (Samadhi, Sadhana, Vibhuti and Kaivalya padas) do not only restrain the mind of the yogi but also provide an abiding devotion to the transcendental consciousness (*Vivakṣṇānya*).

Vaiśeṣika, the second oldest philosophy, upholds a theoretical understanding of the universe as a search for true knowledge of reality instead of the transcendental self, etc. Vaiśeṣika doctrine considers atoms as undying and consistent particles of the world, and all worldly events have their own natural evolution maintained by the science of categories (*padārtha*). Kanāda's *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* and Praśastapāda's commentary (600 CE) are the foremost classical texts suggesting that the cause lies in the material effects, while knowledge of particularity (*Viśeṣa*) demarcates one eternal substance from the other. Liberation means understanding the true knowledge of reality and an accomplishment of happiness (*pravṛtti*) and cessation of the negative action (*nivṛtti*).

Nyāya epistemologically refers to the methodology of argumentation. Gautama (200 BCE), the profounder of this darshana, was concerned about two different doctrines – logic and ontology safeguarded by Vaiśeṣika's epistemology in *Nyāya Sūtra*. Nyāya amplifies the nature of valid knowledge (*prama*) through the instruments of valid knowledge (*pramāna*), such as perception, inference, comparison and testimony. Nyāya believes in the substantial mode of self as the intrinsic cause of cognition. The pre-existence and transmigration processes endorse the self that can attain liberation when the law of karma and false knowledge are nullified.

Mīmāṃsā, also known as *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* or *Karma Mīmāṃsā*, enshrines the prior analysis of the Vedic knowledge from the aspects of action, rituals, ceremonies (*yajna*) and critical reflection. In Jaimini's *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, the Vedas are regarded as external, authorless and infallible knowledge and the attainment of the 'highest good' is possible through *dharma* (virtue or duties) and *dharmin* (the categories that possessed dharma) as prescribed by Vedas that give value to the human acts, an intense rationalistic appeal in conjunction with performing *yajna* and duties or non-duties. The continuation of ethical activities and understanding the Vedic verdicts are a theme in philosophy of language, which involves learning the exact meaning of *dharma* and proper way of conducting *yajna*.

Vedānta literarily means the zenith of Vedas and depends on the *Prasthānatrayi*, which are the Upanisads (*Śruti prasthāna* or wisdom), the Bhagavad Gita (*Smṛti prasthāna* or practice) and the Brahma Sūtras (*Nyāya prasthāna* or logic). All the major schools of Vedānta advocate that Brahma is the supreme and static material cause of the world. The metaphysical stance of Vedānta centres rounds the triangular structure of the world (*Jagat*), self (*Jivātman*) and ultimate reality (*Brahma*). Advaita defines Brahma as *Sat-cit-ānanda*, that is, existence, consciousness and bliss constitute the non-dualistic essence (*svarūpa*) of Brahma instead of his attributes (*gunas*); whereas other schools of Vedānta preserve *Sat-cit-ānanda* as *Svarūpa* and *gunas* together executing the concept of *Brahmasvarūpa-Svagata-bheda*. According to Advaita, liberation consists in purest realization where knowledge (*jñāna*) of absolute identity between the self and the ultimate Brahma is attainable, while

other schools of Vedānta regards devotion (*bhakti*) and action (*karma*) manifested by knowledge as ways to achieve salvation.

Buddhism, the founder of this non-theistic creed is Gautama Buddha (sixth century BCE), whose philosophy later becomes a religious text *Tripitakas*. The essence of Buddhism lies in its Four Noble Truths (*catyāri ārya satyāni*), an anti-speculative outlook that directs an individual towards enlightenment through the paths of suffering and its causes and the way of its cessation or ultimate liberation (*nirvaṇa*) is made possible through *astāṅgika mārga*. Buddha's ethical philosophy rests on conditional-based existent objects (*pratītyasamutpāda*), the law of karma, momentariness (*ksanika-vāda*) and the non-existence of the soul (*nairātmavāda*) that are concerned about the metaphysical cum epistemological basis of philosophical quests.

Jainism, propounded by Mahāvīra (500 BCE), is derived from the word *Jina*, a conqueror who subdues passions to attain liberation by practicing the tenets of non-violence, asceticism, veganism, meditation and liberation. This doctrine rests on three tenets: common-sense realism, the relativity of judgements (*syādvāda*) and pluralism or many-sided realities (*anekāntavāda*). Liberation in Jainism is made possible through *Ratnatraya*, that is, Samyak darshana (right faith/view), Samyak jñāna (right knowledge) and Samyak charitra (right conduct).

Cārvāka is a *ca ru-va ka* or sweet-speech materialistic doctrine that professes perception as the only *pramana*. They are also called *Bhutacaitanyavadin*, that is, consciousness is merely a by-product of the four material elements (earth, water, fire and air) from which the world is formed; whereas, the soul is a myth like God, an unnecessary creator. The ethical values of the Vedas or other schools have been despised by Cārvāka. Liberation takes place with physical death, and the logical upshot of Cārvāka metaphysics and epistemology persuades them to enjoy all material pleasures in life since the possibility of rebirth is absurd and illogical.

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GURU

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The conception of the word *guru* in Indian cultures goes back to the Upanishadic era, especially in the *Mundakopanishad*, where Brahma (the creator of the world) taught the *Brahma Vidya* (the foundation of all knowledge or the speculative discussion about ultimate reality) to his eldest son, Atharvan. Later, Artharvan transmitted the Brahma Vidya to Angiras who shared the absolute knowledge with Satyavaha, a successor of Sage Bharadwaja. Satyavaha narrated to Bharadwaja, who finally imparted the knowledge (both the higher and lower levels) to Angiras. A significance that one could find here is the use of the Upanishadic term *paraparam* (*Mundakopanishad*, 1.2). The term not only indicates that the foundation of all knowledge has two different folds – *para* (transcendent) and *apar* (mundane) – but also that the term *paraparam* tinges to the transmission progression of the knowledge from guru (enlightened master) to his *shisya* (dedicated disciple). The proper way of learning Brahma Vidya depends on the *gurupasadena*, that is, only guru can condescend to expose wisdom to the devoted disciples.

The criterion of a guru is clearly mentioned by Upanishads which say that a guru must be an enlightened person (*jnani*) who learned the Vedas carefully and dedicated himself to the contemplation of Brahman. The guru would be a man of wisdom who has not only seen the truth but also has the capability to teach in an appropriate way to his disciples. The guru possesses wisdom, equanimity, self-control, empathy and a desire to help others, who strive for the complete recasting of the oneness as versed in the *shruti* (canonical, unquestionable) and *smṛti* (supplementary, liable to change) texts.

A *shisya* (*adhikarin*) must have the proclivity to know the absolute knowledge and have a reverent interest in learning the truth, channelized by self-control, thought, intellectual apprehension and reasoning. Both, the guru and the *shisya*, need to tread the inner path guided by *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (contemplation) and *niddidhyasana* (meditation). Our mind is a curvature line of the harvest field (wisdom), which could be controlled by the consort of spiritual life, faith in Brahma, knowledge about Brahma and finally self-realization. These procedures ought to be guided by the gurus, the most fortunate seekers who attained the illumination of Brahma Vidya by guru *parampara* (uninterrupted succession).

A guru seeks the eternal knowledge in the immutable absolute being by attaining consciousness of the difference between all non-eternal appearances and the absolute Being. Besides, a dedicated disciple for the sake of knowledge of the absolute Being needs to approach a spiritual preceptor who is rooted in the consciousness of Brahma. The radiance of absolute knowledge is a quest where the guru is regarded as one part (*purvarūpam*) and other complement part (*uttararūpam*) is rigidly the *shisya*; and their union (*sandhi*) escorts towards the production of knowledge through the recitation of the Vedas. The seeker must be a son/daughter or a worthy pupil.

This Sanskrit term guru that originated from the Vedas has an overall Indian root and its use is not bounded only by Hinduism but also has linkages to Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Baul, etc. These different religions infuse guru–shishya parampara, where knowledge is passed through successors, through either one’s heirs or pupils. In neo-Indian tradition of the Bauls of Northern India, the guru, or the Arabic *murshid*, is the person who shows the *sahaj* (simple) way to segregate worldly turmoil and teach the seeker (*baul*) to merge his or her mind to his or her inner mind, where the eternal and all-pervading Truth resides.

Archaeological and epigraphical evidence point out that in ancient and medieval India, pupils studied and practiced the śāstras in the *gurukul* (the house or the teaching place of gurus), which was considered an auspicious place.

Most cultures, such as the English, French, German, Polish, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish, are habituated to the use the word guru in the sense of sage and spiritual leader. However, in contemporary India, the etymological meaning of the term guru transmits to different concepts, such as a teacher of *tantra* (esoteric traditions), *yōga*, music, game, arts, etc. It has no significant connection with the term guru as promoted in the Hindu śāstras. Most of them never practiced the sacred knowledge of the Vedas and are falsely considered as an authority on God or a direct incarnation or prophet of God. They demean the revered term guru whom the Upanishads placed as high as God. These fraud gurus and their followers engage in mundane rejoices. Now in Indian languages, such as Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Telugu and Malayalam, the term guru ironically indicates an extremely sly personality who can manage anything for her or his self-interest.

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