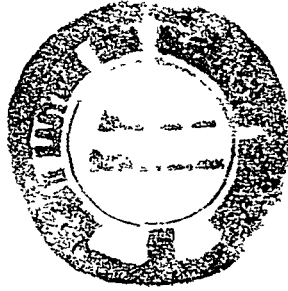


**THE CONCEPT OF ERROR AND KHYATIVADAS  
IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**



**A**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED  
TO GAUHATI UNIVERSITY AS A PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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**By**

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M.Phil Degree of Gauhati University was prepared under my  
supervision and guidance, that it conforms to the M.Phil  
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That the dissertation as a whole or any part thereof  
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[ Mrs. Golapi Kalita ]

P R E F A C E

This dissertation entitled "The Concept of Error and Khyāti-vādas in Indian Philosophy" is a discussion of the illusory or false knowledge (Aparmā) as against True knowledge (Pramā). The concept of error is very important to the philosophers of India as it is related to the problem of knowledge. Here I have discussed in the 'Introductory chapter', the concept of knowledge, the distinction between valid and invalid knowledge (Pramā and apramā).

Error is a kind of invalid knowledge which is different from memory, doubt and hallucination and I have explained in the introduction about the concept of error and what are its nature. Again I have explained the Khyātivādas in short from realistic and idealistic standpoints.

In the Second Chapter, I have explained the different Khyāti-vādas of the realistic group of philosophers of India.

In the Third Chapter, I have explained the Khyātivādas of the Idealistic group of philosophers of India.

Finally, in conclusion, on the basis of all these theories, I have given a conclusion which I like most or find satisfactorily explaining the nature of the erroneous knowledge.

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CHAPTER - I  
I N T R O D U C T I O N

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### "THE CONCEPT OF ERROR"

(The Concept of "error" is an epistemological concept. It is a drawback in knowledge at a given time. It is a category of false knowledge<sup>1</sup>.)

'Reflection upon the nature of our knowledge gives rise to a number of perplexing philosophical problems<sup>2</sup>. An enquiry into the problem of knowledge is important not only for the satisfaction of our curiosity with regard to this particular event but also for revealing the nature and attributes of other varieties. As a matter of fact "knowledge is only the instrument of understanding the truth"<sup>3</sup>. It is on the basis of knowledge of something that all living beings deal with other objects of the surrounding world. Hence knowledge is regarded as the ground of what may be called the behaviour or conduct of a living being. Hence, knowledge may be said to be a cognitive phenomena, which stands for something as the objects of knowledge. So knowledge consists simply in the manifestation of objects (ārtha-prakāsa buddhi)<sup>4</sup>.

The ultimate constituents of things are not material but living particles which not only exist and interact with one another, but somehow experience their existence and activity. The real, is, therefore, an objective system of

which existence and knowledge are two inseparable aspects. It is true that what we know as the consciousness or knowledge of human beings is a specific phenomenon determined by certain conditions as the subject object relation or the activity of the nervous system and the brain. But while these conditions explain the specific empirical form and character of this or that knowledge, they cannot account for the original experience, which is embedded in reality and conditions there conditions themselves. Hence we conclude that knowledge is present in all reality and is manifested in a specific form in man by th subject object relation. It is just the self expression of reality. Basanquet says that "Knowledge is an essential form of the self-revelation of the universe, experience as a whole in the essential form".

The basic epistemological problem of the nature of knowledge, the relation of knowledge to reality and the nature and criterion of truth and error". Our activities are not blind reaction to objects. We proceed to act in a particular way with reference to an object on the relief that our knowledge correctly reveals its nature. But at times we donot find a thing where and how we expect it to be, and thus knowledge is not always a correct representation of reality and that it frequently misguides us and leads to painful results. Thus we come to distinguish between truth and falsehood<sup>4</sup>.

With regard to the nature of knowledge, a distinction

should be made between its essential and functional Characters or what is the same thing between its metaphysical and empirical nature. Metaphysically speaking, a thing is what it is in itself, apart from and independently of its relation to other things. From the empirical standpoint, we consider the nature of a thing as related to other things. For a thing to act means to come into relation to other things affected by its action.

Knowledge in its empirical character may be considered from the standpoint of psychology and logic. As knowledge is defined from the psychological point of view, as the apprehension of objects, it is an action where the external object is apprehended. It is merely the act of knowing where the object is a presented object. Thus knowledge includes all knowing state such as sensations, perceptions imagination, doubt and illusion. Knowledge, thus, understood is merely a descriptive act of knowledge.

As Results says "whatever we are acquainted with must be something we may draw wrong inferences from our acquaintance, but the acquaintance itself cannot be deceptive. Thus when an object is known as an object in an act of knowing there can be no question of truth or falsity about the act itself. Hence, "knowledge, to be true, must conform to the nature of the object that is known"<sup>5</sup>.

"Truth and falsity are the characteristics of beliefs

or statements<sup>6</sup>". Hence a world of mere matter, since it would contain no beliefs or statements would also contain no truth or falsehood. It is knowledge by description which is under the roof truth and falsehood. According to Gangesa "In the world of facts there is no such objects which may be called a false fact "A fact is what it is, and by itself is neither true nor false<sup>7</sup>". Hence we face a very pertinent question what does then make them false ?

According to Prof. N.V. Banerjee that in regard to the external world considered in itself the question of error does not arise any more than that of knowledge. It is only in connection with its cognitive relation with the self that knowledge may take place or error may arise"<sup>9</sup>. Knowledge inherently refers to an object that is known and it always belongs to a subject that knows. Thus it is easier to account for falsehood in which the mind and the various objects concerned all occur.

(Illusion) or (error) have been constantly baffling all philosophical analysis that aspires to formulate a consistent theory of knowledge. Every philosopher has to explain their appearance in order to justify his conclusions in the field of epistemology. In Indian philosophy the problem of illusory appearance, so to say the concept of error, has been one of the very important and favourite topic of discussion and has aroused a good deal of heated debate and divergence of opinion. /

(There are well known theories in Indian philosophy to explain the problem of illusory knowledge which is known as "Khyātivādas" meaning erroneous cognition. When a thing is experienced as what it is not or is not experienced as what it is there is erroneous cognition. So error or illusion means a failure of the cognitive function recognised as such. Error (bhrama) is the reverse of valid knowledge (Pramā).)

In Indian philosophy the sanskrit word 'jñāna' stands for knowledge and is used in a variety of senses. It is often used in the sense of buddhi (cognition) or Anubhava (consciousness). At times it also means upalabdhi (apprehension). Moreover, it refers to any kind of cognition irrespective of validity and invalidity. It is only in its narrow sense that jñāna (knowledge) is divided into two sections known as pramā and apramā (valid and invalid). A cognition is called pramā when an object is truly cognised as it is. We have cognition like there is silver and nacre where both silver and nacre are cognised as they are. But apramā is a kind of invalid cognition where we do not cognise an object as it is, but otherwise, when we see silver in place of nacre like 'This is silver' (idam rajatam), it is an erroneous cognition, where nacre is mistaken for silver. So apramā is a kind of invalid cognition which is called illusion or error. So illusion is an invalid knowledge where a strange object is superimposed upon the former object.

{ "Illusion or error represents an object in a form

which does not belong to it. It reveals an object differently from what it actually is<sup>8</sup>". In error an object is cognised as having certain characteristics that really fall out side of its being. "Hence it has been described as the wrong apprehension (mithyā upalābdi) in which an object is taken for what it is not"<sup>9</sup>.)

Bradley says "we cannot on the one hand, accept anything between non-existence and reality, which on the other hand, error obstinately refuses to be either. It persistently attempts to maintain a third position which appears no where to exist, and yet somehow is occupied. Error has no home, it has no place in existence, and yet, far all that, it exists"<sup>10</sup>.

(Error is the qualification of a reality in such a way that in the result it has an inconsistent content which for that reason is rejected. "It is the experience and the result of misinterpreting<sup>ing</sup> some real sense stimulus or stimuli".<sup>11</sup> The perception of nacre as silver is a case of error, where something is not presented before me as a real object.)

The concept of illusory experience is based on the facts of experience and not a mere hypothesis or gratuitous assumption. That the reality of things is different from their outward appearance. A straight stick appears bent in water. To the passengers in a ship or moving railway train, the trees appear to be moving, in the opposite direction. People who are

moving appear to be standing still when we see them from a distance, when the clouds move in the sky it looks as if the moon is moving. A stick which is burning at one end, when revolved rapidly, produces the impression of a circle of fire. In darkness we see snake in a piece of rope. A tree stands as ghost in darkness. When the eyes are pressed little, we see the double moon or the double finger in place of one. In the sea shore, shell looks like silver in bright sun light. In a desert one can see the water in place of sand. A jaundiced person sees everything yellow. A crystal looks red by the side of red flower. We see the sky as blue though actually it has no colour so all these are common cases of illusion. So the disparity between what is real, and what it appears is mainly due to the inherent limitations in our sensory and intellectual apparatus.

Science has an explanation of every illusion. But the scientific explanation is quite different from philosophical explanation given by the philosopher. And so the khyātivādas stand for the explanation of illusory appearance.

But the illusion itself is not a bare nothingness floating on mere nothingness. It has a definite substratum or an objective basis. For example, in the case of illusion e.g. of a person in a pillar, at least one factor is real or non-illusory. It is the presence of the pillar itself. The pillar when perceives as a person makes the knowledge illusory. So error involves an irrational jump from the give to the not-given.

But again the question comes, how the specific object gives a specific illusion. We never see man in a shell or pillar in a snake. Why we see snake in the rope only ? Vātsāyāna says that there is the general resemblance between the snake and the rope, though not its inherent qualities. The law of general resemblance accounts for all cases of common illusion and misleads one to see what exists elsewhere in that which is actually present before the perceiver.

It has been admitted that even the common illusions contain some elements of truth. In an illusory judgement. This is a snake" there are two parts, the 'this' and the 'what'. The nature of right knowledge eventually correcting or rejecting it is expressed in the form 'This is a rope'. The knowledge of something that is actually present remains unaffected by the process of the correction. The correction is only of the 'what' part of the illusory judgement and 'this' part is remain unchanged. The 'snake' is replaced by the rope, but the experience of certain general features of the rope, previously perceived as the 'this' remains unaffected. Thus common illusion contains an element of truth, namely the actual experience of some general feature of something objectively real.

In normal perception it is the presence of the object which brings forth our awareness. But in the erroneous apprehension we argue that the object exists because we have an apprehension. Does this mean that our apprehension brings

forth the object. This is not the case, since it is impossible to have an apprehension if there is no object. But the erroneous object does not have a real existence. In other words, we have to say that either the erroneous object is uncaused or it comes into being along with the apprehension. But logically it is not possible. So the erroneous object is self-contradictory.

The object that actually exists does not have its own form during the erroneous apprehension. The form of the attributed content transforms, as it were, the form of the given and the given comes to acquire the predicated form. The actual properties of the rope does not become the real properties of the snake and yet the apprehended snake cannot be other than the rope. In other words, the erroneous perception like that of snake does not imply a crossed reference, for it is an appearance that has come into being.

What is the way out to explain the appearance of a snake which we have a perceptual contact only with the rope? Past experiences of rope and snake have left certain impressions in our mind. Though they give rise to acts of recollection, in the erroneous apprehension they function in the way in which they do when we have a valid apprehension. The sense - organs and their impressions constitute the material conditions for an erroneous apprehension when they are aided by certain defects. The defects in the apprehension prevent it from knowing the rope as the rope, instead it

awakens the dormant impressions which they bring forth the awareness of a different object.

The sense organ and its defect cannot cause error since there cannot be any similarity between a quality of the given and the appearance or the similarity between that which appears and the quality of the percipient. The perceiving consciousness cannot cause the object of error, since that which creates cannot create any out of nothing, nor can it transform itself into the erroneous object. Since the mind cognises the externally given only with the aid of the sense organs, the mind by itself cannot be said to cognise the object of error. Even the sense organ cannot come into contact with the erroneous snake which in reality is not the object visible to the eye. Then we have to say that the mind alone cognises it after creating it and this is a manifest impossibility.

In the erroneous cognition 'This is a snake' the 'this' is apprehended as snake. If the snake was not known to us previously from our experience, we cannot have the appearance of a snake. When we speak of an appearance, it implies that it is an appearance of something else which is its ground. This ground is necessary for any apprehension. In the illusory judgement. This is a snake', the 'this' is the ground. We negate the snake which is the 'this' in the correcting judgement. And we can negate the snake only if it existed earlier. If it did not exist, it is impossible to negate the non-existent.

In the erroneous cognition, the apprehension does not alter the actual character of the objects but only our knowledge of it. So the object of the perceptual cognition is not erroneous and that our knowledge above is only erroneous because the object cognised does not actually exist. But do we negate our knowledge ? It is something other than knowledge that is negated. If the nacre appears as having the characters of silver, what is that which brings about this character to nacre ? It cannot be knowledge since this knowledge arises from the cognition of the given which is the ground.

Like illusion, doubt and memory are called also invalid knowledge. But illusion is different from doubt and memory.

Doubt is a kind of invalid knowledge where there is no definite assertion or a definite denial. It is a state of indecision.

Memory or smriti is also another kind of invalid cognition which is different from error. Memory is the reproduction of past experience and so it is representative.

Illusion is different from dream also. In dreams objects are recalled due to the revival of memory images and they falsely appear as existing here and now.

Illusion is different from hallucination. Hallucinations are the sensory perception in the absence of

corresponding object. They are creations of one's own mind.

So (illusion is different from all these kinds of invalid knowledge because it has a definite, assured, presentative character. It is invalid, because the object appears not as it is, but other than what it is. Of course, though the illusion is definite, assured for the time being when it occurs, ultimately it is invalid like any other invalid types of knowledge. )

(The illusory object has actually no epistemological status i.e. the status of knowledge. The status of the 'illusory object' is different from that of the veridical object and it has no real existence as the latter. It does not exist anywhere in space. It has a temporal existence in so far as it is taken to exist till it is sublated. /

"There is a difference between a sense illusion and the illusion of the understanding. If we take a rope for a snake, it is the illusion of the understanding"<sup>12</sup> and it ceases as soon as we are convinced that it is a rope. But if a man sees a double moon owing to an eye disease it is a sense illusion and it will continue even if he is convinced that the moon is single.

In illusion, what is really is not there, is perceived by us to be there and what does not exist is perceived by us to exist. If science could show that what we call 'illusory

appearance is really there, the stick which we perceive as bent in water is really bent. But in reality it is not. Science gives no explanation why a subjective appearance should be taken to us to be objective and real, for example, seeing a snake in a rope. We perceive what is not really there.

So the Indian philosophers are interested to analysis such errors which mispresent a fact and distorts the nature of reality and consequently misleads us in practical activity.

### KHYATIVĀDAS

Since Khyativādas are discussed only in the context of falsity or bhrama, each theory, therefore turns out to be a view about the nature of the cognitive content of the so-called erroneous knowledge. Since Khyativādas are always discussed in the various classical treatises mostly through the illustrations derived from perceptual source, it is argued that each of these theories of error centres its discussion over the nature and content of erroneous perception. The question is this : how are we to explain the false perception of silver in a shell ? Is it due to the object itself ? or is it due to our subjective attitude towards the object ? Every system gives different explanations though they are similar in some respects.

There are two groups of philosophers, Idealists and the Realists and they have their own outlook regarding reality. Both there two groups have different explanations

regarding reality and concerned problems.

The Realists hold that the objects exist independently of the knowing mind. According to the Idealists, on the other hand, holds that the mind apprehends an external object through the ideas.

Khyāti-vādas are discussed by these two groups of philosophers and so there are different theories of error. I discuss here the principal theories of error which are classified under two heads :

(1) Sat Khyāti - 'Sat' means existence, so according to this view, in error the basic datum of illusory object is objectively real. So error is the cognition of the existence. Sat-khyāti is followed by Rāmānuja, Prabhākara, and Nyāya. Sāmkhya and Kumārila also follows this view. The Yogācāra school of Buddhism, may also be considered as Satkhyāti, in that the ground of illusion as mental idea, is not denied, only its externality is rejected.

So the Satkhyāti theories of error are -

- (1) Satkhyāti-Vāda of Rāmānuja,
- (2) Akhyātivāda of Prabhākara Mimāmsā.
- (3) Anyathā Khyāti vāda of Nyāya .
- (4) Viparita Khyātivāda of Kumārila Bhatta.
- (5) Sadāsaḥ Khyātivāda of Sāmkhya,
- (6) Ātmakhyāti-Vāda of Vignāna Vāda School,

Again the Satkhyāti of Rāmānuja, Akhyāti, of Prabhākara, and Sadāsatkhyāti of Sāṃkhya have similarities in explaining the erroneous cognition.

Anyathākhyāti of N̄yāya and Viparita Khyāti of Kumārila are alike theories in the explanation of erroneous cognition. But Ātmakhyāti vāda have different explanation regarding error holding everything as subjective idea. The Anirvacaniya Khyāti of Advaita Vedānta explains that the object of error as neither real nor unreal, but indeterminable. The Advaitins donot regard the object of illusion as purely subjective, but has a kind of objectivity as long as illusion lasts. So the concept of error is indeterminable. This theory is in between the Satkhyāti and Asat-Khyāti theory of error.

(2) Asatkhyāti - The ward 'asat' means here non-existence. So according to this view the content of illusory experience is pure non-entity. So error is the cognition of the non-existent object. Nāgārjuna of Sunyavāda follows this view.

Again (1) the Asatkhyātivāda of Nāgārjuna (2) Ātmakhyāti-vāda of Vignānavāda and (3) Anirvacaniyakhyāti vāda of Advaita Vedānta, belongs to the Idealists groups of philosophy. The rest of the theories belong to the Realists school.

The purpose of both the Realists and the Idealists is to define the nature and content of erroneous perception. In



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other words, the point of debate is to account for the perception of shell as silver. How is erroneous perception possible? Is it that the object is not fully perceived? (Akhyāti). Or is it that the object which is somewhere else is misperceived to be here and now (Anyathākhyāti) Or is it that idea which is purely internal is misperceived as an external object (ātmakhyāti). Or is it that the object of illusory perception is absolutely now existent (asat-khyāti). Or that the object of erroneous perception is indeterminable (anirvacaniya).

But the explanation of different theories are not limited to empirical scrutiny but of some non-empirical commitment. They are not merely restrict themselves to the empirically available data but freely posit certain further data which are not empirical, but metaphysical. For example, for the Anyathākhyāti-Vādins, it is argued that the erroneous perception points to a silver which is a unique type of object not ordinarily perceived but is only known through what is called an extra ordinary perception (jñānalaksana pratyakṣa). It is further claimed that the Advaitic explanation of error as anirvacaniya shows the object of error as unique of its kind which can never be described in any of the available empirical categories (Sat, asat etc.).

So the explanation of the erroneous perception thus turns out to be the metaphysical explanation about the nature and status of the object of misperception. A discussion about the empirical concept, thus, turns out to be the discussion

about the metaphysical entity. This metaphysical rendering is to be a special feature of the Indian discussion of psychological issues for instance, when the shell is misperceived as silver is it real (sat) or is it unreal (asat) or is it both real and unreal (sadāsat), or is it neither real nor unreal (anirvacaniya) or is it real not in the sense of external object but in the sense of ideas (Vijñānas) ? That means the dispute among various theories is precisely about the 'being' of object of erroneous cognition.

Though the different theories of errors or illusions are depending on certain common illustrations mostly derived from perceptual sources, they are also inclusive of various types of conceptual errors. The different theories are meant to explain error as such irrespective of the issue whether it is perceptual or conceptual. For Akhyāti-Vādins as well as Satkhyāti Vādins not that there is absence of perceptual error there is absence of error as such. For Asat Khyātivādins, Anirvacaniya Khyātivādins and Ātmakhyātivādins not that error is only traceable to perceptual source but that all pieces of empirical knowledge is from the very root, grounded on the basis of error. While the Rāmānujaite, for instance, advocates about the reality of silver cognition where something other than silver is commonly taken to be present, he is surely not merely interested to prove the reality of silver and thus explaining all cases of illusion, hallucination etc. His main purpose is to defend that no knowledge, can never be false. All forms of knowing reveal the real, though not completely

but at least partially, Nothings falls short of reality (Yathārtha sarva Vijnānam). On the other hand, the Akhyāti-vadins, the Samkarite argue that not only perception but other forms of empirical knowledge carry the logical possibility of being false. According to them "everything falls short of the real". The conclusion to which these philosophers point at is that there is no logical distinction between truth and error and all are pieces of knowledge and knowledge seems to be more important problem for them. However these different theories have dispute only on the issue whether the object of erroneous cognition is real or unreal or both or neither. The silver, in the nacre silver illusion, is real or unreal or both or neither. And the different theories give explanation holding their own metaphysical viewpoint.

Error is always related with "mithyā jñāna, not mithyā vastu (object). So the discussion of error is only an epistemological concept which is wrongly related with metaphysical significance. When we say 'this is silver', the judgement may be sat or asat. That means sat, asat are thus shown to be not adjective of the objects, referred to a particular piece of knowledge.

On the basis of doctrine of the validity (Pramātvā) and invalidity (apramātvā) set forth by the Indian philosophers the analysis of error is forwarded.

The Naiyāyikas explain the possibility of error by

showing how a real substantive (Visesya) and a real attribute (prakāra) may be erroneously correlated when they are presented in cognition and thus save realism itself from being ruined by conceding the possibility of error.

The Prabhākara realists think that any concession of the possibility of error (bhrama) would spell the ruin of realism and insist that all experiences are valid (anubhutih pramā) and that the so called error involves an element of non-discrimination (aviveka).

The Bhatta realists adopt the anyathākhyāti of Nyāya with subtle modification and in order to preserve realism effectively, they would make the knowledge of cognition (jñāna) dependent upon the knownness (jnātata) of the object (jñeya) and thus provide an effective counter blast to idealism which seeks to merge all jñeya to jñāna.

The Buddhist idealist rules out truth and considers all determinate knowledge (savikalpa) erroneous. The advocates of the theory of intrinsic validity (prāmānya Svatastva Vādinah), more specially the Bhattas and the Advaitins, would generally emphasis the ideas that, in a valid cognition, the object is not nullified by a subsequent sublatting cognition and is not merely re-exhibited through a reminiscent impression, the former of these two features being stressed in particular, and this way of looking at pramātvā would be quite in accord with the view that apramātvā is made

out extrinsically and pramā̄tva intrinsically.

Advaitin's theory of bhrama regards it as a cognitive complex consisting of two cognitive factors, one of them being a Vritti of antahkarana and the other being a vritti of avidyā̄. According to this theory, the object of a bhrama is real in a relative sense and comes into being along with the bhrama and lasts as long as the bhrama lasts.

Rāmānuja and his followers hold that the object of bhrama is always real and there is invalid cognition at all. In the perception of nacre as silver, it is the silver which is included among the component parts of nacre that is seen. They assume that substances which are similar must have some component parts in common, that silver is made up of parts of nacre and parts of silver. In the constitution of nacre, the pre-dominating is represented by nacre and there is a small portion of silver, and that this small portion of silver, and that this small portion of silver it is, that happens to be seen when nacre is seen as silver. Thus according to this school of Rāmānuja, a person who errs in cognition really blunders into a subtle truth which under normal conditions, is missed or ignored.

Rāmānuja's theory of bhrama is similar to Prabhākara's theory of akhyāti with certain modifications and their version of akhyāti is known as 'non-apprehension cum apprehension of reality (akhyāti-samvalitā̄ - satkhyāti). Both hold the same

view that all knowledge is intrinsically valid and error is extrinsic.

Nāgārjuna of Sūnyavāda hold the as-at khyāti view in conformity with his world view. The silver which is presented in bhrama is non-being out-and-out (atayantāsat) within the sphere of nacre, though it is real elsewhere, and the Chief argument in support of this view is that the sublatting cognition, which arises later takes the form - 'There was no silver at all here in the past, it is not here now, and it will never be here in the future (natra rajatam asit, asti, bhavisyati) and it totally denies the existence of silver within the sphere of nacre in the past, the present and the future. The non-existent or non-being (asat) is an absolute zero, and cannot be perserted in any experience.

So we see that Indian philosophers are critical of analysing the theory of bhrama (Khyātivāda). All definitions or theories of error agree in one point, they recognise that the core of erroneous perception consists in one thing is appearing as having the attributes of another. Different enquiries differ, however with regard to the nature, reality, time and place of the locus of super imposition and that which is super imposed. The super-imposed silver is supposed to exist in a different place by the Naiyayikas and in the percipients mind by the subjective idealist. The Mādhyamikas believe that the shell itself, the locus of super-imposition is unreal. The Mīmāṃsakas alone deny that there is a positive

appearing of one thing as another. But the Mimāṃsakas cannot account for conative movement or effort (pravṛiti) and so they must be forced to admit that erroneous cognition contains a positive element. Rāmaṇuja also support this new. The Vedānta contends that all these doctrines of reality and unreality are inadequate to the facts which necessitates fresh reconstruction in the realm of metaphysics. Error thrusts upon us the concept of anirvacaniya. The different theories of error make different ontological assumption with regard to the nature of the real and the unreal and their interrelation.

Now in this dissertation I explain the important theories of error (Khyāti-Vādas) which the Indian philosophers put in their philosophic discussion.

I discuss Khyātivādas on the basis of their realistic and idealistic analysis. I divide the realistic theories in one group and the idealistic theories in another group. The following two groups are -

- (1) Realistic theories of error
  - (a) Anyathākhyātivāda of Nyāya
  - (b) Viparitākhyātivāda of Kumārila Mimāṃsā
  - (c) Akhyāti vāda of Prabhākara Mimāṃsā
  - (d) Sadāsatkhāyati vāda of Sāṃkhya
  - (e) Sat khyāti - vāda of Rāmaṇuja, the Visistādaitavādin.

(2) Idealistic theories of error

- (f) Asatkyāti Vāda of Nāgārjuna, the Sunyavādin ,  
(g) Ātmakhyāti-Vāda of Vignāna vādin school (Yogācāra),  
(h) Anirvacaniya-Khyativāda of Advaita Vedānta (Sankara).
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CHAPTER - II

REALISTIC THEORIES OF ERROR

- A. ANYATHĀKHYĀTI-VĀDA
  - B. VIPARITAKHYĀTI-VĀDA
  - C. AKHYĀTI-VĀDA
  - D. SADĀSĀTKHYĀTI-VĀDA
  - E. SĀTKHYĀTI-VĀDA
-

ॐ\* ANYATHĀKHYĀTIVĀDA  
(NYĀYA THEORY OF ERROR)

The Nyāya view error is called Anyathākhyāti-vāda. In the phrase "anyathā" means other than what it is and khyāti means false knowledge. So according to this view, "the object of illusion is a real object mistaken another real object"<sup>1</sup>.

This view defines error as "the apprehension of a thing not having an attribute as possessing that attribute. This is the significance of the old Nyāya maxim that all judgement is valid so far as its subject is concerned, but it may stray away from reality in respect of its predicative element"<sup>2</sup>.

So error is a perceptual cognition of an object as other than what it is and so it points to an object outside it.

Since the Nyāya theory of truth and error is closely linked with the problem of knowledge, let me discuss about the nature and allied problems of knowledge in brief.

Knowledge is understood in a very wide sense in the Nyāya system. Knowledge consists in the faithful apprehension of the object given to the senses<sup>3</sup>. Gautama does not find any difference between buddhi, upa/abdhi and jñāna. This line of Gautama suggests that knowledge stands for any conscious determinate state and not necessarily referring to correct

awareness alone. Buddhi here is used in the sense of determination (visaya). Later on the Naiyāyikas elaborate the view of Gautama by pointing out that jñāna or buddhi is the cause of all verbal expressions. The invariable association of jñāna and vyavahāra shows that all knowledge must be expressible in forms of determinate judgement. It is the conceptualised judgement which is of interest for the Naiyāyikas. Although the subject and the predicate are different from each other as the condition and the content of knowledge yet knowledge is possible only at the combination of the two.

The knowledge is presentational according to Nyāya as against representational form of knowledge which include memory. It is presentational in so far as the judgement refers to the object, directly presented. In Nyāya philosophy, all the cognition other than recollection (smṛiti) are technically known as 'anubhava.'

Anubhava is divided in two in Nyāya literature - (1) real (yathārtha) (2) unreal (ayathārtha). The first variety is called pramā and the second is called apramā.

The term 'Yathārtha' means exactly correspond to the object and the term 'ayathārtha' means which does not correspond to the object. To know a snake as a snake is a yathārtha jñāna and to know a snake in a piece of rope is the ayathārtha jñāna.

According to Nyāya valid knowledge (yathārtha jñāna) is of four kinds : perception, inference, testimony and comparison. And memory, doubt, error and hypothetical reasoning fall under apramā (ayathārtha jñāna).

Knowledge is neither valid nor invalid in itself, but become one or the other in accordance with certain conditions. "According to Nyāya Valid knowledge is a definite (āsamdigdha) unerring (yathārtha) experience (anubhava)" arising from the presentation of the object to the cognitive mechanism"<sup>4</sup>. So the question of its validity or invalidity arises not in regards to the condition that give rise to it but in regard to its relevance to the need that has occasioned it"<sup>5</sup>. On this view both validity and invalidity are not the intrinsic feature of knowledge. This view is called paratah prāmānya of Nyāya. That means both truth and error are extrinsic. "In a valid cognition, the exact correspondance between jñāna and jneya, consists in the correct corelation of the phases of visayavisayibhāva, viz, adjunctness (prakāratā), substantiveness (visesyatā) and this relationness (sam-sargatā)<sup>6</sup>". In erroneous cognition there is a wrong co-relation of the phases of visaya-visayibhāva, the adjunctness (prakāratā) of the real snakesness which belong to the real snake existing elsewhere being erroneously correlated with the substantiveness which belong to the rope presented as snake"<sup>7</sup>. Thus the Nyāya view of aprama is the lack of correspondance with objective reality.

By conceiving of ordinary knowledge as a blend of presentative and representative elements, the Naiyāyikas find it easy to account for error at the perceptual level. The Nyāya explains that in all cases of perceptual illusion the visual sense - organ is in contact with the right object, but it is owing to certain subjective conditions that the object comes to represent a character which it does not wholly possess. Thus when I perceive a rope as a snake under cover of darkness the past impressions of a snake come to be unconsciously revived in my mind. So it is the wrong, synthesis of presentative and representative. What is actually in contact with the eye is the rope, but it is apprehended otherwise than what it is (anyathā). So it is named as anyathākhyāti. The Nyāya theory of error is realistic and looks upon error as a single unitary cognition, but all the qualities in the illusory judgement are of separately real, only the presented identity between them is unreal. Vātsāyāna, commentator of the 'Nyāya-Sutra' says "No wrong apprehension is entirely baseless. Error, then, in the meaning of anyathākhyāti is not an experience of wholly unrelated contents, but is the erroneous apprehension of two reals, one of which is taken for the other"<sup>8</sup>.

The Naiyāyikas hold that all error is subjective. Vātsāyāna says "what is set aside by true knowledge is the wrong apprehension, not the object"<sup>9</sup> Uddyotakāra observes, "taking the mirage as an instance, the object all the while remains what the actually is. In regard to the flickering rays

of the sun, when there arises the cognition of water there is no error in the object, it is not that rays are not rays nor that the flickering is not flickering, the error lies in the cognition as it is. The cognition which instead of appearing as the cognition of the flickering rays appears as the cognition of water, i.e. as the cognition of a thing a something which it is not"<sup>10</sup>.

The significance of the standpoint that a positive manifestation of the object (i.e. the shell) as silver is an indispensable position had been well realised by the Naiyāyikas who contented that it would be illogical to imagine that the super-imposed entity viz, the silver in any instance of illusion would be absolutely non-existent, for absolute non-existence is never capable of appeared nor can it explain the fact of sublation of later experience, because sublation pre-supposes the prior existence of 'super-imposed entity. For the Nyāya philosopher the only way out of this muddle is to contend that 'silver' has a real existence in some other locus, the remembrance of this silver alongwith the malobservation of the shell, rendered possible through the operation of defects, creates a false identification of 'Silver' and 'shell' and thus we have the illusion of silver.

← The theory of anyathākhyāti is interpreted in two ways in Nyāya philosophy. The earlier Naiyāyikas like Vācaspatimīśra would take this proposition to mean "One reality is mistaken for another reality"<sup>11</sup>, while later naiyāyikas like Gaṅgeśopādhyāya would take it to

mean "A real object which does not have a certain attribute is mistaken in an extra-normal perception as having that attribute, which exists elsewhere".<sup>12</sup>

Thus when a man happens to mistake a rope for a silver, there is no error so far as the sense object is concerned. But it becomes vitiated by the element inducted through memory into the perceptual content what is perceived as a snake is not an element of the actual perceptual knowledge, yet it determines the nature of the object in its own exclusive way. Thus the object presented is perceived as otherwise and the object represented exists elsewhere, and illusion arises when the presentative is misperceived as only the representative. Both snake and rope are real in their respective places, but when the former supersedes the latter, what is cognised is otherwise than as such and then there arises illusion. The recollection of snake is due to the revival of its subconscious impression by the perception of similarity. So error, according to modern *naiyāyikas*, arises at the level of 'jñāna - lakṣaṇa pratīkṣa' (extra-ordinary perception), because it is the product of the joint operations of memory and the perception.

In the present instance of erroneous cognition, features like white colour and brightness, which nacre possesses in common with silver, are noticed, they remind the knower of the real silver and silverness which he might have seen elsewhere, and the recollection (*smṛiti*) of the real

silverness (rajatatva) constitutes the extra-normal relation represented by cognition, which brings silverness within the scope of the visual sense seeing nacre as 'this' (idam) in the ordinary way. Thus according to modern Nyāya, the visual misapprehension of nacre as silver is an extra-normal variety of visual perception (alaukika cākṣusa).

"Error, then in the meaning of anyathā khyāti, is not an experience of wholly unrelated contents, but is the erroneous apprehension of two reals one of which is taken for the other, a subjective conditioning, or relationship to the perceiver. Correction, then is only the sublation of attribute and not the rejection of the substance itself".<sup>13</sup>

#### CRITICISM

The Nyāya theory of anyathā khyāti, though explains illusory character of knowledge, is not consistent in some respects. Moreover it gives a satisfactory explanation except that it makes the unintelligible assumption of an extra-normal sense contact in order to explain illusory knowledge. Moreover there are other objections also.

The sublating cognition 'this is not silver' merely sublates silver connected with particular time and place, it does not exhibit silver as related to another time or place, for silver is not perceived to be so related. So the Naiyāyikas explanation of illusory silver of another time and place cannot be accepted.

2. The crucial problem involved in such a theory of illusion must not be overlooked. In the rope one actually sees a snake, in the shell one actually sees silver. If therefore, the snake exists in the past and in the jungle or if the silver actually exists in the past and in the market how can one, during the time of present illusion, really see it ?

In other words there is a perceptual experience of the object of illusion. But such an experience pre-supposes a direct sense object contact with the rope, there is a direct perception of the rope. But how can there be such a contact if the object experienced belongs to some other place and time ? How can there be the contact of one's visual sense with a snake supposed to exist in the jungle and in the past ? How again, can there be contact of one's visual sense with the silver said to exist in the market ?

So the Nyāya cannot give a satisfactory explanation of illusory object.

It is because the naiyāyikas start with realism and as they hold that the illusory object is perceptual, so it is difficult to maintain its position in the solution of the problem.

3. According to Nyāya that nacre conceals its distinct form and assumes the form of silver. But this is not tenable as we have no ground to know that the presentation of silver really refer to shell or nacre. It may be something else like nacre.

4. Kalidas Bhattacharjee criticises Nyāya view that whether the illusory object 'silver' is universal or particular. The naiyāyikas holds that it is neither, and it is an entity seen as 'mere silver' stripped of its other properties. So K. Bhatta says "it is something dreadfully abstract universal with its axons and dendrites all shaven off. Such absolute creatures cannot for a moment endure".<sup>14</sup> The implication is that the piece of silver so understood is no real entity - and once this is admitted, the Naiyāyika's grip on realism is broken.

However, though there are some difficulties of his realistic analysis about error, we cannot deny it altogether, they admit that external objects exist in their own right. Its data can never be false, for we are then stated to be in direct contact with reality and get an immediate knowledge of its presence. Error, however, may creep in when we relate two or more of these things at the higher determinate level. It is to this level therefore that the doctrine applies its theory of extrinsic validity and it is here that it fails to substantiate the Nyāya view. So far as the lower indeterminate level is concerned the doctrine may be said to accept the theory of self validity. In the doctrine of illusion 'rope snake', 'the snake is also presented, that is, there is an objective basis for error and that is nothing more than a reiteration of the realistic postulate of the Nyāya view and to this respect, the theory is in accordance with the common sense belief, i.e. we have a perceptual knowledge of the

illusory object in front of us though ultimately it is false from the philosophic point of view.

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b. VIPARITAKHYĀTI-VĀDA  
(KUMĀRILA'S THEORY OF ERROR)

The two schools of Mimāṃsā, the Bhatta and the Prabhākara, which though agreeing in several points, differ from each other in some central points. We propose to treat of one such difference here viz that relating to the conception of error. This explanation of error 'viparita khyāti' differs from akhyāti view of the Prabhākara.

"Viparita khyāti" vada is a theory of error of Kamārila school which is similar to the view of the naiyāyikas. According to the Viparitakhyātivāda, "an illusion manifests a real object in the form of a different object which too is real".<sup>1</sup> Like the Nyāya school it also maintains that an illusion is a mistaken apprehension of something. In the case of silver in place of nacre, the nacre is presented in the form of a silver which is also real. In this illusory perception, it is only the relation between the subject and the predicate elements, e.g. 'this' and 'silver' which is unreal and appears to be real. Accordingly an error is a positive misapprehension. The mistake lies in identifying two unrelated real objects under the influence of some vicious subjective and objective conditions. Due to wrong apprehension we do not note the peculiar qualities of the shell as distinguished from silver, and at the same time by the glow etc.

of the shell we take the 'shell' as the silver which have seen elsewhere.

Error is not akhyāti or non apprehension but Viparitakhyāti or misapprehension. The difference between the two views is that while according to akhyāti, error is due to a losing sight of the fact that the presentative and the representative factors stand apart unrelated, here in viparitakhyāti, it is associated to a wrong synthesis of them. Illusion is here taken as unitary knowledge instead of two jnanas. This misapprehension arises due to some defect in the causes of knowledge and set aside by a subsequent sublating knowledge.

Kumārila's theory of error is based on his analysis of knowledge and its validity and invalidity. According to Kumārila, knowledge is the revelation of objects. Every act of cognition implies a certain relationship between the perceiver and the object perceived by him. The power of revelation belongs to knowledge itself. If it does not reveal it is no knowledge at all. Hence the truth of knowledge belongs to the causes which brings about knowledge. In other words, truth is produced by the same condition which give rise to knowledge. Falsehood consists in the defects which are extraneous to the nature of knowledge. Thus Kumārila maintains the self validity of knowledge, but false hood is ascertained on contradictory appearance, and the knowledge of defects in the cause of knowledge.

What Kumārila therefore means by his theory of error is that, when knowledge fails to justify itself, it is the relation alone, to which it points, that is false. As regards the relata, however, his view is that they are always real.

According to him, there is a misarrangement of actual features in error and the object given is consequently seen away. In the 'rope-snake' illusion, the rope is given and real, and the snake, though not given, is yet quite real. Hence error means neither the falsity of the rope nor that of snake, it consists purely in affirming of the rope what can only be denied of it. This is the reason, we may add by the way for the specific name of 'reverse predication' or viparitakhyāti, literally reverse apprehension. Parthasārathi Misra, a famous follower of Kumārila, puts it, the subject and the predicate elements in an erroneous judgement are quite real and the relation between them is alone false.

According to him, the erroneous judgement 'This is silver' is only one single judgement of which 'this' and 'silver' are just two parts. Silver too, in an erroneous judgement, is accepted by Kumārila to be real. It is real in the sense that the predicate of silverhood is in itself a genuine one. It is not that silver is nowhere used as a predicate. Predicate in itself is not faulty. It is only when a predicate is misapplied to a subject, error results. So "error is not due to the relata, i.e. the subject and the predicate but only due to the relation (samsarga) which misrelates the predicate to the subject".<sup>2</sup>

Error results when the appropriate predicate is not applied and when an opposite predicate is applied to it . Hence it is said that the erroneous judgement is nothing but a contrary judgement ( Viparita-Khyāti ). " To judge a thing as what it is not is to commit error"<sup>3</sup>. Thus Kumārila is engaged in defining the concept of error. The issue in this regard, that is raised is only logical and never ontological. The reality of 'this' and 'silver' is not maintained from metaphysical but from epistemological point of view.

This theory is practically the same as the Nyāyaview because both agree in holding that illusion is an apprehension of one thing as another. But Bhattas doesnot account for illusion through extra-normal sense contact ( alaukika sannikarsa). This school urges that if there can be an extraordinary contact with distant object, everyone would become omniscient. It was pointed out that excluding dream there are two types of illusion, viz., the presentative and the representative element in illusion in which a sensory element and a memory element are involved, as in the nacre-silver illusion. But in the illusion of red crystal, only sensory elements are involved. Now the difficulty is how does the memory element acquire perceptual character in the form of illusion. The Nyāya tries to explain it by assuming an extraordinary contact of the eye with the remembered object which Bhatta rejects.

So according to Kumārila, the illusory experience is not a case of direct perception like Nyāya, but it is a case

of wrong fusion of perception and memory, the perception of something as 'this' fused with the memory of something perceived in the past and in a different place. Both the things perceived as well as remembered are real entities belonging to the external world and as such there is no question of illusion. The illusion consists in the wrong amalgamation of two independent pieces of right knowledge, one of which is perceptual and the other of the nature of memory.

In case of 'Shell-Silver' illusion the silver only subsists in its non-temporal and non-spatial character ; the shell exists in particular time and place, and knowledge in either case is equally valid. The predicate 'Silver' itself, in its general or universal aspect, is real, only it is not found in the present context. There is a subjective element here, which however is not in respect of silver as such but as regards its 'hereness' and 'now-ness' or its particularity.

If Viparita Khyāti should represent a realistic doctrine in spite of its admitting a subjective element of this kind, we have to understand it as maintaining the validity of knowledge whether it refers to an existing object or only to a subsisting one. That is, the objects in themselves are real ; they are unreal only in so far as their 'hereness' and 'now-ness' are concerned. The illusion of a 'red-crystal', the crystal and the redness are both real ; indeed they are actually given. So far the knowledge is true, but it

is false only because it represents the redness as characterising the crystal while it, in fact, does not.

Such a view may appear to go against the spirit of Kumārila's whole polemic against subjectivism (nirālambana-vāda) and nihilism (Sūnya-vāda), in the course of which he discusses the question of error. But really it is not so, for the point of dispute there is merely the objective validity of knowledge and not the givenness of the object then and there.

### CRITICISM

From the above discussion if we look critically, we see that what Kumārila means by his theory of error is that when knowledge fails to justify itself, it is the relation alone, to which it points, that is false. As regards the relata, however, his view is that they are always real.

The Bhattas while explains bhrama as 'Viparita Khyāti' or contrary experience ; that the relation between macre and silver or " idam and rajatam' (this, and silver') in the case of the misapprehension of macre as silver, is a non-being ( asst). Among the Vedāntins that what they call their own version of ViparitaKhyāti or Anyathā Khyāti and contend that, in case of erroneous, experience like Suktirajatambharma, the silver which is presented in bhrama is non-being out and out (atyantāsa) within the sphere of macre, though it is real elsewhere and the chief argument in support of this view is

that the sublating cognition ( $\bar{b}adhaka\ pratiti$ ) which arises later takes the form. " There was no silver at all here in the past ; it is not here now ; and it will never be here in the future." ( $natra\ rajatam,\ asit,\ asti,\ bhavisyati$ ) and it totally denies the existence of silver within the sphere of nacre in the past, the present and the future'.

Though Kumārila's Viparita Khyāti is the outcome of the Nyāya's anyathā Khyāti, the Nyāya criticises his view on the ground that 'the silver; in an illusory judgement 'This is silver', is not perceptual in character. It is the wrong fusion of perception and memory, the perception of something as 'this' fused with the memory of something perceived in the past and in a different place. The Naiyāyikas find it inadequate to account for the full facts about illusory experience. If the silver is not perceived, however then illusory experience is later remembered after its correction. After correction one says 'I saw snake, I saw silver' and never 'I remembered silver, I remembered snake". Rememberance implies perception of something formerly and this rememberance is distinctly of a perceptual experience of 'Silver' in the illusory judgement, 'This is silver'. Hence it is proved that illusory experience itself must have been of the nature of perception which Kumārila overlooks.

In every erroneous cognition we have an object experienced earlier at some place and time ; it is apprehended when something else is the given or the ground. The knowledge

of that object is retained in the memory and yet it is not memory that is reproduced. The apprehended content has a form similar to that of memory. It is not a memory image that is elsewhere apprehended. We have an immediate apprehension which presupposes a ground, an existent with which we have that contact. In such a contract due to some defect or other, the memory image is awakened. And in the erroneous cognition then we have the appearance of something that was seen earlier. The present apprehended content is similar to that apprehended earlier, and this makes us call this content in explicable. It is not a totally unreal which is apprehended, for we have a ground which is integrated to a non-real existence'. In other words, this object is not an objective existence, and even a non-existent can be an object of experience'.

So from the above explanation it is clear that though Kumārila is criticised by others, we can say that he is simple in explaining the viparitakhyāti-vāda. The Bhatta's theory is right in rejecting the Nyāya's assumption of an extra-ordinary perception and in holding that illusion has an objective basis, but it too fails to explain the perceptual character of the illusory object. Kumārila, like Rāmānuja and Prabhākara admits the self-validity of knowledge and on that ground he explains error in perception that valid cognition to be possible due to valid source like perception, inference etc and invalid cognition is just opposite of it i.e. they are not derived from any valid source.

Kumārila while commenting on the Mimāṃsā Sūtra which contains a definition of direct knowledge (Perception). He interprets the definition by saying that knowledge obtained by a perception is the result of the right functioning of the sense-organ with reference to their objects. In other words, the so-called erroneous cognition is due to the wrong functioning of sense organs with reference to their objects. That is why, though in such cognition, there is the presentation of object it is not as such known, it is rather known as something other than what it is. In this manner the so-called erroneous cognition is by definition, declared to be non-perceptual. That is the reason why Kumārila fails to explain the perceptual character of illusory cognition.

Now apart from the theory of self-validity of knowledge, Kumārila's account of error is examined at the background of realism. It is very often remarked that the realistic position of the Bhatta in general is inconsistent with his theory of error. As realist he should admit the objective factors of all knowledge. Kumārila gives up his realism to the extent he admits the subjective or the ideal element in error. When error is regarded as mis-apprehension, the subjective element creeps into it. Though the two relata are separately real, yet the relation between them is not so.

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C. AKHYĀTI-VĀDA  
(PRABHĀKARA'S THEORY OF ERROR)

The Indian epistemological tradition found much to add to its variety in the speculative genius of two powerful exponents of the Purva-mimamsā school, namely Prabhākara and Kumārila.

The most thoroughgoing attempt to explain error on realistic lines is embodied in the Akhyāti theory of Prabhākara school of Mimamsā.

The theory of error has a bearing on the theory of realism. If error is held to be ingrained in our nature, the citadel of realism is forthwith shaken. In that case, there can be no guarantee that the external world comprehended by our intellect is not an error. Prabhākara is unique so far as this question is concerned. He goes deep into the analysis of error and concludes that the so-called error is not an error per-se.

The word 'khyāti' stands for knowledge and the word 'akhyāti' which is literally equivalent to no knowledge indicates that error according to this theory, is a lack of knowledge rather than wrong knowledge, 'Akhyāti' is also called 'Vivekakhyāti' or Bhedāgraha or Asamsārgagraha or Smṛitipramosa.

Prabhākara's view of error was found in his commentary called 'Brhnti on' Sabara Bhāṣya'.

'Prakāraṇa pavicika' is another important work of Prabhākara school which elaborately discusses the doctrine of error. Bhavadeva Miṣṭa's 'Nyāya Viveka' along with commentary of Varadarāja called 'Dipika' or Varadarāji can also be considered in this connection.

Before discussing error, however, it is desirable to discuss about the theory of knowledge of Prabhākara, which resembles in more than one respect of the Nyāya school of knowledge.

Knowledge, according to Prabhākara is a quality of the self and a quality, it regards as different from the substance with its characteristics. Hence knowledge is distinct from the self in which it arises. Though thus different, it can belong only to the self, and therefore become a characteristic feature (visesaguna) of it. Thus far the view is same as of the Nyāya. But knowledge is here conceived not as knowable, but as self-luminous, and it accordingly reveals not only the object to which it refers but also itself. It is also taken to reveal at the sametime the self also. Knowledge, thus, simultaneously reveals itself, its object and the self to which it arises,". This is what is meant by the 'tri-puti-jnāna' or 'tripārtite knowledge" The subject, the object and the knowledge are simultaneously manifest in every act of knowledge which is self luminous.

So 'Prabhākara was caught in dilemma, either he must give up the thesis of the self revelatory character of knowledge or he must give up his theory or error"<sup>2</sup>.

What, then, is Prabhākara's explanation of error, which is a fact of everyday life ?

Prabhākara holds that error is not due to knowledge misrepresenting a thing. If it is the nature of knowledge to misrepresent its object under certain conditions, all the wordly intercourse would end in a chaos.

Prabhākara explains the fact of error within the frame work of his contention that all knowledge is valid. It is strange indeed how a cognition can apprehend an object and yet be invalid;"<sup>3</sup>

Now if all apprehensions is valid, then how do we distinguish valid and invalid knowledge.

Prabhākara says that so far as the element of apprehension is concerned all the so-called invalid knowledge is also valid, while the element that is invalid is no apprehension at all.

Prabhākara, true to his view of the intrinsic validity of knowledge, does not admit error in the logical sense. If the

subjective and the objective sides are in complete agreement with each other there would be no error. But sometimes knowledge on the objective side is infallible, it is only on the subjective that error can be found. Error occurs not because we misapprehend reality but because we fail to apprehend and thus we miss some relevant feature of reality. So Illusion or error is not a positive misapprehension but a negative non-apprehension.

Prabhākara says that erroneous perceptions of a shell as silver is not a unitary cognition as maintained by the Nyāya. This is silver is a composite cognition made of two component parts. The 'this' is actually perceived, as also certain characteristics which it possesses in common with silver. The very presence of these characteristics revive in our mind the past memory traces of silver. it is a sort of confused memory ( Smritipramosa ).

We have now two distinct elements - 'that pertaining to shell' and 'that to silver', Prabhākara even says that at this level knowledge is not playing false to its basic character.

"Error, then is a mere accedental factor, since the subject fails to apprehend the difference between what has been presented by the object and what has been represented by memory" <sup>4</sup>  
So error is not of commission but an error of omission. The error occurs not because we misapprehend reality but because we

fail to apprehend and thus we miss some relevant feature of reality.

Prabhākara is true to his realistic position in maintaining that knowledge can never misrepresent its object, that means there is no error on the objective side. The cause of knowledge itself. Thus a jaundiced person will perceive everything as yellow because the medium through which the knowledge comes is defective.

In erroneous cognition the awareness of the content as being the remembered one is suppressed. It is some specific defect or condition or limitation that is responsible for the awakening of the memory image of a specific object when the sense organ is in contact with another. The limitation or defect does not allow the sense organ to reveal the specific nature of the object. It is due to this defect that we fail to distinguish the perceived content from the remembered one. So illusion occurs resulting from the initial failure to distinguish.

✓ In the case of 'red crystal' or the jaundiced person sees everything as yellow', there is non-discrimination between perception and perception as both the cognitions of both cases, are presentative in character.

Again in the case of memory when a person recollects something that he saw yesterday a snake lying on the road, when

really he saw a piece of rope, here these two imperfect cognition of memory, is due to the non-discrimination between two memory images.

Again when a person mistakes a 'silver' in a piece of shell these two imperfect cognitions are due to non-discrimination between a percept 'this' of the shell and a memory image (silver). Here the non-discrimination is between perception and memory.

So in all cases of error, according to Prabhākara, occur due to non-discrimination which means non-apprehension of the distinction between two cognitions and their objects. So it is called 'Vivekakhyāti' or 'Bhedāgraha' or 'Asamsargāgraha'.

We may therefore describe error as partial or incomplete knowledge. It is incomplete because it fails to apprehend the distinctive feature of the thing presented viz., the rope and second, because it fails to see the remoteness in space and time of the thing recalled viz, the snake.

"Error, as we have seen in the logic of Prabhākara Mimāṃsā, is never positive nor permanent. Omission of knowledge is not error. The later correction serves only to point out their separateness and does not invalidate the knowledge. In the view of Prabhākara, reality although sometimes known partially, can never be known as other than what it is. Even the defective

sense organ cannot cause any positive error. They only fail to reveal in its entirety, but they never lie in respect to what they do reveal."<sup>5</sup>

#### CRITICISM :

Though Prabhākara explains error on the basis of realistic doctrine, we cannot agree with him in all respects. There are some arguments against his theory.

1. Discarding the theory of Prabhākara mainly on this ground, the Nyāya argues that the fact of illusory experience can never be doubted. In the common illusion under consideration, one actually perceives a snake in a rope, or a silver in a nacre. But this is apparently the point also argued by the Advaita Vedānta against sūnya-vāda, the snake or the silver cannot be explained away as pure fiction, because the fact is that in illusion these are actually perceived as long as illusion lasts. However nothing is more remote than this from what the Nyāya wants to prove by the positive experience of snake or silver in illusion by 'jnāna Laksana-prataksa.'

2. The Nyāya argues against Prabhākara that his theory of error fails to account the presentative character in illusion. When somebody sees silver in a nacre, something silver is actually perceived in that very moment 'here' and 'now'. It is not a case of 'this' is presented and the 'that' (Silver) is remembered.

Again against Prabhākara the naiyāyikas hold that error is not non-apprehension of differences but it is a positive apprehension of identity between the two, i.e. shell, and 'silver' and so a man desires to pick it up. So mere non-apprehension cannot explain it.

3. Again Prabhākara holds that in the illusion ;This is silver' two types of consciousness are present viz, apprehension and remembrance. But 'this is silver' are revealed by the same consciousness, so there is no reason to hold that the consciousness of 'this' is an act of perception and that the predicate is act of remembrance. And in this position, why a man wants to pick it up which is only a remembered silver.

4. Prabhākara's theory is contradicted by experience. We donot perceive any difference between illusory silver and the real silver so long 'as the illusion persists. It is this positive character of illusion that urges one to act. The 'this' and the 'silver' are identical in illusion and the illusory judgement is 'This is silver'. One acts on the basis of experience or knowledge. The mere absence of a discriminating knowledge between two experiences being itself something negative, can by no means provoke positive activity.

In this way, though Prabhākara is criticised on some points, we cannot totally discard his view. The akhyāti theory offers a good logical as well as psychological analysis of

illusion and it is right in pointing out that in illusion there is some objective fact which is but viewed incompletely and there is the memory image revived due to similarity ; but it fails to explain how the memory image is synthesized or fused with the given fact. In Nyāya theory, in this point they explain with the help of jñāna-laksana pratyaksa, though it is not acceptable.

However, Prabhākara in its bearing on the theory of realism denies the falsity of illusion and according to him, all knowledge is valid as far as it goes, thereby explaining away the fact of experience. Overall, he made a significant contribution to the theory of realism by repudiating the phenomenon of illusion and on that account he occupies a unique place among the philosophers of India and the west who contend the arena of battle between realism and idealism.

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d. SADĀSATKHYĀTI-VĀDA  
(SĀMKHYA THEORY OF ERROR)

The Sāmkhya theory of error is known as "Sadāsatkhyātivāda". This theory is of the view that error involves "What is given as well as what is not" and so it is "Sadāsatkhyāti".

Scholars are generally of the opinion that the early Sāmkhya view advocates Akhyātivāda. This view does not seem to be plausible as in the case of Akhyāti nothing of what was cognised before, is sublated. The school of Prabhākara is explaining this doctrine maintains that " there is no error in the logical sense and all knowledge according to it is true so far as it goes. It is not therefore necessary to dwell upon it at any length"<sup>2</sup>.

According this view - in all cases of illusion, error is lack of knowledge, not wrong knowledge. In all cases of illusions alike, it is partial knowledge of the thing of things in question which leads to a misconception about them. And the way to escape from the misconception is to acquire more, if not complete knowledge. The most important point in this explanation is that when the error is discovered, nothing of what was cognised before is sublated (bādhita) what is given in knowledge is always and necessarily a fact ; only it may not be the whole of the fact. In other words, there is no subjective element in error.

This view is what is generally found expressed in early Sāmkhya yoga works (Yoga-Sutra Bhāṣya)<sup>1</sup>. Vijnāna-Bhikṣu who is regarded the chief exponent of the later Sāmkhya also seems to agree with it. But he modifies this view in a later part of his bhāṣya view in a later part of his bhāṣya on the "Sāmkhya Sutra and admits a subjective element in error. Thus he describes the second kind of error as involving a positive relation between the purusa and the buddhi - a relation which is not given but is fancied so that, though the relata as such are real, the relation between is not so. In regard to the first kind of error also where we are concerned with only a single thing and its varying phases, he admits a subjective element by bringing it under the same head as the previous one viz, Sadāsat-khyāti. The explanation of the 'shell-silver' for Vignāna-bhikṣu, it is not the 'shell' alone that is given but the 'silver' also, is in a sense, viz, as a mode of the buddhi through the revival of an old impression caused by the perception of the luster. The confusion is thus between the shell which is actually given and 'silver' which is given in the form of a buddhi-brīṭi or, as we must put it, between what is presented and what is represented. In other words all erroneous knowledge is partial invalid and presents not merely what is but also what is not, which appears to be somewhat startling conclusion of the Sāmkhya view of error is like that of Kumārila (viparita-khyāti) while the previous resembles that of Prabhākara (akhyāti).

The Sāmkhya view of error is related into the mechanism

of his theory of knowledge. According to the Sāmkhya, what is called knowledge is a material phenomenon. It is a function of what is simply an evolute of matter. According to Sāmkhya, knowledge arises through a psychic medium, known as buddhi-vritti. The yogācāra school have the same view which leads them to subjective idealism, but the Sāmkhya as a realistic school holds the view quite different that all knowledge necessarily points to some object outside it. The Sāmkhya maintains that although the intellect and the mind are ultimately the product of prakṛiti, yet they subserve the puruṣa in securing for it the knowledge of things. Knowledge has its nature either as truth or as error. There cannot be a knowledge without one or the other of these nature. Valid knowledge is defined as a definite unerring representation of objects (anvāparicchitti) rendered possible through the modification of buddhi into the form of the object revealed to it by the sense."<sup>3</sup>

According to Sāmkhya buddhi or cognition assumes the form of the object. Thus the truth of a cognition consists in its being a faithful copy of the object. Error arises when in perception there is an extraneous element which does not correspond to anything in the concrete situation. That is what is apprehended in perception in more than that actually given to buddhi. Error here is a lack of apprehension (akhyāti) of the entire content as revealed in knowledge. When I see a rope at night in a indistinct light, only certain factors constituting the rope are in subject-object relation and not all. These

factors are common with a snake also, and so the knowledge takes the nature of a snake. This defect is in the nature of the knowing, and as such the error is inherent in it. If all the factors constituting the snake come into the subject-object relation, then the knowledge takes the nature of a snake itself. And that is what is known as valid one, the knowledge of the thing as it is. And for this reason, knowledge has its nature either as truth or as error.

The Sāmkhya theory of error is based on the theory of Svatah-Prāmānya view of knowledge (intrinsic validity and invalidity of knowledge). According to Svatah Prāmānya theory of knowledge, both truth and falsity are inherent in knowledge. Validity and invalidity cannot be produced in any knowledge as extra, but must belong to it an initio. Both validity and invalidity of knowledge are the normal features of jnana itself. validity is apprehension of the object in its full representation and invalidity is the apprehension of it in its partial representation. Both can be tested by reference to subsequent knowledge and not by reference to any extraneous factors. Both are aspects of knowledge, and manifest themselves as such in situation appropriate to each that is, it is largely dependent upon the circumstances that give rise to knowledge.

It follows then, that knowledge is valid only in so far as the form assumed by buddhi truly represents the object perceived. Error arises when in perception there is an

extraneous element which does not correspond to anything in the concrete situation, the implication here being that what is sometimes apprehended in perception is more than that actually give to buddhi. "Error here is lack of apprehension (akhyāti) of the entire content as revealed in knowledge"<sup>4</sup> Thus, when we misperceive shell as silver it is because the mind is not able to discriminate properly between the presentative and the representative elements. The close similarity of silver to shell activates the past impressions of silver, persisting in memory. Now, there are in the mind two elements, the one pertaining to the object, and the other furnished by memory . Knowledge is valid when perception is of the given, but when the element furnished by memory becomes part of perceptual content it is inevitable that knowledge should contain an extra element which does not point to anything outside the individuals visual field. "Thus, error, according to Sāmkhya, consists in non-discrimination of the presented and the represented."<sup>5</sup> So long as the two are discriminated as belonging to two different spheres, there is no termination of the state of illusion.

In explaining the illusions of everybody life he assumes an ideal element. Instances of the 'red crystal' and the 'glowing iron ball' appear as illustrations in explaining the other type of error. The red flower and the white crystal is given and it is because we lose sight of the fact that they are two, we mistake the crystal to be red. It is aviveka (non-discrimination) as in the case of purusa and buddhi, the confusion between which is stated to be the cause of empirical

life. The moment we realise that there is the flower in addition to the crystal, the error disappears. That is, it is incomplete knowledge that gives rise to error.

Hence the Sāṃkhya concludes that in the illusory perception in form of judgemental analysis, the subject is 'real' and the predicate is 'unreal'. The judgement 'this is silver', the cognition of 'this' is real (sat) and the cognition of 'silver' is unreal (asat). The cognition of 'this' has for its object an object present to the visual organ. So it is real but the cognition of 'silver' has for its object 'silver' which is not present to the visual organ and it is contradicted by a sublating cognition. So it is unreal. So an illusion apprehends both a real object (sat) and an unreal object. This is Aniruddha's interpretation of Sadāsatkhyāti. So error is regarded as misapprehension and is held as due to wrong synthesis of two cognitions which are separately real (sat) though the synthesis itself is unreal (asat).

#### CRITICISM :

From the above explanation, it is clear that Sāṃkhya, holding their realistic position, explains illusion on an objective basis. In the judgement 'This is silver' both are real separately. Error occurs as the mind is not able to discriminate properly the presentative and representative elements. Silver cannot be perceived but it comes through memory. So it is a kind of akhyāti like the Mimāṃsakas. And similar is the criticism of

Samkhya view like that of Mimamsā (Prabhākara).

In Sāmkhya theory of error the subject is true and the predicate is false . Illusion occurs when we relate the predicate to the subject. So it cannot be sadāsatkhyāti but it is akhyāti like that of Prabhākara.

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e' SATKHYATI  
(RĀMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF ERROR)

Rāmānuja, the visistādvaita school adopt the Prabhākara theory of akhyāti with certain modification and their version of the theory is known as "Non-apprehension cum apprehension of Reality" (Akhyāṭisamvalitā-Satkhyāti). Rāmānuja and his followers hold that the object of bhrama is always real and there is strictly speaking no invalid cognition at all. "All judgements are true and all that is presented in experience is real"<sup>2</sup>. The upholders of satkhyāti and akhyāti theories of error have tried to defend this view philosophically.

The realistic doctrine of Rāmānuja's School maintains that the appearance of illusory object is absolutely real, that the content of the illusory experience really exists in the substratum of illusion. Rāmānuja's visista-advaita school is not a distinct school of philosophy like Sāṃkhya or the Nyāya or such schools. It is only a particular interpretation of the original Vedānta School. The differences that are there among the various sects of the vedānta are mainly rooted on some religious views regarding life and its destiny.

Rāmānuja's doctrine of illusion is found in his 'Sri-bhāṣya'. This theory is further defended and elaborated by Sudarśana Suri, a commentator of Sri-bhāṣya (Sruta prakāśikā) and also by Ātreya Rāmānuja in his Nyāya-Kulīśa. Again Venkatanātha in his ;Satadusani, Nyāya-parisuddhi, Tattvamuktā

kalpa and sarvārtha Siddhi discuss the problem of error. Srinivāsācārya is another famous Rāmānujite who discusses Satkhyāti along with other rival theories.

The problem of error tackled by Rāmānuja seems to have a sanction of logical reasoning to a form of metaphysics or so to say metaphysically oriented. Since these philosophers are discussing the problem through perceptual illusion, hallucination etc. many assume that they are engaged in a psychological questions and thus their problem is purely an empirical one "What distinguishes Rāmānuja's theory of error from most Indian explanations is that it does not call in the aid of memory"<sup>3</sup>.

Both Satkhyāti of Rāmānuja and anirvacaniyakhyāti of Samkara, belong to the same vedānta school, their view are absolutely different. Their absolute opposition, according to Satkhyāti 'all judgements are true' and according to anisvacaniyakhyātivāda 'all judgements are absolutely false'. None of these two theories is decided to be true as against the other so far as the empirical facts are concerned.

But before explaining the Satkhyāti view of Rāmānuja, let me explain first about Rāmānuja's conception of knowledge and its related problems. Rāmānuja maintains that knowledge is not a synthetic construction, but it is purely a spiritual process by which things are revealed. The objects that are known are all characterised by attributes and there is no object of knowledge

which is devoid of attributes. Knowledge implies both subject and predicate. It is the subject which know the object, by means of its essential attributes ; i.e. knowledge ( Dharmabhūta jñāna ) Rāmānuja does not admit the possibility of attributeless object. The knowledge of such object is also determinate as it is the knowledge of the object with qualities ( savisesa vastu ). There is, therefore, no indeterminate knowledge of pure being. All knowledge according to Visista-advaita philosophers, is determinate ( savikalpa ) and hence judgemental in character. There cannot be any pre-judgemental knowledge in the logical sense of the term. " All judgements are true in so far as they all grasp and reveal their corresponding objects. Truth is inherent to the very nature of judgement. It is argued that if the judgement is not inherently true then it cannot be made true by any other external source."<sup>4</sup>

It is this fundamental point of judgement being intrinsically true that raises the problem of error. Since all judgements are conceded to be true by themselves the very fact of error needs to be explained. Prabhākara and Rāmānuja all believe that error is non-apprehension. Error is only partial truth. Cognition as such is never valid. Error means imperfect and incomplete truth. The way to remove error is to acquire more perfect and complete knowledge. There is no subjective or ideal element in error. Truth only supplements error and does not cancel it. Rāmānuja adopts Prabhākara's theory with some modification and his theory is called Satkhyāti or akhyāti-

samvalita-satkhyati or 'Non-apprehension-cum apprehension' of Reality. All apprehension is real ( yathārthasm sarvavijnānam),

The difference between Prabhākara and Rāmānuja is that while the former is contended with the non-apprehension of the distinction of the distinction between perceived shell and remembered silver, the latter advocates real perception of the element of silver in the shell, and while the former takes a fully pragmatic view of knowledge, regarding knowledge as only a means to successful activity, Rāmānuja values knowledge more for the light it brings than for the fruits it bears".

"Rāmānuja proposes a novel way of meeting the Naiyāyika's and Mīmāṃsaka's difficulties about the elsewhere and elsethen silver gets to be here and now."<sup>5</sup> Rāmānuja takes the advantage of the doctrine of "Quintuplication"<sup>6</sup> (Pāncikarana) taught in the Upanisads which suggest that there is unity in everywhere and everything. All things share in all things and contain common elements. According to this doctrine, the objects of the physical world which are all compounds, are believed to contain the five elements (bhutas) though in varying proportions. There are earth, water, air, fire and ether. Every existing entity is a mixture of all five of these elements, the differences between entities being explained by differences in amounts of each element present in the respective entities. So Rāmānuja with this doctrine of quantuplication (everything contains the elements of everything) shows that there is silver in nacre, water in sand, and directions of one in the other. In the case

of mirage, what is being looked at is a heated sandy waste which contains not only earth, the preponderating part of it, but also water however slight, and the apprehension of the latter there, it is said, is therefore, only of what is actually presented to the eye "So Rāmanuja justifies his realist view hereby pointing out that, the structural affinity that is discoverable among the things that belong to the physical world."<sup>7</sup>

Thus we see that Rāmanuja is consistent with his realistic analysis, explains the illusory experiences giving objective reality to it. And his explanation of illusory experience is based on his metaphysical doctrine. Though the problem of error is an epistemological problem, ultimately leads to a form of metaphysics.

So Rāmanuja holds that all illusory judgements are true as far as they go " He interprets similarity as part-identity."<sup>8</sup> To say that 'X' is similar to 'Y' is to say that a part of X is a part of y. The piece of silver I see is a part of the shell, the silvery part. At least brightness seems to be a common feature shared by both the objects. According to Rāmanuja, the similarity of brightness means some sort of material identity between the two objects. So it is argued that what is perceived is actually presented. In this manner, it is argued that no unreal objects are ever apprehended. The constituent element of every object being in every other thing and so illusion can be explained away. So Rāmanuja explains all cases of error with a

non-empirical manner. All this shows that Rāmānuja does not feel hesitate to make any metaphysical assumption for holding the doctrine of Satkhyāti. The doctrine of Pancikaraṇa is very significant for the explanation of all kinds of error.

Prof. Hiriyanna says that " The aim of Satkhyāti, is to show the 'jnāna' including the so-called illusion, never deviates from reality. The so-called illusory knowledge is illusory, not because it has an unreal object but because it fails in life"<sup>9</sup>. A false judgement only reveals the object but does not possess practical value.

#### CRITICISM :

But though Rāmānuja gives a realistic outlook for his theory of illusion, Samkara criticises him on the following grounds :

Like Rāmānuja Samkara also holds that in the illusory perception of silver the object is only apparent or illusory existence (pratibhāsika sattā ) while according to Rāmānuja, it has a real or ontological existence (pāramārthika sattā).

But if the object of illusion has real existence, how we perceive water in a desert ? According to Rāmānujam it is with the help of the 'doctrine of quantuplication.' Before quantuplication the elements are subtle and cannot be perceived and after quantuplication also the elements cannot be separated.

So it is not possible to perceive water in a desert with the help of this 'theory of quantuplication.'

In case of 'silver in a shell' also according to Rāmānuja, because silver really exists in nacre in the form of the elements of fire. But why are the elements of fire in the nacre perceived as silver alone and not others ? There is also other firey objects. It cannot be said that the particles of the fire which by quantuplication are transformed into silver, are combined and are perceived in the nacre, for there is no proof of their existence.

The view that shell also contains some elements of silver is not formulated on the basis of any discovery but for making judgement of a metaphysical nature.

Again there is no law of nature that an object must contain a part of another object with which it has similarity. Vāsudeva in 'Advaita mode' points out that "this is a gratuitous theory since it remains unvarifiable ; when we look closer we donot find a piece of silver, we find a shell" in the shell silver illusion.

In other theories, it is found that the correlation of illusion involved the rejection of one content in favour of another. Rāmānuja makes the correction by adding something to the illusory perception. In the perception of nacre as silver it

is the silver which is included among the component parts of nacre that is seen. Thus according to Rāmānuja a person who errs in cognition really blunders into a subtle truth which under normal conditions is missed or ignored.

So, from these explanation, I came to the conclusion that Rāmānuja, as a realistic philosopher tries to look illusion on the basis of realistic outlook. Rāmānuja's discussion of error though centres round the judgements are true' yet the analysis of error is not so much carried from a rigorous logical point of view, rather very often the analysis is found to have been based on some apriori metaphysical assumption. Specially the 'doctrine of pancikarana' cannot be accepted to explain perceptual illusion. If everything is in everything in its basic characteristics, we cannot classify objects into different class character. A man is not different from cow because this doctrine tells it. Of course, everything in the universe is composed of five basic elements, but that does mean that every object is similar to another. What sort of identity occurs when a person sees a ghost in a pillar in darkness. So Rāmānuja is biased with his metaphysical assumption. His theory of Satkhyāti is right to this point only that in the illusion the illusory object has an objective basis.

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CHAPTER - III  
IDEALISTIC THEORIES OF ERROR

F. AṢĀTKHYĀTI-VĀDA

G. ĀTMAKHYĀTI-VĀDA

H. ANIRVACANIYA-KHYĀTI-VĀDA

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§: ĀTMAKHYĀTIVĀDA  
(VIGNĀNAVĀDINS THEORY OF ERROR)

The Vignānavāda school advocated by Yogācāra accept the doctrine of ātmakhyāti. The two Mahāyāna Buddhist school, Vignānavāda and Mādhyamika hold their different theories of error or illusion though both have their idealistic outlook.

Yogācara, an idealistic philosopher hold that, there is no extra-mental reality, and outer things are only thoughts or ideas of the mind. Reality is a stream of cognitions bifurcated upto a subjective and an objective series. Ātmakhyāti is a theory of self-apprehension<sup>1</sup>".

For Yogācara, error consists in an illegitimate process of projecting of subjective ideas as objective and extramental facts. There is no existence of external objects. The real in this system is the constructive activity of consciousness which alone invests things with significence. There is no object external to consciousness. So for yogācāra, "the mere apparent ascription of external objectivity over the internal vignāna is sufficient to create error"<sup>2</sup> and so it is called Ātmakhyāti or Jñānakārahyaāti, since it insists on the sole reality of ideas and looks upon all objects as cognitions wrongly taken for external things.

"So what is called illusion is the false knowledge (Khyāti) of the pure ego (ātman) as something objective."<sup>3</sup>

The Vignānavādins unlike suñya vādins hold that the snake seen in the rope, cannot be viewed as a total non-entity

or pure *asat*. It is real as a form of internal cognition, but mistake consists in taking it to be the form of an extra-mental object. The silver is a mental fact where as in the illusion it is taken for an extra-mental fact. As a thing existing in the material world, the silver is, of course, fictitious.

Vignāna-vāda is a *miḥsvabhā-vatāvāda* as it rejects the reality of the objective world. According to this school, knowledge points no external object whatsoever and in consequence it rejects the duality of subject and object. The object is essentially of the nature of knowledge as knowledge according to this school is *sākāra*. If knowledge is engaged in revealing an object extraneous to itself it cannot at the same time discharge the function of revealing itself. And knowledge being momentary, can never be revealed, if it is not revealed at the moment of revealing object. Knowledge, therefore should be considered as *svaparakāsa*. The Vignānavādins think that the *sakāratva* of knowledge is logically complementary to its *svaparakāsatva*.

According to Vignānavādins, "no judgement either perceptual or inferential is possible without the implicit acceptance of the dichotomy of subject and object"<sup>4</sup>. It is maintained that judgement as such is erroneous which is consistent with the general Buddhistic doctrine that, All judgements are intrinsically false".

So there is no logical distinction between true and

false judgement. If in a case of false judgement it is argued that the very idea of externality is the root of error and 'Silver' which is merely a mental idea is mistakenly thought to be present outside as an object. It means that in case of true judgement, where the object is actually a piece of silver, there is actually an external object to correspond to the idea of silver. That means, in valid perception, there is complete *harmony between the idea and the external object, where as in case of erroneous perception, this is lack of this harmony.*

"So, on the vignānavāda view, truth is just pure consciousness and all else is error"<sup>5</sup>. But if there is no external objects really, then how at all the vignāva appears as if it is an external object. The Vignāvādin's answer is that the so called knowledge of externality is due to beginningless ~~na~~rescience. This seems to be a general explanation for all errors.

It is owing to ignorance that consciousness is perceived as something else. When in the empirical plane, the rope is mistaken for a snake the former does not become transformed into the latter, but remains so throughout the duration of the illusory perception. "What appears as a snake is no more than an idea projected by the mind into the form of an external object"<sup>6</sup>.

"This objectification of subjective idea is due to sub-conscious impression (Vasaṇā) of silver"<sup>7</sup>. This sub-conscious impression is beginningless (anādi) and is the result of

nescience (avidyā). It is due to this subconscious impression that we have an idea of silver in our mind. This mental idea of silver appears wrongly as an object. It is purely subjective hallucination. This is the doctrine of ātmakhyāti.

So from the above analysis, it is clear that the vignāna-vādins hold their ātmakhyāti doctrine of illusion on the ground of their acceptance of idealistic philosophy. Ātmakhyātivādins, like other theories only analyse the concept of error. Its interest is not to give a psychological explanation regarding illusion, dreams and hallucinations. They advocate that all judgements are erroneous, do not put forth an empirical proposition whose validity can be measured scientifically. The claim that ideas are real alone is a typical metaphysical doctrine directly conflict with experience. The ātmakhyāti while insisting for the khyāti of the vignānas, merely advocate a revision of conceptual frame work. The discussion of error though is pursued in terms of perceptual instances like illusion, hallucination etc. still is not really confined to perception at all. "The empirical distinction of true and false judgement is not at all to be explained by means of the theory of ātmakhyāti"<sup>8</sup>.

Though the vignāna-vādin works out this theory of illusion for the purpose of justifying his fundamental metaphysical position, there is at least apparently some difficulty about it. Not only the snake seen in the rope is something purely subjective falsely taken as an objective, but

so also is the rope normally seen in the rope. This the vignānavādin argues is precisely the reason why he wants us to view all experience as illusory.

But there is some prima-facie difficulty in taking such a position. If the snake seen in the rope is as much a bare idea as the rope seen in the rope, what prevents the vignānavādins to rely on the latter for the purpose of proving his own case ? His own procedure shows that he has to assume, at least tacitly some difference between the illusion of snake and the perception of the rope or some difference between the illusory snake and the actual rope - though from the standpoint of his metaphysical position, such a difference is hardly permissible.

## CRITICISM

1. The Vignānavādins view of error cannot be accepted on the analysis of perceptual judgement. The naiyāyikas criticises this view on the ground that it fails to account for the fact of the case which sublates an illusory cognition. On the theory of Yogācāra, there is no difference between knowledge and the subject and the object of knowledge, everything being an idea only. Hence the cognition of silver should appear not in the form 'This is silver' but 'I am silver; which however is not the case practically. If everything being an idea we donot know how to account for the difference between an idea and its corresponding percept. Actually 'this' in the illusory judgement is never sublated, which points to the fact that in illusion a

real external object appears in the form another external object. Thus Yogācāra is wrong holding illusory object as an idea.

2. Yogācāra holds that objects are non-existent apart from knowledge. Then how it is known that cognition alone is there. It cannot known by perception or inference because in both cases external objects are necessary.

This theory cannot explain our experience of rectifying our perceptual errors, i.e. in a mirage when we see water is in reality is not water there. Yogācāra idealist has identified the criterion of validity with the nature of knowledge and thus rendered himself in capable of explaining the cause of empirical error.

3. The Vignānavādins abolish the distinction between truth and illusion, since in both alike there is no object outside knowledge. But this position is hardly acceptable. We infer the falsity of dreams by comparing them with waking experience. So if we accept his doctrine, all the pre-suppositions of practical life ends in a chaos.

4. Vidyāraṇya, the Samkara vedāntist criticises his view on the ground that the object that is presented in illusion is not wholly unreal or as at (Suñyavāda) nor it is mental what is presented in illusion is a real object here and now for the time being as long as illusion lasts. The Advaitins hold that if

there is no silver outside, there cannot be a cognition having that as its form.

5. If everything is a subjective idea, there is no objective reference of any thing, then how we explain the practical purpose of every object. We drink water to quench our thirst. If 'water' is simply the idea of the mind, does it serves the purpose of quenching thirst? If I have an idea of lots of money in my mind does it serves any practical purpose to buy anything from that idea of money? It is impossible. Ideas have no practical use.

6. Again *ātmakhyāti* points out that the non-existent external object is perceived in illusion. If it is the perception of the non-existent object, it is like the 'asat' or 'non-existent object' in illusion which the *Mādhyamika* explains in "*asatkhyātivāda*".

"Further, if there being nothing but ideas, one idea may be mistaken for another, but not for that which is not idea at all i.e. extra-mental object like silver" perceptual errors cannot, therefore be explained on the theory of subjective idealism of *Yogācāra* type. For as Ewing says "even in error we are concerned not with our ideas but with external reality error is not a mere dwelling on our ideas but an unsuccessful cognising of objects"<sup>9</sup>.

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३. ANIRVACANIYAKHYĀTIVĀDA  
(ADVAITA VEDĀNTA THEORY OF ERROR)

"The doctrine of adhyāsa is one of the most important contribution to philosophical thought by the Advaita Vedānta"<sup>1</sup>. In this doctrine we have an epistemological doctrine of higher order. In perception we cognise the appearance but not the underlying reality. This fact of mistaken appearance for reality is called adhyāsa. Its essence lies in not seeing a thing as it is, and in placing upon it a different interpretation. It is misjudging of the data presented to the sense by a pre-conceived idea. Superimposition or adhyāsa is defined by Samkara as the apparent presentation to consciousness by way of remembrance of something previously observed in some other thing. It cannot be called memory.

Samkara has explained the world to be an appearance. This explanation of the world has given his philosophy the name of māyāvāda. Allied to māyāvāda, we have in Samkara's philosophy, a theory of, error known as 'anirvacaniya khyāti'.

"The concept of error is so important in Samkara's philosophy that he raises the problem of knowledge and error in the very opening lines of his famous 'Adhyāsa bhāṣya'<sup>2</sup>. The concept of anirvacaniya is a logical conclusion arrived at through an objective analysis of illusion and its object.

Anirvacaniya khyātivāda is propounded by Samkara and elaborated by Post Samkara advaitins. Anirvacaniyakhyāti literally means the false knowledge of the indescribable

(anirvacaniya). "The advaitins assert that, what is known as an illusory object is a peculiar and indescribable one"<sup>3</sup>.

This theory is the logical consequence of the refutation of the other khyātivādas on the ground that the content of erroneous cognition cannot be real existing in the substratum, it is not also a memory image, neither it is real existing elsewhere, nor again it is purely internal or absolutely non-existent. Samkara usually refers to the illusory object as "tattvānyat vābhayam anirvacaniya"<sup>4</sup> and not in terms of sat and asat. It starts straight way from experience, without laying down any such postulates and thereafter tries to find out what the content of error in itself may be. "Two prominent features of the object of illusion must be emphasised at the very outset"<sup>5</sup>. Firstly, the object of illusion cannot be real even from the common sense point of view; because the final revelation of the substratum and the subsequent cancelling knowledge, which emerges as its corollary and demolishes the existence of illusory objects for all the time. Secondly, it cannot be dismissed as altogether unreal, because such an absolutely unreal cannot form the object of perception and no one can dispute its presentation as such in actual cognition in the realm of relativity. In every case of illusion, there is an assurance (though for the time being) that there is something real, direct and immediate underlying it. During illusion it is the appearance itself, which is through ignorance conceived to be this real something. For explaining the fact of appearance, the illusory object must be there, and for explaining cancellation it must not be real.

This expression is explained as indicating the impossibility of conceiving it as either the same or as other than its ground. The fact is that while seeing a snake in the rope, the snake can neither be identified with the rope nor distinguished from it, an explanation which implies that its nature is not determinable (durnirūpa) or that it has no essence of its own. The snake in the rope cannot be viewed as just asat or nothingness for what is just nothingness like the son of a barren woman can never be experienced. Failing thus to view the snake as purely non-existent, it considers as sat or really existing.

This again is absurd, because one eventually realises that the snake seen in the rope exists in no dimension of time past, present and future. So the snake is neither existent nor non-existent, neither an entity nor a non-entity neither sat nor asat. "So the Advaitins choose the golden mean of calling the illusory object "anirvacaniya"<sup>6</sup> (Indeterminable), "Indescribable". It is not characterisable as either is or is not (Sadāsadanirvacaniya).

"The Vedāntists hold that in order to justify the appearance as well as the illusory content of a cognition, the existence of an object that is inexplicable as neither real nor unreal must be admitted at the locus of presentation"<sup>7</sup>. The Advaitins reject the thesis that only the real can be cognised and the unreal alone is rejected.

On the other hand, the fact that the real can never be

sublated and the unreal can never be cognised, is attested to by normal cognitive experience. "It is therefore, according to Vedāntists, an anirvacaniya object can be content of perception and an object of negation also"<sup>8</sup>. Vedāntists describe the real as that which cannot be manifested. It is the anirvacaniya alone, the inexplicable as either real or unreal, that can be both revealed and rejected.

The theory of anirvacaniya Khyāti provides the clue to an understanding of the significance of māyā as being and non-being and the position held by Samkara that the world is neither being nor non-being. The Vedāntists hold that in order to justify the appearance as well as the illusory content of a cognition the existence of an object that is inexplicable as neither real nor unreal must be admitted at the locus of presentation.

According to Samkara, there are three orders of reality- Pratibhāsika, Vyavahārika and Pāramārthika. "Error arises on account of the super-imposition on one order of reality on other"<sup>9</sup>. The snake belongs to the phenomenal order called drisṭisṛṣṭi and the rope on which it is super imposed belong to the empirical order. Seeing as a snake where there is a real rope is a case of adhyāsa for the rope which is phenomenal is super imposed on the snake which belongs to the empirical order. What is super-imposed must be assigned to a lower order because its knowledge suffers contradiction when a higher knowledge arises. The snake can neither be identified with the rope nor distinguished from it - an explanation which implies that its

nature is indeterminable, or it has no essence of its own being but nāma (name) and rupa (form). In other words, it is but an appearance. Error points to a thing that is preciously like what it appears , but is yet not characterisable as either is or is not (Sadāsadanirvacaniya). Hence the name is anirvacaniya.

According to Advaita, the snake or silver is neither unreal nor mental, but an actual creation for the time being. It is the creation of avidyā (ignorance). To perceive the snake it is not enough if there is in sufficient light and a mental disposition. There are the only conditions but the material cause is avidyā. The illusory snake is perceived for same time and then sublated by a corresponding experience. Therefore it cannot be absolutely unreal or-absolutely real. It cannot be both at the same time because two contradictory predicates cannot qualify the same entity at the same time. Hence the illusory snake is indefinable. As the snake cannot be the object of our practical activity, it cannot belong to the order of empirical existence to which the real snake belongs. It belongs to a relatively less real order of being called the Pratibhāsika satta or illusory reality. "Thus, in short a mysterious snake neither existing nor non existing is temporarily produced by ignorance and becomes the object of illusory perception"<sup>10</sup>.

There is also another kind of error which arises from a confusion between two objects which are inclose physical proximity. In the illusion of 'red crystal' the mistake here is not due to the super-imposition of one object on another, but is

due to the failure to keep the two different things and their qualities. The mistake in the case of crystal arises from its close association with the red object. It is the adjunct that accounts for the error, Samkara refers to this case, on his commentary on 'Vedānta Sutra'. But the underlying principle is the same.

Samkara, unlike Yogācāra Buddhist but like Mimāṃsakas, assume an objective content of error. To know is for him to know something which is other than knowledge. But he differs from Mimāṃsakas, in so far as he realises that the factors in error, owing to its later sublation cannot be the same at the corresponding object of the ordinary experience, it must therefore be explained in a different way viz, as an appearance.

According to Samkara, neither *asat khyāti*, nor *ātmakhyāti*, nor *anirvacaniya khyāti* nor *Akhyāti* nor the rest of the theories can adequately explain the true nature of illusion. What is presented in illusion is a real object which is outside of us, here and now. It leads one to activity to pick it up (incase shell-silver), but is falsified latter on when the true character of knowledge arises. These are the characteristic feature of illusory perception and only the Advaita theory of *anirvacaniya khyāti* do justice all of them. In advaita Vedānta, this understanding of common illusion provides the model for explaining what they consider the illusion of the material world in pure-spirit (Brahman).

## CRITICISM

1. According to Advaita, the illusory object is indefinable because it is neither real nor it is unreal. But the object under 'real and unreal' character at the same time can never be perceived firstly, the question of sublation comes later on According to advaita. The illsory object 'silver' is perceived is perceived for the time as long as illusion lasts, so it is like Nyāya view in this point.

2. Inexplicable object cannot be the object of illusion. Either it has some basis or not but cannot neither, it is impossible. When we see water in a mirage, the water is apprehended as real not a something anirvacaniya. The Pravritti of the person who sees it is directed towards real water. Oñe cannot have such behaviour towards anirvacaniya object, that is water. The existence of water in a mirage is apprehended in a particular place and time, how can then it is called anirvacaniya ? In perceptual field there is no anirvacaniya object, i.e. which cannot be characterised as something. If the object is itself is anirvacaniya, then how we call it snake in a rope in the illusory judgement 'This is snake'.

3. If the Advaitins say that though the snake is itself anirvacaniya. Yet it appears as real, in that case the Advaitins must accept Viparita khyāti (Kumarila) for one thing appears as another.

4. When any illusion occurs say 'Silver' in a 'rope', the correcting judgement is 'This is not silver'. So when we see

'silver' in a shell the shell is not transformed into the silver, only our knowledge of the object is wrongly applied. But Sankara misses the fact that illusion a false cognition. The Nyāya and Mimāṃsā system criticises this view that anirvacaniya khyāti cannot explain an object which is first perceived and then sublated. A snake is perceived in illusion and later on, it is sublated. The Nyāya points out that the silver exists somewhere else but is sublated here and now when we realise that 'This is not silver'. So it is not the knowledge of silver which is sublated but the object itself comes under sublation.

5. Kumārila Bhatta criticises this view that if the object of the illusion 'This is silver' be an indefinable silver, what is the object of the correcting cognition 'this is not silver' ? In the case of negation of an indefinable silver by the sublating cognition the latter will be equivalent to 'this is not an indefinable silver', but, because the perceived silver is supposed to be actually an indefinable silver, this sublating cognition will be false.

6. Sankara's anirvacaniya object is similar to Nārgārjuna's 'asat' which is purely non-existent. Does the indescribable snake seen in the rope is more real than the purely fictitious snake held by the Sūnyavādins ? Anirvacaniyakhyāti is also basically asat, though with some special illustration distinguishes its unreality from the more fictitious called alika. Both are untrue.

So Samkara is an idealistic philosopher but he explains illusion on an objective basic which is done by the realist philosopher like Nyāya. In illusion, there is perception of something as something else. Samkara also explains in the same manner. As long as illusion lasts, the perception of silver is real. So long the question of anirvacaniyatā does not arise. When illusion vanishes and the real object occurs, in this point the illusory silver comes under anirvacaniya. Actually we cannot understand the meaning of the word 'anirvacaniya' in his philosophy. He explains the world as anirvacaniya, that means the world is real from the empirical standpoint, we cannot deny the world totally but it is unreal in relation to the Pāramārtha sattā. So silver is also real as long as illusion lasts, it is unreal when the real object 'shell' appears to our perception.

Anirvacaniyatā is the only explanation of the erroneous cognition, while explaining error, anirvacaniyatā is unavoidable, it is inevitable. The Advaitins hold that any explanation of illusion is unintelligible if we do not assume its anirvacaniyatā. According to Samkara, anirvacaniyatā does not mean that the object of error is anirvacaniya, but they mean that it is neither real nor unreal, neither none nor both.

The term 'anirvacaniya' is used as a category and not as an object or an entity. So it is a category to describe the illusory nature of objects, that means it refers to something which is neither real nor unreal nor both.

So Samkara is successful in explaining illusory cognition and sublation adequately and satisfactorily.

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CHAPTER - IV  
C O N C L U S I O N

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## C O N C L U S I O N

In the above chapters I have analysed the different theories of error or bhrama (Khyātivādas) propounded by the famous schools of Indian Philosophy. All these theories discuss this important topic with divergence of opinion in conformity with their philosophical analysis. These theories give different explanations of the very relevant questions of the erroneous knowledge of the nature of the 'silver' which appears in the shell. We have seen in the above discussions about the nature and content of this erroneous cognition as the object is not fully perceived (Akhyāti) or the object which is somewhere else is misrepresented to be here and now (Anyathākhyāti) or the object as an idea which is purely internal, is misperceived as an external object (Ātmakhyāti) or the object is pure non-being (as-at Khyāti) or the object is indescribable (Anirvacanīyakhyāti) and so on. This controversial topic of error in the field of philosophic speculation again is based on the question whether error is due to the object itself or it is due to our subjective attitude towards the object.

But these explanations in the form of different theories are such that they are not limited to empirical scrutiny so that none of them can either be rejected or accepted in preference to others. There is clearly the presence of some non-empirical commitment which shows that these different theories, by way of explaining the erroneous phenomenon, not merely restrict themselves to the empirically available data but

freely posit certain further data which are not empirical but metaphysical.

So the explanation of the erroneous perception, thus, turns out to be the metaphysical explanation about the nature and status of the object of misperception. A discussion about the empirical concept (a concept of perception) turns out to be discussion about the metaphysical entity. In fact this metaphysical rendering seems to be the special feature of the Indian discussion of psychological issues and so psychology cannot be separated from metaphysics.

Of course it is a fact that philosophers when they analyse any concept, they give analysis from their own philosophical standard. Just as a scientist analyses any fact from a scientific point of view. So both the groups of philosophers, Idealists and Realists discuss error from their own philosophical standpoints. Again as theories of error are broadly classified into Sat khyāti (existence) and as-at khyāti (non-existence) are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. However diverse their explanations of the false 'object in error' all these theories start with an ontological assumption that such objects must be either real or unreal. Each of these views appears more as a protest against the other, and the strongest argument in favour of either is the failure of the other. The reason for their failure to be convincing is to be traced to this mixing up of ontology with epistemology.



the different theories are only debating about the nature and status of the object of the erroneous cognition. For instance, when the shell is misperceived as silver, is it real (sat) or is it unreal (asat) or is it both real and unreal (sadāsat) or is it neither real nor unreal (amirvacaniya) or is it real not in the sense of external object but in the sense of ideas (vijnānas). That means the dispute among various theories is precisely about the being of erroneous cognition.

(4) It is also seen that the different theories, while elucidating their respective position have a mode of explanation which are not empirical but they are metaphysically oriented. For example, the Naiyāyika's 'Jnāna-Laksanapratyaksa,'

Advaitins anirvacaniya object which is neither real nor unreal nor both, Ramanuja's doctrine of Quantuplication which shows that though they are discussing the problem perceptual knowledge, their theories are not properly perceptual, but metaphysically oriented.

The Buddhist doctrines of asatkhyāti and ātmakhyāti are also metaphysical in nature and is influenced by their idealistic outlook.

Though anirvacaniyakhyāti belongs to the idealistic group, explains error quite objectively that the so-called error has an objective basis. In case of 'snake' seen in a rope, the snake is perceived as an objective fact as long as illusion

lasts. Ofcourse that 'snake' is ultimately belongs to the anirvacaniya level.

The other two theories, Viparitakhyāti and anyathākhyāti, of course explain error in an objective basis holding their realistic position.

Now, the question is which is the most consistent of all the theories of error ? Actually if we go through all the theories throughly, it is seen that all the theories fail to explain the fact of illusory experience ultimately, from the common sense point of view. Of course the problem is philosophical and all the theories give philosophical explanation in conformity with their position they hold.

The Naiyāyikas and the viparitakhyātivādins are right that in illusory experience the object appears as other than what it is. But the naiyāyikas 'jnāna-Laksana pratyaksa' is not a general explanation. On the otherhand, it falls into memory because remote objects cannot be perceived but it comes under memory. The Naiyāyikas holding their realistic position, calls it perception.

Actually in the illusory judgement the 'this' is always the same, but the 'predicate occurs differently. If we can identify 'the this' with the predicate properly the question of illusory knowledge does not arise.

Again at the time of illusion, we cannot judge the 'predicate' whether it is real or unreal. When the illusion lasts it seems to be the character of that object (silver in case of shell) because we can see the silver directly. We cannot think that our senses err sometimes. But when the actual character of the object (shell) appears in the next moment we are in trouble. So we are bound to think that we perceive wrongly. Then what sort of the nature of the illusory object is it existent or non-existent ? Or is it true or false ? We cannot judge as long as illusion occurs it is true after correction it is false.

So one can agree with Sankara's 'Anirvacaniyakhyaṭi that the object of illusory judgement is neither real nor unreal, nor both, nor neither. Samkara is right in justifying this character to the illusory object. And finally Samkara calls this character as anirvacaniya. So in Samkara's philosophy this anirvacaniyatā is a category which is applied to a thing which cannot be judged either of the four qualities Anirvacaniyatā is the category of our understanding by which we can justify the object of illusion which does not fall under all these four qualifications.

Commonly the term anirvacaniya means indescribable, indeterminable, indefinable etc. But Samkara uses this term in a different manner, because we see that when he explains the world, he uses this word that the world is anirvacaniya. That means, according to him anirvacaniya is an explanatory principle

which can be applied to a thing or the object belonging to the pratibhāsika sattā and the vyavahārika sattā, and not to the Pāramārthika sattā or to the absolutely unreal.

An absolutely unreal object like barren's woman son is indescribable because it is beyond description. Again the 'term indefinable' can be applied to Brahman, because Brahman's essence cannot be defined or determined. But Samkara does not hold that Brahman is anirvacaniya.

So while Samkara uses the term anirvacaniya, we mean by it that it refers to something which cannot be determined in terms of set ideas, such as real, unreal or both or either.

The 'Shell' bears an anirvacaniya relation to the super-imposed silver that the prior cognition take the illusory silver as real. But since the relation is anirvacaniya or ultimately false, the latter cognition regarding silver is unreal. Thus the Advaitins are in a position to prove the anirvacaniyatā of the illusory silver. Thus one can draw conclusion with Samkara that there is no contradiction with experience for the assertion of the anirvacaniyatā and it is only the explanatory principle by which we can judge the character of an illusory object.

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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