

## Chapter-III

### Means of Knowing an Absence

Before discussing *anupalabdhi* as a *pramāna* for grasping absence it is necessary to provide some ideas about the notions of *pramā* i.e., valid cognition and *pramāna* i.e., the source of valid cognition. The Indian concepts of *pramā* (valid cognition) and *pramāna* (source of valid cognition) come under the purview of epistemology. The concept of *pramā* is different in different systems of Indian Philosophy and accordingly the nature and number of *pramāna* is admitted there. Hence before taking up the problem of the means of knowing absence properly, it is essential to discuss the theories of different schools of Indian philosophy regarding the valid cognition (*pramā*) and the means of valid cognition (*pramāna*).

According to Indian thinkers, a true cognition means certain (*niścita*), uncontradicted (*avādhita*) which is distinct from a false one (*mithyā-jñāna*). In Indian philosophy, the word '*jñāna*' stands for both valid and invalid cognition.<sup>1</sup> The '*jñāna*' or cognition, which is synonyms, is divided into two classes: *pramā* (valid cognition) and *apramā*.

According to Nyāya, valid cognition (*pramā*) is a definite or certain (*asandigdha*), unerring (*yathārtha*) knowledge and it consists in knowing the

object as it is.<sup>2</sup> But a cognition is invalid which has, for its predicate, a character which is not possessed by the subject (of the cognition). Thus, *pramā* means *yathārthānubhava* i.e., the definite and assured knowledge of an object which is true presentational in character. In other words, true cognition is an expression whose qualifier is such that it belongs to the object (*tadvati tatprakāratvam*). That is, to know an object as such is valid and as otherwise is invalid.<sup>3</sup>

The above matter can easily be shown with the help of some examples. ‘I know a piece of silver as silver’ – in this cognition the existence of silverness remains in silver but not in shell. For this reason it is qualified as *pramā*. For ‘silverness’, the qualifier, remains in the qualificand ‘silver’ leading to the fulfillment of the definition ‘*tadvati tatprakāratva*’. If, on the other hand, somebody has got the knowledge of silver in the case of shell and claims – ‘This is silver’ then we will see that the qualifier ‘silverness’ remains in the shell but not in silver. For this reason it lacks the character of *pramā* due to having *tadabhāvavati tatprakāratva* i.e., the qualifier remains in a place where the qualificand does not exist. Now we may conclude by mentioning two important points namely, one is about the nature and another is the test of truth of validity. In the case of the first, there is difference of opinion among the various schools of Indian philosophy. According to Jayanta, *pramā* is that knowledge of objects which is free from doubt and illusion.<sup>4</sup> Gangeśa holds that *pramā* is that which informs us of the existence

of something in a place where it really exists.<sup>5</sup> The Prābhākaras define it as immediate experience (*anubhūti*). Bhāttas, under the influence of the Buddhists, hold that valid cognition (*pramā*) invariably related to a novel object.<sup>6</sup>

Dharmakīrti, the eminent Buddhist logician, defines true cognition as corresponding to the reality (*avisamvādī*) in the sense that there is one to one correspondence between the cognition of an object and the practical activity meant to obtain it.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he holds that valid cognition of an object is always a new one, the cognition of which not yet attained earlier.<sup>8</sup> Kapila, the formulator of Samkhyasutra, states that *pramā* is a determinate knowledge of an object which is not known earlier. The Advaitins hold that valid cognition consists in knowledge which is *abādhita* or unsublated. In this context Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra gives two definitions of *pramā*, the first one includes memory while the second refers to novelty as an essential feature of valid cognition.<sup>9</sup>

It is a well-known fact that regarding the test of the truth of knowledge there are four theories in Western Philosophy: (a) Correspondence theory, (b) Coherence theory, (c) Pragmatic and (d) Self-evidence theory. According to the correspondence theory, a true proposition is one that corresponds (not in the sense of resemblance) to a fact, i.e., to an actual state of affairs, which is similar to *avisamvāditva*. In general, the statement the P is true if and only if it is the case that P. In other words, a statement is true if it is the case that P or it corresponds to

the fact. Those who admit correspondence theory of truth are silent about the test of truth. The propagators of the pragmatic theory hold that a true proposition is one when it proves to be both intellectually and practically satisfying in experience and its utility. Truth is held to be something that happens to a proposition and a proposition is made true through verification. If otherwise, it is a meaningless term. In this sense the test of truth is not different from the nature of truth. The coherence theory holds that the test of the truth of a proposition is to be sought in the consistency between the proposition whose truth is in question and other relevant propositions. The consistency upon which the coherence lays emphasis is of both sorts, as the nature and test of truth. The basic principle of the self-evidence theory is constituted by intrinsic validity of the data of our knowledge. Thus we may say that what is self – evident is, indubitable.

In Indian philosophy there is also a difference of opinion among the different schools concerning the nature and test or criterion of truth with regard to *pramā*. As to *pramā* the Naiyayikas admit that the nature of truth is correspondence, i.e., *tadvati tatprakāra* which means the object of knowledge must correspond with the cognition. To the Buddhists the test of truth is practical efficiency, i.e., *arthakriyākāritva*. The Buddhists regard *arthakriyākāritva* or causal efficacy compared to the pragmatic theory as in the West. Dharmakīrti's analysis of *pramā* resembles the coherence theory of truth, because truth, according to him,

should be congruent to experience. For Advaita Vedānta it is the principle of non contradiction which is the means of examining the truth.

According to the Naiyāyikas, the word ‘*jñāna*’ is not same as the English word ‘knowledge’. For, the periphery of the word *jñāna* is wider than that of knowledge. The word ‘*pramā*’ which covers a specific area of ‘*jñāna*’ is permitted to be translated as knowledge. But the Nyāya concept of *apramā* which also covers the domain of *jñāna* is not knowledge. Hence to translate of *jñāna* indifferently as knowledge should be misleading and confusing. In a word, all individual manifestations of knowledge are *jñāna*, but not the *vice-versa*.

According to Nyāya, knowledge is the quality of the self by virtue of being *guṇa*. Every quality (*guṇa*) has its locus in a substance through the relation, called inference (*samavāya*), and the substance in this context is none other than the self. That *jñāna* is described as a *guṇa* inhering in a self (*ātma-samaveta*) is known through the method of residues called *pariśeṣa*. *Jñāna* cannot belong to the substances like the earth; water etc., as they have their specific qualities. Jnana, by virtue of being a quality, must exist in some substance which is no other than a self (*ātman*). In this sense, both ‘*pramā*’ (valid cognition) and ‘*apramā*’ (invalid cognition) are the qualities of self (*ātman*). In case of perceptual cognition self is connected mind which is again connected with sense organ (‘*ātmā manasā samyujoyate manah indriyena indriyamārthena*’). In the former case we perceive

the object of knowledge as such. So valid cognition, according to Nyāya, is defined as that which informs us about the existence of something in a place where it really exists, or which predicated of something a character which is really possessed by it. In other words, valid cognition is defined as presentational knowledge (*yatharthānubhava*). In fact, the whole epistemology involves in four factors, namely, the subject or the knower (*pramātā*), the object or the known (*prameya*), the method by which the subject knows the object (*pramāṇa*), and the resultant knowledge (*pramiti*). That is why; Vātsyāyana said in his Nyāyabhāṣya that the epistemological frame work consists in four pillars as mentioned above (*‘catasṛṣu caivamvidhāsu arthatattvam parisamāpyate’- Nyāyabhāṣya on 1.1.1.*). These four factors together constitute the whole truth.

Udayana defines the mark of *pramā* as proper ascertainment (*‘samyak paricchittih’*). According to him, it is the condition of the real nature of a thing, and it is the condition of the perception. From this definition it follows that memory cognition (*smṛtijñāna*) is not included herein on account of the fact that it cannot provide us the accurate cognition. As *smṛti* is not independent knowledge, its object is the same as that of the original perception which has generated it. In order to keep *smṛti* apart from valid cognition Udayana uses the term *‘anapekṣa’* (i.e., independent) in his definition.<sup>10</sup>

Among the commentators on the Nyaya-Sutras, Vācaspati Miśra deals with the issues of validity and invalidity of knowledge. Udayana follows Vācaspati and lends supports to his view on many points. He opens a detailed discussion with the remark that validity and invalidity of knowledge are extrinsic properties.

The word ‘*pramāṇa*’ is originated from the root *mā* meaning to measure and hence it signifies the means of measurement. Thus, we etymologically derive the expression *pramāṇa* from *pramīyate anena iti pramāṇa* i.e., the instrument through which something is to be proved. It is suggested that the scope of *pramāṇa* lies in ascertaining the accuracy of cognition.

This view of *pramāṇa*, depending on the etymology of the word as the means of measuring knowledge, is not a final one. The Indian thinkers regarded *pramāṇa* both as a means of discovering truth and verifying knowledge. The term ‘measurement’ signifies discovering and verifying cognition. Now we shall consider the general definition of *pramāṇa* in various schools of Indian philosophy and find that all the systems of Indian philosophy, more or less, agree in respect of literal meaning as well as the function or purpose of *pramāṇa* in the sense that it is conducive to valid knowledge (*pramā*). *Pramāṇa* is generally defined as the *karaṇa* of *pramā*, i.e., a special cause generating a particular effect or *pramā* (*pramākaraṇam pramānam*).

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, there is no difference as to the definition of *pramāna*. This school also accepts *pramāna* to be the instrument of valid cognition i.e., ‘*pramānakaraṇam pramāṇam*’. In *Tarkasamgraha-Dīpikā*, Annambhatta holds that *karaṇa* is the uncommon or special causal condition (*asādhāraṇam kāraṇam*).<sup>11</sup> The *karaṇa* is to be understood as the uncommon or special cause through which a particular effect is generated, if the instrument is in operation. In the case of perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣa pramā*), e.g., a sense – organ (in the case of external perception) or *manas* or mind (in the case of internal perception), is the instrumental cause (*karaṇa*). Like these, there are many causes which are required for the generation of external perceptual knowledge. But *ātman* is the one cause which is common to all the varieties of knowledge, whereas no particular sense-organ is common to all except perception, i.e., it is an uncommon cause for the external perception alone. Though perception is essential in inferential, testimonial and other forms of cognition due to having perception of *hetu* in case *anumāna* and perception of words in case of testimonial cognition yet they are common cause in those cases. But in case of perception alone sense organ is the common cause.

It may be argued that the instrumental cause or *karaṇa*, being an uncommon cause, can give rise to cognition if it is operative (*vyāpāravat*). The sense organ has got capability of revealing an object if it is operative. Thus, a cause is said to be

*karāṇa* that must not merely be uncommon (*asādhāraṇa*), but also possess active function (*vyāpāra*). The contact between the sense-organ and an object is a cause of perception no doubt. In this sense, it is present only in perception instrumentally, and hence it is said to be uncommon. But still it is not the *karāṇa* of perception, if it is not associated operative process.<sup>12</sup>

Now we may turn our attention to the means of knowing absence or a negative fact. Concerning it, the Bhāttas and Advaita Vedāntins accept the sixth method of knowledge, viz., *anupalabdhi* as a *pramāṇa*. Now, we propose to discuss whether the means of knowing a negative fact as admitted by the Bhāttas and Vedāntins is really a separate source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) or not. Although there is much controversy, some issues that arise on the way of understanding the claim may be as follows: Are there really negative facts? Facts may be of two types: positive and negative. Facts are normally those which are capable of being experienced. The positive facts are known through perception, inference etc., e.g., “This is a red book” or “This is P”. To say that such cases are known through perception, inference etc means knowing the positive aspect of P. We get something positive by our sense organ. It may also happen that our sense organs are operative and have got contact with an object not existing there. In such case also there is sense organ, mind and their connection with an absence of something. As for example, ‘There is no jar on the ground’ (*bhūtale ghaṭo nāsti* or *ghaṭābhāvavad bhūtaḥ*).

This negative fact is known through a separate source of knowing called *anupalabdhi*. The Advaita Vedantins have justified their position in admitting *anupalabdhi* as a means of knowing, which will follow soon.

The Naiyāyikas hold that non-existence is cognized through perception while the Buddhists think that it is cognized through inference. The Advaitins, of course, belong neither to the former nor to the later group. The Prābhākaras and Sāmkhyas hold that the negative fact or non-existence has a specific mode of reality different from the positive or existent ones. In spite of this fact non-existence is said to be known through perception as the positive fact or existent things. The Naiyāyikas also have arrived at the same conclusion with the help of a different set of convincing arguments.

The Advaitins admits six ways of knowing or *pramāṇas* being influenced by the thought of the Mīmāṃsā school of Kumārila Bhatta. According to them, *anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension cannot be reduced to any of the other five means of knowing- *pramāṇas*. It is not acceptable to those that the non-existence of an object is inferred from its non-apprehension. For, inference requires a probans or *hetu* and invariable relation between *hetu* and *sādhya* called *vyāpti*. For, inference requires a these conditions and there is no such proposition employed, for example, in the case of the cognition of the absence of something. It is also obvious that *anupalabdhi* cannot be known through perception, comparison, testimony, or

postulation due to having different domains of them which do not suit in case of cognition of absence. For these reasons, the Advaitins regard *anupalabdhi* as an independent source of valid knowledge. So it can be said that the non-existence of a thing can be known through a separate source of knowledge or *pramāṇa* which is called *anupalabdhi* or *yogyānupaladhi*.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the *anupalabdhi* as a means of knowing or *pramāṇa* is the specific cause of such immediate knowledge of non-existence of a thing, which cannot be known through any of the well known means of knowledge. The Advaitins have well-argued that the fact of knowing the absence of an entity cannot be included in perception and inference as done by the Naiyāyikas and Buddhists respectively. If something is the source of knowledge and if it cannot be included in perception, inference etc., it has to be accepted as an independent source of knowledge or *pramāṇa*.

### **The Advaita theory of Anupalabdhi:**

The Advaita Vedāntins and that Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas accept *anupalabdhi* as a separate source of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), because it is one and only one way of knowing a negative fact or *abhāva*. If the absence of an object is capable of being known, it is possible only through non-cognition or *anupalabdhi* on account of the fact that other *pramāṇas* fail to yield the knowledge of absence. Its object is the non-existence of a thing, but not the non-existence itself. The five *pramāṇas* (except the sixth one called *anupalabdhi* adopted by the Advaita Vedānta and

Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā) have got different domains to illuminate in which absence is obviously not there and hence *anupalabdhi* has to be taken as a separate source of knowledge. If each of the *pramāna* leads to some knowledge not derivable from any other, it can maintain its exclusive nature for which it is meant. Hence, absence is not capable of being apprehended by perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference ( *anumāna*), knowledge through comparison (*upamāna*), presumption (*arthāpatti*) or testimonial cognition (*śabda*). This is the reason why a distinct source of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) called for and it is called *anupalabdhi*.

The Bhāṭṭas and the Advaitins forward their identical opinion regarding the absence of an entity; its attributes and its locus that are known by the special source of knowledge called non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). This implies that the absence of an object (*anupalabdhi*) is apprehended by its non-perception ( *apratyakṣa*). From the non-perception of a jar in a place one may draw his conclusion that it is not there. In the same way in the cases like, “The students are not in the class room”, “There is no taste of a mango”, “The apple is not on the ground”, “This flower has no red colour”, the knower becomes aware of the some object or its attribute by means of non-perception. The students’ absence from the class-room is known by the non-apprehension of their presence there, but not by the perception of his absence. Their absence is not known by the perception of the room or anything else in the room.

It may seem to be problematic that the non-apprehension of an object is a way for understanding its non-existence (*abhāva*). But it is true that an absence of something is known through its non-apprehension and at the same time it is known through the perception of the locus also. When there is an absence of a jar on the ground, we at first perceive the ground with the help of eye and become aware of its absence. It is argued that if a jar were on the ground it would have been perceived by us. This is what the Naiyāyikas would suggest. But it is not ignorable fact that eye etc have certain function to have an awareness of non-availability of the jar which ultimately leads us to the land of the cognition of absence.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that each and every system of Indian Philosophy has got certain metaphysical or ontological presuppositions in formulating epistemological theories. I believe the Advaitins are not exception to this and hence they have certain presuppositions behind the acceptance *anupalabdhi* as a separate source of knowing. It is a well known fact that the Advaitins believe in monism or the existence of non-dual entity as Reality. According to them, Brahman and Atman are one and the same. The phenomenal world is nothing but Brahman is known through the realization of Brahman. One who realizes Brahman can identify oneself with the whole world. (*Brahma satyam jaganmithyā/ jīvo brahmaiva nāparah*). This is in fact, the state of liberation. But one who has not realized the self or Brahman is not able to understand the non-dual

mode of being. For the mental upliftment of the ordinary people ignorant of Brahman the Advaitins are in favour certain means like *śravaṇa* (hearing), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (meditation) of what is said in our Śāstras, Brahmasūtra etc.<sup>14</sup> Epistemology is also a part of programme. The epistemology advocated by the Advaitins is goal-oriented. The ultimate goal is to lead an individual to the path of realizing the self. *Anupalabdhi* has been accepted as a *pramāṇa* to serve such important purpose. An ordinary man has to be convinced that in Brahman there is the absence of duality. Brahman is only One and Ultimate Reality. The term ‘*advaita*’ means ‘the absence of duality’ (*dvaitābhāva*). In order to understand the absence of duality in Brahman or Âtman we need a separate *pramāṇa* called *anupalabdhi*. Such absence of duality cannot be known through perception due to not having its perceptible characters like colour (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*) etc. It can never be apprehended through inference due to not having the cognition of *hetu* and *vyāpti*. The absence of duality which is identified with the *advaita* state gives no room for inferential procedure. Hence the *anupalabdhi* is the only means to know such non-duality. That Brahman is Advaita or nondual indicates that the absence of duality is there. Without an adjunct or *upādhi* the non-dual character of Brahman is not ascertained in the phenomenal stage. In other words, that Brahman is indeterminate and non-dual is ascertained with the help of the adjunct called ‘the absence of duality’. Had there been no *anupalabdhi* as a

pramana, the duality in the phenomenal world which is the result of nescience or illusion cannot be removed. Hence, the sixth *pramāṇa* – *anupalabdhi* which alone can ascertain the non-dual character of Brahman.

According to *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā* by Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the means of valid cognition as *anupalabdhi* is the extra-ordinary cause of the apprehension of non-existence which is not caused by the instrumentality of cognition (*jñānākaraṇaka*). In other words, *anupaladhi* is an uncommon cause of the right awareness of absence (*abhāvānubhavāsādhāraṇakāraṇa*) which is not caused through the instrumentality of other knowledge.<sup>15</sup> The word ‘the right apprehension’ (*anubhava*) in the definition is incorporated in order to keep memory under the purview of *anupalabdhi*. Through the insertion of the term ‘*anubhava*’ the *smṛtijñāna* i.e., the recollective cognition is excluded from the purview of *anupalabdhi*. Sometimes there might be the recollection of non-existence as the awareness of non-apprehension. In order to avoid such unwanted situation the means of the direct or right awareness of the absence is called *anupalabdhi*.<sup>4</sup> Awareness is of two types: *smṛti* (recollective cognition) and *anubhava* (presentative cognition). When the object is directly or correctly known, it is called *anubhava* or presentative cognition. That is to say, *anubhava* is that type of cognition where the cognition is verified with the real presence of the object. In case of the cognition of a jar if there is really a jar after verification, the

cognition of jar is called *anubhava*, because the object is physically present here. So far as recollective cognition or *smṛti* is concerned, there is also awareness which is not of *anubhava* type or of correct type. The object of recollective knowledge (*smṛtijñāna*) is not physically present as it is a case of remembered content. So far as the awareness of absence is concerned, it is of *anubhava* type. If there is an absence of a jar, for example, on the ground, it is a kind of presentative cognition or *anubhava*. For its absence can be verified. Recollection of the absence is not a presentative cognition (*anubhava*), but *smṛti*. In order to exclude such type of knowledge Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra has incorporated the word *anubhava* in the definition of *anupaladbhi*.<sup>16</sup>

The word ‘*jñānakaraṇājanya*’ (cognition not caused by the instrumentality of knowledge) is inserted in order to exclude other means of cognition like inference etc. that are caused through the instrumentality of knowledge. For, inference is caused through the instrumentality of the knowledge of *hetu* and cognition of *vyāpti*. Following the same argument the Advaitins are of the opinion that *anupalabdhi* cannot be included under *arthāpatti* or presumption, because the presumption is also caused by the instrumentality of other cognition. When it is known that the strong and stout Devadatta does not eat in the day time, the eating of Devadatta at time is caused by the cognition of his stoutness and his non-eating at day time. Hence it is also *jñāna-karaṇa-janya* or cognition caused by cognition.

In the like manner, anupalabdhi cannot be included under comparison (*upamāna*) and testimonial cognition (*śabda*) also due their origination through the instrumentality of other cognitions like cognition of similarity in case of *upamāna* and cognition of word and meaning in case of testimonial cognition. It is also to be noted that non-apprehension is the only means for having the direct knowledge of non-existence of perceptible objects and their attributes, but the indirect knowledge of their non-existence can be attained by other means. In other words, the absence of perceptible objects is known directly by non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). Moreover, if the adjunct '*jñānakaranājanya*', i.e., not caused by instrumentality of other knowledge, were not inserted in the definition, it would have been unduly extended to inference, verbal testimony etc. It may be argued why the term '*asādhāraṇakāraṇa*' (uncommon cause) is inserted in the definition in stead of *sādhāraṇa kāraṇa* or common cause? The term '*asādhāraṇakāraṇa*', i.e., uncommon cause, is included in the definition in order to exclude the common causes like unseen factors etc. (*adṛṣṭa* etc.) under the purview of *anupalabdhi*. The term '*adṛṣṭa*' means 'unseen factor.' It includes merit (*dharma*), demerit (*adharma*), Space (*ākāśa*), Time (*kāla*) etc which are supersensuous in nature. In other words, it may be said that anupalabdhi is not concerned with those common causes due to their imperceptible character. Hence, the definition given by Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra is free from every possible fault.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, one thing can be discussed here. The derivative meaning of the term ‘*pramāṇa*’ entails that which is the instrument of valid cognition (*pramāyāḥ karaṇam pramāṇam*). It is mentioned earlier that *karaṇa* of valid cognition is associated with operative process (*vyāpāra*). It is important to note that *anupalabdhi* is *pramāṇa* which is also without any operative process (*vyāpāra*) like *anumāna*, *upamāna* and *arthāpatti*. Here also *karaṇa* (instrument) is not taken as that which is conjoined with operative process (*vyāpāravat*), but it is to be taken in the sense of the instrument of valid cognition or *pramā* as per its definition-*pramāyāḥ karaṇam pramāṇam*. As *anupalabdhi* is a *pramāṇa*, it is to be presumed as having some *karaṇa*. In the case of *anumāna* also there is uncommon cause, i.e., the knowledge of *vyāpti* which is connected with operative process (*vyāpāra*, i.e., *parāmarśa*). But in the case of *anupalabdhi* there is no doubt the uncommon cause, but there is no operative process (*vyāpāra*) due to the impossibility of the operation of the sense-organ with the absence. So far as uncommon cause is concerned, it is obviously there. Hence, it is said that while perception etc. are endowed with uncommon cause as associated with operative process or *vyāpāra* (*vyāpāravat*), the non-apprehension is endowed with an uncommon cause having no operative process or *vyāpāra* at all (i.e., *vyāpārabhinna*).

## **Bhāṭṭa View**

Let us have a look towards the Bhatta notion of *anupalabdhi* which is to some extent similar to the Advaita view. Now it would be much helpful for us to grasp the Advaita concept of *anupalabdhi* if some light is thrown to this from the Bhatta theory of *anupalabdhi*. It may happen that two theories are complementary to each other.

Kumārila is of the view that there is no rule that *pramāṇa* is always related to the positive entities. On account of this *pramāṇa*-s related to positive entities cannot give us any information regarding negative entities. According to Kumārila, the absence of an object in a particular locus is not identical with the locus itself (*adhikaraṇasvarūpa*). It is something more than the mere locus (*adhiṣṭhānātriktam tattvam*). Thus, the positive (*bhāva*) and absence (*abhāva*) are two different aspects, but not identical. i.e., one is not reducible to other. In order to know negative entity we must remember the absentee or counter-positive (*pratiyogī*) and declare the cognition in the form-‘This is not a jar’ etc. Thus, neither perception nor inference can apprehend a negative cognition, for there is no logical mark of a negative object. The positive entities are known through positive means of knowing while negative ones are apprehended through *anupalabdhi*. Had positive objects been apprehended through *abhāva*, all the objects would have been known

by this, which is not possible.<sup>18</sup> In each and every positive object there is the existence of positive one.

From the foregoing discussion it is concluded that *anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension is a means of knowing absence (*abhāva*). For example, the non-existence of an elephant in this room is known through the absence of our apprehension of an elephant in this room. Such non-apprehension is known as *anupalabdhi*.

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, a follower of Bhāṭṭa school, has given the definition of *anupalabdhi* in the following manner. The factors causing *anupalabdhi* is the collocation of causal conditions (*sāmagrī*) for knowing an absence without its absentee or counterpositive (*pratiyogī*) and the contact with the absence. In case of the absence of a jar on the ground (*bhūtale ghaṭābhāvah*), there is no absentee or counter-positive (*pratiyogī*) in the form of a jar along with the absence of the contact of eye with the jar, but other causal factors like opening of the eye lids, the contact of mind with the jar, sufficient light for visualizing etc are there. (“*Athopalambhayogyatve satyapyanupalambhanam/ abhāvākhyam pramāṇam syādabhāvasyāvabodhakam// Atra hyanupalambhah kāraṇam. Tasya ca jñānābhāva-rūpatvādabhāvah pramāṇamityucyate*).<sup>19</sup> The collocation of these causal conditions (*sāmagrī*) is the generating factors of the non-cognition of a jar. Such

absence of a jar becomes the object of valid cognition (*pramā*) (“*viṣayam tadadhīnāmśca sannikarṣādīkam vinā/ upalambhasya samagrīsampattih khalu yogyatā//*”).<sup>20</sup> Though Kumārila has accepted *anupalabdhi* as a form of separate source of knowing (*pramāṇa*), the Naiyāyikas and Prābhākaras have opposed to this and are of the view that *anupalabdhi* cannot be granted an independent *pramāṇa* for the purpose of knowing absence. To them absence is either perceived or inferred, as the absentee or counter-positive (*pratiyogī*) of the absence is capable of being perceived and inferred. The same sense organ which reveals an object can perceive the absence also. For this reason the Naiyāyikas think that a separate *pramāṇa* is not needed to know an absence. They reduce it to perception. The Prābhākaras also have extended their full support to the Naiyāyikas in not declaring *anupalabdhi* as a separate means of knowing or *pramāṇa*. They only differ from the Nyāya for not admitting absence (*abhāva*) as a separate category (*padārtha*), but as a positive entity. The knowledge of bare existence of the locus (*adhikaraṇa*) in itself is wrongly called absence or *abhāva*. Kumārila refutes the view that absence can be perceived and inferred as endorsed by the opponents. To him absence can never be perceived due to the absence of contact of the sense organ with object. It cannot be inferred, because the invariable relation between probans and probandum cannot be known. The absence cannot be known by verbal testimony (*śabda*), comparison (*upamāna*) and presumption (*arthāpatti*). Hence

absence which is an independent category is known by an independent source of knowing or *pramāṇa* called non-apprehension or *anupalabdhi*. When it is said that the absence of an entity can be known through non-cognition, it leads us to the world of slight contradiction. This contradiction can be removed if it is made clear to us that the object of cognition and the object of non-cognition are not identical in nature. An object is always known through the absence of cognition of the other. What is cognized in case of absence is the absence of some positive entity (*bhāva-padārtha*) and the counter-positive of the absence is the positive entity (*bhāva-padārtha*) which is again the object of non-cognition.

It may again be argued that from the non-cognition of an entity its non-existence or absence or *abhāva* is not proved. Non-cognition of an entity is not taken as an instrument (*karaṇa*) of knowing the absence (*abhāva*) of an object. It may be clarified with the following example. A situation may come when we are not in a position to see a book on the table remaining in dark due to the insufficient light and from this we are not sure that there is no book in the table. In the like manner, a man having some fault giving poor eyesight cannot locate an object in a room. From this non-cognition the absence of that object cannot be guaranteed. In order to remove these problems the Bhāṭṭas are of the opinion that in order to know an object the conditions for knowing it must be fulfilled. It is accepted that cognition may be illusory or unknown if there are defects like excessive distance

(*atidūratva*), excessive nearness (*atisāmīpya*) etc. In spite of fulfilment of all the conditions if an object is not known then alone the non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*) reveals absence of the object, but not in other occasions.<sup>21</sup> The Bhāṭṭas admit three causal conditions for knowing the absence of an object. First, the locus of absence must be perceived. Secondly, the absentee (*pratiyogī*) of an absence must be known. Lastly, the absentee (*pratiyogī*), though knowable through some other means of knowing is not known in spite of having all conditions for its knowledge. In order to know the absence of a pot, as for example, we have to see the locus of the absence of pot like ground etc, to remember the pot and to have non-cognition of pot though all conditions for its perception are present.

In the context a question may be raised whether *anupalabdhi* as a *pramāṇa* can reveal all types of absence or not. If the answer is in positive, another problem would crop up. There are certain cases which *anupalabdhi* cannot reveal. Hence the problem arises whether *anupalabdhi* is a *pramāṇa* in each and every case of absence or only in some specific cases.

In reply Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the author of *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*, is of the opinion that the capable *anupalabdhi* (*yogyānupalabdhi*) alone can give rise to the knowledge of non-existence. From this it can be assumed that the entities not capable of being perceived like merit (*dharma*), demerit (*adharmā*) etc cannot be known through *anupalabdhi* of capable type. Hence, non-apprehension of the

objects alone that are capable of being known through sense organs (*yogyānupalabdhi*) can be the instrumental factor of the apprehension of non-existence.<sup>22</sup> It has already been told earlier that for knowing an absence the cognition of its absentee or counter-positive (*pratiyogī*) is presupposed. In this context it should be borne in mind that the cognition of any type of absentee cannot lead us to apply *anupalabdhi* for its knowledge. It should also be kept in mind that the absentee should be capable of being known. The absence of an absentee or *pratiyogī* which is not capable of being known sensually cannot be known. Hence, the term ‘*yogya*’ (capable) is attached to ‘*anupalabdhi*’.

It may be contended that the absence known through inference may also be known with the help of non-apprehension on account of the fact that there is no difference between the absence apprehended through *anupalabdhi* and absence attained through inference. If it is said that the absence of the entities that are super sensuous can be known through inference while the absence of the sensuous objects is known through *anupalabdhi*, there would be the logical defect of cumbrousness called *gaurava* for accepting various causes for knowing absence, which goes against law of parsimony or *lāghava*. Hence, the contention of the opponents that knowledge of all types of absence should be known through *anupalabdhi*.<sup>23</sup>

On refuting such objection the Advaitins gives the following arguments as rejoinder. If *anupalabdhi* be taken as the instrument of knowing all types of absence, there would arise the possibility of knowing an absence of some incidents or objects occurring in dream due to their non-apprehension. Moreover, if *anupalabdhi* is taken as a *pramāṇa* revealing all types of absence, there would arise the possibility of knowing the absence of merit, demerit etc. at the waking state grounded on the same reason. But actually the knowledge of absence of merit (*dharma*) and demerit (*adharmā*) is not known though there is *anupalabdhi* of them due to their imperceptible character. Hence *anupalabdhi* cannot be the source of knowing all types of absence (*abhāva*). On account of this only *yogyānupalabdhi* (i.e., absence of those that are capable of being perceived) is to be taken as a source of knowing absence (*abhāva*). Though at the waking state there is non-cognition of merit, demerit, self, God etc., yet their absence is not capable of being known through *anupalabdhi* due to having the absence of *yogyānupalabdhi*. The absence of merit, demerit etc. is known through inference, but not through *anupalabdhi*.<sup>24</sup>

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