

CHAPTER- II

Definition of 'error' in the light of the Naiyāyikas

The fundamental subject-matter of philosophy is 'knowledge' or 'cognition'. 'Knowledge' is mainly two-fold namely, (i). memory or '*smṛti*' and (ii). feeling or '*anubhava*'. '*Anubhava*' is of two kinds namely, (i). valid cognition or '*pramā*' and (ii). invalid cognition or '*apramā*'. It is understandable for us that, it is necessary to know about the nature of invalid cognition for the sake of gaining valid cognition. The main objective of this present thesis is to give the nature of one of the forms of invalid cognition like erroneous cognition. So, at first, an effort will be made to discuss about the definition of 'error' in accordance with the *Naiyāyikas*.

It is necessary to know about the term '*lakṣaṇa*' or 'definition'. The term '*lakṣaṇa*' is defined as "*asādhāraṇam kāranaṁ karanatvaṁ*" in Indian philosophy.¹ The extra-ordinary property of any category is called '*lakṣaṇa*'. This property is a determining quality which separates the concerned category from others. This determining quality also helps the concern category to be used. Because, the important statement is: '*vyāvṛttirvyāvahāro vā lakṣaṇasya prayojanam*' i.e. the necessity of definition is to differentiate an entity from others and to use the same. 'Definition' is used in two cases namely, '*vyāvṛtti*' or 'to particularize the concern

category' and 'vyavahāra' or 'to give the ability the concerned category for public-use'. Actually, the meaning of the term 'vyabhicāra' or 'use' is 'to apply such terms by which the concerned category to be made known.'²

Invalid cognition or 'apramā' may be classified into three kinds namely, (i).*samśaya*, (ii). *tarka*, and (iii). *Viparyaya*.

The term 'viparyaya' or 'error' is defined by Annambhaṭṭa in his famous book *Tarkasaṃgraha* as: "Tad abhāvavati tatprakārah anubhavah ayathārthānubhavah". The significance of such definition is: If the feeling of an entity becomes realized by the knower in any entity where actually the absence of such entity exists then that feeling is called as 'erroneous feeling'.³ If any category becomes knowable to the knower qualified by any attribute but actually that attribute does not exist in that category then that feeling is called 'viparyaya' or 'error'. For example, the knowledge of the fire in the lake, the knowledge of the silver in the shell, the knowledge about the snake in the rope etc. The 'silverness' does not remain in the shell at any time; rather the shellness exists in the shell in all times. For this reason, the cognition of silver in the shell is called 'erroneous'.⁴

Now, all the terms of the above-mentioned definition of erroneous cognition will be separated and critically analyzed below.

Annambhaṭṭa gave the definition of ‘invalid cognition’ or ‘*apramā*’ as such:
“*Tad abhāvavati tatprakārah anubhavaḥ ayathārthānubhavaḥ*”.

The above-mentioned definition has been signified as such: The term ‘*tat*’ is signified by ‘adjective’ or ‘such property which exists in any subject and it separates the subject from another subjects’. The meaning of the term ‘*abhāvavati*’ is ‘the locus of the absence’. The question may be raised in this connection that, whose absence has been indicated? The answer is that, it is the absence of that determining property which separates the particular thing from another. If the cognition becomes qualified by the determining property but actually that determining property does not exist in that thing or subject then that is called ‘invalid cognition’ or ‘*apramā*’. For example, in the shell-silver case, the knower gains the knowledge of the shell qualified by the silverness. But, the silverness does not exist on the shell; rather the shellness exists on the shell. The cognition of the shell by the silverness --- such cognition becomes originated on the locus which is qualified by the absence of the silverness. For this reason, it is called as ‘invalid cognition’ or ‘*apramā*’.

Annambhaṭṭa points out in his *Dīpikā* that, the above-mentioned definition of ‘invalid cognition’ also is not valid; it is a fallacious definition. Because, ‘*saṁyoga*’ or ‘connection’ is one of the category of twenty-four-fold qualities accepted by the Vaiśeṣikas. The ‘conjunction’ is such quality which exists on such

locus where also exists the absence of that conjunction. For example, in the case of the conjunction between the pen and the hand of the knower; there the absence of the conjunction also exists on the hand of the knower. The ‘conjunction’ exists on the three fingers of the knower despite that portion of the knower’s hand, the absence of the conjunction exists on another portion of the hand. In this case, ‘the conjunction of the pen’ is the adjective. The hand of the knower is the locus of that absence of ‘the conjunction of the pen’. The cognition qualified by ‘the conjunction of the pen’ becomes originated on such locus where ‘the absence of the conjunction of the pen’ exists. So, ‘the knower’s hand is qualified by the conjunction of the pen’ --- such cognition becomes fallacious.

To remove this blame, Annambhaṭṭa said in his *Dīpikā* that, “*Yadavaccede yatsambandhābhāvah tadavaccede tatsambandhajñānasya vivakṣitatvāt*”. In this connection, the significance is that, the cognition of that relation in any space is called as invalid cognition where actually the absence of that relation exists. For example, if the cognition of the conjunction of the pen originates in that space of the hand where ‘the absence of the conjunction of the pen exists then that cognition would be erroneous. So, the definition of the ‘invalid cognition’ or ‘*apramā*’ given by Annambhaṭṭa is an accurate definition.⁵

Now, we have to judge about the Naiyāyikas’ theory of error. We know that, the main opponent school of the Ancient Naiyāyikas is the buddhist philosophers. For

this reason, we have to highlight the Buddhistic theory of error at first. After that, we have to try to establish the theory of '*anyathākhyāti*' refuting the Buddhistic theory of error.

There are mainly four schools in Buddhism namely, (i). *Sautrāntrika*, (ii). *Vaibhāṣika*, (iii). *Yogācāra* and (iv). *Mādhyamika*. In those four-fold schools, the *Vaibhāṣikas* accept the existence of the external things. These external things become acceptable as they are capable of being known through perception in accordance with the *Vaibhāṣikas*. But, according to the *Sautrāntikas*, the external things are known to be existence as they are cognised through inference. The Yogācāra Buddhists accept only the existence of cognition or '*vijñāna*'; besides cognition, there is not knowable entity. According to them, the knower and the knowable entity--- those two categories are included in cognition or '*vijñāna*'. This '*vijñāna*' or 'cognition' is temporal and it has a visible form. Again, the *Mādhyamika* philosophers are known as '*śūnyavādīns*'. Because, they do not accept anything - the existence of the knowledge and knowable entity. Their theory of error is called as '*asatkhyātivāda*'. The others schools of Buddhism are known as '*atmakhyātivādīn*' concerning the theory of error. But, usually the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism is called as '*ātmakhyātivādīns*'. According to them,

all categories like shell, silver etc. are actually the forms of cognition. They say that, “*Vijñānameva khalvetad gr̥hṇātyātmānamātmanā.*

Vahirnirūpyamāṇasya grāhyasyānupapattitah.”⁶

The main theory of the *Vijñānavādins* is: the perceptible external things are actually the internal forms of cognition.

According to the *Vijñānavādins*, the identity between the knowledge and knowable entity is proved through the inferential statement like “*jñeyam jñānabhinnam jñānopalambhakṣana niyatopalambhagrāhyatvāt.*” The validity of this inferential statement becomes proved through the concomitance invariable rule like ‘*yad yena niyatasahopalambham tat tato na bhidyate yatha ekasmaccandramaso dvitiyascandramah*’. So, the knowable entity and knowledge --- both of those are actually the forms of cognition in accordance with the *Vijñānavādins*.⁷

Besides that, the doctrine of ‘*asatkhyāti*’ is a theory of error upheld by the *Mādhyamika* Buddhist philosophers. At first, we must know about the nature of ‘*asat*’ or ‘*unreal*’. Because, there are various meanings *as* to the term ‘*asat*’ in Indian Philosophy. For example:--

(i). According to the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* philosophers, substance, quality and action -- these three entities are the loci of the real entity or ‘*satta*’. ‘*Satta*’ or the real

entity exists on these categories through the inherence relation. So, these categories or substance, quality and action are real entities or 'sat'. But, the real entity does not exist on 'universal'(sāmānya), 'particular'(viśeṣa), 'inherence'(samavāya) and 'absence'(abhāva) through the direct relation or the inherent relation. So, these four-fold categories are not the loci of the real entity. As a result, these are the different categories from the loci of the real entity. For this reason, the ancient Naiyāyikas have been said that, the universal etc. four-fold categories are unreal or 'asat'.

(ii). The absence which is the originator of any effect --- the counterpositive (*pratiyogī*) of that absence is unreal due to the absence of that negatum in that time. For example, the pot, cloth etc. are the effects. The originators of those effects are the absences of the pot, cloth etc. The negatums of those absences do not exist in the time of effects. As a result, these are the unreal entities or 'asat' in accordance with the ancient *Naiyāyikas*.

(iii). The non-related categories with the time are unreal entities or 'asat'. For example, 'the sky-lotus' etc.

(iv). That is called 'asat' or unreal whose nature would not be indeterminable by us. ⁸

According to the *Mādhyamika* Buddhist philosophers, the ultimate real entity is not real (*sat*), not real (*asat*), not real-unreal both (*sadasat*) even it is not the different category from the real-unreal both. No alternative is left behind besides those four-fold alternatives. As a result, the nature of the ultimate real entity is undeterminable; and for this reason, the ultimate real entity is void in accordance with the *Mādhyamikas*. With reference to this context, Mādhavācārya has been said in his famous book *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* that, “*Atastattvam sadasadubhayānubhayatmakacatuskotivinirmukam śūnyameva*”.⁹

Actually, all categories are imaginary or fictitious in accordance with the *Mādhyamikas*. These fictitious entities are called practical real entities. These are undeterminable entities in accordance with them. These are void of nature (*‘svabhavaśūnya’*); as a result, these are undeterminable. All categories are void of its nature; for this reason, their theory is called *‘śūnyavāda’* or *‘nihilism’*.

In the erroneous cases, actually, a category imposes on another category. These two types of category are unreal or *‘asat’* in accordance with the *Mādhyamikas*. In the shell-silver case, the imaginary silver becomes imposed on another imaginary shell; it is called the erroneous cognition in accordance with the *Mādhyamikas*. The noun and adjective --- both of them are unreal in the erroneous statement¹⁰.

It is mentionable that, the doctrine of ‘śūnya’ has been explained in various ways in ancient time. According to Nāgārjuna, there is no existence and also non-existence of any category. Because, the ultimate real entity is not real, not unreal, not real-unreal both, not enough of real-unreal both also; the ultimate real entity is something besides those four alternatives. Besides these no other entity is possible. So, the ultimate real entity is actually ‘void’ or ‘nothing’ or ‘śūnya’. It is called ‘the doctrine of sunya’. Nāgārjuna does not admit the theory of “*sarvaṃ nāsty*” or ‘*nothing exists*’. This doctrine may be called as ‘*sarvābhāvavāda*’, which is supported by *an* another school of Buddhist philosophers. They are also known as ‘*ānupalambhika*’. According to Vātsyāyana, the opponent school of the ancient Nyāya philosophy is the ‘*ānupalambhikas*’.

Maharṣi Gautama in the *Nyāyasūtra* mentioned the opinion of the *Ānupalambhikas* with the following words: “*Buddhyā vivecanāttu bhavanam yathatmyanupalabdhistanttvapakarsane*

patasadbhavanupalabdhivattvadanupalabdhih”¹¹. The significance is that, the nature of all things which are the objects of cognition may not be realized to the knowers in accordance with the *ānupalambhikas*. For example, a piece of cloth becomes proved to be non-existent thing if we divide the materials of that piece of cloth i.e., the threads one by one. In the same manner, all things may be proved as the non-existent things. In this way, it is proved that all things are unreal. So, the

cognition with regard to all things may be erroneous in accordance with the *Ānupalambhikas*.

To refute the argument of the *Ānupalambhikas*, Maharṣi Gautama said *in the sūtra* “*pramāṇānupapattyupapattibhyām*”. The significance is that, if the ‘*pramāna*’ or evidence exists in respect of the statement like “*sarvaṃ nāsti*”, it may not be said that, all things or categories are non-existent in accordance with Maharṣi Gautama. Again, there is no any evidence with regard to that statement then this argument may not be proved. Because, any thing *is* not proved without any evidence.¹²

According to Maharṣi Gautama, in the form ‘the cognition of human-being in the tree’ *the* cognition is called ‘the false cognition’. On the other hand, the cognition in the form ‘the cognition of the tree in the tree’ --- is called ‘the valid cognition’ or ‘the certain cognition’. The false cognition has been refuted through ‘the certain cognition’. But, ‘the tree’ and ‘the human-being’ ---these two categories are not refuted. Actually, the absence of reality of those categories is not possible to prove. Even, universally all trees or ‘treeness’ and all human-beings or ‘humanity’ may not be refuted. In the same manner, the absence of those categories of the state of dream may not be refuted through the cognition of the awakened person. According to Vātsyāyana, the significance of Maharṣi is that, the erroneous cognition becomes refuted through the accurate cognition but, the unreality of the

erroneous objects may not be proved by means of such accurate cognition. The accurate knowledge is the opposing entity of the erroneous cognition but, it is not opposing of those erroneous objects. In this way, Maharṣi established that, the erroneous objects are real entities.

After that, Maharṣi has established that, the erroneous cognition is real through the statement like “*buddheścaivam nimittasadbhāvopalambhāt*”(36// 446)¹³. The term ‘*sadbhāva*’ has been indicated with regard to the reality or the extra-ordinary property of the real entities in the above-mentioned statement. The significant meaning of such statement is as such: all human-souls perceive the erroneous cognition through the minds after the origination of such erroneous cognition. Because, the erroneous cognition also is the knowable entity for the sake of becoming the mental perception of the erroneous cognition. In this way, Maharṣi has established the existence of the erroneous cognition.

According to the explanation of Vātsyāyana, it becomes understandable to us that, ‘knowledge’ and ‘knowable entities’ --- both of them are non-existent in accordance with the Śunyovādīns. To refute their argument concerning error, Maharṣi has been established the reality of the erroneous objects and also the reality of the erroneous cognition.

Maharṣi Gautama has pointed out in the 37/447 sutra that, the locus of the imposing entity is called 'tattva' and 'the imposing entity' is called '*pradhāna*' in the erroneous case. So, the erroneous cognition is valid in so far as *the part of the locus is concerned and valid so far as* the imposing property is concerned. In this way, the erroneous cognition is of two-fold. In the erroneous case of the cognition of the human-being in the tree', the subject or 'the tree' is called 'tattva' and on the other hand, 'the human-being' is called '*pradhāna*'. The erroneous cognition of the human-being originates in the tree due to the similar perception between them. In this present case, the tree is not actually the human-being, but, really it is tree. For this reason, it is called 'tattva' in such cases where the human-being becomes imposed on the tree. So, the main imposed object is called '*pradhāna*'. The error originates from the similarity between them. So, the human-being is the main object to create error.

Actually, '*pramātvā*' or 'the property of the valid cognition' and '*bhramatva*' or 'the property of the erroneous cognition' --- those are not the opposing entities. Again, there are such erroneous cases where the error is acceptable in all parts. The Neo-Naiyāyikas accepted such cases also. In those cases, the cognition of the property of thisness does not become understandable in the part of the subject; the

cognition of the subject originates from the determining quality which exists on the another entity. ¹⁴

END NOTES:

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3. *ibid.*, p: 286
4. *Tarkabhāṣā*, p: 432
5. *Tarkasaṁgraha*, p: 287-288
6. Miśra, Vācaspati, *Bhāmati* (Part-I), Bhattacharya, Mohan, Sri, Sri (Ed. & Trs. in Bengali), Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 1973, p: 63
7. *ibid.*, page: 65
8. Bhattacharya, Biswabandhu (Trs. & Ed.), *Tattvacintāmaṇi, Anyathākhyātivāda*, Navatirtha, Tripathi, Dinanath & Bhattacharya,

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9. *ibid.*, VIII

10. *ibid.*, VIII

11. Gautama, Maharṣi, *Nyāyadarśana*, Vātsyāyana, *Vātsyāyanabhāṣya*,
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12. *ibid.*, page: 156

13. *ibid.*, page: 181

14. *ibid.*, p; 183