

INTRODUCTION

The work is an attempt at a reconstruction of the basic epistemic concept of perception or pratyaksa in Indian Philosophy in the light of critical methodology of contemporary philosophy. It is an independent work rather than a traditional non-secular exposition of Indian thought. This is a conceptual study and as such is an explication of the Advaita concept of perception in the main.

The basic methodological assumptions which provided the guidelines for the detailed reconstruction are as follows :-

(a) All factual truth claims must be settled empirically in accordance with the canons of rational method of investigation.

(b) Philosophy cannot give us facts, but is an activity of clarification of the concepts, so that the classical

conception of speculative philosophy as a super-science breaks down.

(c) Scientific explanation is only one type of interpretation of the given and does not negate the value and validity of alternative modes of explanation of man's response to his experience of the given.

(d) Existential interpretations of man's response to his experiences of the universe are *sui generis*, although they have points of contact with other types of interpretations.

(e) Though not capable of proof in the strict logical sense, existential interpretations have their own logic of reasonableness.

(f) Language has plural uses or functions which, when confused with each other, generate pseudo-problems. The language of Indian Philosophy should, therefore, be approached for analysis from functional point of view prior to its interpretation.

The present work is a critical explication of a perennial epistemological problem, namely, the determination of the nature, role, types and validity of perceptual cognition or *pratyaksa* as a source of knowledge or *pramana* in the existential prospective of the philosophical thought in ancient India. The plan of the work is as follows :-

In chapter one Nyāya, Jaina, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Advaita and Rāmānuja views of the nature of valid cognition are presented and critically discussed. In this connection the question whether Indian views of perception as a valid cognition exhibit any pattern, is also critically examined.

In chapter two the definition of perception as propounded by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Advaita, Bhāṭṭa-Mimāṃsaka, Prābhākara-Mimāṃsaka and Bauddhas are presented and examined. Views of Greek philosophers are also presented and a comparative study is enunciated.

In chapter three, a very vital question of epistemology, namely, the question of primacy of perception over other sources of knowledge on the ground of their paroksatva or mediated character, has been posed and critically examined. The writer endeavoured to enunciate a new interpretation of the term "immediacy" with what success it is upto the reader to judge.

In chapter four the distinction between (a) Savikalpaka and Nirvikalpaka perception (b) Laukika and alaukika perception & (c) Bāhya and Mānasa perception, has been presented from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Bauddha, Mādhva, Rāmānuja, Advaita, Mimāṃsā, Jaina, Sāṅkhya and Śābdika points of view and has been subjected to a critical estimation.

In chapter five the question whether perception

constitutes the unit of knowledge is taken up for discussion. In this connection the views of Locke, Kant, Bradley, Hobhouse, Russell and views of Indian thinkers have been taken up for a critical and comparative study.

In chapter six the problem of aberration of perception has been critically discussed. In this connection the different theories of illusion as expounded by the different schools of Indian philosophy have been taken up for critical estimate from a novel point of view with what success it is upto the readers to evaluate.

In chapter seven the nature of consciousness vis-a-vis perception has been presented from Indian and Western points of view. The writer has given his own estimation of these views. However, how far his views are cogent and acceptable it is upto the readers to judge.

In chapter eight the writer has expounded his own conclusion regarding the basic problems of perception. He subscribes to the Advaita point of view, although he is not ready to accept all the conclusions of the Advaitins. How far his reasons for upholding the Advaita points of view are on all fours is left to the readers to judge.

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