

## CHAPTER-III

THE ADVAITA THEORY OF ANUPALABDHI

The Advaita Vedāntins and the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas accept anupalabdhi as a separate source of valid cognition (pramāna), because it is the only way of knowing a negative fact. When the negation of a thing capable of being cognised is known, it is through anupalabdhi on account of the fact that other pramānas fail to provide the knowledge of absence. Its object is the non-existence of a thing, but not the non-existence itself. The five pramānas ( except the sixth called anupalabdhi adopted by the Advaita Vedānta and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā) are not capable of apprehending a negative fact and hence the sixth one (i.e., anupalabdhi) is to be taken as a separate source of knowledge. If each pramāna leads to some knowledge not derivable from other sources, it can keep its exclusive character. Hence, non-existence cannot be grasped by perception, anumāna, upamāna, arthāpatti or Śabda. That is why, a separate source of valid cognition (pramāna) called anupalabdhi has to be accepted.

The Bhāṭṭas and Advaitins are of the opinion that the absence of an object and its attribute of its locus are known by the unique source of knowledge called non-apprehension. (anupalabdhi),

which means that the absence of an object is apprehended by its non-perception. Not seeing a jar in a place one can say that it is not there. In the same way in the cases like, "The teacher is not in the class room", "There is no sound here", "The apple is not round", "This flower has no fragrance", the knower becomes aware of the same object or its attribute by means of non-perception. The teacher's absence from the class-room is known by the non-apprehension of his presence there, but not by the perception of his absence. Teacher's absence is not known by the perception of the room or anything else in the room.

It may seem paradoxical that the non-apprehension of an object is a means to the apprehension of its non-existence (abhāva). But in fact both non-perception and perception become the means of knowledge, i.e., pramāna to the knower (pramātā). They lead to both positive and negative experiences. The knower knows both the presence and absence of things with the help of perception as well as non-perception respectively. It is known to us that there is a tree on the ground, because we see it. It is also known that there is no tree on the ground, because we do not see it. These two different cognitions are expressed in two different sentences. The one does not lead to the another. The knowledge of the absence of the bird on the tree is not a case of perception, because the sense-organ has no contact with the absence. It does not also follow from the perception of the tree. It proceeds directly from the non-apprehension of the bird.

In this connection, it is worthy to mention the metaphysical presuppositions behind the postulation of anupalabdhi as a pramāna. The Advaitins believe in the non-dual entity - Brahman. According to them, Brahman and ātman is one and the same. The phenomenal world is nothing but the manifestation of Brahman. That the whole world is nothing but Brahman is known through the realisation of Brahman. One who realises Brahman can identify oneself with the whole world. To him, there is only one Reality, i.e., Brahman, which can be described as advaitāvasthā, i.e., a situation when someone is identified with Brahman. This situation, according to the Advaitins, is the state of liberation. But one who has not realised the self or Brahman is not able to understand the non-dual situation. Hence Śruti, Vedānta literature, Upaniṣad etc. give an account of a situation with the help of some descriptions. The epistemology as advocated by the Advaitins is goal-oriented. The ultimate goal is to lead an individual to the path of the realisation of the self. Anupalabdhi has been accepted as a pramāna to serve a very important purpose. To an ordinary man it is to be informed that in Brahman there is the absence of duality. Brahman is only one and ultimate reality. To realise Brahman entails the realisation of a Reality which is non-dual. That Brahman is Advaita means there is absence of duality. To gather an idea of Brahman as having absence of duality in the phenomenal stage is not possible until and unless anupalabdhi is accepted as a

pramāṇa.<sup>1</sup> That Brahman is Advaita or nondual signifies that the absence of duality is there as an adjunct of Brahman without which 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'. If it is not ascertained that Brahman is indeterminate, the duality in the phenomenal world which is the result of nescience or illusion cannot be removed. Hence, the author has introduced the sixth pramāṇa-anupalabdhi which alone can ascertain the non-dual character of Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

According to Vedānta Paribhāṣā, the means of valid cognition as anupalabdhi is the extra-ordinary cause of the apprehension of non-existence which is not due to knowledge as instrument.<sup>3</sup> In other words, anupalabdhi is an uncommon cause of awareness of absence which is not caused by other knowledge. The word 'the

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1. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, p. 223, 1377 (B.S.).

2. Ibid.

3. Jñānakaṇḍīyānyābhāvānubhavāsādhāraṇakāraṇaṁ anupalabdirūpaṁ pramāṇaṁ

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. Anupalabdhi-pariccheda), Edited along with English Translation by S. Sūryanārāyaṇa Śāstrī, Adyar Library, Madras, 1942.

apprehension' (anubhava) in the definition is incorporated in order to exclude memory where there may be the recollection of non-existence and the term used in such a way only to emphasis the direct awareness of non-apprehension. The means of the direct awareness of the absence is called anupalabdhi.<sup>4</sup> Awareness is of two types : Smṛti (recollection) and anubhava (presentative cognition). When the object is directly known, it is a kind of presentative cognition. That is to say, when some objects are known, they can be verified through the presence of those objects. If we have the awareness of a jar, it can be verified through the physical presence of the jar. It is called presentative cognition or 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. Because the object of recollective knowledge is not physically present. So far as the awareness of absence is concerned, it is of anubhava type. If we feel the absence of a jar, for example, on the ground, it is a kind of presentative cognition or anubhava. For, the absence of it can be verified. But when the absence of an object is recollected, it is not of anubhava type. When I was a student, for example, I had absence of money, But now as I am employed, I have no such

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4. Abhāva - smṛtyasādhāraṇa - hetu - saṃskāre'tivyāptivāraṇā-yānubhaveti viśeṣaṇam.

absence. Hence, the absence of money which I experienced in my student-life may be recollected now. This recollection of the absence of money is not a presentative cognition (anubhava), but smṛti. In order to exclude such type of knowledge Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the author of Vedāntaparibhāṣā, has incorporated the word anubhava in the definition of anupalabdhi.<sup>5</sup>

The word 'which is not due to the instrumentality of knowledge' (jñānakaraṇājanya) is inserted in order to exclude other means of cognition like inference etc. that are caused through the instrumentality of knowledge.<sup>6</sup> For, inference is caused through the instrumentality of the knowledge of hetu which has invariable concomitance with the thing to be inferred. When the nature of the thing is ascertained by itself as in the case of the knowledge of non-existence, the relation of any hetu to it cannot be determined. So there can be no inference due to not having appropriate hetu. Verbal testimony and presumption are all due to knowledge, viz., namely words conveying an intention and the things

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5. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, p. 223, 1377 (B.S.).

6. Anumānādi - janyātīndriyābhāvānubhava - hetāvanumānādāvativyāpti - vāranāyā - janyāntam.

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi-pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

to be explained respectively. Hence, these are excluded from the purview of the definition. It is also to be noted that non-apprehension is the sole 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 non-existence of objects capable of being cognised is known directly by non-apprehension (anupalabdhi). Moreover, if the adjunct 'jñānakaranājanya', i.e., not caused by instrumentality of knowledge, were not inserted in the definition, it would have been unduly extended to inference, verbal testimony etc. The term 'asādhāranakāraṇam', i.e., uncommon cause, is included in the definition in order to exclude the common causes like unseen factors etc. (adrsta etc.).<sup>7</sup> Because the non-existence of dharma (merit) and adharma (demerit) are supposed to be known only through inference, but not through non-apprehension as they are supersensuous. Hence, the definition given by Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra is free from all types of defects.

In this regard, it is necessary to point out that anupalabdhi is also without any vyāpāra (function or operation) like upamāna and arthāpatti. Here also karana (instrument) is not taken as that which is vyāpāravat, but it is understood as that which is

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7. Adrṣṭādaṁ sādharāṇa - kāraṇe'ti - vyāpti - vāraṇāyasādharā-  
raṇeti/

vyāpārabhinna.<sup>8</sup> If 'anupalabdhi' does not have 'karana', it would not have been considered as a pramāna as per definition of it (pramāyāh karanaṃ pramānaṃ). As anupalabdhi is a pramāna, it is to be presumed that there must be some karana in it. If the term 'karana' is taken in a traditional sense (i.e., vyāpāravat asā dhāraṇaṃ kāraṇaṃ karaṇaṃ meaning an uncommon cause having operative process is an uncommon cause), there is no karanatva in this sense. Hence, the term 'karana' is to be interpreted in a different way. In the case of perception etc. there is the uncommon cause associated with operative process, i.e., eye and it's contact with eye (sannikarṣa). In the case of anumāna also there is uncommon cause, i.e., the knowledge of vyāpti which is connected with vyāpāra, i.e., parāmarśa. But in the case of anupalabdhi there is uncommon cause nodoubt, but there is no vyāpāra due to the impossibility of the operation of the sense-organ with the absence. Hence, here karana has to be taken as vyāpārabhinna, but not

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8. (§ 40) TS - Asādhāraṇaṃ kāraṇaṃ karaṇaṃ.

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TSD - Vyāpāravat kāraṇaṃ karaṇaṃ iti mate parāmarśadvārā vyāptijñānaṃ.

- Tarkasamgraha-Dīpikā on Tarkasamgraha by Annam Bhaṭṭa, Translated and Elucidated by Gopinath Bhattacharya, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1983.

vyāpāravat. 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 vyāpāra (vyāpāravat), the non-apprehension is endowed with an uncommon cause having no vyāpāra at all (i.e., vyāpārabhinna).

The most important points of the above discussion can be shown in the following way :

- a) Anupalabdhi is an uncommon cause of awareness of the absence of something. In order to exclude common cause like adr̥ṣṭa etc., the term 'asādhāraṇa' is incorporated.
- b) It is direct or immediate and presentative, because memory of past non-existence is excluded from the purview of the definition.
- c) Here karana is not taken in the sense of vyāpāravat, but in the sense of vyāpārabhinna.
- d) It is not produced by the ordinary positive means of knowledge, viz., namely knowledge of invariable concomitance, knowledge of similarity, knowledge of the fact to be explained and knowledge of the words conveying intention respectively.

Now it would be much helpful for us to understand the Advaita concept of anupalabdhi if it is highlighted through the concept of anupalabdhi as advocated by Bhāṭṭas. In this connection it may be noted that there are striking resemblances between two theories or rather each theory is complementary to another.

Śabarāsvāmin<sup>9</sup> holds that the absence of other means of knowledge is not itself due to the means of knowledge of non-existence in any sense. This sense is also clearly expressed by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa that if the five (positive) means of knowledge in the case of an object do not function towards the comprehension of the existence of that object, we have negation as a pramāṇa for the non-existence of that object. The ascertainment of the non-existence of an object depends upon the validity of negation as a way of knowing. Now the question is : How do we determine the validity of negation and what is the ground of its validity? In reply, the Bhaṭṭas refute the opponent's view by saying that the validity of negation is not established through perception or inference.<sup>10</sup>

Kumārila claims that there is no rule that pramāṇa must always be positive. Because pramāṇas dealing with positive entities cannot tell us anything about negative entities. According to Kumārila, the non-existence of an object in a particular locus is not identical with the locus itself. It is something more than the existence of the mere locus (adhīsthānātriktam tattvaṃ). Thus, existence (bhāva) and non-existence (abhāva) are two different

9. Śabara Bhāṣya on Jaimini Sūtra I.i.5.

10. Śloka-Vārttika of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, verse 45-46, Edited by Dr. C. Kunhan Rājā, Madras, 1946.

aspects, but not identical, i.e., one is not reducible to other. The process of cognising a negation is purely mental. It means that having perceived the presence of the bare locus and after remembering the counter-positive (pratiyogin), we arrive at a negative judgement that "it is not .....". Thus, neither perception nor inference can be valid in the case of a negative cognition, for there is no logical mark of a negative object. The positive objects are known through positive means of knowing. In the same way, negative objects are apprehended through Anupalabdhi. If positive objects were also apprehended through abhāva, all the objects would have been known by this, which is not possible.<sup>11</sup>

The main contention of the Bhāṭṭa-Mīmāṃsaka is that if the negation of an object is known, it presupposes the knowledge of the locus on which the object of absence i.e., counterpositive (pratiyoqī) remains. Because, without the knowledge of the counterpositive absence can not be known. The absence cannot be known if pratiyoqī is not capable of being cognised. Though locus and pratiyoqī are known, there is no logical mark through which the absence can be known. Hence, absence is not capable of being perceived or inferred, but capable of being known through non-apprehension (anupalabdhi).

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11. Kasyacid yadibhāvasya syād abhāvena kenācit samvandhadarśanam  
tatra sarvamānam prasajyate/

So anupalabdhi or non-apprehension is a means of knowing non-existence (abhāva). Anupalabdhi is concerned with apprehending negative facts (abhāva) and hence it is connected with the non-existence. For example, the non-existence of an elephant in a room is known through the absence of my apprehension of an elephant in this room. Such non-apprehension is known as anupalabdhi.

It is also to be noted that the self should be known as different from non-self. In this connection, the question may be raised in the following way. Is this difference (bheda) a negative entity or absence (abhāva)? If absence, it has no relation with a sense-organ and it cannot, therefore, be grasped by any of the five pramānas. One can say that difference is known from non-cognition (anupalabdhi). But why? Bheda is a kind of anyonyābhāva (mutual absence). That is, when it is said that self is different from non-self, the form of absence will be : 'Self is not non-self'. Or in other cases, when it is said 'jar is not jar', there is the knowledge of the absence of a jar. This absence is somehow known to us. If there is any knowledge, there must be some sources of knowing. This source is not perception or inference etc. Hence, non-cognition or anupalabdhi must be the source of knowing the absence of it.

It may be argued whether anupalabdhi always gives rise to the knowledge of non-existence. If it is said that anupalabdhi does not lead always us to the knowledge of non-existence, another problem would crop up. The problem is : When can anupalabdhi be

regarded as the source of the knowledge of non-existence? In other words, it is a problem whether anupalabdhi is pramāna in each and every case of absence or in some specific cases.

In reply, Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the author of Vedānta-paribhāṣā is of the opinion that appropriate anupalabdhi (yogyā-nupalabdhi) can give rise to the knowledge of non-existence. As the imperceptible objects like merit, demerit etc. are not capable of being known through sense-organ, there is no certainty of knowing their non-existence. Hence, non-apprehension of those objects that are capable of being known (yogyānupalabdhi) is the instrument of the apprehension of non-existence. In fact, knowing an absence presupposes the knowledge of the counterpositive or absentee (pratiyogī). The knowledge of absentee again presupposes its capability of being known directly with the help of sense-organs. If there is a pratiyogī (i.e., absentee) which is not capable of being known, the absence of it cannot be ascertained.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the term 'yogya' is attached to 'anupalabdhi'.

It may be argued that the absence which is said to be

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12. Na cābhāvānumiti - sthale'pyanupalabdhyai vābhāvo grhyatām;  
viśeṣābhāvāditi vācyam; dharmādharmādyanupalabdhi - sattve'pi  
tadabhāvānisāyena yogyānupalabdhere vābhāva - grāhakatvāt/

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi-  
Pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

known through inference may be known with the help of non-apprehension also. Because there is no difference between the absence apprehended through anupalabdhi and absence attained through inference. If it is said that the absence of an object which is supersensuous is to be known through inference and absence of objects other than this type is to be known through anupalabdhi, there would be the defect of logical cumbrousness - called Gourava due to accepting various causes for knowing the knowledge of absence. Hence, it is the contention of the opponents that knowledge of all types of absence should be known through anupalabdhi.<sup>13</sup>

In order to refute the above standpoint the Advaitins forward the following arguments. If anupalabdhi is taken as a source of knowing all types of absence (negation), there would arise the possibility of knowing an absence of some incidents, or objects existing in dream due to having non-apprehension of them. Moreover, there would arise the possibility of knowing the absence of merit, demerit etc. at the waking state due to the same reason.<sup>14</sup> But actually the knowledge of absence of merit and

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13. Vivrti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattācārya, Calcutta, p. 224, 1377 (B.S.)

14. Dharmādharmādyanupalabdhi - sattve'pi tadabhāvānīścayena yogyānupalabdherevābhāva - grāhakatvāt.

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi Pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

demerit is not known though there is anupalabdhi of them. 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 pramāna of abhāva. Though at the waking state there is non-cognition of merit, demerit etc., yet it (i.e., absence of merit, demerit etc.) 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>15</sup>

Another problem may be raised in the following way : How is the yogyatā (appropriateness) of anupalabdhi to be ascertained? One reply can be given that yogyānupalabdhi is a kind of anupalabdhi whose absentee (pratiyoqī) is a perceptible object. As for example, if there is a absence of jar on the ground, the anupalabdhi of the jar is a kind of yogyānupalabdhi; because the jar which is the counterpositive of the absence is a perceptible object. So the non-perception of the jar on the ground necessarily indicates the knowledge of its non-existence.

The opponents argue that what may be the exact meaning of the term 'yogyānupalabdhi'. The meaning is of two types :

- i) The non-apprehension of a counterpositive which is capable of

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15. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, p. 226, 1377 (B.S.).

being perceived.

- ii) The non-apprehension of the counterpositive in the locus which is capable of being perceived.<sup>16</sup>

It may be said that the former is not correct. If yogyānupalabdhi is taken as non-apprehension of the perceptible object, there would not be the perception of the difference of spirit in a pillar. Because the counterpositive of the difference of spirit is the spirit itself which is not capable of being perceived. In that case though there is the non-apprehension of the counterpositive i.e., spirit, this non-apprehension (anupalabdhi) is not yogyānupalabdhi although the difference of spirit is perceptible. Hence, the former meaning is not tenable.<sup>17</sup>

The second meaning is not also tenable. If yogyānupalabdhi is the non-apprehension of an object in a perceptible locus, there would arise the possibility of perceiving the absence of merit, demerit etc. in the self (ātman) as there is yogyānupalabdhi of the counterpositives like merit etc. in the perceptible-self. Here

16. Nanu keyam yogyānupalabdhiḥ? Kim yogyasya pratiyogino' nupalabdhiḥ? Uta yogye 'dhikarane pratiyogyanupalabdhiḥ?  
- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

17. Nādyah, stambhe piśācādi - bhedasyā - pratyakṣatvāpatteh/  
- Ibid.

'perceptible self' means self existing in the body. There is also self which is not associated with body. This type of self is not perceptible, which is not taken here. In other words, here is the locus itself which is capable of being perceptually known there is the non-apprehension of the counterpositives like merit, demerit etc. From these it would follow that there would be the perceptibility of the absence of merit, demerit etc. in the self. In this case, the non-existence of dharmā (virtue) and adharma (vice) in the self could not be known through anupalabdhi though the locus i.e., self is perceptible and hence it cannot be taken as an appropriate locus. But it has already been stated that the absence of dharmā, adharma etc. can be known through inference only. From this it follows that the appropriateness (yogyatā) of anupalabdhi does neither mean the appropriateness of the absentee nor the appropriateness of the locus of absence.<sup>18</sup>

The appropriateness of a particular anupalabdhi can be known by applying a kind of hypothetical argument of the following type. When we can say that a particular object would have been known, had it been present there, there is yogyānupalabdhi. If there is a jar on the ground in a broad daylight, it would have been perceived. From the non-perception of the jar, the non-existence of it is

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18. Nāntyaḥ, ātmani dharmādharmaḍyabhāvasya pratyakṣatvā-  
patteriti cet, na/

known.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the non-existence of the jar on the ground is known through yogyānupalabdhi. But such type of hypothetical argument is not possible if there is the absence of a jar in a darkroom. The absence of a jar in a room which is sufficiently illumined can be apprehended. At that same time there may be the absence of a jar in a complete darkroom. In the latter case yogyānupalabdhi cannot be applied, because in this case it is not possible to apply hypothetical argument in the form - 'Had the jar been in the room, it would have been cognised'. As there is no light in the room a jar though present cannot be cognised. Hence, the knowledge of the absence of a jar in a darkroom is not known through yogyānupalabdhi.<sup>20</sup> Again, if there is a spirit in a pillar through the relation called identity (tādātmya), it

19. Anupalabdhyogyatā ca tarkita - pratiyogisattva - prasāñjita - pratiyogikatvam/ Yasyābhāvo grhyate, tasya yah pratiyogī, tasya sattvenādhikarane tarkitena prasāñjitamāpādana - yogyam pratiyogi - upalabdhi - svarūpam yasyānupalambhasya tattvam, tadanupalabdhyogativamityarthah/

- Ibid.

20. Tathāhi sphītālokavati bhūtale yadi ghaṭah syāt, tadā ghaṭopalambhah syādityāpādana - sambhavāt tādrśa - bhūtale ghaṭābhāvo 'nupalabdhyagamyah, andhakāre tu tādrśāpādanābhāvanānupalabdhi - gamyatā/

- Ibid.

would have been perceptible by itself like the pillar. Hence, the absence of the spirit in a pillar is known through anupalabdhi. The matter can be explained in the following way : If spirit is different from the pillar and spirit remains in pillar through contact then the existence of the spirit in the pillar would not be known. But if spirit, without being different from the pillar, remains in the pillar through the relation called tādātmya, it's presence would have been cognised like the pillar. As pillar is cognised, the spirit which is identical with pillar is also to be cognised. Hence, the hypothetical argument of the previous type may also be applicable here. In this way, the non-apprehension of the spirit in a pillar is possible through yoqyā-nupalabdhi. Although dharma etc. exist in the self, we cannot apply the hypothetical argument in the form : 'If dharma etc. were in the self, they would have been perceived'. Hence, the absence of dharma etc. cannot be known through yoqyānupalabdhi.<sup>21</sup>

The Advaita concept of anupalabdhi can be explained with the help of the commentary known as Maṇiprabhā. According to Maṇiprabhā, a particular sense-organ does not give us the knowledge of an object bearing certain characteristic features and

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21. Ata eva stambhe tādātmyena piśāca - sattve stambhavat  
pratyakṣatvāpattyā tadabhāvo'nupalabdhi - gamyah/ Ātmani  
dharmādharmasattve'pi tasyātīndriyatayā niruktopalambhā-  
pādanāsamhavanāna dharmādharmādyabhāvasyānupalabdhi-gamyatvam/

existing in a particular locus. If the object is capable of being perceived, the absence of the knowledge is the means of conveying the knowledge that the object possessing those characteristic does not exist in that locus.<sup>22</sup>

It may be argued by the opponents that, since the Advaitins admit that the apprehension of the absence of a jar on the ground is possible if there is some sense-activity, it follows that the knowledge of the non-existence like the non-existence of its locus is derived from sense-perception, but not a different source of knowledge called anupalabdhi. The main contention of the opponent is that in order to know the absence of an object we have to see the locus. Hence, sense-organs are operative even in the case of the knowledge of absence. As sense-organs are active, the knowledge of absence should be taken as perceptual, but not the knowledge attained through anupalabdhi.<sup>23</sup>

In reply, the Advaitins argue that sense-activity is present in the immediate apprehension of both existence and non-existence, but anupalabdhi of the absent object is present only in the case of the apprehension of non-existence. It cannot be said that in each and every case of the apprehension of an object the sense-

22. Maniprabhā on Śikhāmani, p. 318.

23. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, p. 233, 1377 (B.S.)

activity is present. There are some peculiar cases of absence as in the case of ayogyānupalabdhi (about which the discussions have already been made) which cannot be known through anupalabdhi.<sup>24</sup>

It may be asked that the non-existence is to be taken as the object of sense-perception if we admit that the perception is caused by non-existence as a capacity of content (artha). Without accepting the non-existence as an artha, how perception is possible. But it cannot be said that the non-existence is the object (artha) of sense-perception logically, because it does not come to the contact of the sense-organ as we find in the cases of a jar etc.

The above question does not stand by itself. It can be solved in the light of the previous arguments. We have already mentioned that the causes of the knowledge of an object are sense-activity, anupalabdhi etc. Here anupalabdhi alone is the unique cause of the knowledge of non-existence, but not the sense-activity. So anupalabdhi alone must be accepted as the special cause of apprehending non-existence, but not sense-activity etc. Hence, it may be said that the knowledge of non-existence under consideration cannot be apprehended through the operation of the sense-organs and it is not perceptual.

It may further be argued that both the knowledge of

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24. Ibid, p. 234.

existence and non-existence bear the same character of immediacy. That is to say, if knowledge of existence is known directly with the help of sense-organ, the knowledge of non-existence also should be known with the help of the same means due to having the same character of immediacy.<sup>25</sup> Do the Advaitins want to say that ground is known through one means, i.e., perception and the knowledge of non-existence through another, i.e., anupalabdhi?

In reply, the Advaitins are of the opinion that though the apprehension of the object is attained through perception, the absence of an object is known through a different instrument called anupalabdhi which is a separate pramāna. It is not logical to say that the non-existence is to be known in the same line by which the ground is known. There is no certainty that the character of the produced knowledge determines the means of knowing it, but it is the character of the mental process or function (vr̥tti) that decides the method through which it is known. This method is not certainly a perceptual one though the knowledge is of immediate nature. Hence, it is known through a separate means called anupalabdhi.<sup>26</sup>

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25. The six ways of knowing, Edited by D. M. Datta,  
Calcutta University Publication,  
Calcutta, 1972, p. 173.

26. Vr̥tti- vaijātyamātreṇa pramāna- vaijātyopapatteh/  
Tathā ca ghaṭābhāvākārā vr̥ttimendriya - janyā, indriyasya

There is no certainty about the theory that if one object is known through perception, other objects that are known immediately should also be known through the same process, i.e., perception. Because to the Advaitins the nature of the object determines the process through which it is to be known. Each and every mental form or function technically called vṛtti is according to the nature of the object. Hence the mental mode or vṛtti in the form of ground is different from that of absence of a jar. Though there is immediacy in both the cases, the mental mode is different in two cases. Hence, from the difference of mental mode the different way of knowing or pramāna has to be accepted. The mental mode in the form of the absence of a jar is not caused by the sense-organ (na indriyajanya), through the mental mode in the form of ground is caused by the sense-organs. Hence, perception cannot reveal both presence and absence of an object. For absence, we have to accept a separate source of knowledge called anupalabdhi.

Another serious objection may be raised against the Advaitins that the knowledge of the non-existence of a jar is immediate or direct. The Advaitins admit that the non-existence which is the product of cosmic illusion (Māyā) should be of

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viṣayenā'sannikarsāt kintu ghaṭānupalabdhi - rūpa - mānāntara-  
janyeti bhavatyānupalabdhermānāntaratvam/

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi  
pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

immediate character. In other words, if the knowledge of the non-existence of a jar is perceptual, there would arise the possibility of perceptibility even in the case of the illusory knowledge of the non-existence of a jar when there is really a jar on the ground. It can be explained in the following way. When the real absence of a jar (but not erroneously) is known immediately, the illusory knowledge of the non-existence of a jar should be known directly. The Advaitins believe that in illusion the cause of illusory objects (i.e., Māyā) is of a positive character (bhāva-rūpa). From this it follows that māyā is not merely a negation of knowledge, but indeterminable. The absence of a jar which forms in the content of illusory knowledge will be indeterminable and positive, but not a negation. Had it been a negation, the sense-contact would not have been possible. In order to avoid this difficulty if it is said that the absence of a jar in illusion does not have any māyā as its material cause, it will go against the basic position of Advaita Vedānta.<sup>27</sup>

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27. Nanvanupalabdhi - rūpa - mānāntara - pakṣe 'bhāvapratiṭeḥ  
 pratyakṣatve ghaṭavati ghaṭābhāvabhramasyāpi pratyakṣa-  
 tvāpattau tatrāpyanirvacaniya - ghaṭābhāvo 'bhyupagamyeta/  
 Na cestāpattih, tasya māyopādānakatve 'bhāvatvānupapatteḥ,  
 māyopādānakatvābhāve māyāyāḥ sakala - kāryyopādānatvānupapa-  
 ttiriti cet/

Dharmarāja has tried to solve this difficulty with the following argument. The illusion of the absence of a jar is not indeterminable product of māyā. It is the case of cognition which is called anyathākhyāti, but not anirvacanīya-khyāti. The absence of a jar is cognised in the colour of the ground is to be cognised on the ground only. The jar is non-existing in the colour of the ground. When there is the illusory knowledge of the non-existence of a jar on the ground, there is the cognition which of different type, i.e., anyathākhyātivāda. It cannot be questioned how the Advaitins can propogate the doctrine of anyathākhyāti which is formulated by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Because the Advaitins also accept anyathākhyātivāda in the case of illusion. In other words, if there is the illusory cognition of absence on the ground then it must be taken as anyathākhyātivāda,<sup>28</sup> because the absence of a jar is not really there. If there is the knowledge of the absence of a jar in a place where there is really the absence, it would be taken as anirvacanīyakhyātivāda.

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28. Na, ghaṭavati ghaṭābhāva - bhramo na tatkalotpanna -  
 ghaṭābhāva - viśayakah, kintu bhūtala - rūpādaū vidyamāno  
 laukiko ghaṭābhāvo bhūtale āropyate ityanyathākhyātireva/  
 Āropya - sannikarsasthale sarvatrānyathākhyātereva  
 vyavasthāpanāt/

Such knowledge of absence though produced through anupalabdhi is not mediate or indirect. There is the relation called Samjuktābhinna-viśeṣanātā (i.e., qualificerness identical with the conjoined) between sense-organ and absence of a jar existing in the colour on the ground. Hence, the object which is conjoined with the sense-organ may be known through a separate pramāna. Whatever pramāna it may be, there will always be immediacy of knowledge. There will not be uniformity if it is said that the object of illusion in some cases is phenomenally true and in some cases it is indescribable. This view is not correct according to the Advaitins, because it has been accepted that, where the imposed object is in connection with the sense-organ, there is always anyathākhyātivāda. On the other hand, where the imposed object is not conjoined with the sense-organ but direct, there the doctrine of anirvacanīyakhyāti has to be accepted. Hence, there is no problem.<sup>29</sup>

The author of Vedāntaparibhāṣā admits four kinds of non-existence that can be known through anupalabdhi. Four kinds of non-existence are : Previous non-existence (prāgabhāva), non-existence as destruction (pradhvaṃsābhāva), absolute non-existence (atyantābhāva) and mutual non-existence (anyonyābhāva).

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29. Astu vā pratyogimati tadabhāva - bhramasthale tadabhā-  
vasyānirvacanīyatvaṃ, tathāpi tadupādānaṃ māyaiva/

The first is defined as non-existence of an effect in its material cause previously before the effect is originated.<sup>30</sup> It is the object of an apprehension that the thing will come into being. The non-existence of a jar, for example, in its material cause (earth), prior to the production of the jar, would be called prāgabhāva. So the judgement, "The jar will exist",<sup>31</sup> applies only to the case of prāgabhāva, whereas the judgement, "The jar does not exist", is common to all kinds of non-existence.

According to the Naiyāyikas, the definition of prāgabhāva is the absence which is destructible called prāgabhāva (vināśya-bhāvatva). Any absence, they opine, does not come to an end if prāgabhāva is not accepted. But the Vedāntins think that all the absences are destructible. Hence, they do not accept the Nyāya view and formulated the above mentioned definition. In other words, prāgabhāva does not have any beginning and it cannot remain in a different place other than material cause and time.<sup>32</sup>

30. Kāraṇe kāryasya ghaṭāderutpatteḥ pūrvam yo 'bhāvaḥ,  
sa prāgabhāvaḥ/

- Ibid.

31. Sa ca bhaviṣyatīti pratītiṣayaḥ/

- Ibid.

32. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by

The second is illustrated as follows. There is the absence of a jar, after it has been destroyed with a club. This non-existence as destruction is also certainly destroyed when its substratum, (i.e., the pieces of a jar) is destroyed.<sup>33</sup> This is contrary to the view of the logicians, according to whom it has a beginning but no end. It cannot be questioned how there can be a cessation of destruction where the substratum of the destruction is eternal. The Advaitins admit that when the locus of the non-existence created by destruction is destructible, the non-existence cannot be endless or indestructible. Moreover, when the locus, in question, is endless or eternal, the non-existence in question is eternal, viz., as in the case of an atom.<sup>34</sup>

They also admit that Brahman is alone endlessly real or eternal entity, which follows that kind of non-existence which is endless and which has Brahman for its locus. An indirect proof

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Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1377 (B.S.), p.237.

33. Tatraiva ghatasya mudgarapātānantaram yo'bhāvah, sa dhvamsābhāvah/

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

34. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1377 (B.S.), p. 238.

of the falsity of the statement, according to them, is that the destruction of the non-existence of an object created by its destruction necessarily implies the re-emergence of the object.<sup>35</sup>

It is seen that the Naiyāyikas accept the destruction which has a beginning but no end. But the Vedāntins think that the destruction also comes to an end as all the objects excepting Brahman are non-eternal.<sup>36</sup> The locus of the destruction is only the material cause of the counterpositive. The object whose locus is its material cause would be destroyed due to the destruction of the material cause. Otherwise it has to be believed to remain without any locus. Nothing in the phenomenal world may remain without locus, because Brahman also has been accepted as having without locus. Hence, the destruction is capable of being destroyed with the destruction of its material causes. The contrary of the counterpositive is its destruction as the destruction remains after the destruction of the counterpositive (i.e., prati-yogī). There is no possibility of its coming back again. That is

35. Anyathā prāgabhāva - dhvamsātmaka ghaṭasya - nāśe,  
prāgabhāvonmajjanāpattih/

- Ibid.

36. Na caivamapi yatra dhvamsādhikaraṇam nityam, tatra katham  
dhvamsa - nāśa iti vācyam, tādrśamadhikaraṇam yadi caitanya -  
vyatiriktaṁ, tadā tasya nityatvamasiddham/

- Ibid.

why, it has been stated as if there is destruction of the destruction of a jar. The jar cannot reappear just as the jar is the counterpositive of the destruction of jar and the same jar is also counterpositive of the destruction of the destruction of a jar. It may be said that the destruction of a jar should be the counterpositive of the destruction of the destruction of a jar. But why is only jar taken as pratiyogī? It can be replied in the following way. Just as at the time of the destruction of a jar an individual does not have apprehension of a jar, so in the case of the destruction of the destruction of a jar the individual has the same feeling (the non-apprehension of a jar). In both the cases we have a common feeling that the jar is destroyed. Hence, the jar is taken as the counterpositive of the destruction of the destruction of a jar.<sup>37</sup>

The third kind of non-existence literally means absolute non-existence. If a particular thing does not exist in past, present and future, it is to be taken as absolute non-existence of that thing in that locus.<sup>38</sup> The other three kinds of absence,

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37. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1377(B.S.), p. 238.

38. Yatrādhikaraṇe yasya kālatraye 'pyabhāvaḥ, so 'tyantābhāvaḥ/  
— Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

i.e., prāgabhāva (prior absence), dhvamsābhāva (non-existence as destruction) and anyonyābhāva (mutual absence) do not remain at anytime. According to the Advaitins, after the production of the counterpositive there is prāgabhāva, at the destruction of the locus there is dhvamsābhāva and after the removal of nescience there is anyonyābhāva (i.e., mutual absence).<sup>39</sup> But the absolute absence remains as long as time remains. That is why, absolute negation remains pervading all times, e.g., there is <sup>the</sup> absence of colour in the air. It is a kind of absolute absence as it remains covering three times (i.e., colour does not exist in air in three times). This absolute absence becomes the counterpositive of destruction at the time of dissolution just like space etc. At the time of dissolution the locus of space etc. is destroyed just as space is destroyed. In the like manner, after the destruction of the locus of absolute negation, the absolute negation is destroyed.<sup>40</sup>

If somebody says that the absolute absence of an absurd entity like the absolute absence of hare's horn etc. may be considered as a case of absolute absence, it is not tenable. For, though here the absence of hare's horn remains in past, present and future, it cannot taken as real atyantābhāva. Atyantābhāva of an entity which really exists can be taken as a real one. In

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39. Vivṛti (a Bengali commentary) on Vedāntaparibhāṣā, Edited by Panchanan Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1377 (B.S.), p. 241.

40. Ibid.

fact, the negation is possible if the counterpositive of it is a real object. If pratīyoqī is an absurd entity, it is not an atyantābhāva. This type of absence is called the absence, the counterpositive of which is an absurd entity (alīkapratīyoqī-kābhāva). The object which is prasakta (i.e., capable of being negated) can be negated only. According to this principle, the hare's horn etc. are not capable of being negated due to their non-existing or absurd character. Hence, their absence is not possible.

Lastly, mutual non-existence (anyonyābhāva) is nothing but difference or separateness due to which, we generally say, "This is not such and such", "This is not that". The object of such awareness is a kind of absence which is called anyonyābhāva.<sup>41</sup> This mutual absence is generally used by the terms difference (bheda), separateness (prthaktva) and classification in the following way - "This is different from that", "This is separated from that" and "This is classified from that". The Naiyāyikas have accepted the separateness and classification as qualification (guna). But the Vedāntins do not think so. Because, they do not think that classification, separateness and difference are not different from each other due to the identity of

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41. Idamidam neti pratīti - viśayo'nyonyābhāvah/

- Vedāntaparibhāṣā (Chapt. anupalabdhi  
pariccheda), Madras, 1942.

The Naiyāyikas think that the mutual absence is eternal, while the Vedāntins do not. According to the Vedāntins, a case of mutual absence becomes non-eternal if the locus and the counter-positive of the mutual absence are non-eternal. In the case of the mutual absence in the form "jar is not cloth", the locus and the counterpositive (i.e., jar and cloth) are produced object. Hence, this mutual absence is non-eternal. If these are eternal (i.e., anūyogī i.e., locus of absence and pratiyogī i.e., counter-positive are eternal), the mutual absence also becomes eternal. In the mutual absence "Jīva different from Brahman" or "Brahman is different from Jīva" the anūyogī i.e., the locus of absence and pratiyogī i.e., counterpositive of the absence are eternal. Hence, mutual absence is also eternal.<sup>43</sup>

Difference is of two kinds - conditioned (sopādhika) and

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42. Ayameva vibhāgo bhedaḥ prthaktvaṃ ceti vyapadiśyate,  
bhedaṭirikta - vibhāgādaḥ pramāṇābhāvāt/

- Ibid.

43. Ayamcānyonyābhāvo 'dhikarāṇasya sādītve sādih/  
Yathā ghaṭepaṭa - bhedaḥ/  
Adhikarāṇasyānādītve 'nādireva/

- Ibid.

unconditioned (anupādhika). The conditioned mutual absence is that the existence of which is the vyāpya of the existence of its upādhi, while the unconditioned mutual absence is that which has not this kind of existence.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the mutual absence becomes sopādhika, i.e., endowed with limiting adjunct, if its existence is pervaded (vyāpya) by the existence of the limiting adjunct (upādhi). This type of mutual absence remains as long as its limiting adjunct upādhi remains. The existence of mutual absence is conditioned by the existence of upādhi. The first type of absence lies in the mutual absence of the space which is due to the difference of upādhi like jar etc. We can take another example, the same sun becomes different due to the difference of the container of water on which it is reflected. Though there is no difference of Ākāśa or space, yet it is a well-known fact that there is a difference between space limited by jar (ghaṭākāśa) and the space limited by mission (maṭhakāśa). The difference of same space appear to us due to the difference of upādhi (ghaṭa or maṭha). In the same way, it can be said that there is no difference in the sun. In spite of that there is difference among the containers of water due to the difference of the container which are upādhis, the sun seems to be difference.

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44. Punarapi bhedo dvividhaḥ sopādhiko nirupādhikaśceti/  
 Tatropādhi-sattā-vyāpya-sattā katvaṁ sopādhikatvaṁ,  
 tacchūnyatvaṁ nirupādhikatvaṁ/

The unconditioned mutual absence lies in the difference of cloth in a jar (ghaṭo no patah).<sup>45</sup>

The differences as found in Brahman are illusory as they are produced by some nescience, The nescience is positive, but not the prior absence of knowledge. Hence, it can produce illusion of difference.

The anupalabdhi can, however, be proved as a separate pramāna with the method of reductio-ad-absurdum or tarka as found in Indian philosophy. In the case of knowledge, 'There is no jar on the ground' - the negation is known with the help of reductio-ad-absurdum or tarka which is generally adopted by us at the time of apprehension. The form of tarka will be like this, "Had there been a jar on the ground, it would have been perceived". As it is not perceived, it is not there. In the same way, when the jar is known as different from the pot, the mutual absence is known through the application of tarka again. That jar is different from pot is known through their non-identification (bheda). The tarka will go like this, "Had the jar been identified with pot,

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45. Tatrādyo yathāikasyākāśasya ghaṭādyupādhibhedena bhedaḥ/  
 Yathā caikasya sūryasya jalabhājanabhedena bhedaḥ/  
 Yathā caikasya Brahmaṇo 'ntahkaranabhedād bhedaḥ/  
 Nirupādhikabhedo yathā ghaṭe pata-bhedaḥ/

it would have been perceived as such". As jar is not revealed to us as an identical with a pot, it completely different from that. In this way, we are going on applying tarka in order to know an object correctly. When "the book", for example, is known, it is known as non-identified with non-book. In the same way, cow is known as different from other animals, i.e., non-cow, as cow is not identical with others. In this way, in our practical life we are applying tarka in order to get the knowledge of absence.