CHAPTER 8
ANUPALABDHI (Non – Cognition)

We have seen a lot of judgments about both existence and non-existence. These judgments may be based on inference, testimony etc. But how is the judgment of non-existence derived? For example the non-existence of a jar, at first sight the judgment of non-existence appears to be one of perception, because the knowledge obtained is evidently immediate. But difficulty arises when we try to understand how sense can possibly grasp non-existence. It the sense perception of an object pre-supposes some relation of that sense with that object, we cannot by any stretch of imagination conceive how sense can come into any relation with non-existence, so that it might be perceived. How, then is non-existence known in such a case? This in short, is the problem discussed by the Advaita Vēdāntins under anupalabdhi. The solution of this problem depends chiefly on the conception of non-existence. There are in Indian Philosophy three main conceptions of non-existence (अभाव) and consequently three different ways of solving this problem.

The Prābhākaras maintain that non-existence has no reality apart from that of an existent thing. The same existence object is judged to be existent with reference to it and non-existent with reference to other things. The ground itself on which there is no pot, says the author of the Prābhākara
vijaya, is judged to be existent with reference to itself and non-existent with reference to the pot and there is no need therefore for assuming that non-existence has a separate reality. The non-existence of a jar on the ground is, therefore, nothing over and above the existence of the locus, the ground. It is not, however, identical with any state of the existence of the ground, but only with the state of unqualified or pure existence of the ground i.e. the bare ground (भूलमात्र) unoccupied by any other thing. The Sāṅkhyas also hold that of the many forms or transformations (परिणाम) of the locus, the ground, the one that is devoid of any content is identical with the non-existence of the jar on the ground. In a word, according to both the Prābhākaras and the Sāṅkhyas the non-existence of thing in a particular locus is nothing but the existence of the bare locus (अधिष्ठानारूप अथवा अधिष्ठानस्वरूप).

According to this view, therefore the judgment of non-existence of the type in question can be easily said to be derived through perception. The difficulty as to how non-existence can become the object of perception does not at all arise, because perception of the non-existence of the jar on the ground means, according to this view nothing but the perception of the ground, which as everybody will grant, can be perceived through sense. The non-existence of the jar, therefore, can be known through perception.

The Naiyāyikas come to the same conclusion by a different line of argument. According to them non-existence of a thing in a particular locus is not identical with the locus but adjectival to it. For we always say that the
ground is characterized by the non-existence of a jar. The non-existence of a jar on the ground is therefore to be conceived as a character (विशेषण) of the ground, and it is reasonable to suppose that it is perceived through the perception of the ground, just as the attributes of the ground like colour, size etc. are perceived. Sense cannot of course come in to relation with this character, ie non-existence in the same way as it can with the attributes of colour, size etc. The Naiyāyikas admit, therefore a special kind of relation (सत्रिकर्ण) with a character (विशेषण) like non-existence (and also the relation of Samavaya) through its relation with the locus of that character. It is sufficient to mention here that the relation of sense with non-existence varies with the six kinds of relation. Sense can have with the object; the Naiyāyikas have been discussed already in perception.

The Bhāṭṭamīmāṁsakas and the Advaitins hold, however, that non-existence is not identical with its locus but is something additional to it (अधिष्ठानातिरिक्त तत्त्व). They hold that everything has two forms, one of existence and the other of non-existence. The Prābhākaras already stated that non-existence is nothing but an aspect of its locus, the ground. But the Bhāṭṭas assert that existence and non-existence are the two different aspects of a thing, and as such the one is not reducible to the other that the two serve two different purposes and possess two different meanings. Non-existence therefore is something different from existence. The Advaitins does not ready to follow the Bhāṭṭas in these empirical matters and they do not find
any independent elaborate discussion of this point in their works. If the non-existence of a pot on the ground were but another name for the bare ground we should perceive, the non-existence of the pot, even while it is there on the ground because it cannot be said that, the ground, as such is not perceived while the pot is on it. Again if perception of the bare ground led to the knowledge of non-existence, there could not arise the knowledge of the non-existence of a jar on the ground while there was, for instance a wood on it. In addition as there may be simultaneous non-existence of many things in the same ground and we should be aware of all of them every time that we perceive the ground, which is not really the case. However it happens very often that we become aware of the non-existence of a thing on a ground long after the ground itself is perceived. Now it could not be happen if the perception of non-existence consisted simply in the perception on the ground. These difficulties stand, therefore, in the way of the acceptance of the view that non-existence is identical with its ground and that knowledge of it means nothing more than the knowledge of the bare ground. If however the statement ‘the non-existence of a jar is nothing but the bare ground’ be analyzed, it is found on the contrary that non-existence has to be understood as something different from its ground. Perception of the ground cannot, therefore, by itself amount to the perception of the non-existence present in it.
If non-existence is different from its ground lays down that it can be perceived as adjectival to the ground. Since it cannot be understood how non-existence can be related either with its locus or with sense. The relation of samyoga or Samavāya possible only between two existent entities cannot relate non-existence to either a locus or a sense. On no grounds, therefore it can be maintained that non-existence is perceptible through sense. Non-existence is known neither through perception nor inference and the knowledge of it through any other means generally known is inconceivable, how do we at all speak of non-existence? It is known according to the Advaitins and the Bhāṭṭas, through a unique means of knowledge called non-cognition (अनुपलब्धि) or rather appropriate non-cognition (शोम्यानुपलब्धि).

It should be necessary to refer the Bhāṭṭa’s view to understand more fully and clearly the conception of the method of non-cognition. Śabaraswāmin (the author of Jaiminīya śutrabhāṣya) says that the absence of other means of knowledge is itself a means of the knowledge of non-existence of things not presented to any sense. Kumarilla Bhaṭṭa expressed the same idea that if a thing were such that while it exists, its existence is revealed through any of the five means of knowledge, and it still there is no knowledge of the thing, then this non-cognition of the thing is evidence (प्रभाणम्) for the non-existence of the thing.

Advaitins define anupalabdhi is the specific cause of such immediate knowledge of non-existence as has not been produced by any of the known
means of knowledge, such as perception inference etc. The chief points sought to be brought out in this definition are following:

1) Knowledge derived through anupalabdhi has for its object non-existence of something.

2) It is immediate and presentative, so that it does not include the memory of past non-existence.

3) It is not produced by any of the positive means of knowledge, so that inferential knowledge of non-existence also is to be excluded from it.

Knowledge of this specific character is then to be regarded as a product of the specific method, i.e., anupalabdhi or non-cognition. But here it is necessary to answer the question; does non-cognition of a thing always lead to the knowledge of its non-existence? And when non-cognition can yield the judgment of non-existence? The author of Vādānta Paribhāṣa replies that, only an appropriate non-cognition can lead to the knowledge of non-existence. This appropriateness may appear at first sight that an appropriate non-cognition is the non-cognition of a perceptible object. This would of course, hold, good of cases like the non cognition of the pot on the ground; the absent object, the pot is perceptible if present, and hence non-perception of it yields the knowledge of its non-existence. But it does not apply to the case of a judgment of non-existence like ‘There is the difference from ether in earth’ (i.e. earth is not ether) which can be legitimately formed on the visual perception of the locus- the earth-though in such a case, the
absent object (ether) cannot be said to be appropriate because it is not by itself perceptible. Here it can be understood that the appropriateness of non-cognition depends really on the appropriateness of the ground (अभिष्ठान) of absence and not on that of the absent object (अभावातियोग) here, earth, ground etc. are all perceptible. If it were true, the non-existence of virtue and vice (धर्म: अधर्मः) in the self (आत्मा) would be known through non-cognition, because the self is perceptible and therefore an appropriate locus. But the non-existence of virtue or vice can never be so known, it is known through inference. Hence it is easily seen that the appropriateness of non-cognition cannot be ascertained either from the appropriateness of the object that is absent, or the appropriateness of the locus of absence⁸.

Regarding yोग्यनुपालब्धि (appropriate non-cognition) the Vēdānta Paribhāṣā says that, by ascertaining whether the object not known would have been known, has it been present there, under those very circumstances⁹. For instance, the absence of the visual knowledge of a jar on the ground in the broad daylight is an appropriate non-cognition, and can therefore lead to the judgment of the absence of jar. Because there is a condition to argue, 'had there been a jar under these circumstances, it would have been seen. But the non-perception of a jar in the dark room is not an appropriate non-cognition because we cannot feel sure that if the jar had been there it would have been seen. And we therefore judge that the jar does not exist. Again though a spirit or ether (स्तम्भविषाचः) is not perceptible by itself, we can yet
argue that if there were a spirit as identical with a pillar (or earth) it would have been perceived. Hence the non-existence of the spirit as a pillar can be said to be known through anupalabdhi. But we cannot similarly argue had there been dharma in the self, it would have been perceived. Hence the absence of dharma in the self cannot be known through anupalabdhi.

It Advaita sidhi, Madhusudanasaraswathy states a similar definition of yogyanupalabdhi. The non-existence of that thing in a certain place is appropriate, the existence of which in that place is opposed to its non-perception. We can define the Advaita view more explicitly, and its content can be expressed as follows: - If a particular sense does not yield the knowledge of an object as possessing particular characteristics and as existing in a particular locus being related to it, in a particular way, and if that object be such that it is perceived, if existing under those circumstances, then that absence of knowledge is a means to the knowledge that the object as possessing those characteristics does not exist in that locus in that relation. These various conditions can clear with some instances. If a jar while perceive from a distance through the visual sense, is not perceived through touch, we cannot from the absence of the tactual knowledge, judge its non-existence, because it is not capable of being perceived through that sense (in touch) under those circumstances. Again, if a jar is not perceived as existing on the ground, in the relation of identity with it, it cannot be judged that the jar does not exist on the ground in the relation of conjunction also. It again a
black jar is not perceived on the ground, it cannot be judged that a red jar also does not exist there, and so forth. The Sāmkyas and the Naiyāyikas that, since the Advaitins must admit that there can be the cognition of the absence of a jar on the ground only when there is some sense activity and never without it may say it. They also admit for simplicity of explanation that, the knowledge of the non-existence, like that of its locus, is derived through sense perception and not through an additional independent source. Therefore it can be understood that the sense-perception that is invariably present accounts for the perception of the locus and the locus alone. It is inconceivable how sense can come into relation with non-existence, and how the antaḥkaraṇa can assume the form of a non-existent object. It is impossible to argue, therefore, that because the activity of some sense is invariable present in every case of the cognition of non-existence, such cognition must be derived through sense. On the contrary it is reasonable to argue that as sense activity is present in the immediate cognition of both existence and non-existence, while the non-cognition of the absent, object is present only in the case of cognition of non-existence, it is this peculiar factor of non-cognition, which is especially responsible for the cognition of non-existence.

An existent cognition can yield the knowledge of an existent something; similarly the non-existent cognition or non-cognition can yield the knowledge of a non-existent something. Besides, even in the opponents view, non-existence has to be credited with causality. For how can non-
existence be said to be the object of sense perception unless it is admitted that this perception is caused by non-existence as its object?

It is not true that the cognition of non-existence is more simply explained by admitting that it is a case of sense perception. As the factor of non-cognition (of the absent object) has also to be admitted to be the cause of the knowledge of non-existence, the supporters of the view of the perceptibility of non-existence are forced to assume two causes of such knowledge – sense activity and non-cognition. In view of this, therefore, it is found that the credit for simplicity of explanation is on the side of those who make non-cognition alone the specific cause of the knowledge of non-existence, and not on the side of those who have to accept two causes of the two factors, invariably present, one, non cognition, alone must be accepted as the special cause since a sense cannot be conceived to non-existence.

The Bhatta argument is that one can think, for example, at noon that one did not see a tiger in a particular place in the morning. This knowledge of non-existence cannot be explained as the memory of past perception (of non existence) that we had in the morning. Because the knowledge of the non-existence of the tiger, and as we may not have thought of a tiger at all that morning, there could not possibly be any knowledge (perceptual or non-perceptual) of the absence of a tiger at that time. Such a case of the knowledge of non-existence shows, therefore, the inadequacy of the theory that non-existence can be perceived through sense. On the other hand, it is
very easily explained if non-cognition were held to be the means of the
knowledge of non-existence. The absence of the memory of a tiger at that
place and time is a form of non-cognition that is a means to the knowledge
of non-existence in this particular case. But here we have to think that, is not
Sabaraswāmy defined anupalabdhi, as absence of a means of right
knowledge (प्रमाणप्रमाण) and is not memory excluded from a pramāṇa? How
then, can absence of memory be regarded as a case of the absence of
Pramāṇa? To this question Nyāyaratnākara replies that, though memory is
not itself a pramāṇa, it is still the result of a pramāṇa (प्रमाणवत्तम) and
consequently the absence of memory implies the absence of pramāṇa as
well. According to the Advaita theory, the absence of the tiger can be
known through anupalabdhi because even here it can be argued, “Had there
been a tiger it would have been perceived”. It is not an ordinary case of
memory.

Here we can realize that the knowledge of non-existence in question
cannot be regarded as the result of sense – activity, though this later may be
present in every case of such knowledge. But Naiyāyika may still ask an
Advaitin. In the judgment, “there is no jar here on the ground,” you must
admit that non-existence of the jar is as much immediately known as the
ground. Why should you not, therefore, admit that the non-existence is
known also in the same way as the ground, that is when the antahkarana goes
out to the ground and sets up a relation between the known and the non-
existence that inheres in the ground? If the character of the knowledge produced be the criterion for ascertaining the means through which the knowledge is derived, how can you in the present case, say that the ground is known through one means and the non-existence through another, not withstanding the fact that the knowledge of both of them possesses the same character of immediacy? 12

The Advaitins reply that though the non-existence of the jar is felt to be as immediate as the ground, and though the antahkaraṇa goes out to the ground, we cannot say that the antahkaraṇa takes the form of the non-existence, because non-existence though an attribute of the ground, is such that no sense can be conceived to come in to contact with it, and consequently antahkaraṇa can be thought to be assuming the form of it 13. In consideration of this difficulty it cannot be believed that the non-existence is known in the same way as the ground. Besides it is not a universal rule that the character of the resulting knowledge decides the question as to the means through which the knowledge is derived. For even knowledge derived through testimony can acquire the character of immediacy. It is the character of the mental function or process (चिन्ति) producing knowledge that really decides the questions as to its means or method. In the case under discussion, the mental function in the form of the negative judgment ‘there is no jar on the ground’ cannot be possibly produced by any sense activity.
Hence non-existence cannot be said to be known-through sense perception, even when the knowledge of it is felt to be of an immediate character\(^4\).

Another problem is that having admitted that the knowledge of the non-existence of the jar is direct or immediate; they must also admit that the illusory cognition of the non-existence of the jar must be of an immediate type. But the Advaitins also lay down the general theory that in every case of immediate illusory cognition the object present is produced by nescience (माया). So they must admit that when we wrongly judge that there is no pot on the ground, nescience produces the wrongly perceived non-existence. Then the difficulty arises as to how माया which is conceived as a positive entity (वाचक रूपम्) can be the material cause of non-existence. But if the present case were said to be an exception, the Advaitins must give up their fundamental theory, namely that माया is the material cause of all phenomena. The Advaitins evade this difficulty by saying they do not admit that in all errors of immediate knowledge the object is produced by माया.\(^5\)

In cases where the wrongly perceived object is really present in a contiguous locus and immediately known, the Advaitins hold that the error is caused not through the fresh production of an illusory object, but through the transference of a really perceived object from its own locus to a locus in which, it does not really exist (अन्यथाक्य्याति). In the present case also the jar's non-existence in some other contiguous locus is simply transferred to the ground. For example the absence of a jar perceived in the colour of the
ground may be immediately known and this absence, instead of being judged to be in its real locus, is judged to be in another locus, the ground; hence the error. But even if it were admitted that Māya also produces this illusory non-existence, the difficulty pointed out does not really arise. There is no such rule that the effect phenomenon must be in every way like the cause-phenomenon. A cloth is in some respects unlike the yarn out of which it is made. If it be insisted that there must at least be some resemblance between the effect and the cause, it can be pointed out that even between an illusory non-existence and Māya there is this point of resemblance, namely that both are different from Brahman, and therefore false from the transcendental stand point.

Four kinds of Non-existence.

According to Vēdānta Paribhāṣa there are four kinds of non-existence, that can be known through non-cognition (अनुपलब्धि). They are Prāgabhāva, Pradhvamsābhāva, Anyonyābhāva and Atyantābhāva respectively.

Prāgabhāva literally means previous non-existence. It is defined as the non-existence of the object in its material cause previous to its coming into existence. To illustrate the non-existence of the jar in its component material earth, prior to the production of the jar, would be called Prāgabhāva. It is distinguished from other kinds of non-existence by the fact that it is the basis of the peculiar judgment of futurity like ‘the jar will exist’. The judgment ‘The jar does no exist’ is common to all kinds of non-existence.
But the judgment “The jar will exist applies only to the case of previous non-existence. Another distinguishing features of this kind of non-existence mentioned by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas is that it has no beginning, but has always an end\(^{17}\). Prāgabhāva put an end to as soon as the object comes in to existence.

Pradhvamsābhāva literally means non-existence as represented by annihilation or destruction. The non-existence of the jar in the component parts in which the jar is broken falls within this class\(^{18}\). The destruction of an object is invariably and unconditionally preceded by the existence of the object. Hence the existence of the object is a necessary factor for the production of its non-existence arising out of its destruction.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas the destruction of an object, say a jar cannot be further destroyed\(^{19}\). The Advaitins question the truth of this view\(^{20}\). The non-existence of a thing, they argue must have a locus (अविकरणम). That is to say, whenever we say that a jar does no exist we mean that it does not exist in a certain place. Now the non-existence of the jar, when destroyed, has for its locus its component parts. When therefore, these parts are further destroyed, the locus of the non-existence of the jar is destroyed and with it the non-existence of the jar in those parts is also destroyed. In other terms, the judgment “there is non-existence of the jar in these component parts” becomes untenable and false when those parts no longer exist. Hence the Advaitins conclude that when the locus of the non-
existence created by destruction is destructible, that non-existence cannot be itself indestructible or endless, but when the locus, in question is eternal or endless, the non-existence in question is eternal. As the Advaitin hold that nothing except Brahman is endlessly real or eternal, it further follows that according to them only that kind of non-existence is endless which has Brahman for its locus. To illustrate the non-existence of the world in Brahman is eternal. It need not be supposed that if such non-existence were eternal, there would be no other eternal thing except Brahman; this would tell against the pure monism of the Advaitins. For the Advaitins have shown in other contexts that the negation of an object illusorily super imposed on some reality is nothing but the affirmation of that reality, and consequently that non-existence (caused by destruction) of the illusory object is nothing over and above the existence of the real locus. The eternality of the non-existence of the world in Brahman implies, therefore, not another parallal eternal reality but only the eternality of Brahman.

But the Naiyāyikas ask, if the non-existence created by the destruction of the jar, were destructible would not the destroyed jar again spring in to existence. For does not the negation of the negation of a thing imply the affirmation of a thing? In reply to this, the Vedāntaparibhāṣā points out that the annihilation of the destroyed parts of a jar, implies as much non-existence of the jar as of those destroyed parts and does not; therefore amount to the creation of the jar. Here we can say "there is non-existence of
the jar now in these parts”. But when these parts are again broken in to smaller pieces, this judgment can no longer be maintained; it is no longer valid; for ‘these parts’ no longer exist. But falsity of this judgment about the non-existence of the jar in a particular locus does not mean that another judgment about the non-existence of the jar in some other locus cannot be passed. On the contrary, when the broken parts are further broken we can still pass the judgment “there is non-existence of the jar now in these still further broken parts” which would be quite valid for that time and would prove not the re-emergence but the non-existence of the jar. The jar can be destroyed only once, that is when it is broken in to its parts, and consequently non-existence created by destruction, though we can say that, there is non-existence of the jar in the broken pieces, we cannot say that this non-existence in the piece is such as has been created by destruction of the jar. Such non-existence cannot, therefore, be said to be endless. The author of the Vēdānta Paribhāṣa gives an indirect proof of the falsity of the statement that the destruction of the non-existence of an object created by its destruction necessarily implies the re-emergence of the object\textsuperscript{23}. In Advaitasidhi a similar problem in another form has been dealt with by the Advaitins in another way\textsuperscript{24}. The Advaitins say that the world is false and Brahman alone is real. Now their critics raise the question. Is the statement ‘the world is false’ itself true or false? If it were true, then there is another reality in addition to that of Brahman; this the Advaitins cannot accept. But
if this statement were false, then the Advaitins must contradict themselves for the falsity of the falsity of the world amounts to the reality of it. Now it is this last question with which we are concerned at present. Does the falsity of the falsity of an object imply its reality? The Advaitins reply that it does not. For they say that anything that is different from Brahman is according to them false. Now both the falsity of the world, and the falsity of the falsity of the world, and the falsity of the falsity of the world are different from Brahman. Both are therefore false. The negation of the negation of a thing amounts to its affirmation only when there are two different grounds for the two negations. But when the ground for negation (निक्षेपत्तवच्छेदक धर्मम्) is the same in both, the negation of the negation of a thing does not amount to its affirmation.

Anyोन्याभाव, the third kind of non-existence, is according to Advaitins, nothing but difference or separateness owing to which we judge ‘This is not that’. The difference of a pot from a cloth has a beginning because the pot has a beginning in time. Again the difference of an individual soul (जीव) from Brahman, or difference of the latter from the former, is beginningless because Jīva and Brahman are beginning less, according to the Advaitins. But none of these two cases of difference is eternal²⁶. There fore it also has beginning in time, or not, according as its
locus has beginning or not. The reason for its non-eternity is the same as in the case of the other kinds of non-existence.

The fourth kind of non-existence, atyantābhāva, literally means total or absolute non-existence. If a particular thing does no exist in a particular locus at any time, then it is said that there is atyantābhāva or absolute non-existence of that thing in that locus. For instance there is atyantābhāva of colour in air. The Naiyāyikas hold that atyantābhāva is eternal. But the advaitins, following their own theory that Brahman alone is eternal, refuse to accept the view. The author of the Vedaṇṭa Paribhāṣa says, therefore that atyantābhāva is perishable. According to the Advaitins as everything except Brahman is non-eternal, non-existence as existing in any such thing must also be perishable.

Here it is found that according to the Advaitins the object of a non-perception (अनुपलब्धि) can be one of the four kinds of non-existence. There is one more important point to be noticed in this connection. It relates to the question how ajñāna or ignorance is known. According to their view, ajñāna being the non-existence of knowledge should be known, like other kinds of non-existence through non-cognition. But the Vivaraṇa does not accept this apparent conclusion. According to it ajñāna can be divided in to two classes, namely

1) Absence of the knowledge of a particular object (ज्ञानविशेषाभावम्),

2) The general absence of knowledge (ज्ञानात्राभावम्).
Of these two, the former alone can be known through non-perception. But the latter is directly revealed to the witnessing self. But if this conception were tenable, the distinction sought to be made by the Vivarṇa is quite reasonable. The knowledge of the absence of the knowledge of a particular object involves the knowledge of the object at that time, but the general absence of knowledge does not do so.

**CONCLUSION**

In our treatment we have nowhere distinguished the view of the Advaitins from that of the Bhāṭṭas. By the writers of the Advaita School who closely follow the traditions of the Bhāṭṭas in these matters. But if we carefully consider the account of anupalabdhi as given by the Vēdānta Paribhāṣā, we do not feel that the Advaitin have the same conception of anupalabdhi as the Bhāṭṭas.

It will be noticed that we have so far used the word non-cognition for anupalabdhi, in order to keep the world vague and general so as to suit any interpretation that may be given. The account of anupalabdhi given in the Vēdāntaparibhāṣā and stated here would almost clearly show that by anupalabdhi, it means non-perception. It clearly says that when a particular sense competent to inform us of a particular thing does not yield any knowledge about it we can judge that it is absent. But the Bhāṭṭas do not accept this view, for they are said to mean by anupalabdhi not non-perception alone but non-cognition in general. Therefore we must say that
there is some difference between the Advaitins and the Bhāṭṭa, that while the
former understand by it any form of non-cognition.

Here we have to think about the real distinction between non-perception and non-cognition as means of knowledge. Non-cognition is wider in meaning than non-perception and though theoretically there can be as many kinds of non-cognition as of cognition, the only kind of non-cognition that can directly yield any knowledge about non-existence is non-perception. As a means of knowledge, therefore non-cognition becomes practically equivalent to non-perception. Kumarilla states that everything has two aspects, of which the aspect of existence is known through one of the five pramāṇas and that of non-existence through anupalabdhi or non-cognition, it is argued that wherever the object of knowledge is the non-existence of a thing, the instrumentality of non-cognition is involved. Thus the knowledge of non-existence through inference, testimony etc. would be through to involve non-cognition, and there would consequently arise five different cases of it. It is from this standpoint that even the case of inferential knowledge of the absence of virtue (धर्मम्) mentioned in Vēdānta Paribhāṣā is explained as involving anupalabdhi. It is affirmed with the support of a line from Nyāyaratnākara, that, even in such a case the absence of the object is primarily known through anupalabdhi though afterwards it may be known through inference as well. But it is difficult to understand how in such a case the non-existence of the object like virtue, vice etc. can
be ascertained and therefore known, prior to and independently of inference, through mere non-cognition, inspite of the fact that even the existence of the object is known only through inference. The only way therefore in which this contention can be maintained is to declare that inference, testimony etc. can yield only affirmative judgments (existence) and never negative ones (non-existence). All negative judgments are invariably derived through anupalabdhi. This argument that, non-existence is known through anupalabdhi alone is not compatible with the above statement of the Nyāyaratnākara, which grants that non-existence can be known through inference as well. But the Advaita School does not hold that non-existence is known in all cases through non-cognition. On the contrary there view is that it is known in some cases through non-perception and in some cases through other methods of knowledge for then, anupalabdhi means of the knowledge of non-existence. And knowledge of non-existence may be felt to be immediate (प्रत्यक्ष) it is to be classed apart from an immediate knowledge obtained through sense perception, on the strength of the distinction that exists between the two as regards the processes through which they are derived.

And the Advaitins himself admit, only an appropriate non-perception that can be the source of any knowledge of non-existence. We cannot therefore, pass directly from a non-perception to the knowledge of non-existence; we have to ascertain, before we can do so, that the particular non-
perception is also appropriate. To test this appropriateness we have to ascertain, as the Advaitin tells us, that in that particular case, if the unperceived object were present, it would have been perceived. If it not legitimates to conclude from the Advaitins own statements, therefore that non-existence is known not through non-perception alone, but non-perception together with the evidence for its appropriateness? If that be so, it follows easily that the knowledge of non-existence is obtained through the synthetic construction of two premises, one expressing the fact of non-perception, the other, its appropriateness – which is obviously a process of inference that can be put in the form of the hypothetical – categorical syllogism. If ‘A’ were present it would have been perceived. ‘A’ is not perceived therefore ‘A’ is not present.

Vēdāntaparibhāṣa proves that the appropriateness of a non-perception has to be determined with the help of the hypothetical argument (तर्कम्). “If the object existed it would have been perceived”. But this argument cannot be considered to be a premise leading to the conclusion, “It does not, therefore exist” because this argument is only a canon for testing the validity of the conclusion. The non-existence of a jar on the floor is known through its non-perception. But if this knowledge is in any way doubted it is reinstated with the help of the hypothetical argument or tarka. And even if this validating argument were called an inference, non-perception does not cause to be the source of the knowledge of non-existence. At last we can
conclude that non-perception is an independent and ultimate method in being the specific source of the knowledge of non-existence.
References.

1. Saptapadārthi P. 76 – तथा हि प्रभाकरः : भावान्तरं एव भावान्तरपैक्षया अभाव
   इति व्यवहिते।

2. Tatvakoumudī. P.179-180. नहीं भूतलस्य परिणामविशेषात् कैवल्यलक्षणात्
   अन्यो घटामावो नामा।


5. Jaiminiyasūtram.1.5 P.19.अभाव: अपि प्रमाणामावो नास्तीत्यस्य
   असत्वकृकृष्टस्य।

6. Śloka vartika. P.473.

7. Vēdānta Paribhāṣa. P. 162 ज्ञानकरणाजन्याभावान्तमवासाधारणमनुपलबिरूपः
   प्रमाणम्।


9. Ibid.

10. Advaitasidhi. P. 810.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid. P 172.

16. Ibid. P. 176.
17. Tarkasaṅgraha P.146 - अनावि सान्तः प्रागभावः


19. Tarkasaṅgraha. 147.


21. Ibid. अन्यथा प्रागमाकवांसात्मकघटस्य विनाशे प्रभावोन्नजनापति.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.


26. Ibid.

27. Vivaraṇaprameyasaṅgraha P. 16. Ibid. साक्ष्माध्यमः अस्माते तु साक्षीवेच्छो

अज्ञातमात्रामयः