CHAPTER I

JĪVĀTMAN AS SUBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

A. Theory of Pramāṇas

No attribute of the self is a better pointer to its existence and nature than the fact and mode of its cognition. 'I know' is the commonest statement we hear from a man in the street. Whether in India or in the West the fiercest battles have been fought by philosophers on the question of cognition. In the West it has been pointed out almost ad nauseam that a universal scepticism or an absolute agnosticism must commit suicide while establishing itself. In India, too, the most formidable arguments that could be levelled against the Cārvākas were from the fact of knowledge. The Cārvākas themselves, despite their positivistic and materialistic outlook, did not begrudge perception its validity. If however they denied it to other pramāṇas, they did so only at the cost of jeopardizing the cogency of their own position, as their adversaries were quick to point out.

Knowledge is far from univocal. We have knowledge that is sensible, intellectual and mystical; practical and theoretical; scientific and artistic. But in Indian philosophic as well as theological thought there is one knowledge that commands every other and cuts across particular, individual systems, namely the supramundane realization of the Self or its equivalent, which is the summum bonum of man. This knowledge is potently salvific. That jñānamārga or path of knowledge holds the primacy in man's quest for salvation is generally admitted in all the systems. Even those who would underscore the karmic or the Bhakti mārga give meaning and life to it only by recourse to jñāna. Jñāna alone governs all the margas and justifies them as such, and also the end to which they lead.
If liberation is the summum bonum of the self—the realization of the self being the reverse side of it—it goes without saying that the whole process vitally depends on right knowledge. For right knowledge alone can infallibly lead one to or rather mature into self-realization. This is a supposition that has always been taken as axiomatic in Indian thought, as much as, let us say, the theory of rebirth. This being so, extreme care is to be taken to find out which is the right knowledge and which is less so; which are the sources and means that provide us with right knowledge and which are treacherous; and finally what are the criteria by means of which we are assured that our knowledge is free from all error.

Every non-materialistic system, then, which claims to point out the way to liberation must at the same time instruct us also on the means to correct knowledge. Else the system would be essentially incomplete. In fact such a need was so compelling that even Śankara had to make provision for it of some sorts. His distinction cuts across reality, dichotomizing it into vyāvahārika and pāramārthika. Now all śāstra comes under the vyāvahārika sphere. We might expect that in such a system epistemology would have no function to fulfil with regard to what ultimately matters. As a matter of fact, however, it is not so. For just like śāstra, epistemology too has a role to play, that of means to an end, in the process of self-realization. Moreover, if vyāvahārika reality cannot be regarded as pure nothing, no more can vyāvahārika knowledge be considered pure ignorance. It is, so to say, twilight spilled out from the Self which is knowledge itself.

No such justification is needed in the case of Madhva. He is a thorough-bred realist even where knowledge is concerned. In such a system, then, all knowledge is bound to be salvific more or less directly. Madhva himself assures us so: 'A thing, then, must always be understood rightly and pondered over; for it brings about ultimate human good...whereas erroneous knowl-
edge gives rise to evil." It follows, therefore, that epistemology is a sine qua non for the self in its long quest of realization.

The theory of pramāṇas would be what constitutes epistemology from the Indian point of view. The word pramāṇa itself is on the whole the nearest equivalent to truth in the epistemological sense of the term. Etymologically the word pramāṇa is derived from the root Mā (to measure), and the suffix ana. Grammatically it would seem to signify 'a means of (right) knowledge—means of pramā'. Historically, too, its instrumental character was recognized early enough when Vasāyāyaṇa defined it as upalabdhi-hetu—cause of cognition. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and his school of Mīmāṃsā were in line when they asserted "adustakāraṇārabdhāṃ pramāṇam" or pramāṇādhanam pramāṇam. The Naiyāyikas in general taught 'Saṃyagānubhavakāraṇām pramāṇam'. But the other aspect of pramāṇa, namely, that in itself it is valid cognition as distinct from its instrumentality often tended to be forgotten, although the very first definition which we have of pramāṇa, given by Kanāda aphoristically as 'adustam vidyā' seems to imply both.

Madhva would rather insist on the cognitive aspect of pramāṇa. It is never an instrument in the sense that it is

1. Tasmad vastu yathārūpam jñeyam dhyeyam ca sarvadā/kāraṇām puruṣārthasya...mitājñānam anarthaḥkam. (Anuvyāyōna IV 1.23-30)
3. Advanced Studies in Indian Logic and Metaphysics—by Sukhlalji Sanghvi, p.35.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
something else than the cognition it brings about. Since the ātman, as we shall see later, is self-luminous (sva-prakāśa) it grasps its states of certainty with as much directness as it grasps itself. And this act of grasping includes right cognition or pramā as well as the validity of that cognition or pramānya. For in one and the same act of cognition we become aware that something is true and authoritatively true.

Madhva rejects the jñātatā of the Bhattas, which is for him an obstacle between the cognizing self and its object, preventing a simultaneous awareness of the self and of objective evidence. If truth (pramānya) is a quality produced in the object by a process of which we can have no direct awareness, how is it to give rise even to the least certainty? If knowing an object subjects it to a change that escapes our cognition, how objective would be the objectivity of our knowledge? One could assert with as much logic that when an object is desired a certain quality of being desired (iṣṭatatā) modifies the object without our being aware of it. As for considering the pramāna an instrument, as the Naiyāyikas do, the definition would sin by defect. However applicable it might be to our modes of cognition, (e.g. pratyaksa) it leaves out of consideration the cognition of the Lord, which is knowledge par excellence. For in it immediacy of the object and of its pramāna is absolute. It is its own pramāna and carries with it its own pramānya or validity. Both pramā and pramānya are identified in it, and from it derives our awareness of truth.

In one, indivisible act, then, the self grasps itself both as a true object and source of true knowledge: Mayaitajjñātavit

7. Svaprāmānyam sadā sāksā paśyateyeva suṁścayāt/ jñānasya grāhakenaiva saksinā mañatāmīte// A.V. III 4,146.

tu sākṣīgam jñānagocaram. Hence the self or sākṣīn itself can be regarded as pramāṇa par excellence, with a certain amount of self-sufficiency. It is knowledge itself. In order to emphasize this characteristic Madhva calls it kevala-pramāṇa—pramāṇa pure and simple—whereas those pramanas traditionally known as such (like pratyakṣa, anumāṇa and āgama) are designated as anupramāṇas. While these are instrumental in their function with respect to kevala-pramāṇa, both have one thing in common, namely cognitive correspondence to objects or yathārthiyam. It should be once again noted, however, that even in the case of anupramāṇas knowledge is intrinsic to them.

It is true that Sākṣīn can grasp his objects directly by an intellectual perception. Such objects are what constitute psychic life—manas and its modifications, space and time within which alone objective judgments could be made, and above all Sākṣīn in his own self. There is no room for error in Sākṣīn's knowledge of them, as there can be nothing intervening and introducing distortion between the source of light and its object. But there are other varieties of cognition which are mediate in their process: sense knowledge, originating from sense perception, and knowledge that is supra-sensible, which derives from Scriptures; and finally reasoning which helps us arrive at knowledge not yet attained directly—filling in what was wanting in perception, and finding a concordance among the apparently discordant texts. In them alone, and not in kevala-pramāṇa may be seen the instrumental character—pramakorana or pramāsādhana—once their intrinsic relation to knowledge is safeguarded.

8. Yathārtham pramānam/ tad dvividham/ kovalam anupramānam ca/ yathārthajñānam kovalam/ tatasādhanam anupramānam/--Pramāṇa-Lakṣaṇa p.1

Yathārtham pramāṇam—this is how Madhva defines pramāṇa epistemologically: True knowledge corresponds to its object. The simplicity of the dictum, it might be noted, is characteristic of a good definition. It reveals at the same time Madhva's approach to things—realistic as opposed to idealistic. Jayatīrtha enumerates four different senses of yathā, the first half of the compound yathārtha, as given by Grammarians: fitness, repetition, likeness and non-trespassing the object.\(^{10}\) The first two senses are obviously ruled out in the present definition, but curiously enough, Jayatīrtha rejects the third meaning too—that of likeness. His reasons are purely grammatical. One wonders if Madhva, who was not known for his fastidiousness in the matter of grammar, would applaud his learned disciple's overexactitude. Even the later commentators, much to their embarrassment, have refused to subscribe to the strange view.\(^{11}\) Etymology itself would not favour the rejection of yathā in yathārtha in the sense of likeness. The true seems to be that the third and the fourth senses of Jayatīrtha, namely, that of likeness and of non-trespassing the object are both implied in yathā. Certainly both are required as mutually complementary for a full definition of pramāṇa, one as positive, the other as negative. The negative aspect, the non-trespassing of the object, had been always signified variously in their definitions of pramāṇa by earlier writers. The very first definition of pramāṇa by Kanāda as adustam vidyā—knowledge free from defects,—reveals it beyond doubt. The definitions formulated later on in other systems of thought have incorporated the idea more or less clearly. Thus the couplet attributed to Kanāda includes the phrase adustṛa—

10. Yogystā vīpsā padārthānātāvrttīḥ sādṛṣyam ceṣa yathāsabārthāḥ/—Nyāya-Sudhā II 1, 22. (U.M. p.63)
11. cf. D.M. p.64
kāraṇārābdhaṁ pramāṇam. Jayatīrtha then can claim the full backing of tradition when he interprets yathārtham as padārthanaatikrama which is another word for aduṣṭam of Kaṇāḍa.

But a positive correspondence in the cognitive sphere is absolutely essential for a pramāṇa if it should mean anything at all. Else even a piece of ignorance which does not trespass the object would have to be regarded as a pramāṇa! The objection that even in an error—in an illusion, for instance,—there is resemblance between the object and its representation is no more than specious. The negative sense is meant precisely to stave such doubts. Besides, it must be added that a positive correspondence is in keeping with Kaṇāḍa's psychology where memory is regarded as due to samskāras left behind by perceptions. Now what are samskāras if not positive resemblances to the objects of perceptions?

If we pass on to the other part of the definition, namely artha, we have a similar case to deal with. In fact it appears to be a logical development from the first half of the compound. Already with Vācaspatimiśra who belongs to the ninth century A.D. we notice artha finding its way into the definition of pramāṇa.13 Even the compound 'yathārtha' was used, as Udayanācārya reports of the Gautama school in the definition 'Yathārthānubhavo manamanaapeksatayesyate...14 This definition was looked upon, so to say, as the official one by all the subsequent texts of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school where 'artha' was understood as standing for the object of cognition or viśaya.15

12. The couplet in full is:

Tatraśūrvarthavijñānam niścītaṁ bādhavajitam/
Aduṣṭakāraṇārābdham pramāṇam lokassamanat//—SS p.35.


15. Ibid.
One would naturally expect, then, that Madhvacarya, who as an heir to this tradition adopts the word artha in his definition of pramāṇa subsumes also its implications as generally understood. If, on the other hand, he had reason to differ from the usually accepted position he would certainly have made clear the reason and the extent of his difference. Whereas all the clarification we are given is the obscure text 'arthatvam eyyataiva syāt.16

In interpreting the word artha Jayatīrtha follows as usual his analytical method. He enumerates five possible senses of the word in general—meaning, goods, thing, goal and preventive.17 His summary rejection of all of them is justifiable enough, except the sense of 'vastu'. In ruling out the latter he argues that if vastu were admitted as the sense of artha, then even the action of going to or of cutting would have to be looked upon as a pramāṇa. For neither of them goes beyond its object.18 It is easy to follow Jayatīrtha's line of argument. After restricting the word yathā to its negative sense i.e., not going beyond its object, Jayatīrtha is hard put to it to adopt the traditional meaning of artha, without inviting absurdities. Had he admitted the positive sense also, namely that of correspondence, he could have without hesitation adopted the meaning of object as usually understood of artha. For such correspondence is always essential for right knowledge or pramāṇa whereas it can in no way be demanded of any other operation. The same 'going' can take you either to throw a man into the river or to save him from its fury. You can 'cut' either to save or to kill. The object determines our cognition and rules supreme. In all likelihood this is what was

16. A.V.II 1, 21.
17. Arthasābdasābhidaśadhanavastuprayojanaṁ anivṛttisa
Vartate/ Nyāya-Sudha II 1, 22.
18. Na hi gamanam gamyam ativartate/ nāpi chidā chedyam/
—Ibid.
implied by Madhva when he asserted that the fact of being 'artha' is the fact of being 'arya'--arthatvam aryataiva syāt. 
Arya here is to be taken in its usual meaning— as noble or supreme. Note what follows immediately: such supremacy is not to be found with the objects of action—kriyā-artha.19
In the face of such an explanation Jayatirtha seems to labour the point when he asserts that both artha and arya have a common root in R, meaning to go or to know.20 Jayatirtha needed such an interpretation if only to prop up his mutilated definition of yathā. We do not.

19. Yāthārthāyam eva mānbatvam tanmukhyam jñāna sābdhayoh/
arthatvam aryataiva syānna kriyārtheṣu sā matā/ A.V.II 1,21.
B. Hierarchy of Pramāṇas

Although for his epistemology Madhvacārya draws heavily upon the Nyāya, he does not hesitate to part company with it on points he considers hardly sustainable. Thus with regard to the pramāṇas he adopts only three of them—pratyakṣa, anumāna and āgama. All the other varieties of pramāṇa are reducible to one of the three. Quoting from the Brahmatarka he defines them: adustamindriyam tvaksam—senses free from errors are known as perception; tarko 'duṣṭastathānumā—reasoning free from fallacies is known as inference; āgamo 'duṣṭavākyam—testimony free from errors is known as scripture.1 To this scheme we might add also what is known as anubhava or anubhuti—experience.2 It may be defined as self-knowledge or immediate knowledge of the self through itself—svadṛkṣānubhavah: It includes for its object things external as well as internal—emotions, feelings, impulses—anything psychological. Even the phenomenon of memory is sought to be brought under it,3 not only what is present here and now.

Not all the pramāṇas can enjoy an equal status, to be sure. Madhva can often be seen dismissing the arguments of his adversaries by such summary statements as 'srutyanubhava-virodhat or vedapratyakṣavirodhat. Pratyakṣa and āgama are what he calls upajīvya-pramāṇas—life-giving source to the dependent—upajīvaka, that is reason. A way of cognition can derive its strength two ways: first, through numerical superiority (bahutvāt). Thus if one pramāṇa contradicts many others then the solitary pramāṇa will be one that is faulty—

1. Viṣṇu-tattva-viniṃśaya, 81.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. infra pp 38 ss
as in the conch-shell silver. The other source of strength for cognition is its own intrinsic nature (svabhāvatah). It is owing to its intrinsic strength that a pramāṇa is regarded as an upajīvya. Thus even Scripture can have no validity if it goes counter to experience which is intrinsically valid. As distinct from experience, knowledge can be considered external (bāhya). Between the two, no doubt, experience is stronger. All knowledge obtained through perception, reasoning and even verbal testimony must defer to experience.

Of the three pramāṇas inference is held to be the weakest. Any validity it can claim is due to its being regulated by perception and Scripture. Else there would be no cogency about it. Inference has been so much used and abused by his predecessors that Madhva sees in it a veritable courtesan, an easy prey to her own whims and fancies, and no respecter of pratyakṣa or āgama.

Between pratyakṣa and āgama Madhva would seem to assert the supremacy now of one, now of the other. Thus in the Viṣṇu-tattva-viṁśirnaya he maintains with the Brahmatarka: prābalya-māgasyaivajātya teṣu triṣu smṛtam. In the Anuvyākhyāna he apparently equates the two. This and his repeated warnings that Scripture can have no validity if it contravenes experience would imply that it is experience which sets the guideline for

---

4. Bahupramāṇavirodhe ceikasyāpramāṇyam duṣṭam śuktī-rajatādau// V.T.V. 78
5. Na canubhavavirodhe āgamyā pramāṇyam// 72, op. cit.
6. V.T.V. 81
7. Pratyakṣāgamanābhātmāyādanumānaṁ pramāṇatāṁ yāti/ naivānāthā tasya nityatvam kvaivyādhvav—Ibid. ir. fine.
8. Nānumā, kāmacārini—not inference, for it is whimsical—A.V.I 1, 211. Note also ibid. 215: Anumākāmavṛttā hi kutra nāvasarāṁ vrajat/
9. V.T.V. 81

11
even Scripture. As a matter of fact, however, the domain of one is distinct from and independent of the other’s, though in their working they are mutually complementary. One cannot contradict the other. Thus a philosophic system worth the name owes it to itself that it find the harmony between the sensible and the suprasensible worlds. In achieving this, inference often plays a dominant role—even that of an upajīvya with respect to either pratyakṣa or āgama.11

In explaining the first two pramanas—pratyakṣa and anusmṛtya—Madhva by and large agrees with the Nyāya doctrine. In the matter of verbal testimony, however, he does not scruple to part company. Like most of the orthodox philosophers, no doubt, he avers that verbal testimony is a distinct source of cognition, providing us with knowledge of the suprasensible—a thing beyond the scope of the other two pramanas. Obviously the case is made out only for Āgama or Tradition, which according to Madhva is so called because it deals exclusively with dharma and adharma, the presence of the Supreme and all suprasensible reality.12 Popularly it is called Veda because it makes known the Supreme—veda hyeyainam vedayanti vasmādāhuḥ vedāḥ.13 Or also because they eternally are—vedaste nitya-vinnatvāt...14 The same Āgama is again known as Śruti, since it was heard by all—akhilaih śruteḥ.15 Śruti is to be distinguished from Smṛti in that the former is eternal while the latter is not.

11. Pratyakṣam upajīvyam syātu prāyo yuktirapi kvacīc/ āgamaikapramānese tasyaiva hupajīvyatā// A.V.II 2,18
12. a samantād gamayati dharmādharmau param pādam/ yac-cāpyatindriyam tvanyat tenasāvagamah smṛtah—A.V.III 3, 130
13. V.T.V.,4
14. V.T.V.,43
15. Ibid.
Some of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers like Udayana and Annam Bhatta had maintained that God was the author of the Vedas. Impugning the mīmāṃsaka view they argued that one could not regard the Vedas as eternal in the absence of an unbroken tradition to indicate their eternality. For every such tradition was bound to be interrupted at the dissolution of the world which preceded the present creation. Against this view Madhva aligns himself with the Mīmāṃsakas. He quotes the Brahmanda-purāṇa to show how all the Vedas are eternal, since in their eternal form they subsist in Viṣṇu's mind. He goes further in refusing to entertain the possibility that the letters and words of the Vedas are non-eternal in that they are always intuited by God in his omniscience. In each creation he speaks them out, keeping to the same form, order, letters and modes of utterance. The same sages who had heard them in their former lives are privileged to see them manifest themselves now in their present life—though only in parts. Any allusion to their origin—pleading which the Naiyāyikas deny their eternality—must be understood as referring to their manifestation. Do we not speak of the creation of the individual soul, though it is no more than figurative? Or it could be also interpreted as the coming into being of the presiding deities in secondary authority under Viṣṇu.

The Veda does not owe its origin to any personal composition. The truth of this assertion is self-evident in that nothing is known of the author of the Vedas. That being so is it not preposterous to postulate such an author? It is specious to bring in the analogy of worldly testimony and argue for a personal authorship of the Veda. For no one claims that worldly testimony is authorless.

16. V.T.Vy., 41
17. Ibid.
18. V.T.V., 14-17
Then there is the practical consideration. Any philosophical system, if it is to have raison d'être must basically subscribe to right and wrong—dharma and adharma. For it is only by promoting dharma that a philosopher can hope to help the world—lokopakāra. Else he would be inviting violence etc. in the world, injuring it in consequence, and committing in the meantime philosophic suicide. Besides, the speech of one who has no faith in dharma deprives itself of its right to be and to be heard.19

Dharma and adharma being of paramount importance, can we have it depend on the personal prestige of one human being or another? That would be introducing contingency into a truth which brooks no conditions. For a human being is always liable to deceive or be deceived. It is true, we could circumvent the difficulty by postulating a person who is omniscient. Unfortunately, however, such a postulate would be spawning two more for self-protection: that the omniscient person is not deceptive must be postulated, and that he is the author of the statements on dharma and adharma must also be postulated. All this is in support of omniscience which itself is not a matter of experience. Why not simplify the procedure by denying personal authorship itself?20

Thus it will be seen that arguments apart, Madhva's view on the authorship of the Veda coincides with that of the Mīmāṃsakas. But it is not so where the function of the Vedic testimony is concerned. As against the Vaiśeṣikas who reduce verbal judgments to inferences—vākyam vākyārthe 'numānam—21 the Mīmāṃsakas assign to language a role distinct and proper to

19. V.T.V; 6-10. Note also A.V. I 1, 71—adharavādino vākyam aprayojanam eva hi...
20. V.T.V; 11-13
21. Philosophy of Śrī Madhvācārya—by Dr. B.N.K. Sharma, p.89
itself. The primary purpose of verbal testimony is to mould our conduct by counselling us to do what is right and to avoid what is wrong. The structure of the language itself indicates it. Thus according to Prabhākara, the meaning of words can be grasped only in relation to other words in injunctive sentences. He tries to explain it by what he believes to be the process through which a child learns to understand language: the master commands the servant to fetch the cow or to tether the horse. On hearing the command given and witnessing the action carried out the child comes to know what a cow or a horse is. Prabhākara concludes that word can denote objects only in relation to the other factors of the injunction; apart from these it can yield no sense. This theory is usually known as anvitābhidhānevāda.22

Kumarila, however, allows each word its individual meaning. In a sentence the meanings of all the words combine to yield one connected idea. Thus we have what is termed as abhihitānvakṣavāda, a theory held also by the Naiyāyikas.23 But all the Mīmāṃsakas agree on one thing: The child comes to understand that the prime purpose of speech is to point out that some action is to be carried out—kārya.

Madhva rejects the Mīmāṃsaka theorising on both the counts—the process of a child's acquisition of knowledge and an adult's grasping of what speech has to convey. The first is patently against all child psychology. How can we demand that a child should undergo such a complex set of reasoning, weighed down by an equally straining memory exercise to hold on to an assemblage of things now little understood, for an indefinite future that can command no interest from the part of the child?24

22. Dasgupta pp. 394-97
23. Ibid.
24. esyadānayanāyāyaṃ kuta eva pratikṣate/.A.V. 1 1, 30.
One must remember that it is interest that counts with the child as with everyone else. And for interest what is essential is that the object be present, here and now. When the child is told "Your brother is eating the cookies," he grasps the sense because the object is there—and negatively, if it is not there—not, as the Mīmāṃsakas would have it, by words like "retch the cow" etc.25 Why inject a jussive sense into indicative statements like 'your brother is eating the cookies'?26 A child can understand all right sentences like "It is your mother; it is your father" by a corresponding indication of the fingers. How could one reasonably maintain, then, that all statements involve action, especially action to be accomplished?27

The Mīmāṃsakas fare no better with their explanation as to how an adult grasps the meaning of statements. As we observed already what counts with every being is self-interest. But for it none would be willing to act. And it is knowledge, whether direct or indirect that acts like means to that interest.28 Now a man sets to work only when he is sure that an accomplished fact will lead him to his interest. If on the other hand he realizes that it does not, he desists from his efforts. It follows then that the truth of all statements lies in the information or the signification of accomplished facts.29 Should you maintain that words can have signification only in reference to something yet to be accomplished you would have to admit that even the word 'to-be-accomplished'—kārya—is encompassed by the same law—a rather inconvenient corollary for our friends.30 Moreover in sentences like 'It's your mother;

25. A.V. I 1, 45 ss.
26. Ibid.
27. iyam mātā ' yam pivetyādāvaṅguliprasāranādīpurvaka-nirdeśenaśa hi tajjānātī—V.T.V., 51
28. istamāṅkṣate sarvo na pravṛttimāṅkṣate/ aparokṣam prakṣam vā jñānamiṣṭasya sādhanām/—A.V. I 1, 53b-54a.
29. V.T.V., 55-56
30. V.T.V., 53
It's your father; You are handsome* the signification of the statements is completed by the information on accomplished facts. And finally it is agreed among all the learned disputants that grammar, etymology etc have validity only in relation to existent realities. If grammar etc. were to be bypassed language itself should have to be thrown overboard.

Information, then, on accomplished facts must precede any desire which itself is a forerunner to action. An injunction, therefore, presupposes both knowledge and desire, as well as a possibility of attaining the desired object by means of an action. It will be easily seen that such knowledge and desire could be as much the result of perception and inference as of verbal testimony. In other words the primary function of language is informative, that is to point out the existence of an object that might or might not be desirable. The 'intention' or ākāṅkṣā of a sentence does not consist in the concerted effect which the entire gamut of words achieve grammatically—as the Mīmāṃsakas would prefer to believe—but in the indication of the object towards which the words direct their agency.\(^{31}\) That is how it often happens that a man is satisfied with a monosyllable.\(^{32}\) It is not the grammatical accuracy that we are concerned with here, but the function of the sentence to reveal the object as it truly is. The same yathārthya—conformity to objects—that governed the other two pramāṇas is applicable to śabda-pramāṇa as well. Else it could not be a pramāṇa at all. A word by itself signifies various objects resembling each other. It has a unity in sense, but so long as the word does not find itself used in a sentence it remains general (ca-mānyataḥ). Incorporation into a sentence with its gram-

---

\(^{31}\) A.V. III 2, 188-9

\(^{32}\) Ibid. 186
matics: relation towards other terms narrows it down to specific designation of a definite reality arrested in a unique context of space and time. For the fact that every reality is endowed with its own particular characteristics is the basis of such particularization. This theory of Madhva is known as sāmānya-anvita-abhidhāna-vāda where the import of a statement depends on the words signifying their proper objects but in a related fashion.

33. A.V. III 2, 183
34. Śaktiscalvānvite svārthe śabdānām anubhūyate/ ato ' nvitābhidhāyatvām gauravaṁ kalpane ' nyathā/
——A.V. I 1, 726-73a.
C. Validity of Cognition

Madhva has a long and variegated history of dispute to learn from when he comes to discuss about the validity of cognition. Whether the validity of cognition (pramāṇya) is intrinsic (svataḥ) or extrinsic (parataḥ) has been a much debated question in Indian philosophic thought, dating back in all probability to the time when the heterodox systems like Buddhism and Jainism repudiated the validity of the Vedas. In the face of hostile onslaughts the orthodox thinkers had perforce rally round their source of revelation if only for their own survival. And what they said at first in defence of the Vedic testimony was later on extended to other means of knowledge as well or to cognition as such.

The followers of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system being theists pressed into service of the Vedas their alleged origin from God. The Vedas are valid because God is their author. Once this was asserted, the next logical step was to validate other types of cognition like perception extrinsically. Reason alone can inform us of the validity of our cognition. Perception, for instance, cannot go back on itself to prove its own validity. Thus we perceive a thing as blue, as the direct result of visual contact. Is the visual contact able to guarantee that the knowledge it produced is true especially now that it has lost touch with the knowledge it gave rise to? If on the other hand the production of any knowledge were by itself to guarantee its validity, then there would be no room for invalidity or illusion. But unfortunately our experience tells us otherwise. The validity of our cognition, therefore, should be sought somewhere outside—parataḥ. And that 'somewhere' is reason aided by practical experience. Any piece of knowledge ought to be borne out in practice by an objective realization.
of our desires and attempts proceeding in accordance with our knowledge. The validity of knowledge then is through the attainment by practical experience of the object and the fulfilment of all our purposes from it—arthakriyā-ñāna or phala-ñāna—just as perception or knowledge represented them to the perceiver. Reason alone can assertain validity by saṃvāda or agreement with the objective facts of experience. If the saṃvāda is absent, then it is a case of invalidity which also is as external as validity itself.¹

The Mīmāṃsāka is no believer in God. Unable, then, to trace the validity of Vedic testimony to God's authorship of the Vedas he must maintain that Vedic testimony is self-valid—svātāh pramāṇa. By extension, however, other types of cognition like perception were brought in under the same argument.² The Mīmāṃsā holds that all knowledge is independent of anything else both in its rise and in its action—svakārya.³ The impression that it is valid invariably goes with any knowledge, prompting us to work (pravṛtti) according to its direction. There is no room for indecision here. In cases of illusory perception, however, other perceptions or cognitions arise which produce the notion that our first knowledge was not valid. But until then we work according to our original knowledge, certain that it is valid. This is what is meant by the Mīmāṃsā when it says that validity of knowledge appears immediately with its rise, though invalidity may be derived from later experience—jñānasya prāmāṇyaḥ svatah, aprāmāṇyaḥ paretaḥ.

1. S.S. pp.38-39; Dasgupta I pp.372-73; D.M. p.69
2. Svatah sarvapramāṇānām prāmāṇyamiti gamyatām/ Na hi svato ' satī śaktīḥ kartumānyena śakyate—S.S. p.39
3. Svakāryakaraṇaḥ svatah prāmāṇyaḥ jñānasya—Dasgupta I p.375
Like the Mīmāṃsakas the Advaitins too admit on the whole the self-validity of knowledge. However, they make it a point to add a rider—that such knowledge must have no doṣa to vitiate it. This is a tight rope walking, certainly, between the extrinsic validity of the Naiyāyikas and the unqualified self-validity of the Mīmāṃsakas. The Advaitins, of course, could not have subscribed to the Naiyāyika position without compromising their own theory of knowledge. Nor could they agree to the Mīmāṃsaka contention that knowledge in all its forms is self-valid, for fear of granting validity to phenomenal knowledge and consequently reality to world-appearance. In defence of their own position the Advaitins claimed that their criterion—absence of doṣa—being a negative condition the charge of making knowledge extrinsically valid in reality cannot apply to it.4

Madhva does not agree. But he attacks the view indirectly, approaching it through the dichotomy introduced by the Advaitins between the empirical and the absolute. Our empirical certainties, all without exception, are illusory, they say. What is absolutely true, then, is placed on a different and higher footing in which alone is to be found svataḥ-prāmāṇya. This would be introducing dichotomy into the cognitive order, as well, radically changing, if not distorting, the notion of truth as that of validity. Truth is, for the Advaṅtīn, that which cannot suffer sublation—abādhya. It is thus strictly confined to what is ultimately real—the supreme. What of our everyday experience concerning the reality of the world around us? If this is no more than illusion, and lacks validity ultimately, it might be asked what guarantee is there that sublation does not extend to the ultimate truth as well? If what is guaranteed as true by our experience is bound to be

4. Dasgupta I pp. 484-85

21
no more so one day, how does the sublation itself escape the clutches of that sublating process which also is allegedly experienced by us? What is more, one fears that this conflagration of successive sublations will not spare the ultimate truth itself since all that an Advaitin can appeal to as an assurance lies well within our empirical experience. The Śūnyavādins among the Buddhists have claimed precisely that, since with a greater sense of logic they have gone to the extremity of dissolving everything in śūnyatā. In truth it is evident that the Māyins (Illusionists) differ from the Śūnyavādins only in name.

The Advaitins might very well define truth as that which cannot suffer sublation. They might also, ironically enough, proceed to prove their contention with arguments drawn from practical logic, belonging evidently to empirical world—thus making a mockery of the two levels of reality and of truth. But the Advaitin’s definition of truth as that which cannot suffer sublation is not inexact if it is made to embrace every type of truth and used in the strictest sense of the term. Truth is beyond space and time. What is true today was true yesterday and will remain so tomorrow. Hence a truth may refer to things ephemeral, but it remains absolute nonetheless because it remains always true. Also if the validity of a truth is intrinsic, it is equally eternal—and this applies as much to the physical world as to the metaphysical.

The validity of knowledge must be regarded as intrinsic.

5. ...śrutiyuktyādi pramāṇādīs ca sahaiva tu/ akasmād vi-nivṛttiścā kiṃ viśvāsa na śākyate/--A.V. I 4, 100
6. Yacchūnayavadināḥ śūnyam tadeva brahmāmyināḥ/ nahi lakṣanabheda ' sti nirviśeṣatvatastsyoh/--A.V. II 2, 229
7. Yadi nāngīktam khyādaniṣūŋkṛtāt ' pi hi/ nāngīkte-ti: mūkaḥ sāyaḥ nāśmaḍvīvāditā/--A.V. I 4, 92
8. Prāmāṇyasya ca maryādā kālato vyākhatā bhavet/ kālānte-re ' pyemānam cedīdānīṁ māṇīt kutaḥ/--A.V. III 2, 57
9. Prāmāṇyam ca svata eva anyathā ' navasthānāt/--V.T.V.,21
The reason is not far to seek. Should something else than knowledge be invested with the validity denied to knowledge, one is entitled to demand the validity of that validity. The result would be patently an infinite regress. It might be retorted, no doubt, that by arguing a case for self-validity we are surreptitiously shifting validity from knowledge to its argument—and this would be nothing less than external validity in disguise. But the fact is that all argumentation in the present case serves the only purpose of removing the flaws of thought, if any. Since according to Madhva all flaws are extrinsic to knowledge, arguments directly concerned with their removal cannot affect knowledge in its intrinsic validity.10

But why should the seeking for validity of one cognition in another by itself entail infinite regress? Is it not perfectly legitimate to seek a validating cognition when there is a genuine need for ascertaining the basis of validity? The process does not have to be repeated in the case of validating cognition as it suffers from no such need. Hence the objection of infinite regress becomes irrelevant. Madhva, however, pinpoints the flaw in this argumentation by distinguishing right knowledge from wrong. A defective cognition is shown as such, and corrected by other cognitions, while right cognition is self-valid, calling for no further cognitions. The conclusion ought, therefore, be that all validity is self-established while invalidity is from without.11

Madhva is quick to buttress this epistemological position with his psychological theory of Sākṣin. And Sākṣin being something peculiar to Madhva we shall have to deal with it in greater detail.

---

10. Na cokṣayuktyadhīnatvam prāmāṇyasya buddhidosanirāśematrakāraṇatvādyuktīnām—V.T.Vr., 22

11. V.T.Vr., 24-26
D. Sākṣīn

Though the doctrine of Sākṣīn as the witnessing self is something peculiar to Mādhva system, its name and a few traces of the doctrine could be vaguely deciphered in Śāṅkara dārśana. The Śankarites had spoken of a sākṣīn already before Mādhva. But the treatment it had received among them was neither uniform nor singular. It may be the light of Brahman shining, so to say, in the jīva; or the manifestation of Īśvara himself in all individual selves; or a form of Īśvara which remaining the same in the jīva through its different operations perceives directly and immediately, inspite of its being veiled by avidyā; or finally it may be an inextinguishable and changeless light of pure intelligence.¹

For Mādhva, however, sākṣīn is the bed-rock on which he rests his doctrine of self-validity. Etymologically the word sākṣīn means a witness, a seer or one endowed with vision. Mādhva himself defines it as such: sāksād Īkṣata iti sākṣī.² Even the functions of sākṣīn are invariably connected with vision, and this with absolute immediacy. Thus when sākṣīn is in operation we have pratyakṣa or grasping of what confronts our eyes. This is effected perceivably or visibly—sakṣāt. Sākṣīn is also termed as aparokṣa-jñāna—knowledge of that which is immediate to vision. It is clear, therefore, that sākṣīn according to Mādhva is essentially characterized by knowledge which is so much of its essence that it flows from it directly. In the spirit of Indian tradition sākṣīn is conceived as a spiritual organ śuddha-caitanya—of pure spirit

¹. Dasgupta IV p.158 footnote.
². Gitābhāṣyam IX 18
as opposed to a material organ or prakṛtam. It should be noted, however, that sākṣin is none other than jīva under its cognitive aspect. To regard sākṣin, then, as an organ is something of a metaphor but a metaphor justified by viśeṣa.

The existence of sākṣin can be proved in several ways. There is, for instance, the reality of space and time which points out to the reality of sākṣin. Space and time are illimited by nature. For the Śruti tells us that their grandeur (mahattvam) is limitless. How by what means can we grasp the infinite grandeur of space and time if not by sākṣin? Reason is helpless in a matter of this sort. What is left then is the perception through sākṣin which alone can grasp the absence of limitations at the atoms being divided.

The fact that time is the special object of sākṣin and is a pointer to its existence becomes more manifest when we analyse the nature of deep sleep. The man on waking observes, "I slept well; I slept so long". No particular event could be pointed out as one to which the sense of time could be connected. Neither can it be reasonably contended that an impression then leaves behind certain traces thanks to which one could legitimately reason out to a continuity of the self. For the man readily exclaims "I wasn't aware of anything".

---

3. Nirdosaksodbhavam hyatra pratyakṣam iti śīyate//
Prakṛtam suddha-caitanyamaksam tu dvividhaṃ matam//
--Ā.V. I, 27b-28a

4. For details cf. infra pp 77 ss

5. Ā.V. II 2, 68-70. Note also I 4, 94-95
Sātvatvam gaganādeśa sākṣipratyakṣasādhitam/ sākṣi-siddhasya
na kvāpi bādhya tvam tadadoṣataḥ// Sarvakāleśvabādhya tvam sākṣi-
naiva pratiyate/ kālo hi sākṣipratyakṣaḥ susuptau ca pratītitaḥ//

6. Kālo hi sākṣipratyakṣaḥ susuptau ca pratītitaḥ/
--Ā.V. I 4, 95
Such being the inadequacy of reasoning, the only way out is experience which is continuous. This is the result of sākṣin, the ever-watching self. Since sākṣin cannot cease to be, or be aware of itself, it continues to keep the self-identity in consciousness even where manas ceases functioning as in the case of deep sleep.7

But the function of sākṣin is best seen in Madhva's theory of pramāṇas. We know the view the Ācārya holds on selī-validity of knowledge. However he is not content with what might be viewed as a half measure. That all knowledge is self-valid is an unassailable fact. It is a fact, though, and no more. If we further question what positive reason is that which makes knowledge self-valid, the answer can be found only in sākṣin. For svātāḥ-prāmāṇya is the characteristic of sākṣin itself which is the source of all knowledge and ever-vigilant witness of one's own validity i.e., cognition—svapramāṇyam sadā sākṣi paśystyeva suniścayat, avers Madhva.8 All knowledge, as we have seen, consists in correspondence—yāthārthyaḥ—where the knowing self adapts itself to the object of cognition. That knowing self, that sākṣin is self-luminous by nature, absolutely precluding even a possibility of error.9 The luminosity in knowledge derives immediately from that of sākṣin and this immediacy in sākṣi-pratyakṣa again rules out any room through which error could assert itself. Else the error would have to be attributed to the very selī—a patent absurdity. For in such a hypothesis the source of all luminosity and truth being intrinsically defective one can hope for no attainment of

7. Of. infra 7
8. A.V. III 4, 146
9. Sākṣi nirdoṣa evaikāḥ sadāngīkārya eva nabh/ suddhah sākṣi yadā siddho duḥkhitvām vāryate kathām—A.V. II 3, 64b–65a

26
truth. Whereas in experience we do attain truth and reach valid conclusions—all thanks to sākṣin.10

Sākṣin, then, is the ultimate factor which constitutes and explains the self-valid nature of knowledge.11 Because it is the ultimate and self-explanatory criterion of truth it steers clear of the defect of anavasthā where validity of one piece of cognition would have to be sought in another. All error in knowledge must be explained by the defective functioning of manas, never of sākṣin. Whenever we have absolute certainty it must be attributed to sākṣin. It is true not only de facto, it is so even de jure. There can be no room for doubt where we have sākṣi-jñāna—when we perceive that we experience desire, pleasure or pain, fear or absence of it, understanding and compassion. It must also be noted that sākṣin's sway extends not to the sphere of knowledge alone; those of pleasure or pain etc. are also included in it.

10. Bhramatvam abhramatvam ca sarvam vedyam hi sākṣinā/ sa cet sākṣi kvacīd duṣṭah kathāṁ nirṇaya īyate//--A.V. II 3, 63
11. Sveprāmāṇyaṁ sadā sākṣi paśyatyeva auniścayāt/ jñānasya grāhakeṇaiva sākṣinā mūnātāmiteḥ//--A.V. III 4, 146
E. Jīvatman and Illusion

All pramānas by nature are ordained to give us truth. Sāksin when in full operation guarantees the veracity of a piece of knowledge. Given the right conditions there should be no room for error in human knowledge. But the fact is that we err often and we realize our error after we have committed it. No philosopher whether Indian or western can deny the fact of error, even though he might at times try to explain it away according to the system he subscribes to. In Śāṅkara Vedānta, for instance, the metaphysical explanation of the ultimate reality is apparently made to derive from the fact that we are often victims of illusion. A realist that he was Viśṇuvaṁśīya cannot deny that we do fall a prey to delusions. But he refuses to generalize the fact, much less to find an explanation in what is really an accident for the totality of being—existing by its own right.

In keeping with the subtle Indian mind, the problem of error has been thoroughly investigated into and solutions have been proposed by the various philosophic systems, each with its own metaphysical and epistemological background. Some of the theories, the names of whose first proponents have been long forgotten, survive only in the reportage we have of them through their adversaries.

One of the oldest theories which found no advocates later on and was referred to only to be repudiated is akhyāti or non-apprehension of all objective substratum. It is a sheer hallucination, having no foundation whatever—nirālambana—in the objective order. If we take the case of a mirage, for

instance, the explanation of the illusion cannot be sought in water's being present—if water were present there would be no illusion; neither in its absence, for it is precisely the apprehension of water as present that induces one to try and get it; nor can it be finally the rays of the sun, for then there would be no illusion, only an objective reality. The contention that the rays of the sun are perceived as water is unsound, for one thing cannot be perceived as another. You do not mistake a cloth for a jar.²

A contrary position is held by an equally old and naive theory known as prasiddhārtha-khyāti. The object of an illusion is as really existent as any other of valid cognition. In the case of a mirage, it is water that is the object of the illusion of water. When however another cognition succeeds and contradicts the illusory cognition, the object now is changed as much as the cognition. Thus in our example the object of later cognition is the rays of the sun.³

A divergent view is proposed by the Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā. It is known as vivekākhyāti—non-apprehension of distinction. According to this view even the object of an illusion is existent. Thus the silver in the illusion of conch-shell silver also exists but not in some other place. It exists in memory. An illusion is the result of memory's confounding elements which are otherwise real. Error consists in something negative, an omission or failure to grasp the distinction—bheda-agrāha.⁴ In the case of conch-shell silver, the error lies in the failure to discern between two realities, the one—the conch-shell—belonging to the order of experience, the other—the silver—to the order of memory. The Prābhākaras reject the contention that the real object of illusion is

⁴. Cf. D.M. p.90
established by the subsequent cognition that sublates the first. According to them the sublating cognition can only establish the non-existence of the object of the sublated illusion—that what was believed to be the object was not the real object. It does not tell us what the real object was.  

Two variant views are attributed to the Buddhists. The *Yogacāra* holds what is known as ātmakhyāti—apprehension of what is subjective. Being a vijnānavādin he can allow no external reality. At the same time he refuses to subscribe to the view that the object of an illusion is not real. It is not a pure product of memory. Rather, it is a form of consciousness—jñānakāra—or a mental representation. Erroneously we project it outside us thanks to a subconscious impression—vāsanā—itself the result of a beginningless series of nescience. An illusion, therefore, is not the product of an external object in contact with a sense organ. It is an eccentric projection of a subjective idea into the external world.

The second view is held by the Mādhyamika school of Buddhists. They are sānyavādins and as such they maintain that in an illusion we come by the cognition of non-being. This view is known as asatkhyāti. An illusion is for them a particular case of non-being revealing itself, since it is śūnyatā that defines all reality. If a conch-shell appears to us as real silver, though the latter is nothing in reality, let us remember that the world itself shares in this absurdity.

---

5. I.F.C. pp.299-300
6. Dasgupta I pp.384-85
   D.M.pp.91-2
   I.F.C. pp.287-88
7. D.M. pp.92-3
   I.F.C. pp.286-87
A quaint view is ascribed to a section of the Mīmāṃsā school. It is known as alaukika-khyāti—apprehension of the extraordinary. In the example of conch-shell silver, the theory holds, the object of the illusion is silver alone, not the conch-shell. However, it is not an ordinary silver that forms the object of the illusion. While a valid piece of cognition has ordinary—laukika—silver for its object, an illusory cognition can have only extraordinary silver for its own. The difference between the two is that ordinary silver serves practical purpose, whereas the extraordinary one does not. In an illusory cognition of silver the object is silver, because the cognition is the cognition of silver; and it is extraordinary in that it serves no practical purpose.8

The Naiyāyikas believe what is known as anyathākhyāti or viparitakhyāti—apprehension of the object as some other. Neither of the objects here is denied—it is objectively real, either here or elsewhere. The object in contact with senses is apprehended only in a general way as 'this' in the illusory judgment—This is silver. That which is attributed to it e.g. silverness, is real, but it is to be found elsewhere. One might wonder how the silver to be found elsewhere comes to be attributed to an object before one's eyes. The Naiyāyika ascribes this phenomenon to a peculiar contact—jñāna-laksana-sannikarṣa—contact through cognition. In an illusion like the conch-shell silver, then, we notice three elements: 'this' (idamākāra), an attribute (āropya) and their identification (tādātmya). The error lies in the third element, namely, in identifying or imposing silverness on 'this'. Both 'this' and silver as existing elsewhere are real, as evidenced by the fact that they remain unchanged even after the disillusionment.9

D.M. pp.89-90
I.P.C. pp.302-3
The theory which Rāmānuja favoured usually is known as Satkhyāti or Yathārthakhyāti—apprehension of the real. According to Satkhyāti the object represented by an illusory cognition is real—sat—as a substratum. In the illusion of the conch-shell, the silver one apprehends is something real objectively, for an unreal object is beyond apprehending. It cannot be that because of its similarity with conch-shell the dormant impression of silver is roused leading to the apprehension of silver. If that were so, the result should have been the recollection of silver, not by any means the perception of silver. The real genesis of the 'confusion' as Rāmānuja sees lies much beyond that. Things of this world have come to be constituted by the process of triplication or quintuplication—paścikaraṇa—of the basic elements. The things we deal with today share these elements in a greater or lesser proportion, with the result that one thing exists in another though to a lesser degree. This is why also the Vedic texts could permit the substitution of pūtika for soma or of nīvara for vṛīhi. Thus the illusion of conch-shell silver is possible because the conch-shell contains parts of silver within it. And to that extent it should be treated as a valid cognition. Why then do we regard it as an illusion? We do so because having within it far less proportion of silver-parts, the conch-shell does not serve our practical purpose. Only the defective working of our sensory organ has made us exaggerate the small proportion of silver beyond fact.10

But the prime adversaries Madhva has in view while he formulates his own theory are the Advaitins with their anirvacanīyakhyāti. Illusion for them, as we have said, might be regarded as forming the starting point of metaphysics. For the Advaitins believe that illusion is not something merely

subjective; it gives us a reality that may be considered ob-
jective even though of the lowest degree—illusory or prāti-
bhāsika. It differs from the one immediately higher in grade,
namely, the pragmatic—vyāvahārika—in that it is engendered by 
the particular dosas of senses etc. whereas the vyāvahārika 
transcends them. Also the grip of the vyāvahārika perception 
is not loosened until the dawn of salvation, whereas disillu-
sionment is an everyday occurrence in the order of prāti-
bhāsika reality.

The process of illusion itself is rather ingeniously ex-
plained. First of all we have the mental state of 'haecceity'
—idamākāra—created within us with reference to the thing
before us. This state is, to be sure, due to the contact with 
senses which are vitiated by dosas. Thereupon the cit re-
fects itself both in the object referred to as 'this', and in
the mental state of haecceity. But the dosas which bedevil the
senses disturb also the avidyā which goes along with it. This
avidyā in its disturbed state together with the impression of
silver remembered because of similarity, results in the ap-
pearance of silver. Two elements are to be noted here: an
objective appearance of the silver and a corresponding mental
state which is the result of the contact with the illusory
silver. Both these phenomena, however, though distinct between
themselves, have one object in common, giving rise to one act
of illusion. This is the theory known as anirvacaniya-khyāti,
according to which an illusory silver—indefinable or anir-
vacaniya—comes into being whenever an illusion of silver
occurs. The name anirvacaniya is used because the illusion, as
the Advaitins contend, cannot be defined in terms of being—sat.
For the silver perceived does not exist. If it existed it
could not be sublated. One cannot say that it is purely a
non-being—asat. It appears to be there, and if it did not
exist, it could not be cognized. Neither can it be asserted
that it is a mixture of both. For being and non-being are
contradictory. Hence the definition should indicate its differ-
ence from sat, from asat as well as from sadasat. And this
is precisely what the term anirvacanīya does, though it is
negative in its characterization as it is bound to be. Its
basis is sadasadvilaksana—not being characterized as being
or non-being.11

Madhva's rejection of the concept of anirvacanīya is
total. He bases his argument for the rejection on the claim
that sublation as conceived by the Advaitins makes no sense.
They contend, no doubt, that if the silver existed it could
not be sublated. But why speak of sublation when there has
been no change either in the conch-shell which was always there
and has never ceased to exist, or in the silver which was never
there?12 It cannot be claimed that sublation involves the
destruction of a false relation. For a relation can obtain
only between two realities, while an illusion, by hypothesis,
makes us see one. Sublation, therefore, cannot make any
sense apart from negation—nisedhatva. And while an affirma-
tion indicates existence, a negation points out to non-exis-
tence.13 The one is as comprehensively total as the other.
Hence if the silver is said to be sublated, it must be under-
stood that it had never enjoyed existence of any sort or shade.

Could the Advaitin claim that the second half of his
formula is more defensible? A cursory glance would seem to
favour his position. For in all appearance nothing is more
innocent than the statement that what does not exist cannot be
known. The statement makes sense only if we mean by 'what does

11. I.P.C. pp.292-95; Dasgupta I 486-89; D.M. pp.54-6
12. Jñānabādhyaśvam apī tu na siddham pratīvādīnāḥ
---A.V. I 1, 26a
13. Bhāvatvam vidhirūpatvam nisedhatvamabhāvatā/ nises-
dhasya nisédo 'pi bhāva eva bālād bhūvet/ prathama-prati-
pattistu bhāvābhāvaniyāmikā/---A.V. III 3, 235a-36
not exist' a pure nothing, a totally indeterminate non-being. A nothing, pure and simple, can neither be, nor appear to be. But such is not the case with a relative, determinate non-being, which is in practice a negation of some definite reality. Thus for instance, we can have a clear and definite knowledge of the silver once wrongly believed to be existing, but which never was. Our later experience at the disillusionment indicates the same fact. For we exclaim "Silver appeared to be there, though actually it was not."\footnote{14}

It is strange that the Advaitin is not aware of the absurdity implied when he asserts that what is non-existent cannot be the object of consciousness—\textit{asataḥ khyātyayogat}. How did he frame the principle if he did not have the consciousness of the non-existent? Were he not conscious of it he could not even deny its presentation to consciousness since every denial to be sensible presupposes the knowledge of what is denied. If on the other hand, he was conscious of it, then its being the object of consciousness cannot be denied.\footnote{15} Moreover the Advaitin wants to establish that what we apprehend in an illusion is different from the non-existent. Does he not seem to forget that in the absence of the awareness of the non-existent his efforts will prove abortive?\footnote{16} And finally according to the Advaitins' theory in illusion we apprehend the identity of the illusory silver—\textit{pratibhāsīka}—with the real—\textit{vyāvahārika}—silver. This identity is non-existent undoubtedly. We can see in it something different from the existent as well as non-existent only at the cost of infinite regress. So the conclusion must be that in an illusion the non-existent is \\textit{cognized}.

\footnote{14} asadeva rajatam pratyabhādityanubhavat—\textit{V.T.V.},\textsuperscript{147}
\footnote{15} \textit{V.T.V.},\textsuperscript{144}'
\footnote{16} Na cāsato vailaksanyam tatpratītim vinā jaśyate/—\textit{V.T.V.},\textsuperscript{145}
\footnote{17} \textit{V.T.V.}, 151-52
an entity which is neither existent nor non-existent (sadasadvilaksana)? As long as the first postulate of inexplicability, namely, that of sadasadvilaksana is not established, all subsequent postulates of inexplicabilities—anirvacanīyatā—also remain unproved, and the hypothesis itself cannot claim any raison d'être. This is precisely what is confirmed by our experience when we exclaim "There is no silver here". Had any inexplicability characterized the illusory silver the sublating judgment should have been, "This silver is inexplicable".18

Madhva's own theory is termed as anyathākhyāti and to distinguish it from that of the Naiyāyikas, the later Madhvas have called it abhinava-anyathākhyāti. Madhva defines an illusion as a mis-perception of the non-existent as existent and of the existent as non-existent.19 The definition sounds simple, but its simplicity is deceptive. In actual fact it implies that illusion does not stop with super-imposing a wrong way on the given object; it affects the object itself as presented to us. Noticing the radiance of the conch-shell which is similar to the radiance of silver we affirm the substance of silver, ignoring the specific characteristic (viśeṣa) of the conch-shell. Also by affirming a wrong reality as existent we implicitly deny the existence of the reality before us. So what is affirmed in error as existent is a non-being—a non-being for all times, past, present and future. Anyathākhyāti means then to affirm otherwise than what exists truly, to affirm what is not, to affirm non-being—anyathātvaṃ asat.20

18. V.T.V. 153-54
19. asataḥ sattvapratītih sato ' sattvapratītirityanysthā- pratītireva bhṛantivyatā—V.T.V. 149
20. Anyathātvaṃ asat tasmād bhṛantāveva pratiyate/ sattva- syāsata evam hi svīkāryaiva pratitāḥ—A.V. I 1, 27
It should be clear now how Madhva's theory differs from both asatkhyāti of the Buddhists (śūnyavādins) and the anyathākhyāti of the Naiyāyikas. The asatkhyātivādins are partly right in that they deny the reality of silver—the object of illusion. But they sin by excess when they carry their denial even up to the adhisthāna—the conch-shell. The Naiyāyikas on the other hand sin by defect when they invest the unreal silver of illusion with existence elsewhere. Both the existence elsewhere, and alaukika—sannikāra are arbitrary postulates, unsupported by experience which says only at the moment of disillusionment "It is not silver".
F. Validity of Memory

That memory plays an important role in our knowledge and that by and large it is true to facts is admitted by all the Indian schools of thought. The controversy is restricted mostly to its nomenclature as a pramāṇa and what that implies in turn. Even on this point the orthodox systems and the Buddhists are generally agreed that the title of a pramāṇa ought not to be conferred on memory. The Jains differ. So does Madhva.

It would seem that the controversy on the name traces its origin to that of the philosophical thought in India. The question asked then was about the canonicity or the valid portions of Scripture. The Mīmāṃsakas were the architects of the ruling that the Vedas or śruti alone were to be looked upon as self-valid while the Smṛti could be accorded validity only as something depending on the Vedas—to the extent that the Smṛti was in harmony with śruti. Later on, however, with the rise of philosophical speculation a similar question was asked concerning Smṛti in the sense of memory, and understandably enough it was given a similar answer. The same Mīmāṃsakas now maintained that since memory for its validity depends on the earlier experience—anubhava—as on its cause, it should not be given the status of an independent pramāṇa. The view seems to have been adopted also by the other orthodox systems, particularly as it had little bearing on the other tenets of each school. It is true, each of them adduces its own arguments in support of the view, but this seems to be a case of rationalizing a stand already taken.1

1. Cf. S.S. p.44
The main arguments against the recognition of memory as a pramana are repeated in all the different schools of thought. Thus the Mīmāṃsāka contention is that memory merely reproduces what has been apprehended already before without bringing in anything new. According to Jayanta, the follower of Aksapāda, memory is not to be given the status of a pramāṇa as it is not the product of a real entity—anarthaja—arising as it does at a moment when the object is no more there. A third objection raised by Vācaspati Miśra is that popular usage—lolayāvyahāra—is not in favour of regarding memory as a pramāṇa. For the same reason and in view of the dependent nature of memory on anubhava, Udayana adopts a similar position. The arguments advanced by the Buddhists among them were influenced by the Mīmāṃsakas. Their refusal to accord self-validity to memory would rather seem to be the result of their general position that all thought which involves knowledge—vikalpa-jñānamātra—is no pramāṇa at all.

The Jainas, as indicated earlier, are unanimous in rejecting these arguments after subjecting them to detailed criticism. Positively their own contention amounts to this, that because memory is true to facts—saṃvādin—it ought to be admitted as a pramāṇa just as perception etc. are looked upon as such because they are true to facts. The same train of thought will be found in Madhvācārya who of course takes it to subtler ramifications.

2. Tatra yaḥ pūrvavijñānāṃ tasya prāmāṇyam isyate/ Tadupasthānānātreṇa smṛteḥ syāccaritārthataḥ//—Ibid.
3. Na smṛterapramāṇatvam grhītagrāhitākrtam/ Api tva-arthajanyatvam tadapramāṇyakāraṇam//—S.S. p.45
Srīdhara has this in retort: ye tvanarthaJayavat smṛtera-prāmāṇyamāhuh tesamatitānāgatavīśayasyaumānaśyāprāmānyam syādīti dūsaṇam//—Ibid.
4. Hence the Mīmāṃsaka definition of a pramāṇa: Anadhigatārthagāntr prāmāṇam/
We have seen what an important role Madhva accords in his philosophy to experience. This as Śāksin in operation constitutes the bed-rock of any validity in Mādhva epistemology. If memory then is to enjoy the status of a pramāṇa it is logical to expect that it has a direct link with experience. It does have. For in the long range of data which experience has for its immediate object—such as psychological facts, representations, sentiments, impulses—there is to be found also memory. Madhva terms it as mānas pratyaksa, because manas plays an important part in it aided by saṃskāras.5

In maintaining that memory brings us nothing new—anadhigata—which has not been attained already, the Mīmāṃsakas seem to overlook the peculiar characteristic of memory. It is a partial truth to hold that memory's function is to faithfully reproduce what happened in the past. In reality it does more. It reproduces past events qua past. This is a new element, which was not present in our first cognition.6 Were we to deny it we would not be able to differentiate memory from immediate perception. In such a case also the objection that memory presents to us an object which is not present would make sense. As it is however, since the function of memory is to present the object qua past the objection becomes pointless. It is unthinkable that correspondence of memory with its object should be any other way. Moreover, what validity could the present experience hope to enjoy if the ones preceding it have ceased to be true and it too is destined to share the same fate in the near future?7 As we have already noted validity of knowledge could be imprisoned within the limits of time only at

5. Pratyakṣam mānasam caiva...A.V. III 2, 80
6. ...yadā 'tītārthagocaram/ tādā smṛtipramāṇastvamātīta- tvaviśeṣitam// Ādikyanānubhūtattu yadātītavamisyate/ mānastā ca katham na syāt smṛterbāḍhaśca nātraḥ/—A.V. III 2, 80-81
7. Anubhūtih pramāṇam cet kena smṛtipadāyate/ pūrvānu- bhūte kim mānāmītyakte syāt kimuttarām/—A.V. II 1, 58
the cost of self-contradiction.  

A specious objection has been made that memory serves no purpose as it is a fruitless repetition. As against this Madhva is quick to point out that fruitfulness has never been regarded by him as the criterion of validity.  
The real definition of pramāṇya is correspondence—yathārthya. Why then refuse the status to memory alone? As for fruitfulness we can confidently assert that it does at times attend the evocation of a memory—say in the form of a pleasurable or painful feeling. But that is purely incidental. We take pleasure in them just as we would enjoy the scenic beauty which greets us on our way to a village, the place of our destination.

Thus Madhva is all for assigning the status of pramāṇa to memory. Realism of Madhva seems to win against the scriptural tradition prevalent in other schools. Possibly also the high regard in which Madhva held the smṛti literature prompted him, however unconsciously, to take up the position he did.

8. Pramāṇasya ca maryādā kālato vyāhato bhavet/ kālāntare 'pyamānām cedīṭānām māṇātā kutah//—A.V. III 2, 57
9. Nacāphalatvam vaktavyam sarvasmrtyunubhavādeyoḥ/ phalavatvam na caśmrābhīḥ pramāṇam hi vivakṣitam//—A.V. II 1, 25
10. Trṇādīdarsāne kim ca phalavatvam niṇaḍyaṭe/ Sukhaduhkhādikam kiñcit smṛtāvapi hi drṣṭyaṭe//—A.V. II 1, 26