Chapter 5

CONCLUSION
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From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that in Indian Philosophy much attention has been given to the problem of epistemology. It is indeed true that there are differences of opinion regarding the nature, condition and validity of cognition. In Indian philosophy, the word 'jñāna' has been used in two different senses by two group of thinkers. In one sense it is taken in the sense of pramā only. Prabhākara Mimāṃsakas are the propounder of this theory. For them, jñāna always means true jñāna. A cognition can never be invalid. Hence, apramā is not a variety of jñāna. The Prabhākaras donot accept saṃśaya, viparyaya, etc. as necessary constituents of cognition. Hence, their view of jñāna is restricted only to the scope of valid cognition. On the other hand, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers accept the word 'jñāna' in a very comprehensive sense. Unlike Prabhākaras, they include both valid and non-valid cognitions within the jurisdiction of jñāna (cognition). The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accept the word 'cognition' in the episodic sense when they confine it to pramā, the non-erring and non-dubious presentational awareness, but the lakṣaṇa of jñāna is also extended to cover 'apramā', the erring and dubious awareness etc. within it's scope. According to the Nyāya, knowledge in the sense of pramā is always 'object-oriented'. According to them, jñāna is infallible in some cases and fallible in some other. They put forward various causal and justificatory grounds (pramāṇas)
for distinguishing the infallible kind of jñāna from fallible one. And that very reason, they advanced logical grounds for admitting apramāṇa within the jurisdiction of jñāna. Hence, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accepts the word jñāna in a very wider sense which includes both valid and non-valid cognitions.

The Prabhākara school of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā defines cognition as 'apprehension' (anubhutiḥ). It is direct and immediate awareness and valid by itself. According to Prabhākara, any apprehension is valid in itself. Invalid apprehension is not an apprehension at all. An illusion, for Prabhākaras, is not a unitary cognition but a composite of two cognitions whose distinction is not apprehended. Illusion is not a positive misapprehension but a negative non-apprehension. Prabhākara's view of knowledge is known as triputipratyakṣavāda. In the cognitive situation, there is a triple revelation of the subject, the predicate and the knowledge itself, simultaneously with its own manifestation. According to Prabhākara, the triputi of the jñātā, jñeyā and jñāna is simultaneously revealed in every act of cognition. He does not admit error in the logical sense. According to him, all knowledge, as knowledge, is quite valid though all knowledge is not necessarily perfect. Imperfect knowledge is commonly called error. It is a non-apprehension of object, not misapprehension. This is popularly known as akhyātivāda in Indian Philosophy. Hence, we find that there is a basic difference between Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of cognition and the Prabhākara view.
The broad classifications of cognition in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika epistemology are *anubhava* or presentational and *smṛti* or representational. *Anubhava* or presentational knowledge means direct revelation of object which does not depend on the previous knowledge of object. On the other hand, *smṛti* or memory is a reproduction of previous experience. Both *anubhava* and *smṛti* have been further divided into *yathārtha* (true) and *ayathārtha* (non-true) forms, according as it does or does not accord with the real nature of its objects. *Yathārtha-anubhava* or true cognition is again divided into *pratyakṣa* (perceptual), *anumiti* (inferential), *upamiti* (analogical) and *śabdika* (testimonial). Non-valid knowledge (*apramāṇa*) is divided into *sarhāya* (doubt), *viparyaya* (erroneous) and *tārkika* (hypothetical). Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas refuse to accept memory (*smṛti*) as *pramāṇa* because it gives no new knowledge. It is not presentative in character, but reproduction of the previous knowledge.

*Sarhāya* is the first kind of non-veridical cognition (*apramāṇa*) according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. It is an uncertain or indeterminate cognition of some object. It is the cognition of conflicting notions with regard to the same object. Doubt is not merely the absence of assured cognition; it is a positive state of cognition of mutually exclusive characters in the same thing and at the same time. It neither asserts anything nor denies it positively. It is not a judgement, but a questioning attitude of the mind making no claim to
truth. There are different types of doubt. It may arise due to (1) the apprehension of common characteristics, (2) the apprehension of the unique characteristic, (3) contradictory assertions about the same object, (4) the irregularity of apprehension and (5) the irregularity of non-apprehension.

In Nyāya Philosophy, doubt as a mental state, is shown to be different from both belief and disbelief. It neither affirms nor denies anything, but only raises a problem for thought. According to the Nyāya, doubt is never a definite cognition. It is not a judgement at all. When we are in doubt about anything we donot really know nor do we claim to know what it is. We can not even say that 'it must be either this or that'. But we can say 'Is it this or that'? Hence, doubt is neither true nor false. The value of doubt lies in its being a great impetus to study and investigation. The doubtful character of the object of cognition is said to be a pre-condition for starting any serious philosophical investigation according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. It is the starting point of a critical knowledge of object. Knowledge is often arrived at through a process of this kind, initiated by a doubt and sustained by inquiry. Hence, doubt is the precursor of knowledge.

In the second chapter, apart from doubt we dealt with the concept of Viparyaya. Unlike western philosophy, knowledge in most of the schools of Indian Philosophy stands for both true as well as false cognitions. Here, khyātivādas are discussed only in the context of false cognition or bhrama.
Error or viparyaya is generally understood as something opposite to what is known as valid cognition (pramā). While valid knowledge is the presentation of an object as what it really is, erroneous knowledge is the cognition of an object as what it is really not. Different systems of Indian Philosophy explain error according to their own ways. The ātmakhyāti theory of the Yogācāra school denies the reality of the external world. According to Yogācāras, consciousness is the only reality. The Yogācāra postulates two aspects of knowledge — phenomenal and metaphysical. From the phenomenal standpoint, the external world seems to exist and the metaphysical aspect according to which vijñāna is the only reality, the cognitum and the cogniser being only false appearence. For Yogācāra, error consists in the wrong objectification of what is essentially a state of consciousness. There is really no existence of external object. The Mādhyamika Philosophy, on the other hand, explains error as the apprehension of non-being. In the illusory perception 'this is silver', 'this' is real and 'silver' too is real, but their relation is totally unreal. But according to the Mādhyamika, 'this' and 'silver' are as unreal as their relation. Thus the object of illusion for the Mādhyamika is absolutely unreal. But according to the Naiyāyikas, the illusion of silver is not entirely baseless, it can not arise out of nothing. What is absolutely non-existent can not produce even the wrong cognition of silver. The illusion of silver is due to something in the nature of the shell. It occurs generally in connection with a shell and the like, but not indifferently with everything.
Even if error is a cognition of the non-existent as existent, it is the cognition of it as what it is not.

Rāmānuja holds that objects exist before they are known and the existent alone is apprehended. Knowledge always corresponds to the existent object. Even the so-called illusory perceptions refer to what really exist. According to Rāmānuja knowledge to be true in its usually accepted sense, should not only correspond to the extramental reality, but also useful in practical life. In order to conform to the practical interest in life, knowledge must comprehend the preponderating elements of an object. The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara propounded the *anirvacanīyakhyāti* theory of illusion. He has given maximum importance to the discussion of error for the construction of its own philosophical position. While the illusory silver is real for the moment of illusion only, the actual silver is real phenomenally. But it is clearly maintained by Śaṅkara that the world phenomena becomes false only for one who has realised *Brahman*, the ultimate reality. Hence, the Advaita conclusion is that the world has neither reality nor unreality, because they are unascertainable. The Śāṅkhya philosophy propounds the *sadasatkhyāti* theory of illusion which means the apprehension of a real and unreal object. One and the same thing can be regarded as real and also as unreal under different conditions. In the illusory perception, 'this is silver', silver is real as existent in the silversmith's shop, but it is unreal as super-imposed on nacre.
So, it is the cognition of a real and unreal object. But the sadasatkhya theory of illusion based on the assumption that something non-existent can be perceived. The perception of something where it does not exist is absurd. The object of perception must be present to the organ of vision.

Prabhākara School of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā propounds the theory of illusion popularly known as akhyātivāda. Prabhākara does not admit error in the logical sense. Error is due to non-discrimination between two cognitions and their separate objects. It is mere non-apprehension of the distinction between the two cognitions and their objects. When a person mistakes a shell for a piece of silver and says, 'this is silver', two imperfect cognitions arise. The 'this' of the shell is actually perceived together with certain qualities like whiteness and brightness which the shell shares in common with silver, but minus its shellness. The common qualities revive in memory, the impression of silver which the person has perceived previously elsewhere. According to Prabhākara, error is due to non-cognition of the distinction between two experiences and also between their respective objects. But this non-cognition of distinction is not possible. For distinction, according to him, is nothing but the nature of the distinct objects. With regard to the shell-silver, Prabhākara says that perception and re-collection of 'this' and 'silver' respectively are not known to be different. But this is not possible.
The Nyāya theory of error is widely known as anyathākhyāti. This theory is also acceptable to some Jainas, and some Mīmāṃsakas. According to this theory, erroneous judgement is said to be the judgement of something as what it is not. So far as 'shell-silver' illusion is concerned, the Nyāya account is this. "There is first the contact of sense with something present before it. Owning to some defects, the sense apprehends such general features of the thing as its brightness etc. but fails to discern its peculiar and distinctive feature. But the general features bring associated with some other thing recall the memory-image of the peculiar properties of that other thing. Through such recollection there is a sort of contact between sense and other thing. Hence this is an actual perception of silver in the illusion. The perceived silver is then referred to the locus or something which present before and perceived by sense. In the illusion, there is perception of both the 'this' and the 'silver', although in different ways. Hence, the error lies not in the presentations concerned in the perception but in the determination of one presentation by another given through association and memory. The shell and the silver are both separately real, only their synthesis as 'shell-silver' is unreal. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika recognises the subjective element in error. Error is due to a wrong synthesis of the presented objects.

The anyathākhyāti theory of error is only the logical account of error. It does not solve the problem of error by offering a revisionary
metaphysical explanation saying that really there is no error. Rather its singular interest is to formulate a formal definition of error as distinguished from truth. If something is known as 'it is' then the judgement is bound to be acceptable as true. And error, from all considerations, must imply some sort of deviation from this standard. It is undoubtedly a merit on the part of the Naiyāyikas to emphasize the important point that 'anyathā' in some where else can be regarded as the defining mark of all types of error. It is not merely a case of something as being misjudged as silver but anything being misjudged as another can be cited as the instance of error.

The third type of non-veridical cognition (apramā) is tarka or hypothetical argument. It is a type of implicative argument by which we may test the truth or falsity of the conclusion of any reasoning or soundness of judgement. If there is any contradiction in accepting a given proposition as true, we have no doubt that it is invalid. If we are involved in a contradiction by rejecting it as false, there can be no doubt that the conclusion must have been valid. Hence, tarka is an act of deliveration or really a dialectical act which is meant for the determination of truth by adducing logical grounds in favour of one of the alternative possibilites when the reality is not known in its proper character. Gautama in his Nyāya-sūtra, referred tarka as one of the sixteen padārthas for proving the validity of arguments. It is not a pramāṇa by itself. Tarka is a kind of 'fictitious' or designedly false cognition. When on
seeing smoke at some place, a person infers the presence of fire there, the rule of vyāpti functioning in such a situation like 'wherever there is smoke, there is fire'. The rule is based on uncontradicted experience of the association of fire with smoke. If inspite of such experience, there arises a doubt about the admissibility of the rule it can be removed only if the person making the above inference has a conviction like 'If there were no fire here, there would not be any smoke issuing from the place' or like 'If there were no fire here, then smoke need not be due to fire.' Such a conviction may be based on the knowledge of a causal relation obtaining between 'fire' and 'smoke', and in that case the Rule of Concomitance in question would be vindicated by the indirect argument expressed by the proposition 'If there were no fire, there would be no smoke'. This is a form of tarka. It means a form of deliberation which acts as an accessory to a pramāṇa, but not a pramāṇa by itself. The purpose of such a deliberation is the attainment of 'the right knowledge of an object'. It has relevance for an object which is known in general but whose specific nature is not yet known. Firstly, there arises an enquiry into the exact nature of an object. This is followed by a doubt provoked by the possibility of contradictory possibilities as to its real nature. Tarka dispels this doubt by way of pointing to the ground in favour of one of these alternatives. Generally speaking, an enquiry into the exact nature of an object takes place after there is a doubt as to its exact nature, though
there are cases of doubt following the enquiry, in which cases alone, tarka has it efficay. All types of enquiry is followed by doubt and settled by tarka.

From the expository survey of the nature and types of non-valid cognition (aprama) as admitted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophers, it is clear that they have given as much emphasis on non-valid cognition as they have assigned to valid cognition. To them, knowledge (jñāna) has a wider scope of covering both valid and non-valid cognitions. But a crucial point may arise here : What is the rationale behind it ? It could be a reason that every system of philosophy claims its comprehensiveness in its approach of philosophising. To a Naiyāyika the basic problem is to understand the world as it is and as something exists independently of the knowing mind. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika are realists in metaphysical affiliation. To them, all the objects / furniture of the world are classified into different categories of knowable (prameya). And being an object of knowledge, a knowable or prameya always remains outside the knowing agent. In otherwords, the object of knowledge is not knowledge-dependent and the very characteristic of knowledge is intentional — that is to say, it looks beyond itself; object-oriented. In our practical life, we are not always infallible. In otherwords, we are liable to fallibility. Unless we have doubt about the exact nature of the object of knowledge, psychologically speaking, we cannot start any logical investigation about it. All our cognitions are also not true. A good guidance for leading a
successful practical life would therefore require investigation about the nature of erroneous cognition. Inspite of not being categorizable as \textit{pramā}, they are as important as true cognition. Truth is the predicate of a \textit{jñāna} which is in the nature of \textit{guṇa} (property) and is a concrete occurrence.

The critical and expository account of \textit{apramā} (non-valid cognition) thus highlights the comprehensivness of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika understanding of the world. It has been shown that there is no good ground for accepting the Prabhākara claim that knowledge is necessarily infallible. In otherwords, we can not on sufficient ground exclude the inclusion of non-valid cognition from the scope of \textit{jñāna} (cognition). In the Nyāya account, knowledge is to be understood both in the episodic and dispositional senses unlike in the west where it is generally treated in the dispositional sense. On this account \textit{sāṃskāra} (disposition) occupies a causal ground for the occurrence of certain kind of knowledge which is not \textit{pramā}. \textit{Pramā} refers to a very restricted type of cognition. The word \textit{jñāna} (cognition) and \textit{pramā} are not thus treated as co-extensive in the classical Nyāya texts. But the Nyāya fallibilism by admitting the role of doubt (\textit{sāṃsaya}) within the jurisdiction of \textit{jñāna}, does not invite scepticism. "Even if every epistemic claim can be doubted, as a matter of fact, however, inferential cognitions, cognitions whose objects are familiar and empirical and familiar confirmatory cognitions are
not generally doubted'.¹ The grounds for certitude are provided by them in the empirical search for truth and successful action. An exposition of non-valid cognitions (apuramā) may further indicate to a fact of distinction between 'epistemic structure' and 'ontological structure'.² For Nyāya, what is lacking in an erroneous piece of cognition like 'perception of silver in a shell' but present in the case of right cognition (yathārthānubhava) is a 'total unitary, not further analysable content (vilakṣaṇa viṣayatā) over and above the component contents, namely, 'the-this-as-qualified-by-silverness'.³ The Nyāya fallibilism in the context knowledge may further be defended on another logical ground. "If it is logically impossible for an awareness to be wrong, dubious or illusory, it would also be impossible for it to be right".⁴ In the theory of paratalh-pramāṇya by the Nyāya scholars' emphasis has thus been given on the distinction between 'one's knowing' and 'one's knowing that one knowns'. Knowledge is not necessarily valid; knowledge is valid only if it satisfies the test of truth revealed in the second unit of its occurrence. In otherwords, the validity of knowledge is extrinsic.

3. *Ibid*.