Chapter 1

JÑĀNA AND ITS CLASSIFICATION
1.1. NATURE OF COGNITION (JÑĀNA):

The problem of knowledge is as old as philosophy itself. In the history of philosophy, various attempts have been made to give a comprehensive definition of knowledge. Naturally, philosophers are not unanimous about the nature of knowledge. A popularly accepted term of what is called ‘knowledge’ in the west is ‘jñāna’ in Indian Philosophy. But there is a special sense too in which the nearest kith and kin of knowledge is pramā. Pramā is roughly transliterated as valid cognition.¹ A careful scrutiny from historical standpoint would reveal that in the epistemological consideration in Indian philosophy, there are two dominant senses in which the word ‘jñāna’ has been used. One is the narrower sense in which it is restricted only to pramā (valid cognition). The chief exponents of this view are Prabhākara Mīmāṃsakas. For them, jñāna is necessarily restricted to the scope of valid cognition. The cognition, say, samśaya, viparyaya etc. are excluded from the scope of jñāna. According to Prabhākaras, non-valid cognition is not only theoretical impossibility but also self-contradictory². Valid cognition is apprehension and it is something different

¹ The Sanskrit term pramā is usually translated today as ‘knowledge’. A pramā is usually regarded as a special kind of jñāna whose truth is guaranteed. But according to B.K. Matilal, it is not satisfactory to say ‘Pramā as Knowledge.’ According to him, a pramā, is to be understood always as an episode which is true and non-dubious. But knowledge is justified true belief is not usually understood in the episodic sense. For details one may see, B.K. Matilal, Perception, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, Pp. 107-12.

² According to Prabhākara, knowledge is self-revealing and guarantees its own truth without reference to anything else. Every knowledge must carry in it an assurance of its truth and we should have no doubt. In this sense, a non-valid cognition is a case of impossibility and self-contradiction.
from remembrance, which is not valid. Memory (smṛti) is invalid since the object is not directly known but merely recollected or remembered.

Valid knowledge is experience and it is something different from memory which is the name of that cognition which arises solely from the impressions left by some previous experience. Memory is regarded to be invalid not because it gives no new knowledge but because it rather depends on a former experience. It does not determine an object independently. It is clear from this that in Prabhākara’s epistemological scheme, knowledge is defined in terms of something externally given and in no case the knowledge can be wrong. It is something logically impossible that the object appears otherwise than it is. To put it in modern terminology, all cognitive expressions are cases of only right judgements. A false judgement is inconceivable. Prabhākara asserts, “It is strange indeed how a cognition can apprehend an object and yet be invalid.” To him, doubt and error are valid so long as they are apprehensions.

3. Ganganatha Jha derives the Prabhākara definition of pramā from the following verse of the Prakaraṇa Pañcikā:

pramānanubhūtih, sā smṛteranyā na sā smṛtiḥ na pramāṇam
smṛtiḥ pūrvapratipattivyapekṣanāḥ,


4. anubhūtih pramāṇam sā smṛteranyā smṛtiḥ punah / pūrvavijnāna-saṁskāra


On the contrary, in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, we also find a different conception of *jñāna* which includes not only valid one but also non-valid one. They seem to accept the word ‘cognition’ in the episodic sense, when they confine it to *pramāṇa*, the non-erring and non-dubious awareness. But the *lakṣaṇa* of *jñāna* is also extended to cover ‘*apramāṇa*’, the erring and dubious awareness etc. within it. Knowledge in the sense of *pramāṇa* is ‘episodic’ in nature according to the Nyāya view, because for the Nyāya a piece of knowledge in the sense of *pramāṇa* is always ‘object-oriented’ and in this sense it is different from the sense of its western Platonic counterpart as ‘disposition’. Dispositional sense of knowledge is emphasised in the Nyāya inclusion of memory within the scope of knowledge. Knowledge for the Nyāya thus both episodic and dispositional, in the episodic sense it is *pramāṇa* or *yathārthānubhava* and in the dispositional sense it covers *smṛti* (memory). Thus for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, *‘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. Naturally, they advanced logical grounds for admitting *apramāṇa* within the jurisdiction of *‘jñāna’*. A critical and exhaustive exposition of *apramāṇa* in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition thus deserves special attention for a comprehensive understanding of their contribution to the epistemological literature of Indian philosophy.
Aksapāda Gautama in his Nyāya-sūtra considers 'jnāna' as that which leads to the attainment of the highest good. But the modern scholars of the Nyāya Philosophy differ among themselves as to the English rendering of the word 'jnāna'. The English word 'knowledge' refers to a piece of awareness which is necessarily true and valid. But the scope of the word 'jnāna' in the Nyāya philosophy certainly wider than this. It includes both valid and non-valid cognitions. The word 'buddhi' (cognition) is taken to mean the same thing as the word 'jnāna' means. Broadly speaking, in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, cognition (buddhi) is taken to mean the same thing as apprehension (upalabdhi), knowledge (jnāna) and cognisance (pratyaya). Hence, knowledge means awareness or apprehension of objects. It includes all cognitions that have a more or less determinate objective reference. In other words, cognition (jnāna) is considered in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy as something that looks beyond itself or to put it in a modern terminology, cognition is intentional. The object of apprehension may be a thing or a quality, an act or an emotion, the existent as well as non-existent. But in every case in which there is knowledge, there must be something that stands out as the object of

7. 'tattvajnānāt niḥśreyasa-adhigamah' — Nyāya-sūtra, 1.1.1.
8. 'buddhiḥ upalabdhiḥ jnānam iti anarthāntaram.' — Nyāya-sūtra, 1.1.15.
9. Consciousness is always consciousness of something, that it is always about something and directed towards that something.
cognition. It consists simply in the manifestation (*prakāśa*) of objects. All things are made manifest or revealed to us when they become objects of cognition (*prameyas*).

Scholars of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, without any dispute consider knowledge as an attribute of the self. it is not a substance, since it cannot be the stuff or the constitutive cause of anything, nor is it the permanent substratum of certain recognised and varient properties. The Sāmkhya and the Yoga systems of philosophy look upon cognition as a substantive mode or modification (*vṛtti*) of the material principle called *buddhi*, as it reflects the light or consciousness, which is immaterial and intangible, can be reflected on any material substratum. It is generally believed that knowledge is neither a mode nor a substance but a kind of activity or function (*kriyā*). The Buddhists and the Mīmāṁsakas agree in describing knowledge as an activity, a transitive process. However, the Nyāya emphatically repudiates the conception of knowledge as an activity. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *Nyāyamaṇjari* traces the act theory of knowledge to a grammatical prejudice, a confusion between knowledge as manifestation and the verb, 'to know' as denoting an action. When we hear the expression 'I know', 'I cognise', etc. we are in a belief that cognition or knowledge

is an activity or process. But this only shows how in philosophy we may be deceived by the vague expressions of ordinary language.\textsuperscript{11} Knowledge as an attribute of the self, is always directed to objects. It always refers beyond itself. Knowledge is never self-manifested.\textsuperscript{12}

It is interesting to note in this passing that the Nyāya philosophers conceived the word 'jiñāna' in a very wide sense. In the epistemological considerations of western philosophy, thought or consciousness, as a cognitive fact, has sometimes been regarded as an essential attribute of the mind and a pervasive character of all mental phenomena. However, the Nyāya does not pass over the distinction between thought (jiñāna), on the one hand, and feeling, on the other. Under cognition, it brings together all cognitive facts, like sensation, perception, memory, inference, doubt, dream, illusion and the like. In this sense, the 'buddhi' of the Nyāya corresponds to cognition which, placed by the side of feeling and will, gives us the tripartite division of mental phenomena in the traditional school of western psychology. But in Indian epistemological tradition, Śrīharṣa formulated several sceptical counter-examples to dispute the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika definition of knowledge. Firstly, he gives the example of a lucky guess of gambling.

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play, which fortunately happened to be true. Secondly, affirming a true conclusion from false premises. Mistaking a cloud of dust to be smoke one infers fire to be present, and accidentally fire is there. Here conclusion is true, but it is not a knowledge proper. These examples of Śrīharṣa will be reminiscent of what are called Gettier examples in modern western philosophy. E.L. Gettier formulated some cases which he placed as counter examples to the justified true belief analysis of knowledge. Here we may give one example: Smith and Jones both have applied for the same job. Smith has sufficient evidence for his belief that Jones is going to get the job, and he has counted sometime before that Jones has ten coins in his pocket. From these he infers the conjunctive proposition that (a) the man who gets the job has ten coins in his pocket. Now it is actually Smith who gets the job and unknown to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket. Thus (a) is true, is believed to be so and is justifiably believed but Smith can not be entitled to have knowledge. Here we find that this fails to be a case of knowledge after fulfilling the generally accepted conditions of knowledge. But if knowledge is defined simply as a true awareness then in all the above cases, we have to say that the subject had knowledge, because they are hitting the truth. If truth-hitting episode, a true awareness, amounts to knowledge, then we donot thereby obliterate the distinction between truth and knowledge-hood. As B.K. Matilal says, “In Navya-Nyāya, a knowledge event is a true awareness which is not infected with a dubious
attitude. This is a negative condition which brings back the subjective mooring. It is not claimed here that an awareness must have certainty in order to be knowledge. It should be non-dubious, which is further explained as its being 'not overwhelmed by a doubt about it lack of knowledge-hood' (cf. apramāṇya-jñānanaskandita). It is argued by the Navya-Naiyāyikas that if an awareness which happens to be true and hence have knowledge-hood is infected by a doubt about its knowledge-hood or the lack of it, then the resultant state cannot perform all the functions that a piece of knowledge is supposed to perform. But it may be maintained that the knowledge-hood of such an awareness is not destroyed thereby. Only the external causal factors here interfere to render certain functional powers of knowledge inert. For example, using such an awareness as a premise we can not derive any further knowledge by inference, although there may be logical connection between the two pieces of knowledge".¹³

Prabhākara defines valid knowledge as apprehension (anubhuti).¹⁴ It is totally different from remembrance, which is not valid. All apprehension is direct and immediate and valid by itself. A cognition which apprehends an object cannot be intrinsically invalid. Memory arises from the impression

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¹⁴. anubhūtiḥ pramāṇam sā smṛteranyā smṛtiḥ punah / pūrvavijñāna-saraksāra mātra jaṁ jñānamuchate // — Prakarana Pañcikā, P. 127.
of a prior cognition and therefore, cannot be treated as valid cognition. Kumārila defines valid knowledge as apprehension of an object which is produced by causes free from defects and which is not contradicted by subsequent knowledge. "Valid knowledge is a firm or assured cognition of objects, which does not stand in need of confirmation by other cognitions."^15

The Mīmāṃsaka upholds the theory of svātāprāmānyavāda which may be treated as the theory of self-validity or intrinsic validity of cognition. All apprehension is intrinsically valid. It is not validated by any other cognition. Validity of knowledge is not due to any extraneous conditions. Both Prabhākara and Kumārila uphold the intrinsic validity of cognition. Prabhākara says, "All cognitions as cognitions are valid, their invalidity is due to their disagreement with the real nature of their objects."^17 Kumārila also says, "The validity of knowledge consists in its apprehending an object, it is set aside by such discrepancies as its disagreement with the real nature of the object."^18 Therefore, all cognitions are presumably valid and our normal life runs smooth on account of this belief. A need for explanation is felt only when knowledge fails to be valid. And its invalidity

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15. tasmāt dr̥ham yadutpannam nāpi sarvādamrcchati / jñānāntareṇa vijñānam tātprāmāṇam pratiyatām // — Ślokavārttika: Kumārila Bhāṭṭa, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1898, V. 2.80


17. yathārtham sarvamevha vijñānamiti siddhayet, — Prakaraṇa Pāñcikā, P. 43.

18. tasmād bodhātmakatvena prāptā buddheḥ pramāṇatā / arthaṇyathātvahe tāthadoṣajñānādapodyate // — Ślokavārttika, V. 2.53.
is inferred either from some defect in the instrument of cognition or from a subsequent contradicting cognition. If a rope is mistaken for a snake, the knowledge of the rope-snake is invalidated by the subsequent knowledge of the rope. Though the invalidity of cognition is inferred, yet cognition itself is intrinsically presumed to be valid. But if all knowledge is self-valid, how can error at all arise? Prabhākara and Kumārila give different answers to this question.\(^{19}\) Prabhākara says that so far as the element of apprehension is concerned all the so-called invalid cognitions are valid, while the element that is invalid is no apprehension at all. An illusion 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.\(^{20}\) According to Kumārila, an illusion manifests a real object in the form of a different object which too is real. In all cases of illusory perception it is only the relation between the subject and predicate elements which is unreal though appearing as real. Accordingly, an illusion is a positive mis-apprehension.\(^{21}\)

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika advocates the theory of extrinsic validity of cognition called \textit{parataḥprāmāṇyavāda}. According to it, cognition is neither

\(^{19}\) This point will be dealt in detail in the chapter three of this dissertation.


valid nor invalid in itself. It is neutral. The question of its validity or invalidity arises only after the said cognition has been arisen. The nature of cognition lies in its correspondence with its object. The test of truth is a fruitful activity. If cognition leads to fruitful activity, it is valid, if it does not, it is invalid. Validity and invalidity are not intrinsically connected with cognition. They are the result of a subsequent test. Cognition arises simply as cognition and becomes valid or invalid afterwords due to extraneous conditions.

The Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas agree with the Naiyāyikas so far as the invalidity of cognition is concerned, because both regard it as due to extraneous conditions. But they criticise the Naiyāyikas with regard to the validity (pramāṇya) of cognition. If the validity of cognition also like its invalidity, depends on extraneous conditions, no cognition would ever become valid. The Naiyāyika contends that cognition arises simply as cognition, that it is neutral and that the question of its validity or invalidity arises afterwords and depend on external test. The Mīmāṃsaka points out that the so-called ‘neutral’ cognition is an impossibility. We always experience either valid or invalid cognition. There is no third alternative. To say so is to maintain the absurd position that cognition when it arises is devoid of all logical value. Hence, neutral cognition is no cognition at all. All cognitions must be either valid or invalid.
Prabhākara's theory of knowledge is known as *triputipratyakṣavāda*. He regards knowledge as self-luminous. It manifests itself and needs nothing else for its manifestation. Knowledge reveals itself and as it does so, it also simultaneously reveals its subject and its object. In every knowledge situation, we have this triple revelation. The subject and the object both are manifested by knowledge itself, simultaneously with its own manifestation. The self is known as the knower and it can never be cognized as an object. The *triputī* of the *jñātā, jneya* and *jñāna* is simultaneously revealed in every act of cognition. The subject, the object and the knowledge are simultaneously manifested in every act of knowledge which is self-luminous. It does not need any other knowledge for its revelation. The self and the object both depend on knowledge for their manifestation. Therefore, the self is not self-luminous. Every knowledge has a triple manifestation — the cognition of self as the knower, the cognition of the object as the known and the self-conscious cognition.

Prabhākara does not admit error in the logical sense. All knowledge is valid by itself. To experience is always to experience validity. Therefore, error is only partial truth. It is imperfect knowledge. All knowledge, as knowledge, is quite valid, though all knowledge is not necessarily perfect. Imperfect knowledge is commonly called ‘error’. But it is true so far as it goes, only it does not go for enough. All knowledge being true, there can be no logical distinction between truth and error. Prabhākara is true to his
realistic position in maintaining that knowledge can never misrepresent its object. Error is one of ‘omission’ only, not of ‘commission’. It is only non-apprehension, not mis-apprehension. This view of error is called akhyāti or non-apprehension.

1.2. CLASSIFICATION OF COGNITION OR KNOWLEDGE:

Taking cognition in the most comprehensive sense as the cognition of objects, the Naiyāyikas proceed to distinguish between its different forms, according to the differences in the nature and validity of cognitions. In view of this, cognition is divided into anubhava or presentation and smṛti or memory.²² There is no clear attempt to define what is anubhava either in Tarkasārīgraha or in Tarkasaṃgrahadīpikā. By implication it may suggest, according to some modern scholars of the Nyāya school, a kind of cognition arising only after a sense-object contact.²³ In anubhava, there is a presentational cognition of objects and so it is felt to be given to us. It is original in character and not the reproduction of a previous knowledge of objects. Smṛti or memory, on the other hand, is not the presentation of objects, but a reproduction of previous experience. Here, our cognition


appears to be due not so much to objects themselves as to our past cognitions of those objects. Each of these has been further divided into valid (yathārtha) and non-valid (ayathārtha) forms, according as it does or does not accord with the real nature of its objects. The classification of knowledge from the standpoint of Nyāya Philosophy is depicted by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge (jñāna)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (anubhava)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid (pramā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubt (saṃśaya)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception (pratyakṣa)</td>
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In the Tarkasāṅgraha, ayathārtha anubhava (apramā) is "a cognition which has for its determinans (prakāra) something ‘P’, when its determinandum (viṣeṣya) is characterised by the absence of that
something." To take for instance the erroneous perceptual cognition of a snake. The object of this perception is 'something' that has the feature 'snakeness'. But here that which actually exists before the percipient is something that has for its feature 'ropeness' or 'absence of snakeness'. This perceptual cognition has thus 'snakeness' as its determinans, when its determinandum is actually characterised by 'absence of snakeness'. Such type of cognition is a kind of apramā or non-valid presentation (ayathārthānubhava), which includes all cognitions, that are either false or not true but not false. In this connection, Viśvanātha said that the notion with regard to something that it has a particular attribute, which it has not, is described as non-valid or invalid cognition. Hence, under apramā, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika includes doubt (saṁsāya), with its varieties of conjecture (ūha) and indefinite cognition (anadhyavasāya), as well as error (viparyaya) and hypothetical reasoning (tarka).

However, it is to be noted here that cognitions which donot agree with the real nature of their objects are not always false or erroneous (bhrama). There may be cognitions which fail to give us a correct presentation of objects and so are not true (pramā). But at the same time they may not make any claim to truth, nor lead to any definite assertion.

24. tadabhāvavatā tatprakārakāḥ anubhavataḥ ayathārthāḥ; yathā suktau 'idam rajatam' iti jñānam. sā eva 'pramā' ityucyate — Tarkasanyāsgraha Dīpika, Verse No. 38.

25. tacchunye tammatirya syādapramā sā nirupitā, — Bhāṣa-Pariccheda, Kārikā No. 127.
Such is the case with doubt, conjecture, indefinite cognition and \textit{tarka} (hypothetical reasoning). These are not true indeed, but yet they are not false (\textit{viparyaya}). It is in this view of such facts that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika divides non-valid presentation (\textit{ayathārthānubhava}) further into \textit{samśaya} (doubt), \textit{viparyaya} (error) and \textit{tarka} (hypothetical argument). Hence, it is not correct to speak of \textit{apramā} or non-valid presentation, always as a case of \textit{bhrama} or error. It becomes so when it definitely contradicts its object.

\textbf{1.3. IS SMṚTI PRAMĀ ?}

Memory (\textit{smṛti}) is knowledge of one's own past experience. It is a representative cognition of past experiences due solely to the impressions produced by them.\textsuperscript{26} According to the Nyāya, memory is different from recognition, which is a form of qualified perception and has reference to the direct presentation of some object, although it involves an element of representation.\textsuperscript{27} Apart from Jainism which considers memory (\textit{smṛti}) to be an indirect instrument of valid knowledge, all other schools of Indian philosophy agree in holding that knowledge derived from memory is not valid (\textit{pramā}). The Naiyāyikas distinguish between true and false cases of memory. True memory would represent in thought only those characters of an object which are really possessed by it, whereas the characters

\textsuperscript{26} saṃskāramātrajanyam jñānam smṛtiḥ —Tarkasamgraha Dīpikā, Verse No. 35

\textsuperscript{27} S. C. Chatterjee, \textit{Ibid}, P. 22.
represented by false memory would not correspond to the real nature of the remembered object. According to Udayana, the validity of memory is only relative, it is dependent on, derived from and determined by the validity of a prior direct experience on which it rests. If the preceding anubhava is valid, recollection derived from it is true, if not, the latter is to be taken as false. And for this reason, the term 'pramā' is not applied to memory because it lacks any independent validity of its own.

According to the Nyāya, true memory also cannot be called pramā or valid knowledge. But on this very point, opinions are divided in Indian philosophy. Some of them consider memory to be as valid as perception and inference, and look upon it as the source of our knowledge of past facts. The Vaiśeṣika accepts memory as valid knowledge distinguished from all forms of wrong cognition. The Jaina philosophy also counts memory among the forms of valid mediate knowledge. The Advaita Vedānta, is not definitely opposed to memory being regarded as valid knowledge.

The Mīmāṁsā refuses to recognise memory as pramā (valid knowledge) because it gives no new knowledge. However, the Nyāya does not admit the Mīmāṁsā view that any knowledge becomes invalid simply because it


refers to a previously known object. According to it, what makes memory invalid (apramā) is the absence of the character of presentation in it. In some cases, memory may correspond to real objects. Still it is not valid knowledge, since it does not correspond to given objects and does not arise out of the objects themselves. Memory thus based on no given datum and hence, fails to give presentational knowledge (pramā) and so, is not a source of knowledge (pramāṇa).

It is to be remarked that the two varieties of memory-cognition — the veridical and non-veridical — are not to be described as ‘pramā’ and ‘apramā’ respectively. ‘Pramā’ and ‘apramā’ are two varieties of ‘anubhava’ which is just one sub-class under the class ‘cognition’, the other sub-class being ‘smṛti’ or memory.

“Annāmbhaṭṭa accepts the fourfold division of ‘pramā’ and ‘pramāṇa’ prevalent in the Nyāya school, he recognises the possibility of a veridical memory-cognition which is however, discounted in the Nyāya school, according to which a memory cognition can never be veridical.”

30. sarvavyavahārahetuḥ guṇah buddhiḥ jñānam. sā dvividhā smṛti anubhavah ca — Tarkasarīgraha Dīpikā, Verse No. 34.

31. Tarkasarīgraha Dīpikā, P. 354.