
UNIT 1 PERCEPTION

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the present unit is to acquaint students with the Indian approach to perception as a common-sense and fundamental mode of knowing, upon which all other modes of knowing have to rely for their verification. Imparting clarity to the Indian approach is necessary as other concepts and realities accepted in different systems of *Indian Philosophy* (hereafter IP) are determined by the basic epistemological standpoints. The unit will focus upon the following objectives in this context:

- To orient students to Indian approach of dealing with human cognition, esp. perception.
- To acquaint them briefly about historical development of the idea of perception within various systems
- To introduce different categories (realities) based on the idea of perception
- Also to introduce the distinction of perception from other sources of human cognition and from erroneous perception too.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Perception (*pratyaksa*) is regarded in Indian philosophy as a *means of right knowledge* - the generating process of cognition (*pramana*), and also as a type of *right knowledge* - the resultant cognition (*prama*). As a *pramana*, being primary and fundamental to all sources of knowledge, it is enumerated first in order in all systems of IP and taken as an independent means of knowledge as the knowledge produced by it is about the objects directly presented to senses and thereby require no inference or testimony for further verification of it. Its meaning is rather wider than sense-perception alone. Those systems of IP which recognize other means of right knowledge besides perception subscribe that perception underlies all other means of knowledge. Depending on the nature of the object of knowledge, some of them can be known through any of the means

of knowledge whilst some are to be known through a particular means only. Systems of IP have divergent opinion on this issue. Belief in knowing a particular object through a particular means and thereby producing a particular cognition, i.e., *prama* is called *pramana-vyavastha*. And, advocacy of the view that an object can be known through any means depending upon the nature of object or the way of applying the means is called *pramana-samplava*.

Though, all knowledge does not arise from perception, yet it is the ultimate ground of all knowledge. In other words, all other sources of knowledge presuppose perception. If a doubt is raised over the validity of cognition obtained from other sources, viz. inference, analogy, testimony or language etc., it can only be resolved on the basis of possibility of perceptual verification. So, perception is a principle of verification too.

1.2 DEFINITIONS OF PERCEPTION

Nyaya View

Perception in Gautama's Nyaya Sutra (hereafter NS) (1.1.4) is defined as the knowledge which arises from the contact (*sannikarsa*) of a sense with its object, being determinate, unnamable, and non-erratic. It is an awareness which is (i) produced from the connection between the sense organ and object; (ii) not produced by words; (iii) not deviating from its object, i.e., it is always true; and (iv) is of the nature of certainty. These four marks define perceptual awareness. Thus when I perceive a table, first of all there is a connection between my eyes and the table. The resulting awareness is not produced by words. This awareness is true. It is of the nature of certainty. When I see a table I am sure of my awareness being true.

Senses include mind as it gets conjoined with senses or sense-organs. Perception (as *prama*) must be distinguished from indeterminate knowledge, viz. a doubtful perception cannot be a *prama*. Further, the knowledge obtained from perception is something to which a name is assigned. Thus a name is an external element to perceptual knowledge, it is a linguistic aid. Non-erratic means being without any scope of error in perception which is determined by the adequacy of internal as well as external conditions of perception like awareness, health of sense-organs, presence of sufficient light etc.

The conjunctions of soul with mind and of mind with senses and of senses with sense object produce knowledge, i.e., sensory perception. That is why; Nyaya philosophy holds that knowledge is a mark of soul. There are definite causes of perception enumerated in Nyaya philosophy which are: direction (*dik*), space (*desha*), time (*kala*) and ether (*akasha*). The contact of sense with its object is a special cause of perception. The objects of five senses are also fixed and produce five kinds of special knowledge: 1. Visual Perception (colour); 2 Auditory Perception (sound); 3 Olfactory Perception (smell); 4 Gustatory Perception (taste) and 5 Tactual Perception (touch).

There are some debates pertaining to the above view of perception like, about the impossibility of such perception which is based on contact as contact is not possible in all three times. It is not possible to perceive an object in past or future and also in present simultaneously with the object of sense, e.g. in case of perception of colour, it is difficult to decide if colour precedes perception or, perception

precedes colour. If perception occurred anteriorly it could not have arisen from the contact of a sense with its object. If perception occurred anteriorly or preceded the object, one must give up one's definition of perception, viz. perception arises from the contact of a sense with its object. If perception is supposed to occur posteriorly, then one cannot say that the objects of sense are established by perception. Simultaneity of perceiving two sensory qualities cannot be offered as solution to this problem as two acts of perception cannot take place at a time, viz. there is an order of succession in our cognition. If we offer that a means of knowledge is also established by another means of knowledge, it would tend to infinite regress.

The Nyaya response to the above debate is rather logical and indirect. If a means of knowledge is impossible then denial of it would also be impossible. If denial is based on a means of knowledge, the validity of the means have to be acknowledged. When we deny a thing on the ground of its not being perceived, we acknowledge by implication that perception is a means of right knowledge. The further debate is on the very epistemological status of perception as in an act of perception we perceive only a part of an object and the object is inferred on the basis of it. This implies that perception is a type of inference or it is reducible to inference. The Nyaya response is that perception is not inference for even the objectors admit that at least a part of the object is actually perceived. Hence perception as a means of knowledge is not altogether denied; on the contrary it is accepted as different from inference.

The Nyaya view on perception becomes clearer when Naiyayikas engage themselves in debate with Buddhist view on the same. Buddhist like Dignaga defines perception as the unerring cognition of a given sensum or sense-data in complete isolation from all ideata or conceptual manipulations. In his view, perceptual knowledge should be free from reflection or any intellectual modulation including name or genus. Such a perception cannot be expressed in language and is cognized by itself. Uddyotakara (a 7th century Naiyayika, author of sub-commentary on NS – *Nyaya-vartika*) argues against the above mentioned view that the very purpose of perception is defeated if it is not expressed by a name and warrants meaninglessness of the cognition. The Nyaya view is based on their epistemological conviction that if there is a piece of cognition (be it of any type), it must be verbalized (excepting for *nirvikalpaka* or indeterminate perception). And, our cognition of an object assumes a generic form, and that is why, it is capable of being grasped by our mind.

Responding to the reproaches against the possibility of contact (*sannikarsa*) in case of cognition of inner feelings like pleasure, pain etc., Uddyotakara emphasizes *manas* (mind) as an organ of cognition. *Manas* has equal reach to all kinds of objects of perception, internal and external as well, unlike other senses which have specific objects in terms of perceptibility. However, *manas* is mentioned in NS (1.1.15) as an organ of cognition.

In Nyaya view, it is quite possible that an object of perception to a particular sense be perceived by another sense due to its different qualities, e.g. earth can be touched and be seen as well. While enumerating such qualities of the object of perception, Uddyotakara criticizes Buddhist view that admits only the aggregates of qualities as object of perception and a particular quality can be perceived by a particular sense competent of perceiving it. Uddyotakara argues that if colour

or other qualities appear in the shape of a jar then they produce perception of the jar. This perception is not merely the aggregates of qualities, but such qualities require a substance as their locus or, substratum.

The term *avyapadeshya*, i.e., non-erroneous (or non-erratic) is used in the definition of perception to exclude doubt and error from the range of true sense perception. Indeterminate or determinate perception which makes wrong reference is erroneous. As a piece of determinate perception is not associated with the words denoting objects, so error and doubt owe their existence to the function of our sense organ but are not word-interpenetrated. Replying to Buddhist objections to Nyaya view on perception, Jayanta Bhatta (a 9th century Naiyayika, author of *Nyaya-manjari*) mentions that expressivity in words of a perceptible object does not warrant the invalidity of a determinate perception. Or, a determinate perception cannot be invalid simply because it grasps an object which has been sensed by its antecedent indeterminate perception. The object of determinate perception is qualified by an action, an attribute, a substance, a designation and a universal. Naiyayikas also refute the definition of perception presented by Samkhya School. Ishvara Krishna (author of *Samkhya karika*) defines perception as a clear and distinct image of its corresponding object. In view of Naiyayikas, this definition is too wide as it is equally applicable to inference too.

Vachaspati, a 10th century scholar who wrote on Nyaya besides writing on other systems of IP and the author of *Nyaya-vartika-tatparya-tika*, talks about complete causal chain of the perceptual process. In the chain first takes place the perception of the object, then the determinate perception as a particular object, then awakening of the memory impression of the properties of the object of same class experienced before, then consideration that this object belong to the same class. Buddhist theory of perception goes against such interpretation as cause and effect cannot be simultaneous and the object perceived cannot cause the perception of itself. The ground for Buddhist theory is their principle of momentary-ness which is not acceptable to Naiyayikas. They maintain realism and argue that common sense perception goes against the Buddhist theory. Vachaspati also adds that addition of names or words does not affect the nature of determinate perception; it is rather an accidental factor which may follow a determinate perception.

Elaborating the NS definition of perception Gangesha (1200 AD, author of *Tattva-chintamani*) chooses a different way of defining it as 'cognition that does not have a cognition as its chief instrumental cause', viz. perceptual awareness is the result of perception as the causal complex in which not a cognition but a sensory connection with the object cognized is the trigger of 'chief instrumental cause' (*karana*). He focuses more upon the necessary conditions of perception like memory-impressions. Acknowledging the variable nature of sensory connection, viz. how senses relates themselves to the objects perceived as well as the varying nature of the objects in terms of the ways they are perceptible, he takes ontological turn and includes in his discourse on perception the qualities such as odours and sounds and universals such as colour-ness and sound-ness as objects with which senses can establish contact. This view is known as Theory of Connection (*sannikarsa-vada*).

Gangesha also discusses the role of *nirvikalpaka pratyaksa* - indeterminate perception in generating determinate perception. Determinate perception is cognition of an object or entity which is always qualified by qualifiers appearing to

consciousness. Here, he contests the Buddhist theory of *sakaravada* – cognition ‘having form of itself’, as all information, i.e., qualifications of object is coming from the object of perception, and so, cognition itself cannot have any form of its own. This theory is known as *nirakaravada* – cognition ‘having no form of itself’. But interestingly, he acknowledges that there is no direct, apperceptive evidence for *nirvikalpaka pratyaksa*. Rather, since a perceptual cognition appears as qualified by some qualifier, i.e., *savikalpaka*, we have to posit by force a state of unqualified, i.e., indeterminate perception antecedent to the qualified one. We have to adhere to a natural law that cognition of an object qualified by certain qualities presupposes the preceding cognition of the qualifier. Presaging the possible objection of infinite regression in this context, viz. the cognition of the qualifier would also require a preceding cognition; Gangesha has replied that indeterminate perception blocks such possibility as the qualifier cannot, in principle, be known through another qualifier. It is grasped directly.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is determinate perception according to Naiyayikas?

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2) How mental perception is different from other sensory perceptions?

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Jain View

Umasvati (1-85 AD Jain writer), in his magnum opus *Tattvartha-adhigama-sutra*, adapts a different approach to treatment of *pramana* as he takes the term in two different senses – meaning of valid knowledge and means of valid knowledge. In the former sense, it is of two kinds namely, *paroksa* (indirect knowledge, e.g. recollection, recognition, scripture, argumentation and inference) and *pratyaksa* (direct knowledge). *Pratyaksa* is acquired by soul without the intervention of external agencies. Knowledge attained by *yoga* (in transcendental state of consciousness) is a species of direct knowledge as it is acquired by soul directly and not through any medium (esp. of senses). Siddhasena Divakara (a 4th-5th century Jain writer, author of *Nyayavatara*) classifies perception into practical perception (*vyavaharika* – acquired by soul through five senses and mind) and transcendental perception (*paramarthika* – infinite knowledge attained in the state of enlightenment of the soul).

According to Jain philosophers, there is a process of practical perception and is described by stages as (i) *avagraha*, distinguishing the type whether it be, e.g., horse or man, but not discerning the characteristics; (ii) *iha*, inquiring, e.g., whence came the man and from what country came the horse; (iii) *avaya*, arriving at a correct identification of the above; and (iv) *dharana*, recollecting the thing particularized and keeping it in mind.

Manikya Nandi (about 800 AD, author of *Pariksa-mukha-sutra*) also maintains the time-honoured Jain distinction of perception between direct and indirect. Direct perception arises through sense-organs which is called *indriya-nibandhana*. Deva Suri (11th-12th century Jain writer, author of *Pramana-naya-tattvaloka-alamkara*) elaborates the process and stages of direct perception (practical), while the transcendental perception is described as a necessary aid to emancipation. The possessor of perfect transcendental knowledge is called *arhata*, one freed from all obstructions.

Buddhist View

Buddhist approach to perception is rather radical as their principle of momentary-ness designs the nature of it. Amongst the Buddhists, Dignaga (450-520 AD, author of *Pramana-samuchchaya*) as a leading figure of medieval Indian logic and author of *Nyāyabindu*, takes the object of cognition as a unique individual (*svalaksana*) which is apprehended in perception totally naked, i.e., devoid of any charging of idea (*kalpana*) upon it. Dignaga's point of argument for perception being nameless is that we can perceive a thing without knowing its name. In the same way, it is not connected with genus. It is the knowledge of individual characteristics – some qualities, or part of a thing; it is a complex knowledge – *samvriti-jnana*, of the combination of such qualities. Perception is just the immediate knowledge of a given datum, totally free from subjective determinations.

Buddhists are more inclined to show the impossibility of expressing a perceptual cognition. If one sees a cow and wants to convey it to some other person, it will not be possible to convey or transfer the exact cognition; it cannot be embodied in judgment. In place, the idea or, colour or, name of the cow can be conveyed. Moreover, the same cow cannot be perceived again as the sameness is based on the memory and the cow which is subject to repeated perception would be a cow of a different moment. However, in case of inference the cognition can be very well expressed and communicated in language. Reviewing the doctrine of perception of Naiyayikas, Dignaga also rejects their belief that mind is a sense-organ. And therefore, pain, pleasure etc. cannot be objects of knowledge in the same fashion.

There have been many reactionary critiques from modern Indian philosophers against Buddhist view of perception which are based on the opinion that perception is not merely a sum of sensum and images but also contains large element of meaning as well. It has a definite meaning and refers to a determinate object as that is revealed through sensations. It is only because the Buddhists arbitrarily deny the meaning element in perception that they are forced to exclude the complex cognition of a jar, tree, etc. (*samvriti-jnana*), from the range of perception. Such critiques are not tenable as they lack proper insight into the crux of Buddhist definition of perception. The meaning element is always a part of intellectual construct or of ideata, and while conceiving perception one must rescue it from intrusion of such constructs. Buddhists are rather perspicacious in

defining perception and filtering out other elements accidentally associated with it.

Interestingly, perception in Buddhism (or in IP in general) has a wider connotation than mere sense-perception. It is direct knowledge or intuition, of which sense-perception is a species. There is another intuition; an intelligible one. Ordinary humanity does not possess such intuition; it is enjoyed by *arhata*, the enlightened one. A moment of this intelligible intuition underlies every perception. It is a reflective faculty which illuminates all the sensations or sense-faculty.

Mimamsa and Vedanta

Like Jain view, Māmāṃsā and Vedanta (esp. Advaita School is in consideration here) define perception in a way different from the customary one of presenting it as dependent on or originated from sense-organs. According to the Prabhakaras (one of the two schools of Mimamsa named after Prabhakara), perception is the direct cognition of an object. It is the intuitive or immediate knowledge that we may have of the subject and object of knowledge and of knowledge itself.

In Vedanta, perception as a *pramana* is treated as a unique cause (*karana*) of perceptual cognition as a form of valid knowledge, i.e., *prama*. The sense organs constitute the *karana*. The perceptual cognition is immediate and timeless – *chaitanya* or *cidrupa*, i.e., which is of the nature of consciousness. Such knowledge can be the *self* itself as only there can be the immediacy of knowledge and will be of the nature of consciousness. Senses are instruments or unique cause of perception. Due to function of sense-organs mental modification (*antah-karana-vritti*) takes place. Unlike Naiyayikas, Vedantins do not admit mind as a type of sense, so, for them, there are only five type of perception. Interestingly, Vedantins hold that the mind or *antah-karana* goes out through the senses and establishes contact with a perceptible object and get modified into the form of the object itself. The mental modification is not different from the object. Immediacy of such a perception lies in its being modification of mind itself. It is not immediate in the sense that it is produced by sense-stimulation. If it were so, then it would have over-ranged inference or other types of right cognitions too. And further, it would be difficult to establish the knowledge of God as direct knowledge as it is not produced by senses, whereas, it is not plausible to admit inference as direct cognition and the knowledge of God as indirect one.

The above approach to definition of perception is in advantageous position in the sense that it leaves no scope for raising the question how mental image corresponds to the object, of which it is taken to be the image. Because, the object is not cognized through sensation, rather the mind itself reached the object through senses and fetches all possible data belonging to it.

Though, *chaitanya* is one, it appears different due to its varying qualifications. In the case of perceptual cognition - 'this is a pot', perception is on the part of 'pot'. The *chaitanya*, i.e., consciousness gets concealed by the form or modification of mind due to its occupying the form of pot. It is further clarified that both, *pot* and the *knowledge of the pot* are *pratyaksa*, i.e., perceptual, which are called object-perception (*visayagata-pratyaksa*) and knowledge-perception (*jnanagata-pratyaksa*), respectively. The intentional cause of object-perception is its non-difference from the knower or *pramata*. This view is clearly opposed to the Naiyayikas view of object-perception through senses or *indriya*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Why do Buddhists not admit the involvement of intellectual elements in perception?

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2) How, according to Vedantins, is absence cognized?

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1.3 REALITIES AND PERCEPTIBILITY: ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY PERCEPTION

Naiyayikas have classified perception primarily between *laukika* and *alaukika*, i.e., ordinary and extraordinary. Basis of this distinction lies in the way the senses establish their contact with the objects. Ordinary perception takes place when the objects are present to senses. It is of two types – external, which are of five types; and internal, i.e., mental. In case of extraordinary perception, the objects are not present to senses but get apprehended by senses through some unusual media.

According to the kinds of perception we find in IP the perceptibility of different categories of reality by corresponding modes of perception. Naiyayikas bring all reality under seven categories, viz. substance (*dravya*), quality (*guna*), action (*karma*), universal (*samanya*), particularity (*vishesa*), relation of inherence (*samavaya*), and non-existence (*abhàva*). There are nine substances; viz. earth, water, fire, air, *akasha*, time, space, soul and mind. Substances like earth, water, fire, air are perceptible. However, their atoms, *akasha*, time and space etc. are not perceptible. Soul is the object of internal perception. It is, thus, clear that a substance must have a limited dimension to be perceptible; it should neither be infinite like space, soul etc., nor be infinitesimal like atom (*paramanu* and the combination of two *paramanu*, i.e., *dvayanuka*) etc. Similarly, certain qualities can be perceived by certain senses only, e.g. visual sight and touch can grasp extension, but other senses cannot grasp things as extended in space. Further, perceptible objects, which have extension in space, are objects with parts (*savayava*), viz. being objects with parts, they are perceptible. As a corollary, it is quite possible for an object to be perceived partially as in case of perception of a house or a tree.

Substances have their attributes too. Attributes (*guna*, like colour, taste, number, magnitude, remoteness, nearness etc.) exist in them. Attribute is a static property of substance, viz. there is no possibility of attribute of attribute. Not all attributes are perceptible, e.g. velocity (*vega*), disposition (*bhavana*). Merits and demerits (*dharma* and *adharma*) are also supersensible attributes. These are supersensible attributes of soul. Some of the attributes can be perceived by only a certain sense, whilst some may be perceived by more than one sense, e.g. colour can be perceived by eyes only and number, magnitude etc. can be perceived by both sight and touch.

Differentia (*prithaktva*), according to Naiyayikas, is a positive character of things, due to which a thing is cognized different from other, e.g. a horse is different from a cow. These are different from each other not because they mutually exclude each other, but due to their respective distinctive characters. So far Naiyayikas are concerned, differentia is perceived in perceptible things. But, for Vedantins, differentia is a case of mutual non-existence, and therefore, is cognized by non-perception (*anupalabधि*). However, modern Naiyayikas also do not treat difference as a separate quality, but reduce it to mutual non-existence.

Unlike attributes, action is a dynamic character of things. It is transitive property which affects the position of things. Motion of a perceptible thing can be perceived by sight and touch. In case of perception of motion, the conjoined-inherence (*samyukta-samavaya*) type of contact between sense and object is operative, viz. the sense first come in contact with the thing in which the motion inheres and then the motion is cognized. In case of universals (*samanya*), for Naiyayikas, perceptibility depends on the nature of object, viz. all universals associated with perceptible objects are also perceptible by senses and universals subsisting in supersensible (*atindriya*) objects are imperceptible. For Vedantins, as the universals are constituted by the common attributes of individuals, they can be perceived along with the perception of individuals. The perception of the different kinds of universals is mediated by different kinds of sense-contact. Opposite to universals; particularity (*vishesa*) is the ultimate ground of individuality of a thing or its difference from other. It subsists in eternal substances. It is innumerable. Being supersensible, they cannot be perceived. Inherence (*samavaya*) is an eternal relation between two facts. In such case, one inheres in the other. For Naiyayikas, it is an object of perception. It is perceived by senses of sight and touch. For perception of it, the contact is established by way of *vishesyata*, e.g., in case of perception 'the cloth inheres in the threads.' However, according to Vaishesikas, inherence cannot be perceived, it is cognized through inference.

Non-existence or *abhava* is also a category of reality in IP. It refers to non-existent facts, which are as real as any other fact. On the matter of its way of apprehension, there are different opinions in IP. For Bhatta Mimamsakas (one of the two schools of Mimamsa named after Kumarila Bhatta) and Vedantins, it is known by non-perception, as sense-contact is necessary for perception. Vaishesikas and Prabhakaras believe that non-existence is equivalent to the existence of locus, e.g. ground etc. In case of perception of a negative fact its locus is perceived where the hypothetical object is absent. Besides the above mentioned kinds of perception, Naiyayikas also talk about internal or mental perception, of which pain, pleasure etc. are objects.

In IP, a great deal of discussion has taken place about the modes of ordinary perception. Or, it is another way of classifying perception, according to which perception is of three types: indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*), determinate (*savikalpaka*) and recognition (*pratyabhijna*). However, the third one is also treated as a variety of determinate perception. Determinate perception is what can be identified with and assigned to name, genus etc. The case is not so with indeterminate perception. Indeterminate perception is greatly celebrated in Advaita Vedanta School in which it is deemed to be the knowledge of pure being. Recognition or *pratyabhijna* is perception of an object which has been seen before. According to Naiyayikas, *pratyabhijna* is the conscious reference to a past and a present cognition to the same object. However; Buddhists interpret recognition as a compound of perception and memory.

The extraordinary perception is also classified further into three types: *samanyalaksana*, *jnana-laksana* and *yogaja*. The first one is the perception of the class-property or of the whole class of some object at the occasion of perceiving any particular object of the class. As in case of perception of a jar, we also perceive the class-property of the jar, viz. jar-ness in it. The extraordinary element in it is that the jar-ness is not directly in contact with the sense, yet it is not inferred but perceived. From the point of view of logic, it is also taken as an inductive element. The second type of extraordinary perception, i.e., *jnana-laksana* is a perception of some property or attribute of an object perceived previously and now present before us as a subject matter of perception of some other property by some other sense. As on seeing a rose flower there takes place the knowledge of its fragrance too. There is a great debate in IP on issues whether such kind of knowledge is an inferential knowledge.

Yogaja perception is rather intuitive and encompasses the possibility of knowing any object in any fragment of space and time lying even beyond senses. It is enjoyed by those who attain spiritual perfection. Such a perception is explained on the basis of the nature of consciousness, i.e., the unlimited span of it. The limitations of our consciousness are due, not to anything in the nature of consciousness itself, but to the psychological conditions under which it has to work in us. Such considerations suggest that it is possible for human consciousness to have an instantaneous knowledge of all things; provided it can get over its organic limitations and natural distractions. The important thing is that IP in general has been able to agree upon the immediacy of it and thereby admitting it as a perception and not a species of inference.

1.4 EXPLAINING ILLUSORY OR ERRONEOUS PERCEPTION

There has been great debate over interpretation of illusory or erroneous perception. The question is not simply about the problem of interpretation of it, but is about the very authenticity of perceptual cognition itself. If an illusion is also cognized through perception then how can perception at all be relied upon? The responses to the problem have been divergent in different schools of IP, which helped evolve theories called *khyati-vada* for interpretation of the same.

Some of Indian thinkers interpret illusion as non-apprehension of the object as in case of illusion of snake in a rope, the difference is not apprehended. Since all knowledge is valid knowledge, it would be self-contradiction to designate a piece

on knowledge as invalid knowledge. This theory of Prabhakara Mimamsa is called *a-khyati-vada*. For Naiyayikas, in such a case of illusion the snake is cognized through a mode of extra-ordinary perception. Maintaining their realism, perhaps they cannot deny the apparent cognition; in place, they would call it cognizing otherwise – *anyatha-khyati*. For some of Buddhist idealists, illusory perception is a case of mental projection – *atma-khyati*. Vedantins treat such cognition as inexplicable – *anirvacaniya*, as the object of it is neither real, nor unreal. Since it is perceived, it cannot be unreal and as is subverted by a following cognition, it cannot be real too.

In this context, we find a tendency of defending all cognition as real amongst realists, whilst for idealist; such a perception is taken as an argument refuting realism or substantiating the illusoriness of the world. The effort of Indian thinkers has been directed towards defining of perception in such a way that it may well range the cases of illusory perception distinguishing them from right cognition at the same time.

Check Your Progress III

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is extraordinary perception?

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2) What is recognition?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

Perception is a source of cognition as well a type to true cognition. The essential character of perception is the contact between senses and the object of perception. Internal contents of human cognition like pain, pleasure etc. are cognized through mind and is called mental perception. Due to non-establishment of contact between sense and object, some of Indian thinkers posit a new faculty of cognition for apprehension of absence.

Fundamentally, perception is of two types, indeterminate and determinate. The former is a precognition to the latter one. The latter is assigned name etc. or can be expressed through language. Some of Indian thinkers hold that perception is pure sense-data and is devoid of intellectual constructs. Perception is also classified between ordinary and extraordinary type. The extraordinary one is a super-

sensing of qualities on the basis of foreknowledge of the objects or that of universals. The capability of *yogaja* perception is available to the enlightened people only.

Our knowledge about categories of reality is very much compatible with the nature of perception or other cognitions. However, on the issues of perceptibility of certain categories, there are ongoing debates too.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Prama	: A true cognition
Pramana	: Source of a true cognition
Sannikarsa	: Contact between senses and their object, which is of six kinds: 1. Conjunction, e.g. contact between eyes and a jar; 2. Conjoined-inherence, e.g. in perception of colour of jar contact takes place between eyes and jar in which colour is inherent; 3. Conjoined-inherent-inherence, e.g. in perceiving the colour-ness, the generic nature of colour; 4. Inherence, e.g. the relation between sound and ear-cavity in perception of sound; 5. Inherent-inherence, e.g. in perception of the generic nature of sound, viz. soundness; 6. Qualification or Particularity, e.g. in case of perception of non-existence of an object we grasp the same on the basis of particularization of the part of space where the intended object hypothetically exists. However, those systems of Indian Philosophy which prescribe an independent source of cognition or means of knowledge, viz. non-apprehension (<i>anupalabdhi</i>) for apprehension of non-existence, do not admit this kind of contact or <i>sannikarsa</i> .
Karana	: Instrument or, instrumental cause of cognition
Nirvikalpaka Pratyaksa	: Indeterminate perception
Savikalpaka Pratyaksa	: Determinate perception
Pratyabhijna	: Recognition
Sakaravada	: Cognition ‘having form of itself’
Nirakaravada	: Cognition ‘having no form of itself’
Anupalabdhi	: Absence (of an object with which sense-contact is not possible)

1.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) Determinate perception is such a perception which is cognized with the name, form and genus of an object and can be expressed through language. It involves meaning element too.
- 2) In mental perception, the object of perception is not available in external world, therefore having no possibility of establishing sense contact. The objects of mental perception like pain, pleasure etc. are internally apprehended by mind.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Buddhists approach to perception is purely psychological and segregates the intellectual elements from perceptual element of human cognition. Keeping in view the approach, perception has to be confined to the sense-data alone. Meaning element, for them, is an intellectual construct.
- 2) Since, there is no possibility of having sense-contact with an absent object; Vedantins posit a new faculty of knowing called *anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension. It has to be identified as an independent source of cognition because absence cannot be known through any other sources of cognition like inference etc.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The extraordinary one is a super-sensing of qualities on the basis of foreknowledge of the objects or that of universals. The ordinary type of sense-contact with objects does not take place in this perception. It is of three types: *samanya-laksana*, *jnana-laksana* and *yogaja*.
- 2) Recognition is perception of an object which has been seen before. According to Naiyayikas, it is a conscious reference to a past and a present cognition to the same object. However; Buddhists do not treat it as an independent cognition and interpret it as a compound of perception and memory.