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JÑĀNA AND *PRAMĀ*: THE LOGIC OF KNOWING
— A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

PART A

Preamble

It would appear that *jñāna* as a concept has received ambiguous treatment in the Indian epistemological tradition; no less has *pramā*, a related concept of considerable significance. Although this may give evidence to a concern with ‘understanding’ in some form or another, the rampant confusion does not give the impression of a healthy theory of knowing. Nevertheless . . . *Jñāna* has been seen to refer, on the one extreme, to any bit of awareness or apprehension, to statements of incontrovertible judgements and beliefs, on the other. ‘Ideation’, ‘cognition’, ‘judgement’, ‘knowledge’, ‘belief’, ‘inference’, ‘proposition’, and even ‘wonder’, not to mention ‘remembering’, ‘dreaming’, ‘guessing’, ‘doubting’, and so forth, have contested in the broad spectrum chalked out by *jñāna*. More fundamentally, however, *jñāna* has carried the nuance of ‘cognition’ or ‘psyche-dependent awareness’; although the unguarded rendering of ‘knowledge’ — which is more appropriately to be preserved for *pramā* — has made prolific appearance in recent literature (being really a left-over from the earlier indulgence of philologists).¹ In this paper I attempt to disentangle the notions of *jñāna* and *pramā* in the epistemological context by reference mostly to some trends and analyses in the Nyāya and Advaita schools of thought. But first, some remarks on the reasons for the alleged ambiguity. For one, not all schools and writers in the classical Indian tradition are agreed upon the exact epistemological status of *jñāna*. There are differences of views, (a) on the causal nexus in the emergence of *jñāna*, (b) as to whether it involves identifiable mental processes, and if so, their relative stages and significance; there is dispute also on the precise nature of the *content* of a *jñāna*, and on its truth-value. As to the latter, one wishes to ask whether *jñāna* is ‘true’ by its own nature, or whether ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’ are predicable of *jñāna* — i.e. whether it could be in error, and false. And how are we to know, or be aware at least,

of (a) *jñāna*, (b) its truth, or falsity, (c) whatever other epistemic status or specific features that may be claimed by it? Moreover, what does it *mean* to say any of these things? For instance, if *jñāna* is 'true' by nature, then what sense would there be in asking whether a *jñāna* is 'true' or 'false': does it make sense to ask this question? Is not falsity ruled out analytically in such a definition of *jñāna*: for true *jñāna* (like 'true knowledge' – if 'knowledge' is to be true by definition) would be tautologous and false *jñāna* (or 'false knowledge') a contradiction in terms? But such lacunae do arise, as they clearly have, when a theory fails to give more precise understanding of the basic terms of its, in particular, epistemological discourse, with which we are to be concerned here.

Secondly, the 'psychic' undertone that belies the Indian approach to understanding, has contributed to this ambiguity. Indian epistemology has generally concerned itself with cognition as 'a *mind-content* said to possess the property of knowing in contrast to the concern in western [analytical] epistemology predominantly with properties of *propositions* expressing or stating beliefs'. We might as well say in a rather general sense, now stretching *jñāna* to its forbidden extreme, that 'knowing', an episodic present, rather than 'knowledge', a static all-time, is what is stressed in the Indian *via-à-vis* western epistemology. 'Knowing' *qua* cognizing here is understood as a phenomenologically continuous process, which is an immediate property or disposition of the 'mind' (or 'mental', literally, internal sense: *manas, antahkaraṇa, buddhi*)² of the person (the subject) who has the awareness. Being a property (or quality: *guṇa*) of the 'mind' it is transitory, remaining and disappearing in the duration of the particular mental mode, much as any experience and 'mood' of the person come and go, so to say. While, in contrast, 'knowing' in western epistemology, has had to do more with *properties of propositions* expressing beliefs and judgements, and less with the psychological and phenomenological character of the actual believing and 'judging performed by the knower at some time',³ which is perhaps what the traditional notion of judgement in western (e.g. Kantian) thought conveyed. 'Knowledge', then, in the western sense is characterized as an impersonal 'quantity' of propositions measurable independently of human intention and mental content;⁴ and their truth-values, even if probabilistic, are regarded to be akin to truths of mathematical (or logical) propositions. The distinction is analogous, although not isomorphic, to that between *experience* and a *statement* of the experience, as the latter

may take on properties (e.g. assertion of truth-value) that may not obtain in the experience – just as (to indulge in yet another analogy) for Strawson, the *significance* of a sentence is independent of questions about its truth or falsity, which are more appropriately directed to propositions or statements. It is not to be implied however, that ‘knowing’ *qua* cognition, in the Indian context, is *exempt* from questions of truth and falsity, though it is believed to be easier to demonstrate the truth or falsity of statements or propositions, than it is of cognitions and mental modes, which are comparatively private and individual, but which may evidence propositional structure (as distinguished from a proposition). Statements or propositions, however, at some point turn out to be about people’s *beliefs*, about what is within their *awareness* – the state of believing – and therefore cannot be completely devoid of the element of ‘judgement’ implicated in ‘subjective knowing’, i.e. in cognitive understanding. But this is another issue, which is beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

In light of the differences outlined, we may note how *jñāna* is used in the Indian context, sometimes to indicate ‘knowing’ in the sense of ‘propositional attitude’⁵ towards beliefs, or towards what one is actually *believing* and judging at some time, as would occur, say, in reflective and introspective states, where there is affirmation of particular cognitive contents, as for example, when one becomes aware of ‘table contentness’ in his consciousness as his eyes fall on the large ‘object’ (this something) in the kitchen. The judgement is not about the ‘object’ as such, but is an affirmation of his mental mode in relation to the object. However, often, too swift a move is made by writers who take ‘propositional attitude’ to be an assertion of a *proposition*, in the way a proposition embodying a belief is given (linguistic) expression through the use of meaningful terms. And thus, *jñāna* comes to be used equivocally for characterizing the former disposition as though it were the latter, assertive, expression. Moreover, when a reflective judgement is taken to be an assertion of the truth-value of a cognition, *jñāna* is rendered as *knowledge*, implying that it is a judgement with a truth-value, which may be so in certain, albeit restrictive, conditions but is not a general case. In other words, here *jñāna*, with an attached truth-value truth is taken to correspond to ‘knowledge’, in the sense of ‘true judgement’, in the western context. The term, however, that would seem to be closer to this sense of ‘knowledge’ is *pramā*. But *pramā*, as such, is not predicable of each and every *jñāna* since *pramā* is a distinct class of awareness that requires for its

establishment much more than a simple, or even a complex, *jñāna* does: since the 'simple' could answer to *nirvikalpa* (indeterminate) and the complex to *saṁśaya* (doubt), yet neither of them qualify to be *pramā qua* 'true judgement'. (We shall elaborate on this shortly). It may, for instance, require the successful deployment of a *pramā-karaṇa*, purposeful instrument for generating true judgement, together with certain conditions that guarantee validity of the process. For a *jñāna* to be a *pramā*, it may require the features of certitude (*niścaya*), decisive absence of doubt and counterinstance, and so forth. And while the causal instruments efficacious in generating *pramā* may be quite restrictive, in number, though not in scope, those related to the generation of *jñāna* of a more general class may not be too restrictive in number; and while the problem of 'truth', and 'falsity', may be of serious consequence to one, viz to *pramā*, it need hardly cause alarm with regard to the other. 'Doubt' or 'uncertainty' may be more detrimental to one than to the other. Likewise, the implications for morality, and such normative issues, may bear directly on the success of one, but these may hardly be meaningful for the other. In short, it is argued, *pramā* proves to be epistemologically more fundamental and primary, than *jñāna*. Yet they are inextricably related. We need to examine each in some detail now.

PART B

Jñāna: Cognition

We shall begin by supposing that *jñāna* is a mentalistic term (i.e. functional, without presupposing a mentalistic ontology) that denotes any bit of *awareness*, and by extension, 'ideation', 'cognition', 'judgement', 'belief', 'propositional apprehension', and maybe 'intuition'. Of course there are other sorts of cognitive awareness, such as doubting, supposing, dreaming, referring, remembering and so forth, that are also regarded, as we shall see, to be cognitive events as distinguished from affective and conative processes, precisely since *jñāna* is that class of mental phenomena (acts or events, temporally though not spatially coordinated) that have objective content, i.e. they refer to actual 'objects' such as are not borrowed from 'contents' of other mental states.⁶ Only such mental modes whose contents are un-borrowed, or are 'novel', are epistemically significant, and therefore are potential candidates for 'knowing'. But the significance of a *jñāna* (e.g.

in the case of remembering) is in respect more of its *content* – i.e. having contentness: *viṣayatā*: than of being even potentially knowledge. Though, we may mention here, Advaita would not insist, maybe even resist, that there has to be an *actual* object in the case of each *jñāna*, yet the ‘content’ of *jñāna* is described as being ‘objective’ (*viṣayī-bhūta*; V. P. IV 1) for there must be some reference to which the content points even if it is a concept or is self-referential. In other words, *jñāna* has to be significant in an epistemic sense. The *content* itself may be far from being well-defined and determined, it could be simple or ‘primitive’, and uninformed. But just as *meaning* is dependent upon the structure of a linguistic utterance, the content of cognition is meaningful, so to speak, to the extent a structure is discernible within it. Nevertheless, Nyāya does admit one class in the genus *jñāna* which is devoid of any structure – viz. *nirvikalpa*: ‘undetermined’. Such an awareness has no ‘form’, it is uncharacterized as yet, it is a simple presentation as distinguished from awareness that involves judgement in respect of the contents presented in consciousness. Though not devoid of ‘content’ as such, it is regarded as ‘multiple and discontinuous’⁷ since the specific relations between the elements in the content are wanting in this type of simple ‘prejudgement’ or ‘Prehension’. Although not ‘judgement’ itself, *nirvikalpa jñāna* is the starting point of all ‘knowing’; just as for Kant ‘experience’ is not knowledge itself, but the origin of knowledge. However, this much can be said: *nirvikalpa* is *jñāna* in so far as it has *viṣayatā* (contentness) which is not borrowed from some other property of the self – i.e. it is the property of being directed, even if obliquely, to some objective reference or ‘other’ (*saviṣayatā*). Where it differs, however, from its antithesis, *savikalpa jñāna* – which covers a larger genus of determined awareness – is in not having a similarly defined relational structure of elements within its *viṣayatā*. By definition, therefore, *savikalpa jñāna* is a qualificative awareness, i.e. its objective content – earlier characterized as being directed or related to some ‘object’ – has a relational structure in its ‘intentional presentation’ (to borrow a term from Brentano). This makes the awareness qualificative or *viśiṣṭa*: thus *savikalpa jñāna* is by definition qualificative cognition. In other words, those cognitive or epistemic modes of the ‘mind’ that have objective content with a qualificative structure, much as could be said of ‘propositional’ attitudes or apprehensions, are *savikalpa jñānas*. Unless this qualification is introduced, which Nyāya insists upon, but largely ignored by Advaita, there would be little to distinguish

clear and distinct cognitions from 'primitive' ones, perhaps only causally, and one cognition from other members of the class, since it is one consequence of this condition that 'determined' cognition involves awareness of a distinguishing feature in the objective content of each epistemic mode. That is to say, in *savikalpa* there has to be an awareness of, apart from the 'object', the specific features that are the distinguishing properties of the individual object. If the object, presented in consciousness, aligned to the 'subject' (in 'subject-predicate' model) is *viśeṣya*, the distinguishing features which qualify the 'subject' is the *viśeṣaṇa*. The *viśeṣya* then is the *qualificand* of which the *viśeṣaṇa* is the qualifier. This relation assumes the propositional form of structure prevalent in, say, a statement. Hence, a qualificative *jñāna* is said to name propositional structure in respect of its *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa sambandha* (qualificand-qualifier relation). So, if something, x , appears in my awareness, it is presented as qualified by a distinguishing property y . This relation can be represented in the following propositional form, considered to be inherent in such cognitions, as follows, where x – qualificand, y – qualifier, j – (*savikalpa*) *jñāna*.

$$j = Q(xy).$$

Thus, when I sit on the kitchen table and an object floats into my awareness, I become aware of some *contentness* (this something) in my awareness, if the awareness becomes defined as an object distinguished by a specific feature (e.g. 'cupness') then, it is said, a qualificative cognition (*viśiṣṭajñāna*) has emerged, with the following propositional structure:

$$j = Q(x, \text{cupness}).$$

This awareness in turn may be qualified by yet another feature, making the *jñāna* more complex, as when I become aware of some liquid in the cup, viz. some tea (= z); thus, the structure:

$$Q((Qxy)(z)) : Q((Qx \text{ cupness})(\text{tea})).$$

The qualifier, z , does not always have to be a general, it could well be an individual or individuals, e.g. 'lollies'. Of course, there is possibility of error, as when the *viśeṣaṇa* from another *viśayatā* is juxtaposed on this *viśeṣya* (e.g. $Q(xw)$). We shall return to this problem shortly.

For now, we should note especially how *jñāna* in this analysis emerges as a particular instance of an episodic apprehension and not as a propositional *constant* of logic: *jñāna* is not even like the eternal sentences of Quine (“true no matter what”), nor the ‘true for all purpose’ propositions and proto-type sentences Tarski was looking for. This does not however make *jñāna* any less epistemically significant. For in so far as *jñāna* is a qualificative awareness (or better, judgement) it is amenable to analysis, and its content (which this type of awareness must have) may be correlatable to some linguistic form of expression – i.e. the cognitive content *qua* qualificative structure could lend itself to linguistic expressibility, to some actual or possible utterance, analyzing which in terms of logical principles, would be tantamount to analyzing the cognition. It is not being claimed that linguistic meaning and structure are in any way inherent to the cognitive content, as may be said of belief states, but that they may be applicable to *jñāna* not derived from linguistic understanding. Two problems remain in the Nyāya analysis to be discussed – viz. (a) the mechanics, as it were, of the cognitive process, (b) the question of ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’ of the *jñāna*. We shall proceed by summarizing some points scored above.

Nyāya describes cognition in a more general sense as a quasi-psychological process that ensues when the self of the subject encounters the object. Cognition, as distinct to propositions, is a property (*guṇa*) of the self of the person having the cognition, and this property arises under certain special conditions that intimately involve some of the internal processes of the subjects, such as mind’s relation with the self, and so forth. And the character of the cognition is such that its reference is beyond itself. Cognition, however, is not an eternal property of the self – but it is perishable. It comes about only in relation to something else: it qualifies the self (*ātman*), and it is a consciousness or awareness always of something (*saviśayakatā*), never of itself – unless it presents itself as an ‘object’ of yet *another* cognition. In Nyāya, as Professor Bimal K. Matilal points out, ‘to be conscious means to be conscious of something, there being no such thing as “pure consciousness”; and this, again, means to cognize, that is, to have a *jñāna* of something.’ ‘It can be called a “mental” state only in the sense that what the Naiyāyikas call mind (*manas*) is a necessary factor (actually the instrument)⁶ in the production of a *jñāna*. Again, we can call a *jñāna* an act if we would thereby imply that there is always *something* toward which this act is directed.’⁷ All cognitions, with the exception of the simple or *nirvikalpa* thus are

qualificative (*viśiṣṭa*) bearing a relational structure between the qualificand and qualifier in the content of awareness (*viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa sambandha*). But the cognition is not the *relation* itself: it is a property, or a disposition of the self – not a property of the object either (*jñātātā: knownness* as in *Mīmāṃsā*); nor is it the ‘event’ of the relation between the subject apprehending and its object (as in Advaita). The only condition at which this relation is transcended, in Nyāya view, is the state wherein no cognition, indeed no experience, arises in the self which then is said to stand in freedom as a pure substance (*śuddhā-dravya*). We shall note the differences in Advaita analysis shortly, which contrasts with the Nyāya. To Nyāya no ‘cognition’ or awareness can ‘reveal’ itself in referring to an object or whatever else the ‘mind’ comes into contact with. In other words, cognition is not a ‘self-aware’ or self-conscious bit of awareness in its origin: it is always *parataḥ-prakāśa*: ‘illuminable by other’. For cognition to reveal itself to itself there would have to be a second-order illumination, and even then it reveals itself as an *object* (*viśaya*) of another cognition and not as a ‘subjective knowing’.⁸ An objection is raised that if yet another cognition is required to reveal the previous cognition and so on, then logically we could end up in an *infinite regress* situation: awareness of awareness of awareness of awareness, as is implied in the notions of *vyavasāya* and *anuvyavasāya*. Nyāya contends that the latter affirmation clinches the issue since, all things being equal, we hardly seem to concern ourselves at length with subjective awareness and the mode of their revelation, once the *object* presented has been cognized. Thus we do not find ourselves recoiling to reflect on the ‘awareness of the table percept’ once the table has been perceived with its distinguishing feature.

Now the basic condition for a cognition to emerge is that there must be a mental function – ‘movement of the mind’ – which is akin, though not identical to the Advaita condition of *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*, and the *Sāṅkhya-Yoga, cittavṛtti*. We may note that the mental modes that fall under this category are: perceiving, inferring, knowing, doubting, wondering, guessing, remembering, dreaming, desiring, willing, hoping, rejoicing, worrying, contemplating, etc. But not all mental modes, we pointed out earlier, are acceptable as *jñāna* in Nyāya, much less in Advaita.

The mental modes which Nyāya does not regard to be *jñāna* are: desiring, willing, hoping, rejoicing, suffering, etc, that is, the psychic states of *conation* and *affection* or volition and feeling. Only those other mental modes that are some form of ‘cognition’ or *apprehension* are accepted as *jñāna*. Advaita

would agree with Nyāya on this point. ‘Mental modification’ -*vṛtti*- is an operation of the mind roused by an initial stimulation, which can occur in a number of ways. For example, when the mind, through some sense-organ, contacts an object, it receives impressions from the object which stimulate the mind, which ‘transforms’ in response to the impressions. The mind can, of course, receive impressions through and from other sources, such as internal states, memory, and its association with the power of reasoning or intellect (*buddhi*). But whilst the ‘mind’ in Nyāya, for which the term is ‘*manas*’, is regarded as an *indriya*, in Advaita it is called ‘*antaḥkaraṇa*’, literally ‘inner vehicle’, a complex unified psychic apparatus⁹ with a much wider scope than ‘*manas*’ (of Nyāya), itself a subordinate function of *antaḥkaraṇa*. We shall see a little later what else ‘*antaḥkaraṇa*’ involves. But though it is called ‘mind’ for convenience it is not what we understand by *mind* (e.g. in terms of the ‘mind-brain identity’ thesis) in Western philosophical psychology. Now, mental modification in Nyāya is restricted to modifications of *manas*, more specifically the mind as an internal sense or *instrument* of the self. It is atomic in structure, to which is subordinated several functions of the senses (*indriya*) through which the mind makes contact with objects, both external and internal (such as pain-states). The *manas* has no sentiency or intelligence as an intrinsic property, nor is there a notion of the witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-caitanya*) of Advaita associated with the self (*ātman*) that ‘illuminates’ the ‘mode’ of the mind. Nor do the sense-organs possess any intelligence, which depend directly on the self.¹⁰ Intelligence or consciousness is not intrinsic to the self either, it is a contingent property (*guṇa*) that comes into operation in any cognitive process, when the *manovṛtti* (mental mode) becomes related to it, thereby qualifying it as well. But in this process, it must be made clear, it is not the case, in Nyāya, that the consciousness reveals or illuminates that *manovṛtti* as a cognition. *Manovṛtti* is a cognition once it attaches itself to the self. There is not the sense of ‘imparting light’ or ‘illuminating from within’ as is in Advaita.

In Nyāya understanding it is less adequate to call *jñāna* a ‘mental state’ than it is to call it a mental *mode*, a ‘cognitive act’ or ‘episodic event’. If one were to be aware of the ‘cognition’ as an awareness this would involve another mental process in which the ‘cognizing’ would feature as a mental content of another operation (*jñāna*). We earlier referred to this as a second-order apprehension which occurs in retrospection, or reflective awareness, such as in the form “I know this (is a) table”; whilst the first order cognition

would take the form “this (is a) table”, or simply “table”. Cognition, *jñāna*, arising in this way, are also called *buddhi*, and *upalabdhi*; which translate roughly as ‘apprehension’.¹¹ Thus, in Nyāya there is no talk of illuminating the cognition from within itself: what is illumined is the object itself. Cognition, itself, is not cognized, except in a numerically distinct cognitive act enduring in a separate species present.¹² The agent in the process is the self; consciousness is a function of the agency. As soon as a relation (*samyoga* between the *manas* and *ātman*) occurs there is deliverance of the object in the consciousness of the subject. What consciousness delivers therefore is the object, not the cognition, in strict analysis. There is no consciousness before that. The cognition, we might say, is the “consciousness-link” of the subject with the object – though, in common parlance, it is said that there is a ‘cognition’ (*jñāna*) of or ‘about’ the object, meaning thereby that the object is in the immediate awareness of the self. When the ‘object’ is further defined in respect of its distinguishing feature (*Qxy*) that particular judgement is said to have staked a claim to be ‘a knowledge’ – i.e. it is a viable candidate for *pramā*. Whether it is or it is not, and how this is to be determined, are issues we shall return to after considering the Advaita analysis of *jñāna*.

PART C

The Bounds of Cognition in Advaita

Now the Advaita understanding of *jñāna* also invokes mental, or better, ‘psychic’ mode-effecting, but here this is an operation (*vṛtti*) of the internal sense or *antaḥkaraṇa* which is to be distinguished from the ‘*manas*’ (mind) of Nyāya. Firstly, the *antaḥkaraṇa* to Advaita is an ‘inner instrument’ with much wider function than what is called the *manas* in this system – it is akin to the common sense, in Aristotle’s psychology. The other aspects of *antaḥkaraṇa* are memory (*citta*: the recollecting sense); intellect (*buddhi*: the intelligence principle), the ego-sense (*ahamkāra*: ‘I-maker’). The sense-organs (*indriyas*) (senses of touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, hearing, etc.) are not ‘aspects’ or ‘functions’ of *antaḥkaraṇa*. The sense-organs are associated with *antaḥkaraṇa* through *manas*,¹³ in that they are responsible to the ‘mind’. The ‘aspects’ themselves, including *manas*, are modifications or ‘transformations’ of the internal sense, albeit of varying types and with different functions to each. For example, when the internal faculty receives

impressions from an object through a sense-organ, the operation that is triggered off is regarded as a function of the *manas* ('mind'); when there arises the subject's awareness of itself as an 'I', this state is called '*ahamkāra*' (ego-sense); when there is recollection, this function is designated as memory or remembrance. It does not seem that '*antaḥkaraṇa*' is a term for a substantive (real) base as such, but rather is an operational nominalist concept that covers an aggregate of varying psychic functions and processes that arise in time.¹⁴ Indeed, Madhusūdana Sarasvati, an eminent voice for Advaita, characterized *antaḥkaraṇa* as having something of the nature of light (*tejas*)¹⁵ which illumines the objects in its vicinity. What then, one might ask, of the relation of *antaḥkaraṇa* to subliminal processes, such as reflexes, 'tacit' (e.g. Polanyian) intentions and dispositions to respond in certain specific ways? The likely response in Advaita would be that these are *potential psychic* 'functions', whose transformations somehow remain impressed, even as vague forms of awareness, in the sense-organs which nonetheless are substantive. There are many forms of psychic modifications, which can be classed under the three psychological categories of *cognitive*, *conative* or volitional and *affective* or emotional, as we saw in Nyāya analysis. It is the cognitive ones that we are interested in, as these satisfy one of the essential criteria for a psychic mode to qualify as a *jñāna*. Firstly, cognitive forms of psychic-states arise when the *antaḥkaraṇa* modifies in a certain way, determined by a particular set of conditions, which are more restrictive in Advaita than in Nyāya. For one, sense-organ contact is purely a contingent condition, even for *perceptual* cognition in Advaita, in contrast to (the early) Nyāya view. The extent to which a 'psychic' mode is a cognition is the extent to which it has been brought about by a direct contact between the *antaḥkaraṇa* (not just the *manas*) and the object cognized. Memory clearly is not a case of such direct contact; but since there is some *remote* object presented through 'latent psychic-traces' such 'reminiscence' or recollection of latent impressions pass as *jñāna*, although not a very purposeful one: its object is representative not presentative. The epistemic status of memory is considerably weaker, therefore, in Advaita than it is in Nyāya,¹⁶ although neither accepts memory to be *pramā* (knowledge), except perhaps in some trivial sense, such as expressed in the *re*-cognition "Ah! Yes, I know: I remember you from school days!" Likewise, for awareness of *manas*, *ahamkāra* and *buddhi*, since these are already *vṛtti*, 'aspects', within the ambience of, and not features without, the *antaḥkaraṇa*. But we must understand the object the

antaḥkaraṇa is said to come in contact with in a cognitive process in a wider sense than it is in Nyāya. While in Nyāya, (*savikalpa*) *jñāna* answers to *real* relational characters of objects, and not to superimposed (*adhyāsa*) or projected ideal-constructs (*vikalpa*) *ab extra* on the prejudgemental phase of awareness, in Advaita the *relatas* in a cognition need not be *real*, although in some sense they must be empirical, i.e. experiential. Conceptual abstracts, generals juxtaposed with particular (e.g. in “You are That”), and seemingly metaphysical contents (e.g. in “All is Brahman”) may suffice. But such *jñāna* would be necessarily more complex and susceptible to difficulties.

Secondly, unlike the function of *manas* in Nyāya, where it informs the ‘self’ (*ātman*) directly of the object it comes into contact with, the *antaḥkaraṇa* does not inform the ‘self’ (*ātman*), rather it is itself illumined by *sākṣin* or consciousness – the pure element of ‘witnessing’ in all awareness. The *sākṣin*, however, does ‘borrow’, as it were, its (reflected or ‘delimited’, *avacchinna*) consciousness (*tejas*, ‘light’) from the self (*ātman*), the pure consciousness of subjectivity.¹⁷ Whilst in Nyāya, any mental modification – other than conative and affective ones though – once it is related with the self (*ātman*) or *vṛtti* (or *saṃyoga*), qualifies for a *jñāna*; in Advaita there is an additional requirement for its *illumination*. The mental or psychic *vṛtti* is not an *absolutely* necessary condition, much less is it sufficient for a *jñāna*. However, if *jñāna* is to proceed from such psychic acts there has to be an illumination internally of the ‘mode’ or *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*. Only then is there a conscious awareness of the psychic mode which is then a phenomenologically given awareness of something. It is to emphasize this that Kalidas Bhattacharyya remarks: ‘As mental states are not subjective in the proper sense of the term they are not conscious and *a fortiori* not consciousness’.¹⁸ Since therefore, mental mode are not revealed as self-consciousness (the ‘subjective’) is, their ‘consciousness-qualificand’ lies without them – though not so remote in time and space as in Nyāya analysis. Consciousness as though appears to become an internal characteristic (though not the self-nature, *svarūpa*) of the *antaḥkaraṇa* in its immediate or proximate association with the *sākṣin* (witness-consciousness), and the illumination of an *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* is therefore (fairly) direct in the same moment of its arising. An analogy is made to the crystal that takes on light from nearby and scintillatingly reflects its every contour (*bimba-pratibimba*). But for this illumination there would be no *jñāna*. Thus a distinction is made between cognition *qua jñāna* and other psychic modes that are like cognition. Consider the

following incident: I pull out the drawer and look into my jewellery box for the prized golden ring my mother had given me for my birthday. I went looking for it knowing that it was there as I had seen it there yesterday morning and I know the other ornaments it is placed amidst. But when I open the box, suddenly a strong suspicion overtakes me; it may have been stolen overnight; and as I open the box, sure enough I do *not see* it there. I could see all other pieces which I expected to be there, but the golden ring was not there, or so it appeared to me. However, after a little while, I notice that it is there, exactly where it should have been and at the very spot I had my eyes fixed. But why did I not see it earlier? Could it be that my sudden expectation of it not being there blocked it out of my attention? But surely, if my eyes were fixed on that spot, and I could see all other items around it, it must have been the case that the impressions from the ring were not registering themselves on my mind. Advaita would not deny that the impressions were registering on the mind, they surely were. Since the eyes, in a sense, were in contact with the ring, the impressions would have flowed in and caused a mental modification to that effect. But what happened in this instance was that instantaneously as this *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* arose, another, counterpositive to this, also emerged, informed by the intellect (*buddhi*), and before the witness-self (*sākṣin*) could illumine the former, the latter, due to its high expectation, got illumined, thus blocking the consciousness from flooding into, as it were, the former mode (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*). It was only after a while, when possibly *doubt* arose about the *buddhi*-inspired *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* that the light of consciousness (*sākṣin*) reflected on the sense-organ-informed mode, *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*. Thus, it is stressed by Advaita that the only relation sufficient in this process is that between the *antaḥkaraṇa* and its object, as well as between its *vṛtti* and the *sākṣin*, for *jñāna* to arise, all other relations being contingent. The connection the unillumined *vṛtti* has with the self (*ātman*) in such cases is an indirect and mediated one, and cannot as such become a cognition or ‘mode of consciousness’. The contact, though, of the psychic mode with consciousness is as important, just more, as the contact of the *antaḥkaraṇa* with the object. Finally, whilst the Nyāya position does not deny consciousness or awareness to be an aspect of *jñāna*, it does however only accept consciousness to be an additional contingent character and not an intrinsic character of the mental states. As Kalidas Bhattacharyya points out, ‘(He) has openly admitted that all conscious states (with him

(Naiyāyika) there is no single *consciousness as such* except as an abstract universal, adjectival to every conscious state) are contingent, each of them occasioned at a particular point of time and enduring for a limited period'.¹⁹ Here Advaita, and Mīmāṃsā, differ from Nyāya as they argue that a cognition, as distinct from any mental state, first and foremost has the character of *subjective knowing*, wherein the knowing self, or rather the 'intelligence', 'consciousness' (*sākṣin*, literally, witness-consciousness associated with the self), illuminates the mental state brought about by an *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* or *pramāṇa*-operation, directly as a cognitive state. And further that in Advaita, at least, the relation arising in the form of a conscious mental state is transcended in going beyond all mental modifications (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) in which self-subjectivity (*sākṣin-caitanya*) stands forth as pure consciousness, which it penultimately is. This 'state' is called *Brahma-jñāna* or *ātmavidyā*: the self knowing itself as Pure Subject *par excellence*, which is said to be the unconditional 'state' of *Mokṣa* or freedom from all ignorance. In Nyāya, however, there is no such thing as 'pure consciousness'; freedom being of different order altogether – curiously, that of a self (*ātman*) in all unmodifying state of *no-feeling*.

Unlike Nyāya then, Advaita does not accept many forms of *jñāna*. It excludes cognitive states other than perceiving, inferring, apprehending, knowing, directly experiencing (*aparokṣānubhūti*) and perhaps memory-recollection, ego-sensing or self-consciousness. While Nyāya is happy to proliferate the list of cognitive states under '*jñāna*', such as those above with the addition of *remembering*, doubting, wondering, guessing, dreaming, and so on. One would wonder however, on what grounds does Nyāya include these under *jñāna* when each has only the remotest contact with their respective objects (*viśaya*) – which Nyāya claims to be the distinctive feature of *jñāna*. Perhaps Nyāya ought to have divided its *jñānas*, or candidates for *jñāna*, into primary and secondary cognitions, and insisted that the primary cognitions have definite *viśayatās*, such as those which Advaita also accepts as *jñāna*, whilst the secondary 'cognitions', do not have definite *viśayatā*, but 'borrowed' ones.²⁰ Some Naiyāyikas seem to make such a distinction. For, they divide cognitions into two types: recollection and 'experience' (*anubhava*); as it is stated: "All cognitions other than recollections come under experience".²¹ They then go on to divide the cognitions that come under 'experience' into two sorts – thus, "There are two kinds of experiences, *real (yathārtha)* and *erroneous (ayathārtha)*"²² But that is

raising a separate issue before resolving sufficiently the first issue, and informing us of the nature of ‘experience’. It is not until the ferment in Navya-nyāya (‘new logic’ school) that we get a picture more clear than we have evinced in the previous section.

PART D

Pramā: Knowledge

If we take knowledge (*pramā*) to be ‘true (‘‘valid’’) cognition’ – whatever else *knowledge* might be, according to the different theories of knowledge (e.g. ‘justified true belief’) – we are to ask: are all *jñāna* ‘true’? Does each and every *jñāna* qualify to be knowledge? Here, by *jñāna* we are to understand ‘cognition’ as analyzed earlier – viz. a simple apprehension of an object, effected through the inner sense (*antaḥkaraṇa/manas*). But does the fact of being a cognition mean that it is *ipso facto* true? – just as we may ask, if a belief or proposition about something (some state of affairs) is true simply by virtue of being a belief or proposition? A *jñāna* cannot be said to be true simply by being a *jñāna* – as the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā school seems to want to say.²³ There is more to being ‘true’ (i.e. to truth) than being presented with a cognitive content which may claim to be knowledge. The point is that, not all cognitions turn out to be true: some could be erroneous, some doubtful (or uncertain), some indefinite, some hypothetical, some patently false, and others neither true nor false. But there are a number of salient issues in such discussions which are not always too obvious nor clear. For instance, what are we to understand by ‘true’ (or truth – although we may refrain from thinking the penultimate question of ‘the Truth’)? What is ‘false’, what error? What is doubt; what certainty? What sort of a definition or theory of truth is available to us? What are the criteria (or ‘marks’) for measuring truth, or falsity? It will not be possible to do justice to these larger issues in a short discussion as this. We deal only with the bear rudiments to throw some light on the notion of *pramā*, in contrast to *jñāna*. We may begin by noting that, in Nyāya, at least, every qualificative cognition is either true or false (in their origin), although *nirvikalpajñāna* and doubt are said to be neither true nor false. The latter is a special case that receives attention later. Now, for a *jñāna* (henceforth to be assumed to be ‘qualificative’ unless indicated otherwise) to be a *pramā*, it must have truth-value which

makes it a 'true cognition'. The truth-value is given in terms of *prāmāṇya*, conditions under which a cognition is 'true'. For Nyāya this consists in the *jñāna* having a special feature (in addition to its cognitive content) which is called '*guṇa: excellence*'. But the conditions that constitute and account for *guṇa* are different from the conditions that generate and constitute a *jñāna*. Although the conditions that generate a *jñāna* and those that give it 'truth-value' are different they nevertheless arise together; thus *jñāna* arises as a *pramā* or it does not. We may not know or be aware of its truth-value, but this is a separate issue. We are for the present to be concerned with the issue concerning the conditions that give *prāmāṇya* and those that do not, in the process of the emergence of the cognition, and with the awareness of the cognition.

Now one way to approach the question of *prāmāṇya* is to give the conditions under which a cognition is true. Nyāya does this by suggesting that a cognition has to be an authentic presentation of the object it cognizes, (*yathārthānubhava*) i.e. it must conform to reality, in terms of the qualificand qualifier relation we developed earlier. For instance, if Qxy is apprehended, y should be the feature of x . This 'criterion' is represented in the cryptic formula: *tadvati tatprakāratva*.²⁴ accurate apprehension of the object with its property as in reality. Stated more explicitly, an authentic presentation is constituted by the equiformity with the features of the object causally efficacious in giving rise to that awareness²⁵ – i.e. the object cognized must have those features as cognized.

The definition of 'truth' thus far enunciated appears to resemble what is generally known as the 'correspondence theory of truth'. But these are not isomorphic; there is an important difference. The 'conformity' sought here is not a measure as such between the cognition, on the one hand, and the objective correlate of which it is a cognition, on the other. To ascertain (apprehend) this would involve a process like introspection or some external means of comparing the cognition side by side with the reality in judging the authenticity and the representation, but which in turn would require another cognition to ascertain the correctness of the immediately previous judgement, and so on and so forth. This would lead us to *infinite regress*, if this is the only way 'correspondence' is to be determined and ascertained. The Nyāya principle though is much simpler; either there is conformity or there is not; no question of the awareness *ab extra*, in theory at least, of this conformity is implicated here. That is to say, although we may not be

aware of the 'conformity' as soon as we become aware of the object, it is presented with the cognition. Still, however, there is a glaring problem: how can we ever be certain that the 'conformity' (*yathārthatva*) is there? This is a practical problem, to which a different sort of an answer is given, and which in turn raises some empirical difficulties. We shall consider this issue shortly.

A more reasonable approach, would be to give the conditions, not under which a cognition would be true, — as the difficulties raised above would warn us against — but to give conditions under which a cognition would be *false*. Thus a cognition would be false if it involved attributing such features to an object as are not really in the object (*tadabhāvavati tatprakāra*).²⁶ The test-case would be if and when a qualifier is not actually related to the qualificand of the content presented in awareness. That is to say, referring to our notational representation, in the cognition Q_{xy} , if z does not really belong to x , then an error is detected, and the cognition falsified. More concretely, consider, for instance, the awareness: 'This gold-necklace is red'. If the qualifier *red* does not occur in the qualificand (gold-object) in reality, as it presumably is perceived to be, then the *jñāna* is a case of an error; it is false, thus does not qualify to be *pramā*. Suppose that while looking at the gold-necklace John suddenly recollects seeing a red-beaded necklace around his wife's neck on the previous day, and juxtaposes the 'red' (*viśeṣaṇa*) on the gold (object: *viśaya*) now in his presence; the obvious outcome is just what he reports: he sees 'redness' in the gold-object where it is not. Consider another example, the alleged awareness: 'here's horn'. This cognition has a complex of two *viśayatā*; 'here' and 'horn', they are both *real* things in the world: but in this cognition they have got mixed up, i.e. their relation or juxtapositioning is unwarranted and therefore at fault. Since 'here's horn' is not an authentic presentation in reality, the *jñāna* is said to be *apramā*, false or 'invalid' cognition.

The next criterion for *prāmānya* is the absence of doubt and uncertainty. *Niścaya* or 'certainty' is certainly a significant mark as it gives conviction of the truth of the cognition. However, it could be argued that the same degree of conviction may be present in the content of an erroneous cognition. Thus mere certainty, *niścaya* or assuredness (*asamdigdha*), is not sufficient; there must be a decisive absence of any grounds for doubting the truth. Unlike error, where the *viśeṣaṇa* (or *prakāra*: qualifier) of another object is related to the object of the cognition in question, in doubt there is

presented a confusing set of contents, which gives rise to uncertainty and oscillation between the two poles in awareness — e.g. in the contraries of ‘tree’, ‘not-tree’, only one of which is true. As such, then, doubt clearly lacks certainty, but it is neither true nor false; at best we can say that, as an indecisive cognition, it is ‘not true’, since no definite feature is being attributed to the objective content, nor does it portend towards a purposive outcome. In short, a doubt makes no claim to truth, rather it manifests a state of cognitive anxiety. There is no decisive judgement forthcoming in a doubt, of the form say: ‘This is a tree: is this a tree?’ so as to distinguish the two mental contents and assert one over and above the other.²⁷ It is, however, not a state of ignorance, nor something that stands opposed to any known, or knowable object, or truth. If knowledge were justified true belief, to invoke an analogy, doubt would not be ‘disbelief’, but more correctly, a disposition of conflicting beliefs. Herein, then, lies also the significance of doubt: it may prove to be the beginnings of a more detailed and critical ‘inspection’, a role which has been acknowledged in Indian thought, as the source of dialectics, as much as its use has been a contributing factor in the growth of western thought (cf. Descartes, Hume, Kant and the sceptical tradition). Doubt warns against *a priori* judgements (which may not be *analytic*), and puts the onus of ‘proof’ on the knower. In this respect, doubt could be said to be the first stirring towards unravelling erroneous and hidden bits of judgement (‘premiss’) which owe their source to some extrinsic defect (*doṣa*) or deficiency in the cognitive process (or in the apparatus: ‘Is this shell yellow, or am I jaundiced?’). Thus by casting suspicion on this extra cognitive feature, doubt calls for its removal, if there is to be authentic knowledge. Thus, the absence of doubt and the genuine conditions that would warrant doubt, and therefore sceptical judgement, would need to be assured, over and above self-conviction (*niścaya*).

Pravṛtti-sāmarthya

Finally, the other major criterion much discussed in Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā is *pravṛtti-sāmarthya*: the outcome resulting in, or portending to, productive or fruitful activity (*saphala*). That is to say, there must be potentiality in the judgement (*jñāna*) to lead to the fulfillment of some desired goal or end. For Nyāya this is as much an epistemological criterion as it is a practical one. In other words, it is a rational consideration of ‘workability’, reminiscent

of the Pragmatist theory of truth made familiar by William James, John Dewey and Charles Peirce, with the difference that this consideration is one, doubtless a major, *criterion* derived from a more 'realist theory of truth', but does not become as such the '*theory* of truth' itself to which Nyāya would be seen to subscribe.²⁸ For that matter, Advaita and, particularly, Mīmāṃsā, would appear to be equally committed to this consideration as a corroborative test of what already appears to be true. To be sure, in Nyāya, *pravṛtti-samarthya* does not merely have a corroborative feature, but more significantly reveals the truth of the cognition; it is not that a cognition derives its truth-value, or seeks its corroboration, in the practical outcome, but that herein lies the power of making manifest the truth, or falsity as the case may be, of the *jñāna* – although the process of manifestation involves inference or a subsequent judgement. According to Jayanta, this criterion constitutes the confirmation of the *jñāna* in practical terms by yielding the result or consequence that bears out, as it were, the distinguishing property of the object cognized – (e.g. quenching of thirst by water: this one hot, this cold).²⁹

The *guṇa* of the *jñāna* is exposed thereby. Kesava Miśra³⁰ gives a forceful argument to vindicate this move, through an example: when a man looking for water has the cognition of water, he makes the following consideration: either it is *samartha*, 'fit' or capable of satisfying, i.e. has pragmatic worth, or it is not *samartha*. And an inference is drawn: if there is *samarthya* then the cognition is true; if not, the cognition is false; he may even rely on previous experience to ascertain the distinguishing marks. Udayana also argues along the same lines, adding that the successful outcome proves the efficacy inherent in the *jñāna* by virtue of the *guṇa* attendant upon it, and it is this we may be aware of but not of the truth of the *jñāna* when cognition first emerges in consciousness.³¹ However, through the sort of inferential consideration indicated above, the truth or falsity of a *jñāna* could be said to have been ascertained, or known pending the practical confirmation.

For special sorts of cognition, such as those derived through inference, and, particularly, from 'words' (i.e. *śabdapramāṇa*) another criterion is suggested – viz. *āptopadeśa*, or *āptavacana*: the reliability or trustworthiness of the 'testimony' and of the source itself. This entails in inquiring, especially if there is doubt about the judgement, whether the source of information could plausibly be relied upon, and whether within this lies the roots of error and misjudgements. In the context of linguistic utterance, the reliability

of its 'author' would be the consideration; with scripture, the wisdom of sages; with wise pronouncements, sanction of 'special persons' (*puruṣaviśeṣa*), and maybe even that of Īśvara (God). This criterion is common to Advaita and Mīmāṃsā as well, but its relevance is no less for 'sources' of knowing (*pramāṇa*) other than linguistic utterances (*śabda: śruti*).³² Nyāya has clearly given a set of criterion by which to settle on the question of *prāmāṇya* of *jñāna*. Let us see how this works with a simple experience. I seem to have become aware of something, some object, in front of me; but the presentation is too indefinite and vague for me to be able to say what it really is. As my awareness becomes a little clearer, there seems to be an object like a typewriter. This is the *viśayatā* in my awareness. Although it shows the features of a typewriter, I am wondering whether it might not be an office calculator. Thus there is doubt: 'Is it a typewriter; or an office calculator?' If the former, it should have all the features (*viśeṣaṇa*, t_1) of a typewriter (*viśayatā* t_0), and not (t_2 of a calculator (t_3)). I am not able to distinguish between the two, since the features (t_1) oscillate between being the qualifier of t_0 and t_3 . *Tadvati tatprakāratva* requires that the cognition be either of the form: typewriter (*qualificand*) -R- typewriterness (*qualifier*); or calculator-calculatoriness. But the striking resemblance between t_1 and t_2 confuses me. I am sure though it is t_1 and not t_2 . Perhaps I ought to make the following consideration: if my awareness is of a typewriter I should be able to type words and sentences, and not mere numerals, with the use of the object; if it does not type verbal constructions, then it is not a typewriter. I am fairly convinced of the outcome; the doubt I had barely plagues me. I am now only too anxious to see the outcome as I believe to be fitting to the object cognized. I strike at the keys in the familiar way that I do with typewriters, and sure enough some words: 'the blue fox,' appear printed on the sheet. The outcome has resolved all my doubts, and confirmed the judgement I had put my bet on, having ruled out the counterfactual. Of course, I could have as well asked the secretary in the office what this equipment was; and I could still consult her if I have any lingering doubts about my judgement.

We may notice that in the Nyāya view nowhere is it being said that an awareness of the truth of the judgement is intrinsic to the judgement itself, or even of its awareness. Thus the conditions proposed for ascertaining the truth of a *jñāna* are necessarily extrinsic to the cognition itself. The *prāmāṇya*, although it may arise with the cognition, is not apprehended simultaneously

as the objective content is. If it had been, the problem of doubt would not arise, argues Udayana, for if one is aware, with some conviction, that a judgement in his consciousness is either true, or false, as the case may be, then there would be no cause for uncertainty, nor a need to establish certainty in some other way to one's satisfaction.³³ This is a pertinent argument, as it is meant to hit those who maintain the theory of self-certification of truth (*svataḥprāmāṇyavāda*) which is a sore point in the Advaita epistemology, to which we shall come shortly. The Nyāya position is clear on this, which, to repeat somewhat, holds that by seeking to ascertain truth, or falsity, extrinsically, we are not giving the *jñāna* anything more than what it has come with; it is just that whatever truth-value it came with was not *transparent* in the judgement itself. Thus, this is *parataḥprāmāṇya* with respect to the ascertainment (*niścaya*) not determination of the truth, or falsity, of the judgement. Furthermore, the conditions that give rise to the judgement (*jñāna*) are not necessarily those that will secure *prāmāṇya*, truth-value, for the judgement. These conditions may be different, and are extrinsic to the aggregate of causal conditions efficacious in generating the *jñāna*. One or some amongst this may be a unique or 'extraordinary' causal link, called *kaṛaṇa* or instrument, and of this instrument one may be sufficiently efficacious in producing judgements which are *true* – such as perceptual (*pratyakṣa*), inferential, (*anumāna*) and linguistic understanding (*śabda*). This extraordinary (*asādhāranakāraṇa kaṛaṇa*) causal condition accounts for the *guṇa* (excellence) attributed to the judgement which therefore emerges, all things being equal and vitiating factors or deficiency not intervening, as *pramā*. If in place of *guṇa* there is *doṣa* or defective factors, then the result is an *apramā*, false judgement, or maybe doubt, perhaps error, or even unmitigated pseudo-judgement. Thus, in respect of the determination (distinguished from ascertainment, 'knowing') of the truth, and of the falsity, of a *jñāna*, the theory is *prataḥprāmāṇya* again, i.e. they are caused from without the conditions generating the judgement. Thus, it follows that one important way of arriving at true judgements (*pramā*) is to ensure that an adequate *kaṛaṇa*, one appropriate to the subject matter (or 'object') sought to be understood or investigated, is deployed, with due care and caution against defective factors, irrelevant contingencies, and pretentious judgements. Thus also, the importance of the *pramāṇas* ('valid mean of knowing') that have attracted considerable attention on the part of Nyāya, indeed most all Indian schools of thought. But we are

straying here slightly, although this would be another approach to the question of *pramā* we could have taken here, as I have elsewhere. The Advaita view of *pramā* can be discussed *vis-à-vis* the Nyāya theory. In principle however, Advaita does not find any difficulty in agreeing with Nyāya on the viability of any, may be all, of the ‘criterion’ proposed; indeed, Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, following Madhusūdan Sarasvatī here, repeats virtually the very considerations as we have examined³⁴ – viz., *tadvati tatprakārajñānatvam prāmāṇyam; pravṛtṭyanukūla* – although with a somewhat different interpretation and emphasis and with the addition of a few of their own criteria. But first, on the practical side, the ‘conformity’ criterion is seen to present some difficulties, namely that of *infinite regress*, in the manner we remarked on earlier. Of course, the Nyāya rebuttal is that, in the example, say, of quenching the thirst with water, one does not normally resort to another judgement to ascertain whether the thirst has been quenched: either it is or it is not, and the evidence for this is provided by other consequences.³⁵ Thus, Nyāya does not consider this to be an issue as much as Advaita and especially Mīmāṃsā are pressed to make it into, presumably for a different sort of a motive: this criterion, if it is taken to be a *definition* of *prāmāṇya* itself, would smack of too strong a commitment to *realism*. Advaita is less worried about this since there is interest in this school to know as much as possible about empirical reality; it may not be a sufficient indicator of Reality, *in toto*, but that need not be a concern here. Thus, the later Advaita writers are happy to incorporate this as a ‘mark’ of *pramā* and suggest it as a viable ‘test’, rather than a *theory per se* of truth. Likewise, with *niścaya* or *asāṃdigdha* – i.e. the mark of certainty or conviction, and absence of doubt; and so with *pravṛtti sāmānyā* or fruitful activities. What Advaita contends, however, is that their presence is not, as Nyāya would have them, dependent upon some conditions other than or outside of the aggregate of causal conditions that generate the judgement since this is ensured by the use of a viable *karana*, or instrument of knowing as part of the aggregate conditions.³⁶ Furthermore, the overall conditions should be such that Advaita would expect two further characteristics in the judgement – viz., (a) *abādhitatva*, unfalsified by any other valid evidence, (b) *anadhigatatva*, what is known must be something that was unknown prior to this, thus making it a ‘novel revelation’, or disclosing a ‘new object’.

Abādhitatva is of considerable importance in the Advaita and Mīmāṃsā theories of truth. This criterion requires that the cognition ought not to be

contradicted or falsified by some other information pertaining to the same object or subject matter, as sought to be illumined. The criterion requires the consideration of counterfactuals, whose confirmation or strength in turn would render untrue the cognition in question. This criterion is *negative* precisely because Advaita does not seem to believe in the efficacy of the empirical modes of establishing *truth* in contradistinction to falsity. Not that it does not believe in *truth*, perhaps in some ultimate sense of Truth, to which all relative truths are subordinated; and what is ultimately True is also ultimately Real, *Sat: satyasya satyam* – if there is no ‘True’ there is no God either, for Advaita.

But there are a few problems with this criterion as well. Between Śrīharṣa and Citsukha, the criticism was made that,³⁷ (i) even false cognitions may not receive falsification (would we then take them to be ‘true?’); (ii) a true cognition may obtain its falsification from a false cognition (or even from dubious assertion) (iii) a false cognition may be falsified by another false cognition (does therefore the criterion stand up to a real test?); (iv) we are never in a position to say whether a cognition, believed to be true now, will not be falsified in the future. Of course, the last criticism is a favourable submission to the falsifiability thesis, for there is acknowledgement here of the possibility of falsification, though the conditions under which this would be obtained are not stated. However, the assault from these criticisms can be softened by appealing to corroboration from the other ‘marks’ of truth. In other words, no test is seen to be decisive under one particular criterion, rather they have to, as it were, work together in concert or collectively (*sāmānya-sāmagrī*), each being a check upon the other.

One may add yet another criterion to the list, but which is more strictly a mark to be found in the texts of scriptures, or in the words of a ‘higher person’ (*mahāpuruṣa*) – namely *āptopadeśa*: ‘testimony of a reliable source’. Thus there are some six criterial marks of truth to be seen in the Advaita theory. While some overlap with those in the Nyāya theory, the difference, and a very striking one, is that in Advaita view the conditions that determine the truth of an awareness are the very conditions that also generate those cognitions which are true. That is to say, truth is constituted intrinsically by the conditions that generate the cognition. One may seek corroboration from tests undertaken extrinsically, but these do not constitute their truth, any more than they can be said to generate the cognition itself. And these corroborations are to be seen in the outcomes

of nonfalsification, fruitful activity, novelty of the matter illumined, and so forth. One gets the suspicion, however, that Advaita has incorporated into its theory of self-certification (self-truth-making: *svataḥ-prāmāṇyavāda*) what are essentially marks of a judgement to be determined extrinsically. But one also notices that no direct test of 'correspondence' or conformity in the verificationist sense, is actually proposed. At best, the test is a negative one, because the theory of truth underpinning it is negative also – *viz. non-falsificationist*.

One may object further, that in avoiding a direct test situation the Advaita theory smacks of psychologism. For, it could be argued, if the test of the direct relation of the cognition to the object cognized is not regarded to be necessary – since this is supposedly guaranteed intrinsically by the theory – how is then one to know, that (a) *jñāna* is not an idea conjured in the mind of the knower? (b) there is an *objective* correlate of or about which (true) judgement is said to have been generated? Advaita response to these would appear to be yet simplistic: these are *known* or apprehended intrinsically as well, since the conditions that ensure *prāmāṇya* also reveal the *prāmāṇya*. That is to say, the ascertainment of *prāmāṇya*, truth, is also intrinsic, such that no doubt should arise of the sort raised here. The only aspect of the theory with which Advaita agrees with Nyāya is on the question of *falsity*, what constitutes falsity and how this may be known. *Falsity* is a mark of "failed" conditions that are extrinsic, or *ab extra* to the aggregate of conditions that generate the cognition and its truth. The awareness of falsity in a cognition occurs *ab extra*, in another judgement which apprehends the defects (*doṣa*) or pretentious conditions not germane to the process. If we take Advaita seriously on the latter admissions we may allow that Advaita has not glossed over the possibility that error, misjudgement, illusions, etc, could arise in place of *true jñāna*, and also that the same would be acknowledged. If its theory of truth, because it is *svataḥ* (intrinsically determined and ascertained) appears to be rather incorrigibly strict, its theory of falsity, because it is *parataḥ* (extrinsically determined and ascertained) is rather more tangible and reasonable. Is it fortuitous that Advaita does provide, albeit through a negative means, criteria for the detection of *falsity* or error in a judgement, attributed to adventitious defects? For, if it could be shown that falsity *via non-falsification* is absent, then, given the *svataḥprāmāṇya* theory, truth could be taken to have been established. Further confirmation of the *absence* of

falsity could be had by utilizing the other ‘criterial marks’ which instead of seeking to ascertain truth – as is the case in Nyāya – seek to ascertain the *absence* of falsity. Of course, by failing to show that a *jñāna* has novelty need not necessarily mean that it is *false* – since memory, or *recognition*, barely discloses anything new, but it is hardly a ‘false’ judgement (*apramā*). All of which is to say that Advaita is aware of the difficulties presented in its definition, as also in its criteria in establishing truth. But it would insist, in theory at least, that *prāmāṇya* is given and guaranteed by the totality of the conditions causally efficacious in producing the cognition. Advaita does not believe that a true cognition requires a *guṇa ab extra* as such (*na tu adhikaguṇam apekṣate*).³⁸ And yet certain marks of truth are suggested, by which presumably the absence of falsity could be discerned, if not truth itself. What emerges, it would appear, is a theory of truth, which is not sure of its own grounds. Thus, it borrows some ‘marks’ from another theory, and proposes ‘tests’ which better support yet another theory. But in so far as it attempts to balance considerations for ‘truth’, by a more practical approach to falsity, it gives the appearance of being quite comprehensive in its scope. For after all, Advaita would prefer an approach that would show up, as it were, the *unreality* of the empirical world, so that one may desire to transcend the empirical fold in search of the (more) real, the ultimately True.

Finally, I would like to present two considerations that I believe would help toward bringing the two approaches to truth (Nyāya and Advaita) a little closer, than they seem to be, although it would be hopeless to attempt a reconciliation, though Dharmarāja and others have tried.³⁹ One is that, Navya-nyāya thinkers were generally aware of the *infinite regress* involved in the criterion of external confirmation, i.e. they were aware of the difficulty in coming up with appropriate tests for the true, and so they proffered a definition of *false* cognition: *ayathārthas tu arthavyabhicārī apramāṇajah*:⁴⁰ one which is not in consonance with the real character of that of which it is a cognition; which amounts to saying that a true cognition is a cognition that is not falsified or shown to be false (*avisamvādy’ nubhavaḥ pramā*).⁴¹

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, Nyāya looked upon the test of *pravṛttisāmarthyā* or successful activity as encompassing the first criterion of truth, as we saw earlier, Nyāya demands, namely, conformity of the property with the object cognized. According to Jayanta at least,⁴²

pravṛttisāmarthya succeeds in doing two things: (i) it constitutes a confirmation of the *jñāna* pragmatically by yielding the result or consequence that bears out as it were the character of the object cognised: and (ii) it leads to the discovery, in this way, of the unique character or property, *viz. guṇa* of that object. And if doubt still pervades, then the other criterial marks could be invoked or ascertained. However, for all intents and practical purposes, it could be argued that *if* the tests proposed *ensemble* in Nyāya stand the cognition *fīrm* and confirmed in respect of the absence of its falsity, then by implication, the presence of its truth-character has been vindicated; no further considerations would be necessary, unless perhaps for corroborative dispelling of doubt. This is quite a reasonable program in itself, with an element of criticism built into it. Now taking (a) and (b) together we get the following, somewhat less tendentious view: *truth is what is not known to be false, and can be shown to be true*. We begin to arrive at a position which resembles somewhat the falsificationist versions of truth⁴³ that have come to prominence of late in western epistemology. One implication of this approach is that it does not require the assumption that a cognition, irrespective of the use of a *pramā karaṇa*, is intrinsically true: and it prevents premature rejection of awareness whose direct confirmation has not been forthcoming, with respect to the 'conformity' criterion. It looks for the potential falsification of the *jñāna* in question. If the cognition remains noncontradicted or unfalsified then we could proceed further, with considerations under (b) (above). An appeal to corroboration from other 'marks' would add strength to its claim. In other words, no one test is seen to be decisive under one particular criterion, and no one criterion is taken to express the definition of 'true cognition' (*pramā*); rather they are taken together to work in unison, and collectively give meaning to whatever it is to be *true*.⁴⁴

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.S. *Advaita Siddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (ed.), N.S. Anantakṛṣṇa Sastri; Bombay, 1937.

- B.G.* The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, with comm. of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya; tr. Mahadeva Sastri, Samata Books, Madras, 1977.
- B.H.U.* Banaras Hindu University Publications, Varanasi, India.
- B.P.* *Bhāṣā-pariccheda* with *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* of Viśvanātha; tr. Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1977. Text in: *Nyāyasiddhāntamuktāvalī*, Dharmendra Nath Sastri (ed.), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1977.
- Enc. II:* *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Karl Potter (ed.), Vol. II: Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology-Nyāya Vaiśeṣika . . . to Gaṅgeśa; Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.
- N.K.* *Nyāyakusumāñjali* of Udayana, Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 30, Varanasi, 1957.
- N.M.* *Nyāyamañjarī* of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 106. Varanasi, 1936. Part I.
- N.N.D.N.* *The Navya-nyāya Doctrine of Negation: The Semantics and Ontology of Negative Statements in Navya-nyāya Philosophy*, B. K. Matilal, Harvard Oriental Series, 46. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968.
- N.S.* *Nyāya-sūtra* of Gautama with *bhāṣya* of Vātsyāyana (text. trs) 5 parts, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya and M. Gangopadhyaya (eds.), Indian Studies, Past and Present (series). Calcutta, (1967) 1975.
- P.C.* *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda, with comm. of Prakāśātman; tr. D. Venkataramiah, Gaekwad Oriental Series, (Baroda) CLV, 1958.
- S.S.P.* *Śābdaśaktiprakāśikā* of Jagadīśa (J. A. Bhattacharya (ed.)), Kashi Sanskrit Series No. 109, Varanasi, 1934 (1979).
- T.C.* *Tattvacintāmaṇi* of Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya. Bk. I: Prāmāṇyavāda section, ed. by Pt. Kāmākhyā Nath Tarkavāgīśa, Bibliotheca Indica, No. 98, Calcutta, 1884–1901; also in Mohanty, J. N.: *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth*, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Viśva-Bhāratī, Santiniketan (West Bengal), 1966 (with Introduction, notes, and trs.).
- T.S.* *Tarka-saṅgraha*, with *Dīpikā* (commentary = T.S.D.) of Annambhaṭṭa, tr. and notes by Gopinath Bhattacharya: Progressive Publishers, Calcutta 1958; and text in Athalye (ed.) Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), Poona,

1978. Also in Kuppaswami Sastri's *A Primer to Indian Logic*, The K. S. Research Institute, Madras, 1961.
- V.K. *Vedāntakalpalatikā* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, ed. by Ganganath Jha and Gopinath Kavirāja, Benaras 1920.
- V.P. *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* of Dharmarāja Advarīndra, S. Suryanarayan Sastri (ed.): Adyar Library and Research Series, 34. Madras 1942 (1971).
- V.S. *Vedānta Sāra* of Sadānanda, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1974.

NOTES

A version of this paper was presented in the annual conference of the Australasian Association of Philosophy, 1981, Newcastle, Australia. I am grateful to Professor B. K. Matilal, as also to Professors J. N. Mohanty and Karl H. Potter, with whom some issues herein have been discussed, although another paper would be needed to do justice to some recent problems raised on *prāmāṇya* – see note 29 below.

¹ Such as Max Müller, who translates even '*anubhava*' as *knowledge*: *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* Longmans, London, 1928 (under *Smṛti*); for more recent example see, K. K. Dixit, *Indian Logic: its problems as treated by its schools*, Vaishali, Bihar, 1975.

² For some discussion see my 'Perception (*pratyakṣa*) in Advaita Vedānta', *Philosophy East and West* (Honolulu), Jan. 1980. Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 35–44. And my 'Pramāṇavāda I: Toward an Indian Theory of Knowledge', *Darshana International* (Moradabad), April, 1980.

³ See Potter, *Enc II*, p. 148 for intriguing discussion. cf. Immanuel Kant, 'Analytical Critique of Judgement', and *Critique of Pure Reason* (trs. Norman Kemp Smith), MacMillan, 1970, p. 132. See note 7 below.

⁴ That is to say, independent of intentionality, disregarding the 'intentional inexistence', in the terms of phenomenology; *vide*: J. N. Mohanty: 'Perceptual Consciousness', in *Self, Knowledge and Freedom, Essays for Kalidas Bhattacharyya*, J. N. Mohanty and S. P. Banerjee (eds.), World Press, 1978. Calcutta pp. 93–107.

⁵ B. K. Matilal, *N.N.D.N.* pp. 8ff.

⁶ M. Hiriyanna, 'What is Samavāya', in Kalidas Bhattacharyya (ed.), *Recent Indian Philosophy*, Progressive Publishers, 1963, pp. 212–222, p. 214.

⁷ *N.N.D.N.* p. 6–7; 8–13. Cf. Kant: 'for there is then at least a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgements with each other . . . rests upon the common ground, namely, upon the object, and that it is for this reason they are all in agreement with the object – the truth of the judgement being thereby proved'. *op. cit.* p. 645, (Opining, Knowing, Believing).

⁸ S. K. Maitra, *Fundamental Questions of Indian Metaphysics and Logic*, 2nd ed. University of Calcutta, 1978. p. 63 – 'Subjective awareness' would be a preferable term. (Cf. Kant: 'Subjective sufficiency', *loc. cit.*)

⁹ Akin to "faculty of judgement" of medieval western philosophers. Though it is not clear whether *antahkaraṇa* is a 'unit' like atomic *mind* in Nyāya (and 'brain' in Western

psychology and Identity Thesis), or whether it is a set of *potential* mental states in so far as it is said to be a delimitation of reflective consciousness. The difference between a realist and an idealist epistemology becomes apparent in this analysis. In realist epistemology something inside must make direct contact (or *vice versa*) with the object, with no intervening possibility of ideation, whilst in idealist epistemology the contact is not direct: first there is an illumination, then its relation with something other than itself is sought, which may not be there in all cases.

Manas is more like Aristotle's common sense, and the epistemology resembles his too; whilst Advaita is more Platonic or Socratic, shall we say, accrediting greater reality (relative) to the empiricist world, than Plato did, at least for the purposes of a 'Theory of Knowledge' that covers *all* levels of experience before each is transcended.

Vide VP. Introduction, 2, 3, 4. See my 'Pramāṇa and Contradictions', *Bhāratiya Vidyā* (Bombay). Vol. XLI, June 1981, pp. 40–42 – and also my 'Pramāṇavāda II: prolegomena for valid means of knowing; (Jadavpur, Philosophy Dept. Collections.)

¹⁰ *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* on B. P. 48–49.

¹¹ *Nyāya-sūtra* of Gautama: I.1.15 and Vātsyāyana's *bhāṣya* on I.1.23.

¹² S. K. Maitra *op. cit.* p. 68.

¹³ V. S. 65–69 *Citta* is not used for 'mind' here, but for memory.

¹⁴ See note 9 above. Though it would be true to say that to impute these as 'activities' or 'acts' would be misleading; these are *modes* in which judgement is present whose relation is with the *content* than with the "psychic" modification, *vr̥tti* itself.

¹⁵ See reference in note 2 above.

¹⁶ T. S. 34: *Sarvavyavahārahetur̥ jñānam buddhi; sā dvividhā smṛtiḥ anubhavaśca* (BORI); Kuppaswami 28 p. 13. On its status as *pramā* we return later.

¹⁷ *antaḥkaraṇaviśiṣṭo jīvaḥ; antaḥkaraṇopahitahsākṣī* V.P.I. 98.

¹⁸ Kalidas Bhattacharyya, *Introduction to Advaita Vedānta* L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad. 1975 pp. 44–45.

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁰ *N.N.D.N.* p. 8; 62 ff.

²¹ T. S. 34 *Dīpikā* on 34 (BORI). Also see *Dīpikā* on 63 B.P. 135–6; *tatprakāraṇam jñānam* V.P.I. 83.

²² T. S. *Dīpikā* of author on 35 (BORI).

²³ G. Jha: *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā In its Sources* BHU 1964 p. 68.

²⁴ TS 35 (BORI) Thus in the cognition 'This is a pot', (*ayam ghaṭaḥ*) (*ghaṭa*) 'pot' is the *viśeṣya* (*qualificand*), while potness (*ghaṭatva*) is the *prakāra* or distinguishing feature in the correlate cognition corresponding to the qualifier of pot. The experience of cloth (*paṭaḥ*) cannot have *ghaṭatva* as its *prakāra*. In 'blue pot' experience, *blueness* is the *prakāra* in the cognition, while the same *blueness* is the *viśeṣaṇa* of the pot itself.

²⁵ *ibid* translation is adapted from Karl Potter, in 'Toward a Conceptual Scheme for Indian Epistemologies', in *Self, Knowledge and Freedom* (ed.), (*op. cit.*) 1978. pp. 17–30. Cf. Vātsyāyana on Nyāyasūtra I.1.1. (*bhāṣya: arthavati ca pramāṇe pramātā prameyam pramītir ity arthathavanti bhavanti*). Here *arthavatva* or *arthasārūpya* is the designation for 'copy presentation' or correspondence.

²⁶ T. S. 35 *Dīpikā*. cf. *ayathārthaḥ tu arthavyabhicārī aparmāṇajaḥ* – *Nyāyamañjarī* of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa p. 12.

²⁷ The most exposite accounts on doubt are given by J. N. Mohanty, see his *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth*, [See under T. C. (Abbreviations)], esp. Introduction (perhaps also one of the better summaries of issues in Indian problem of truth); 'Nyāya Theory of

Doubt', reprinted in his *Phenomenology and Ontology* Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1970.

²⁸ Professor Karl Potter has recently contested the conventional view of Indian 'theory of truth' (if there be one only) in opting for a more Value-pragmatist oriented theory on which, apparently, much talk on *prāmāṇya* is ultimately based: '*Prāmāṇya* as Meaning Divorced from Truth-Conditions', Jadavpur, International Conference in Philosophy, Jan. 1983 (unpublished).

²⁹ Jayanta: *Nyāyamañjarī op. cit.* pp. 55–60.

³⁰ *Tarka-bhāṣā* p. 2, p. 37, N. N. Kulkarni (ed.), 1920 (1953: Oriental Series No. 16 Poona) (1920 Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, No. LXXXIV).

³¹ The point remains that 'awareness of the truth' is not simultaneous with the judgement in question, although this may arise in a reflective awareness, or *anuvyavasāya*: awareness of awareness, a sort of a second-order knowing. Udayana in *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, pp. 220–30.

³² For a linguistic approach to 'revelation', see my '*Śruti* and *Apauruṣeya*: an approach to Religious Scriptures and Revelation' *Journal of Darma* (Bangalose) July-Sept 1982. Vol. II No. 3 pp. 275–291. Cf. Śāṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* on I. iii. 28, reference to *śruti*, *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*.

³³ *loc. cit.* (note 31 above).

³⁴ V. P. VII I (*Svataḥprāmāṇyavāda*).

³⁵ Jayanta argues that people couldn't be fooled too easily in trusting their judgements on day-to-day experiences. *op. cit.* p. 159.

³⁶ *tacca jñanasāmānyasāmagrīprayojayam. loc. cit.* (V. P.) Compare Jayanta on similar tendency towards denying the interpolation of a 'special, extraordinary, causal condition: *Nyāyamañjarī, op. cit.* pp. 150–158.

³⁷ Phyllis Granoff (note 41 below) and P. K. Sundaram (note 39 below).

³⁸ V. P. *loc. cit.*

³⁹ *vide* P. K. Sundaram, *Advaita Epistemology*, University of Madras, 1968 Madras p. 7 in fn 18a.

⁴⁰ *Tarka-bhāṣā* see note 29 and 30 above.

⁴¹ See, Phyllis Granoff, *Philosophy and Argument in Late Vedānta*, D. Reidel Publ. Co., Dordrecht, Holland, 1978 p. 35.

⁴² *Nyāyamañjarī op. cit.* pp. 55–60.

⁴³ See Lakatos, I. and Musgrave, A. *Criticism and Growth of Knowledge* Cambridge University, Press, 1974. Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*. Routledge, Kegan and Paul, London, 1969.

Although, it should be noted, the Indian criterion of falsification did not seek reduction of conflicting evidence into *formal* logical contradictions (as derived from, say, *modus tollens*) as the Popperian methodological proposal requires; thus the problem of finding basic observation statements that can be substituted as falsifiers of derivations in a theoretical system does not arise for the Indian parallel, as theirs was a more pragmatic problem of detecting inconsistencies in certain sorts of experience (*anubhava*, *jñāna*, *pramā* etc.)

⁴⁴ Some further analysis that involved high technicality have been omitted here.

For an outline see my '*Śabda-pramāṇa* – an argument for the thesis that *Śabda* ('word') is a means of knowing', *Vedānta Kesari* (Madras), February, 1973, pp. 55–58.