

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON KHYATI VADA (THEORY OF ERROR) OF NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

“Error” is an epistemological concept. As such, it is contrasted with truth. While the truth-claim of a judgment is not challenged, it is accepted as true and when such truth-claim is challenged, it is regarded as erroneous. Philosophers, while dealing with the concept of error, have analyzed it from logical, metaphysical and psychological points of views. The problem of Error in Indian philosophy is discussed in the different theories known as the Khyati vadas. According to the Nyaya School of Philosophy error is known as anyathakhyativada. Here “anyatha” refers to something else from what it is, while ‘Khyati’ denotes false knowledge. Thus, this view indicates that the object of illusion is a real object that is seen by error as another real object. When taken separately the nacre and the silver are real on their own accord, but unreality creeps in when it comes to their relation as “nacre-silver”. In this instance, the nacre is mistaken to be silver that is found in some other locus like a jewelry shop, or in a Silversmith’s anvil. Great skill is exercised by the later Naiyayika school in trying to explain the perceptual character of illusory experience. Undoubtedly, in an illusion, there is the attribution of false character to a perceived fact.

Key words: Khyati vadas, Naiyayikas, anyatha khyati

Introduction:

Every school of Indian Philosophy developed its own theory of error (known as Khyativada) made to fit its epistemology and metaphysics. The Concept of Error (Khyativada) in Indian Philosophy is a discussion of the illusory or false knowledge (Aprma) as against True knowledge (prama). The concept of error is a very important one to the philosophers of India as it is related to the problem of knowledge. (Mohanthy, J.N., 2000)

Khyativada, include the discussion of various theories pertaining to the problem of error in Indian philosophy. Since Khyati denotes knowledge, Khyativada may be inferred as the theory of knowledge. However, the question arises here as to how the theory of knowledge is inferred to be the theory of error! In India philosophy (unlike as in the western tradition).

Since knowledge includes both true and false perceptions and as the discussion of Khyativada are made only when it comes to Brahma or falsity, every theory happens to be an opinion about the nature of the cognitive content of the knowledge that is erroneous.