UNIT 8: THE MIM}MS} THEORY OF ERROR: AKHY}TIV}DA AND VIPARITY}KHYTIV}DA

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the sources of knowledge in Mim"ms" system,
- explain the nature of knowledge,
- discuss the non-perceptual sources of knowledge,
- explain the 'Theories of Error' in Mim"ms" system.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Jaimini (400 B.C.), the founder of the Mim"ms" system wrote the Mim"ms" s$tra. There are two schools in Mim"ms" system. They are the Bhatta and the Prabh"-kara Schools. The Bhatta School was propounded by Kum"rila Bhatta. On the other, the Prabh"-kara School was propounded by Prabh"kara Mishra. The Mim"ms" is called P$rva Mimamsa, because it deals with the earlier portions of the Veda, i.e., the Mantra and the Brahman. These two portions of the Veda deal with actions, rituals and the sacrifices. Therefore, the Mim"ms"- system is also known as Karma Mim"ms".

In this unit we are going to discuss the Mim"ms" theory of knowledge. Mim"ms"- theory of knowledge is concerned with the prama-

nas or the sources of knowledge. Although Jaimini admits only three sources of knowledge, viz., perception, inference and testimony, yet Prabh"kara and Kum"rila School have added another three more pram"nas. They are- comparison, implication and non-apprehension. Besides, these sources of knowledge, anyath"-khy"ti or Viparitakhy"ti theory of error of Kum"rila and Akhy"ti or Vivekakhy"ti theory of error of Prav"kara, have been discussed in the unit.

8.3 NATURE OF VALID KNOWLEDGE

According to Mim"ms"- system, valid knowledge is that which provides new information about something and which is not contradicted by any other knowledge or defective conditions. The Mim"ms"- System admits two kinds of valid knowledge. They are immediate and mediate knowledge. When an existing object is related to our mind then immediate knowledge is involved. It can be said that immediate knowledge is a direct acquaintance of an object. It indicates that there is something, but we do not get the complete knowledge about the object. Therefore, this immediate or indeterminate knowledge is called nirvikalpa pratyak^a.

On the other hand mediate knowledge is indirect knowledge. When we explain an object in the light of the previous knowledge of the object then mediate knowledge occurs. This knowledge can show specifically what the object is. It is not just a mere knowledge of something like existing an object only (immediate knowledge). It can show that 'this is photograph', 'This is Indira Gandhi' etc.

Kum"-rila and Prabh"kara's view on Valid Knowledge: Kum"rila and Prabh"kara regard apprehension as a means of valid knowledge. Kum"rila holds that valid knowledge is a result of a cognitive act. But Prav"kara does not hold this view. He opines that valid knowledge is not inferable from cognizedness of its object (From knowledge of an object). He identifies pram"na or means of knowledge with valid knowledge. He holds that all cognitions are valid. And an invalid knowledge is due to the disagreement with the real nature of the object. So, it is clear that invalid knowledge or

wrongness does not belong to the knowledge themselves, but to the objects cognized. Like Prav"kara, Kum"rila also holds that wrongness of the object is due to the disagreement with the real nature of the object.

Kum"rila advocates for intrinsic validity of knowledge and extrinsic invalidity of knowledge. According to Kum"rila, knowledge is valid in itself. It depends on its essential nature, which is not contradicted by any other knowledge. On the other hand, invalidity of knowledge is due to the external conditions of knowledge, which is contradicted by other knowledge.

8.4 SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

J"mini, the founder of the Mim"ms" system admits three pram"nas. They are perception, inference and testimony. Prabh"kara Mishra, the founder of the Prabh"kara School adds comparison and implication to perception, inference and testimony. Kum"rila Bhatta, the founder of Bhatta School adds non-apprehension to perception, inference, comparison, testimony, implication.



ACTIVITY 8.1

Do you find any similarity between Ny"ya and Mim"ms"- kind of inference? Discuss

Ans: .....

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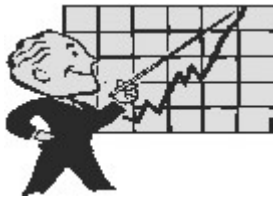
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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who is the founder of the Mim"ms"-system?

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Q 2: Write the names of propounder of Bhatta and Mishra school.

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Q 3: What are the two kinds of valid knowledge?

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Q 4: What is mediate knowledge? (Answer in about 20 words)

.....

Q 5: Fill in the blanks:

a) ..... deals with the earlier portions of the Veda.

b) The Prabh"kara school was propounded by .....

c) Jaimini admits

.....

d) ..... admits non-apprehension as the source of valid knowledge

8.5 THEORIES OF ERROR

The intrinsic validity of knowledge of the Mim"ms" system holds that all knowledge is self valid. It also holds that knowledge is intrinsically valid. Invalidity of knowledge is due to the contradiction or defect involved in the causes of knowledge. Now, the question arises as to, if all knowledge is valid in the Mimamsa system, how does error come into light? In reply, Prav"kara and Kum"rila answer it quite differently.

Let us now discuss the two different theories respectively.

Viveka Khyati theory of error (Prabh"kara): The word ‘khy"ti’ implies knowledge and the word ‘akhy"ti’ means no knowledge. According to Prabh"kara, the term ‘error’ is not a unit of knowledge; rather it is a combination of two jnanas or knowledge. As for instance, when ‘shell is mistaken for silver’, we say that this is silver. The ‘this’ is actually perceived

and the certain features of shell which are considered as common with silver. The knowledge of those features revives in our mind the impression of a former experience and consequently we recollect silver. Therefore, the concept of error, according to Prabh"kara, consists of two jn">as or knowledge, one, is perception and the other is memory. And the concept of error involves when the perceptual knowledge of 'shell' is considered as 'silver' due to recollection of the past impression of 'silver'. As a result, the perceptual knowledge of 'shell' is contradicted and we perceive it as the other that is 'silver'. Perceptual knowledge is different from memory knowledge. The knowledge of 'shell', which is involved through perception, cannot be equated or identified with the knowledge of silver, which is involved through memory or recollection. That is why, error occurs when perceptual knowledge of shell, that is actual, is mispresented as silver due to the recollection of the past knowledge of silver. The former knowledge is claimed to be valid and the claim is justified. The later knowledge does not claim to be valid and the claim is not justified. Prabh"kara holds that knowledge can never be false due to its logical nature. That is why, there is no error as far as knowledge is concerned. According to Prabh"kara, error arises in case of knowledge when we fail to accept memory as a kind of knowledge in the context of when shell is mistaken for silver, here, there are two kinds of knowledge involved, one is perceptual knowledge and other is memory knowledge. Therefore, error is involved when we fail to accept the distinction between perceptual knowledge and memory knowledge and also ignore the former kind of knowledge as the other knowledge. (that is, the result of the later knowledge). This failure by itself cannot account for error, because, if it is, it would occur also in dreamless sleep. Thus, the state of dreamless sleep is characterized by absence of sleep. As we consider there is commonness between shell (this) and silver, so we consider it as silver on the basis of the similarity. Therefore, the knowledge which we gather is incomplete or partial knowledge. As for instance, a white crystal placed by the side of the red flower may be wrongly regarded as red crystal. Here also, we have two jn">as. One is the perception of the red crystal through the sensation of red flower and the other is perception of white crystal.

These two jnanas are also considered as valid, because both the knowledge is derived through the senses. Initially, they provide two jnanas which are incomplete or partial regarding the objects. As they provide incomplete or partial knowledge of the objects, crystal and flower, therefore error lies in the contiguity of the objects, not in the similarity or commonness of the two jnanas. The distinction between the two j="nas as well as the objects is not grasped before, therefore, error arises in the context of the knowledge. M. Hiriyanna in his book *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* points out that the akhy"ti view lays down two conditions—— one positive and the other negative for error becoming possible at all——a partial knowledge of the things presented and a failure to note the distinction between them.

Prav"kara explains through example that illusion occurs when 'nacre' is perceived as 'silver'. Here, nacre has the quality of brightness, which is perceived. Again 'silver' also has the same quality of brightness, which is remembered or recollected. Therefore, the distinction between the perception (nacre) and recollection (silver) is not apprehended. As a result, we perceive 'nacre' as the silver. In the illusion of 'this is silver', the two elements of perception and recollection are not distinguished, only the common quality that is brightness is found between nacre and silver, is considered as the main cause which leads to the illusion 'this is silver'. In the context of this illusion, we do not distinguish between perception and recollection and perceive the present given object, which is not indeed silver, as silver. Here, the knowledge of silver is recollected or remembered due to its quality of brightness. But there is a distinction between perception and recollection, which is non-apprehended in case of 'this is silver'. Therefore, Prav"kara holds that error or illusion is due to non-apprehension or non-discrimination between the elements of perception and recollection.

Prabh"kara holds that all apprehension is valid. It means, what is apprehended is valid and what is not apprehended is considered invalid. In case of "this is silver", nacre is perceived, and therefore, it is valid. But 'silver' is not perceived, so, it is invalid, to Prabh"kara. He distinguishes between truth and error from practical viewpoint. The knowledge or object which leads to the successful action is true and which leads to the

unsuccessful action is false. It is clear that Prabh"kara distinguishes truth and error from practical utility.

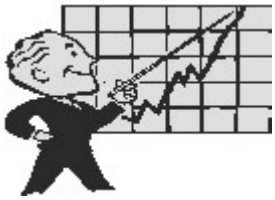
Now, let us proceed to another theory of error.

B. **Kum"rila** holds the theory of viparityakhy"ti or anyath"khy"ti. This theory holds that error is due to misperception or false perception. In the illusion 'this is silver', this or 'nacre' is misperceived as silver due to the common quality of brightness, which was perceived in the past. Kum"rila regards error as false perception or misperception of one object as another. He considers error as positive false knowledge. It is due to misidentification of the remembered element with the perceived element.

According to Kum"rila, knowledge always points to an object which is directly perceived. For instance, this (shell) is perceived as silver. Here, shell is directly given, but silver is not perceived or given. Like Prabh"kara, Kumarila also makes a distinction between perceived and non-perceived element of objects in case of knowledge. The difference between the two views or theories is that the akhyati theory is due to the misperception or non-apprehension of the distinction between perceived or presentative and non-perceived or representative elements in case of knowledge. While, the viparitya-khy"ti theory holds that error is due to the wrong-synthesis of the given or perceived and not-given or non-perceived element of objects. The akhy"ti theory holds that error is due to the omission because it fails to apprehend some relevant part of what is given or perceived. On the other hand, the Kum"rila theory holds that error is due to the commission because it wrongly synthesizes the presentative (given) and representative (not-given) cognition of objects. Here, the subject and predicate elements seem to be related or included in the example like 'this is silver", but that is not seen in reality. Similarly, we can take another example of 'red crystal'. The two relata, namely, 'redness' and 'crystal' are actually given, but they are not unified in fact or wrongly synthesised. And as a result the concept of error appears. Thus, according to Kum"rila, error is the partial misrepresentation or misapprehension of the object.

Kum"rila differs from Prabh"kara in the context that error is due to wrong synthesis between the perceived and remembered element. It is not

due to non-discrimination or non-apprehension between perception and recollection. In short, error is not akhy"ti or non-apprehension but misrepresentation. Error is also regarded as valid knowledge as long as it is not obstructed by real knowledge. As for instance, nacre is considered as valid knowledge as long as nacre is not replaced by silver (real object). Therefore, true knowledge of silver can remove the misrepresentation or false perception. As a result, nacre is not misperceived as silver. That is why, error is positive false knowledge, which is removed by true knowledge. Very briefly speaking, Kum"rila maintains the Viparita theory of error from logical point of view, while Prabh"kara formulates the Viveka khy"ti theory of error from practical standpoint. Prabh"kara holds that error lies in the non-apprehension or non-discrimination of the two elements, perception and memory in the context of knowledge. And error ultimately disappears, to Prabh"kara, when we apprehend the distinction between the elements of knowledge.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What are the two stages of perception?

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Q 7: Give an example of inference

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Q 8: What is sv"rthanum"na?

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Q 9: Give an example of comparison or upam"na?

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Q 10: Who advocates the theory of akhy"ti or vivekakhy"ti?

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Q 11: What is viparityakhy"ti or anthyakhy"ti? (Answer in about 50 words)

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Q 12: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Prabh"-kara holds that negation or non-existence is an positive entity.

b) Kum"-rila holds that non-apprehension is an independent category.

c) Pauruseya relates to the trustworthy persons.



8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Jaimini is the founder of the Mim"ms" System, who wrote the Mim"ms" sutra.
- Kum"rila Bhatta propounded the Bhatta School in Mim"ms" system.
- Prabh"kara Mishra Propounded the Prabh"kara school.
- Mim"ms" system is known as karma mim"ms". It deals with actions, rituals and Sacrifices.
- Mim"ms" system is also called Purva Mim"ms", because it deals with the early portions of the Veda.
- Jaimini admits Perception, Inference and Testimony as the sources of knowledge.
- Prabh"kara and Kum"rila add another three sources of knowledge. They are: Comparison, Implication and Non-apprehension. Kum"rila admits five- pramanas, while Prabhakara admits six-pramanas.
- Mim"ms"- system admits two kinds of knowledge: Mediate and Immediate
- Mediate knowledge is indirect knowledge. On the other hand immediate knowledge is direct knowledge of something.
- Prav"kara and Kum"rila admit determinate and indeterminate perception.
- According to Prabh"kara, there are two kinds of inference: Sv"rtha anumana and Par"rtha anum"na.
- Upam"na is the knowledge of similarity of the perceived object in the present.

- Presumption is an assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two perceived facts.
- Verbal testimony is of two kinds: Personal or Pauruseya and Impersonal (aparuseya). The former relates to the trustworthy persons. On the other hand the Vedic knowledge is impersonal.
- Prav"kara holds the theory of akhyati or vivekakhy"ti. According to this theory, error is due to non-apprehension between perception and memory.
- Kum"rila advocates the theory of viparityakhy"ti or anthyakhy"ti. It holds that error is involved due to misrepresentation of object.



8.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Chatterjee, S.C. & Dutta, D.M. (1958). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. University of Calcutta
2) Sharma, C.D. (1973). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
3) Radhakrishnan, S. (1923). *Indian Philosophy (2 volumes)*. Oxford: University Press.
4) Hiriyanna, M. (1993) *Outlines of Indian philosophy.*Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass publishers pvt Ltd
5) Dasgupta, S.N. () *A History of Indian Philosophy.* Motilal Banarasi Publication
6) Sinha, Jadunath. () *Indian Philosophy.* Motilal Banarasi Publication
7) Kappor, Subodh. ( ) *The Systems of Indian Philosophy. Motilal Banarasi Das Publication*



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Jaimini

Ans to Q No 2: Prabh"kara Mishra and Kum"rila Bhatta

Ans to Q No 3: Immediate and Mediate knowledge

Ans to Q No 4: When we explain an object in the light of the previous knowledge of the object then mediate knowledge occurs.

Ans to Q No 5: a) Pu-rva Mi-ma-m. sa- b) Prabh"kara Mishra
c) Three d) Prabh"kara Mishra

Ans to Q No 6: Determinate perception and indeterminate perception

Ans to Q No 7: From the perception of smoke in the hill, we infer that there is fire in the hill is the example of inference.

Ans to Q No 8: When inference is made for oneself then sv"- rthanum"- na comes into existence.

Ans to Q No 9: As for instance, 'the knowledge of a wild cow' depends on the similarity of a cow perceived in the past leads to the knowledge of upama- na or comparison.

Ans to Q No 10: Prabh"kara

Ans to Q No 11: According to this theory, error occurs due to misperception or false perception. In the illusion- 'this is silver', this or 'nacre' is misperceived as silver due to the common quality of brightness, which was perceived in the past. Kumarila, who advocates this theory, considers error as false perception or misperception of one object as another.

Ans to Q No 12: a) True b)True c)True



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q 1: Who is the founder of Mim"ms"- system?

Q 2: What are the sources of knowledge of Mim"ms"- system?

Q 3: Who advocates the theory of akhy"ti or vivekakhy"ti?

Q 4: Mention the name of the founder of Prabh"kara School.

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about100-150 words)

Q 1: What is mediate knowledge?

Q 2: Briefly explain the sources of valid knowledge.

Q 3: What is non-apprehension? Briefly explain.

Q 4: Discuss briefly the theory of vivekakhy"ti.

Q 5: Who advocates the theory of viparityakhy"ti? Briefly explain.

C. Short notes on (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Presumption

Q 2: Comparison

Q 3: Non-apprehension

D. Distinguish between (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Determinate and indeterminate perception

Q 2: Akhy"ti or vivekakhy"ti and viparityakhy"ti or anyath"khy"ti

E. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the nature of valid knowledge.

Q 2: Define perception? Is it an independent source of knowledge? Discuss

Q 3: What is an inference? Discuss it with an example.

Q 4: Define verbal testimony? Discuss it as a pram"na.

Q 5: Explain the theories of error of Mim"ms" system? Discuss

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