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The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge

B.A. 1st Semester

CC-1

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Nyāya

- ▶ Nyāya is a prominent Hindu philosophical school focused on epistemology, particularly on knowledge sources (pramāṇa) akin to reliabilism, supporting default justification of veridical cognition.

Epistemology

- ▶ The Nyāya-sūtra focuses on epistemology, metaphysics, procedures of inquiry, and debate theory. It emphasizes the importance of epistemic success for achieving happiness and distinguishes itself through its reflective approach to evidence, doubt, and knowledge objects, defining its method as the "investigation of a subject by means of knowledge-sources."

The Characteristics of Perception

- ▶ Perceptual cognition occurs through the direct connection between sense faculty and object, independent of language, consistent, and decisive in nature.

The Characteristics of Perception

- ▶ This sūtra provides four conditions which must be met for cognition to be perceptual. The first, that cognition arises from the connection between sense faculty and object, evinces Nyāya's direct realism

The connections between sense faculty and object

- ▶ Uddyotakara outlines six types of connection (sannikarṣa) to explain perception of substances, properties, absences, etc.: (i) conjunction (samyoga) between sense faculty and object; (ii) inherence in the conjoined (saṁyukta-samavāya) between sense faculty and property-trope; (iii) inherence in what inheres in the conjoined (saṁyukta-samaveta-samavāya) between sense faculty and instantiated universal in a property-trope;

The connections between sense faculty and object

- ▶ (iv) Inherence (samavāya): Enables auditory perception.
- ▶ (v) Inherence in what inheres (samaveta-samavāya): Links auditory faculty to universals inhering within sounds.
- ▶ (vi) Qualifier-qualified relation (viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa-bhāva): Facilitates perception of inherence and absence in objects.
- ▶ In each case, perceptual cognition arises from the connection between a sense faculty and an occurring fact or object.

The second condition of perception

- ▶ The condition that cognition is not dependent on words in Nyāya philosophy has a nuanced history. While Nyāya acknowledges concept deployment in ordinary perception, it differs from the Buddhist view that perception is purely non-conceptual (kalpanā-apodha).

The second condition of perception

- ▶ The term *avyapadeśya* distinguishes perceptual from testimonial cognition, where the latter involves semantic and syntactic knowledge in addition to sensory information. Another interpretation suggests that perception, while involving concepts, often precedes verbal expression causally.

The Third condition of perception

- ▶ The third condition in Nyāya philosophy, "non-deviating," ensures that pramāṇas are error-free, excluding false cognitions like mistaking an oyster shell for silver, which are termed pseudo-pramāṇas (pramāṇa-ābhāsa). This reflects Nyāya's view that pramāṇas, such as perception, are inherently reliable and lead to genuine knowledge.

The Fourth condition of perception

- ▶ The "determinate" condition in Nyāya philosophy ensures that pramāṇas provide clear and accurate apprehension of their objects, excluding merely doubtful perceptions like seeing a distant figure at dusk, which lacks clarity in identifying the object.



**THANK
YOU**