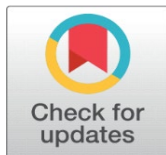
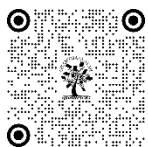


PERCEPTION IN JAINA PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

The etymological meaning of the word ‘Pramāṇa’ is ‘Pramiyate anena tat Pramanan’ i.e., valid knowledge is that by means of which something is known. “Pramāṇa is definite valid knowledge of itself and of other things not proved before (PM 1.1)”. Knowledge illuminates itself as well as other objects. In this definition of Pramāṇa all words are significant and have definite purposes to serve. Jaina thinker concerned that they attach more importance to the instrumental meaning as it alone gives us the true meaning of the word ‘Pramāṇa’. Acharya Prabhācandra holds that Pramāṇa may be derived in three ways. In the first place, the affix ‘Anat’ may be held to be used in active voice meaning i.e., that which knows rightly is Pramāṇa. Here it refers to the nature of a soul which is a knower inherently. From the definition of Pramāṇa as laid down by Manikyanandi it is evident that Pramāṇa is that which gives knowledge of itself and other objects not previously ascertained. This derivation of the word signifies that just as a lamp illumines itself as well as other objects. Secondly, the suffix may be used in the sense of instrumentality. In this sense the word Pramāṇa would mean that by which right knowledge is obtained; just as light shines when obstructions to it are removed, so right knowledge will also illumine when karmic obstructions are partially or totally removed. Thirdly, the word Pramāṇa is used in the Bhāvavaeaya where the emphasis of the suffix is on the verb only and the meaning is almost the same as in the active voice. The Sarvārthasiddhī of Pūjyapāda and Tatvārtharajavartika of Akalanka also give all the three senses of the word Pramāṇa and say that it can be understood according to one’s choice in any of three senses mentioned above.

Keywords: Pramāṇa, Jaina, Objects



1. INTRODUCTION

The grammarian Jainendra Vyākaraṇa says the suffix ‘Anat’ is used only in the sense of karana (instrumentality) and Adhāra. So how is it possible to suffix it either in the active voice or passive intranaitive voice? The reply to this query is given by Acharya Prabhācandra in his Prameyakamalamārtanda. He maintains that although this aphorism exists in the Jainendra Vyākaraṇa, still we may accept the principle that there are certain exceptions in it.

In the definition of Pramāṇa as given by Manikyanandi all terms are significant and they have been used to refute the definitions of other systems. The word Jñāna states that the Jaina doctrine does not follow the view of Naiyāyikans because Pramāṇa according to them consists of the connection of the senses with the objects. According to Yogācāra everything is knowledge and there is nothing to be cognized. The Vedāntins maintain that everything is Brahmana and what we observe in this world is nothing but Maya or illusion. Brahman is existence, consciousness, and bliss and it alone is real. Mādhyānikas asserts that reality is essence and it is void. It does not exist nor does it non-exist, nor is it existence as well as non-existence, nor is it distinct from existence and non-existence. To refute the views of all these three systems, the word Artha is used and it is maintained by Jaina thinkers that the object like soul is real and it exists in its real essence. The word ‘Sva’ is used to distinguished the Jaina definition of Pramāṇa from that of Nyaya, Samkhya, Mimamsa and Yoga

philosophies. In these systems Pramāṇa does not include the knowledge of itself and as well as of other objects known at the same time. We have observed that most of the systems do not hold Pramāṇa to be the knowledge of itself and other objects. The main difference between other systems and the Jaina system is this that in Jaina system valid knowledge, like the sun or the lamp shines itself and illumines other objects as well. Since, Pramāṇa is definite knowledge according to Jaina thinkers so indefinite type of knowledge maintained by Buddhists as the knowledge of Nirvikalpa things cannot be accepted as the valid form of knowledge.

According to Jaina thinker, the validity of Pramāṇa arises from itself or through another. In other words, in the case of objects with which we are already familiar the Pramāṇya arises by itself and in the case of those objects which are not familiar to us, the Pramāṇya arises through others. For instance, when we see a pond or garden previously known many times in our village, the validity in such cases does not require the help of other instruments of knowledge but arises of itself. But when we see a reservoir of water not seen before on any occasion, we may have a doubt first whether it is really water or a mirage. Then we make use of inference and say that as we are having a small of lotuses, feeling cool wind etc., it must be water and no mirage. So, in this case our knowledge is valid through the help of inference. The followers of the system of Nyāya hold that Pramāṇya always arises through others while Mimamsakas hold that it arises by itself. In order to refute the views of these systems, the Jaina thinkers maintain that the validity of a Pramāṇa is either by itself or through the help of others.

Jaina thinkers have divided Pramāṇa into two kinds: - Pratyakṣa (direct knowledge) and Parokṣa (indirect knowledge). All Jaina logicians especially after Uma Swami admit two Pramāṇas. The distinction between Pratyakṣa and Parokṣa is pointed out in the Tatvarth sutra of Umaswati and the Pravacanasara of Kunda-Kunda. Manikyanandi defines Pratyakṣa to be that knowledge which is clear and vivid. Clearness is the main characteristic of Pratyakṣa. 'Akṣa' in Jain philosophy means soul, so that knowledge which is derived from the soul directly is called Pratyakṣa. The core of Jaina perceptual theory is based on the premise that knowledge arises from direct contact with the object of perception (Shah, 2004). Perception in Jaina philosophy holds a distinct and comprehensive place, embodying a multi-layered understanding of how knowledge is acquired. Unlike many other Indian philosophical traditions that focus on sensory perception alone, Jaina thinkers explore perception in a broader and layered manner. Jainism identifies four types of transcendental perception i.e., śrutu, avadhi, manahparyaya and Kevala. These forms of perception are essential in understanding Jaina metaphysical and ethical doctrines, as they provide insights that transcend mundane sensory experience (Umāsvāti, 2007).

- **Śrutu (Scriptural Knowledge):** Śruta-jñāna refers to knowledge derived from scriptures, texts, or verbal testimony. While śruta involves mediated knowledge, Jainism holds it as a valid form of perception because it connects an individual to the wisdom passed down by enlightened beings (Tatia, 1951).
- **Avadhi (Clairvoyance):** Avadhi-jñāna denotes knowledge of distant or subtle objects that are inaccessible to the senses. This type of perception is particularly relevant in Jaina cosmology, as it reflects the capacity to perceive objects and events beyond ordinary sensory limitations. Avadhi is said to be attainable through rigorous spiritual practices (Shah, 2004).
- **Manahparyaya (Telepathy):** Manahparyaya-jñāna refers to the perception of thoughts and mental states of others. This knowledge, unique to highly advanced beings, is considered a product of intense mental purity and is distinct from ordinary modes of interconnectedness of all living beings (Jaini, 1998).
- **Kevala (Omniscience):** Kevala-jñāna, or omniscience, is the highest form of knowledge in Jaina philosophy. Achievable only by liberated souls, kevala encompasses complete, unobstructed perception of all objects in their entirety, across time and space. Jainism holds kevala as the ultimate perceptual state, symbolizing liberation from the constraints of sensory perception and karmic limitations (Umāsvāti, 2007).

2. TYPES OF PRATYAKṢA

- 1) **Mukhya Pratyakṣa (Transcending the Limitations of Sensory Perception):** Mukhya pratyakṣa is also known as parāmāṛthika pratyakṣa, operates on a completely different level. It is described as the direct knowledge that arises within the self, independent of any sensory input or mental processing.

Mukhya pratyakṣa is considered a superior and more direct form of perception. It is accessible only when the obscuring veils of karma are completely removed. This state of unhindered perception is primarily achieved in the state of liberation, where the soul, freed from the limitations imposed by karma, can directly apprehend reality in its purest form. This concept highlights the limitations of ordinary sensory perception, suggesting that our senses and mind, while essential for navigating the world, can act as a barrier to receiving the true nature of reality. Only through the purification of the soul and the removal of karmic obstructions can one attain the clarity of mukhya pratyakṣa.

- 2) **Samvyavahārika Pratyakṣa (The Realm of Sensory Experience):** Samvyavahārika Pratyakṣa means aligning with the conventional understanding of perception in other Indian philosophical schools, which relies on the five senses and the mind to acquire knowledge. However, Jainism sets itself apart by proposing a unique four-stage process within Samvyavahārika Pratyakṣa, providing a nuanced understanding of how we perceive and process sensory information.

3. PAROKṢA PRAMĀṆA: UNVEILING THE FIVE AVENUES OF INDIRECT KNOWLEDGE

Parokṣa Pramāṇa is that knowledge which is not clear. It is indirect while Pratyakṣa is direct. According to Jain scriptures the knowledge which is derived from senses and the mind is called Parokṣa. Parokṣa Pramāṇa is of five types, namely, smṛti (memory), Pratyabhijñā (recognition), tarka (knowledge of universal concomitance), anumāna (inference), and āgama (scriptures). Of these memory is dependent on a previous experience; recognition depends on remembrance and perception; knowledge of universal concomitance depends on memory, recognition and perception; inference depends on the knowledge of problems and scriptural knowledge depends on hearing words. Thus we observe that in each variety of Parokṣa Pramāṇa there is a dependence on another piece of cognition while there is no such dependence in Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa. Five types of Parokṣa Pramāṇa are:

- **Smṛti: The Faculty of Remembering**

Smṛti, or recollection, refers to the mental faculty of retrieving past experiences and knowledge stored as impressions in our memory. This involves accessing the "storehouse" of our past experiences to gain knowledge about something. For instance, remembering a childhood event or recalling a fact learned previously exemplifies smṛti.

- **Pratyabhijñāna: Recognition and Synthetic Judgment**

Pratyabhijñāna means "recognition". It is a cognitive process that combines immediate perception with recollection to arrive at a judgment, either of identity or dissimilarity. This involves comparing a present perception with past experiences to determine its relation to our existing knowledge. For example, recognizing a familiar face in a crowd or identifying a previously encountered object involves pratyabhijñāna.

Tarka: Reasoning and the Principle of Invariable Concomitance

Tarka or reasoning plays a crucial role in expanding our knowledge beyond the immediate data of our senses. It relies on the principle of invariable concomitance (vyāpti), which observes the consistent co-occurrence or absence of two phenomena to infer a relationship between them. For instance, observing that smoke is always accompanied by fire allows us to reason that the presence of smoke indicates the presence of fire, even if the fire itself is not directly visible.

- **Anumāna: The Power of Inference**

Building upon the foundations of tarka, anumāna, or inference, is a method of deducing the existence of an unperceived object based on its invariable relation to a perceived object. It is a more structured form of reasoning, employing a logical framework to arrive at conclusions about things not directly accessible to our senses. For example, inferring that there is fire (unperceived) because there is smoke (perceived), based on our understanding of their invariable relationship, exemplifies anumāna.

- **Āgama: The Authority of Scriptural Testimony**

Āgama, literally meaning "that which has come down", refers to verbal testimony or scriptural authority. In the context of Jainism, āgama primarily emphasizes the teachings of āptas, enlightened beings who have attained liberation and whose words are considered authoritative and free from error. This reliance on scriptural authority stems from the belief that the teachings of liberated beings provide the most reliable path to attaining liberation oneself.

4. EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PERCEPTION

In Jaina philosophy, perception is grounded in the theory of *anekāntavāda*, or the doctrine of manifold viewpoints. *Anekāntavāda* posits that reality is complex and multifaceted, thus requiring multiple modes of perception to comprehend its full nature. This epistemological perspective supports the view that no single perception or viewpoint can capture the entirety of truth (Shah, 2004).

The complementary doctrine of *syādvāda* (conditional predication) further elaborates on Jaina epistemology, arguing that every statement or perception is only conditionally true, depending on perspective and context. These doctrines underline the Jaina belief that knowledge acquisition is a gradual, cumulative process, evolving through different stages of perception (Tatia, 1951).

5. CONCLUSION

Perception in Jaina philosophy, thus, is not only a means of knowledge acquisition but also a tool for spiritual evolution, guiding the individual from ignorance to omniscience. By embracing diverse forms of perception, Jainism offers a holistic view of reality, reinforcing the belief that liberation is attainable through the progressive refinement of one's perceptual faculties. This approach highlights the Jaina vision of a harmonious existence, wherein knowledge, ethics, and liberation are inseparably linked.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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