

Nyaya definition and classification of Pratyaksha (perception)

The Nyaya philosophy was founded by the great sage Gautama. It is primarily concerned with epistemology and logic, and secondarily with ontology. It deals with the sources of knowledge: they are perception, inference, comparison and testimony, and conditions of their validity and the nature of the world, souls and God.

Gautama defines perception as the knowledge which is produced by the intercourse of an object with a sense organ, undefinable, determinate and in harmony with its objects. The perception of the table before me is due to the ~~contact~~ contact of my eyes with the table and I am definite that the object is a table: the sense organs are directed by manas, which is directed by self.

There are different ways of classifying perception. They are: -

Forst:

- ① Laukika or ordinary perception
- ② Alaukika or extraordinary perception

Laukika perception means when there is the usual sense-contact with objects present to sense. On the otherhand in alaukika perception the object is such as is not ordinarily present to sense, but is conveyed to sense through an unusual medium.

Laukik Perception again is of two kinds.

They are: —

- 1. External (bāhya.)
- 2. Internal (mānasa)

External perception is due to the external senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. On the otherhand the internal perception is brought about by the mind's contact with psychical states and processes.

Alaukika or extraordinary perception is of three kinds. They are: —

- 1. Sāmānyalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa
- 2. Jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa
- 3. Yogaja pratyakṣa

We perceive a smoke, through ordinary intercourse. But when we perceive a smoke, we perceive all smokes through the perception of its generic

character due to samānyalakṣaṇa-sannikāṣa. All individual snakes are not perceived through the sense-organs, but they are indirectly perceived through the knowledge of their generic character.

The second kind of extraordinary perception is called Jñānalakṣaṇa perception.

Jñānalakṣaṇa perception is the extraordinary intercourse through the knowledge of an object received from a part perception of it. Visual perception of a fragrant sandal is due to the intercourse of the visual organ with the sandal and the recollection of its fragrance perceived in the past through the organ owing to association.

The third kind of extraordinary perception is called Jogaḥ perception. It is the intuitive perception of all objects past and future by one who possesses some supernatural power generated in mind.

~~Another~~ According to another classification ordinary perception is of two kinds:—

- ① Nivikalpa or indeterminate
- ② Savikalpa or Determinate

Nirvikalpa or indeterminate perception is the primary cognition of ~~an~~ an object and its diverse characters without any judgement to interrelate them. On the otherhand Savikalpa perception is the cognition of an object as possessed of some character. While Nirvikalpa is the cognition of the existence of a thing, as such, savikalpa may be said to be the recognition of its nature.

The third is pratyablijana, which is the cognition of an object as what was cognised before. In it we know immediately that the thing which we now cognise is the same as that which was cognised before.

These are the different classifications of Pratyaksha (perception) according to Nyaya philosophy
