

# KARMA AND TELEOLOGY

A problem and its solutions in Indian philosophy

by

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## Preface

The present volume continues my efforts to understand aspects of Indian philosophy by identifying the problems which confronted the thinkers concerned. In the book *Langage et réalité* (see "References" at the end of this book) I studied the consequences which the belief in the close relationship between language and reality had for the doctrinal development of Indian philosophy. The present volume concentrates on the consequences of the belief in karma and rebirth.

This study cannot and does not claim to be exhaustive. Many questions have not been addressed and others have only been dealt with superficially. Some of the results, however, seem sufficiently interesting to justify publication of the limited material so far collected. It may be of use to those who wish to undertake the more ambitious task of writing a history of Indian philosophy.

I have had the privilege of discussing some of the ideas contained in this book in lectures given at the International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Tokyo in November 1997, at the Università di Roma "La Sapienza" in Rome in April 1998, and at the Centre for Advanced Study of Sanskrit of the University of Pune in December 1998 and January 1999. I have also used this material in a course at the University of Lausanne. I would like to thank all those colleagues and students whose critical questions and reactions have allowed me to make improvements. Whatever errors and misjudgements remain are my responsibility.

J.B.

## §1. Introduction

Robert P. Goldman observed a number of years ago (1985: 418-19): "Although many people in India may generally accept the notion of karma as an impersonal force or mechanism, an understanding of how this mechanism 'works', how karmic accounts are kept, how the actual fruition of past deeds actually takes physical form, is something that sensible folk have left to the ingenuity of that country's plethora of metaphysical philosophers and theologians. For the vast mass of people speculations and 'authoritative' pronouncements on the workings of karma are uninteresting, unappealing, and in any case incomprehensible. They have, as popular literature such as the epics demonstrate, shown more interest in formulations in which the fruition of past deeds is clearly shown to be the result of the supervision and even intervention of some supernaturally empowered being, a god or a powerful ascetic."

India's philosophers, for better or for worse, were not in a position to opt out of the difficulties avoided by "the vast mass of people". The present study will explore how they dealt with these, and how the "problem of karma" influenced their philosophies.

The question of the impact of the doctrine of karma on Indian philosophy has not yet received the attention it deserves. The central problem that will engage our attention has been well formulated by Bruce R. Reichenbach, but his treatment of it remains incomplete, and historically unsatisfactory. Let me first cite his formulation of the problem:<sup>1</sup>

"According to the law of karma, our actions have consequences which affect not only our dispositions and tendencies (*saṃskāras*), but also the non-dispositional aspects of our being (for example, our genetic make-up, our physical characteristics, our social status at birth, our length of life) and our environment. The environment is affected in such a way that in some future life it will be instrumental in rewarding or punishing us according to the merit or demerit resulting from our acts. ... How, it might be wondered, can the acts we performed in some past life affect the present material and physical conditions of our environment or other agents? With the exception of certain theistic systems, ... karma is held to operate in a naturalistic fashion. That is, prior events effect subsequent [2] events without the intervention of any supernatural agent. But if karma operates naturally, is it reasonable to believe that there is any causal link between the original cause ... and the ... effects we experience in a subsequent life? What causal chain can be established between a person's doing good actions in a previous life and the fact that the person has the pleasure of owning a Cadillac, recovered from an attack of influenza, or had a tree blown down by the windstorm miss his house?"

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<sup>1</sup> Reichenbach, 1990: 79.

These questions are legitimate and important. And indeed, given the rationalistic tendency of Indian philosophy in the classical period,<sup>2</sup> we may assume that the Indian thinkers were aware of them, and looked for answers. However, Reichenbach appears to think they didn't (p. 80):

"Strange as it may seem, the precise connection between our actions and the events which bring us happiness and unhappiness in subsequent lives is rarely dealt with in the literature of the traditions which invoke the law of karma, Jainism being the exception."

Paul Griffiths criticizes the position, which he attributes to (some) Buddhist philosophers, and more in particular to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya*, and which he formulates in the following manner:<sup>3</sup> "The material universe (i.e. everything that is not sentient) has as necessary and sufficient condition for both its existence and its nature the volitional actions of sentient beings." Griffiths considers this aspect of the karma doctrine as empirically falsified, and therefore false. It is not our concern at present to express agreement or disagreement with Griffiths' conclusion. We are interested to know whether the thinkers of classical India were aware of the difficulties accompanying this position, and whether they made any effort to solve them. The basis of Griffiths' criticism is that "a necessary condition for the truth of any conceptual system is that it be rational".<sup>4</sup> Many thinkers of classical India would agree with this. Did they apply their rationalistic approach to solve the difficulties? Did they explain the mechanism by which deeds are related to their results?

Wilhelm Halbfass addresses the question of the mechanism of karmic retribution in his book *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian thought* (1991: 299-300):

[3]

"Karma is supposed to be personal, i.e., attached to one individual being or life-process. But how can this be isolated from the shared and public world in which living beings coexist? How do one's own experiences, together with their external conditions, interfere with the *bhoga* of others? Does one's own personal and private karma contribute to the formation of a public and common reality, so that an appropriate share of pleasure or pain may be derived from it? How literally can the rule that nothing undeserved, that is, not resulting from or corresponding to karma, ought to be experienced ..., be taken in a shared natural and social world? To what extent is this entire world itself, this stage for karmic performances and their results, a product of karma? Is the world essentially a karmic show, a projection of retributive causality? What is the reality of objects apart from their capability to provide karmically relevant experiences ...?"

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2 Cp. Bronkhorst, 1999; 2001a.

3 Griffiths, 1982: 281; 1984: 481.

4 Griffiths, 1982: 278.

Again, we find a variety of answers or implicit assumptions relating to these questions. Karma ... has clearly cosmogonic implications in some Buddhist schools; at least, the possibility receives serious attention. Śāṅkara, among others, suggests that acts, primarily those affiliated with the Veda, produce and uphold the reality and structure of the empirical world. On the other hand, most systems credit the world with an independent reality and certain regularities of its own. Among these, the Vaiśeṣika provides the example of a system which is committed to the description and explanation of the world, including natural, 'physical' phenomena and processes, and to a comprehensive classification of its basic components. What is the place of karma in such a system? How does karmic causality function in this context? How does it relate to, and interact with, what is going on in the 'natural world'?"

Halbfass' answer for Vaiśeṣika can be found on p. 315:

"*Adṛṣṭa*, which may primarily have been a gap-filler in the causal explication of the universe, subsequently offered itself as a channel for a much more decidedly dharmic and soteriological reinterpretation of the Vaiśeṣika theory of the universe. At the same time, this theory of the universe and of the categories of reality was presented as a framework and basis for explicating in a theoretically coherent manner the status and functions of retributive causality, to account for karma in terms of a comprehensive metaphysics and categoriology. Insofar as *adṛṣṭa* is presented as a potentially all-pervasive factor in the universe, in particular as the moving force of its periodic regenerations, a karmic framework has been provided for the functioning of "natural" causality; on the other hand, *dharma/adharma*, or what is called karma in most of the other systems, has found its theoretical accommodation in a context that remains primarily that of a philosophy of nature and a doctrine of categories."

More will be said about the mechanism of karmic retribution as conceived of in Vaiśeṣika in § 7 below. Here it may be observed [4] that any description of a world in which inanimate factors — whether they are called *adṛṣṭa* or something else — supposedly act in such a manner so as to bring about certain results has to confront the question what kinds of explanation will be accepted as valid. Is it good enough to say that *adṛṣṭa*, or any other factor for that matter, brought about a particular situation *in order to* reward the good deeds of a person, or *in order to* punish her bad deeds? Can we really ascribe purposeful activity to inanimate things?

[5]

## §2. Teleology

It will be clear that it is not possible to deal with the mechanism of karmic retribution without touching upon the question of teleology. And indeed, the explanations of the mechanism of karmic retribution offered by different Indian thinkers cannot be properly evaluated without taking into consideration their attitude towards teleological explanations in general. We will not therefore limit the present inquiry to karmic retribution alone, but we will also look at teleology in general. It will become clear that various widely differing views existed on this matter in classical India.

Let me first clarify what is at stake. Daily life confronts us with two important forms of causality, proximate causality and final or ultimate causality. The former of these two is common where lifeless mechanical processes are concerned. We say "The window broke because it was hit by a stone", or "The car skidded because the road was wet". An earlier cause gives rise to a subsequent effect. Final causes are different. They tell us what something, or some activity, is *for*. A car, for example, is for driving, a watch for showing the time; a student works in order to pass his exams. In these cases we speak of teleological explanations.<sup>5</sup>

Western thought has a long history of debate on the validity of teleological explanations. Many thinkers find these ultimately unsatisfactory. This was already true of the early Greek atomists, who tried to explain the world mechanically. They provoked in this manner the reaction of Plato, Aristotle and others.

Guthrie (1965: 501-02) makes the following comments:

"With characteristic intellectual courage Leucippus and Democritus tried to reduce even life, consciousness and thought to the reciprocal action of atoms in contact with each other. They failed, but by showing how far one [6] could go even with such primitive concepts as theirs, they encouraged the faith of all who in later ages have been attracted by the notion of man as a machine: might he not be simply a more complicated and highly developed machine than the intellectual and experimental resources of the ancient atomists allowed them to suppose? ... Related to this is the choice between mechanism and teleology. Is function determined by structure or structure by function? Has matter formed itself unaided into organisms of an almost incredible complexity, delicacy and adaptability to purpose, or has this order and efficacy been imposed from outside by a rational agent working to plan? To put it

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<sup>5</sup> Teleological explanation is not to be confused with the explanation of an earlier thing or event with the help of a later one. This latter position is not completely unknown in Indian thought: it is found in Prajñākaragupta's commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Pramānavārttika* (Bronkhorst, 1999a: § II.19). Teleological explanation, on the other hand, is not based on future things or events, but on purpose.

another way, should the animate world be modelled on the inanimate, or should it be the other way round? ... [I]t was Democritus who first compelled philosophers to take sides by his detailed exposition of a system in which intelligence, direction and purpose were epiphenomena emerging at a late stage from nothing but the undesigned clash and recoil of individually inanimate particles. Now it stood forth starkly and could no longer be ignored. The reaction was swift. In the pages of his younger contemporary Plato ... one can sense the shock of hostility which he and those who thought like him had aroused. Democritus and Plato fought the first round in a contest which still continues ... ."

In modern days the question of the validity of teleological explanations is particularly acute in two domains: that of biological evolution and that of psychology. Is it correct to think that the long neck of a giraffe has developed in order to allow its owner to eat leaves that would otherwise be out of its reach? Is it acceptable to explain human behavior in terms of the purposes which the person concerned believes to pursue?

It is hardly necessary to recall that the theory of evolution underwent a decisive change when Charles Darwin proposed a method to understand it in non-teleological terms.<sup>6</sup> Daniel C. Dennett's recent book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* reminds us that now, one hundred and forty years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, many thinkers still resist accepting the full implications of this idea.

In the case of human psychology the situation is even more complicated. I will not comment on the most recent developments in this area, but briefly mention two schools of thought — and two prominent thinkers linked to these schools — that have addressed the issue of teleological explanation: behaviorism and psychoanalysis.

[7]

Behaviorism attempts to explain behavior in terms of earlier positive and negative experiences. Subsequent behavior will be such that activities that once led to positive experiences are repeated, and those that led to negative experiences avoided. The following passage from B.F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior* shows to what extent the concern to avoid teleological explanations was at the heart of this attempt:

"There is [in behaviorism] no violation of the fundamental principle of science which rules out 'final causes'. But this principle is violated when it is asserted that behavior is under the control of an 'incentive' or 'goal' which the organism has not yet achieved or a 'purpose' which it has not yet fulfilled. Statements which use such words as 'incentive' or 'purpose' are usually reducible to statements about operant conditioning, and only a slight change is required to bring them within the framework of a natural science. Instead of saying that a man behaves because of the

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<sup>6</sup> Cp. Plotkin, 1994: 51: "Darwin's *Origin of Species* did away for all time with the problem of teleology."



consequences which *are to* follow his behavior, we simply say that he behaves because of the consequences which *have* followed similar behavior in the past." (Skinner, 1953: 87)

The case of Skinner and behaviorism is relatively straightforward.<sup>7</sup> The situation of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psycho-analysis, is more complicated. His early, but posthumously published *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and surviving letters to his friend Wilhelm Fliess show that Freud, during his prepsychoanalytic period, had attempted to develop a mechanical-physiological scheme of psychology. He abandoned this project when it became clear to him that he could not solve all the problems it involved. The earlier *proximate*-causal theory had to make place, at least in part, for an *ultimate*-causal theory.<sup>8</sup>

Nigel Mackay (1989: 33-34) characterizes Freud's earliest, "prepsychoanalytic", model as follows:

"The concept of motivation inherent in this prepsychoanalytic model treats the determinants of human behavior as mechanistic, as neurological as much as psychological in character ... .

The theory of motivation is mechanistic in a biological sense. It sees that what motivates human behavior is part of the natural world, as is [8] any biological process, and that it is explicable in causal terms. What motivates behavior is not irreducibly purposive. No final causes are at work here, only the forces and structures at work in the physical world.

The concept is neurological as much as psychological because it holds that whatever is describable in psychological terms — purpose, intention, wish, sensation — is a function of neural processes and may be explained as a consequence of those processes. This is the way that psychological qualities are assimilated to the mechanistic, biological world. They are stripped of their vitalism and made subject to the causal laws of nature."

It is not possible to enter into further details here. It is however interesting to observe that Freud's subsequent approach to psychology went hand in hand with a Lamarckian, and therefore non-Darwinian, understanding of evolution.<sup>9</sup>

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In the following pages I will draw attention to the fact that the problem of explaining goal-oriented activity in non-teleological

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<sup>7</sup> One finds a similar attitude in the principle of causality of D. Bloor and other representatives of the strong program in the sociology of science. See Bloor, 1976: 5, 7 (criticism of "teleological model" p. 12-13); criticism of this position in Brown, 1989: 23 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Sulloway, 1979: esp. 365.

<sup>9</sup> Sulloway, 1979: esp. pp. 274-75 ("Freud as Psycho-Lamarckian").

terms was not foreign to the thinkers of classical India.<sup>10</sup> In order to do so, I will discuss the positions of some selected authors. Before turning to these authors, some general reflections have to be made about the situations in which teleological explanations may at first sight appear to be attractive in the classical Indian context. One of these is, of course, any attempt to explain human behavior in terms of more elementary forces, processes or entities. Such attempts have repeatedly been made in the history of Indian philosophy. They concern what we may call classical Indian *psychology*.

We have already seen that teleological explanations offer themselves in other situations, too. Insofar as modern science is concerned, I have drawn attention to the theory of evolution. The modern theory of evolution was not, of course, part of the understanding of the world of the classical thinkers of India. In its stead they conceived of another process which many of them considered responsible for the development of the world: the law of karma. The creation and development of the world were often looked upon as being largely determined by actions carried out by [9] living beings at an earlier time. Actions — and here we come to the point I wish to make — bring about punishment and reward for the living beings who carried them out. In other words, actions bring about processes that are goal-oriented. This belief can be either taken for granted, as a fact which needs no further explanation; alternatively, a mechanism has to be thought out to explain how acts can bring about processes which, though not really goal-oriented, seem to be so.

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<sup>10</sup> I do not, therefore, agree with Marc Ballanfat (1997: 36 f.) who maintains that Indian thinkers confuse, or superimpose on each other, the mechanical and teleological forms of explanation.

[11]

### §3. Sāṃkhya

In order to evaluate the Indian situation properly, I will first present the ideas of a school which, as far as we can judge from the surviving literature, did not feel the need to reduce final causes to proximate causes, a school which accepted teleological types of explanation at all levels. This school is Sāṃkhya. Sāṃkhya does not appear to have seriously attempted to eliminate teleology.<sup>11</sup> I will use as primary source the Sāṃkhya Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, which may belong to the fourth or fifth century of the Common Era.

A central concern of the Sāṃkhya philosophy is to explain how human beings — and other living beings — "work". It does so by distinguishing two altogether different, and separate, parts. On the one hand there is the soul (*ātman*, *puruṣa*), on the other that which is often called 'nature' (*prakṛti*). The soul is conscious, but completely inactive. This implies that no activity whatsoever — and this includes mental activity — belongs to the soul. All activity belongs to nature, which is however devoid of consciousness. Nature as conceived of in Sāṃkhya is therefore far more than that which is covered by the natural sciences today. Mental activity, and therefore most of what we would call psychology, belongs to nature (*prakṛti*). Only consciousness belongs to the soul, not to nature. Since soul and nature together are supposed to explain how human beings work, one would expect that no anthropomorphic features should be attributed to either of them separately.

The reason for this fundamental division between soul and nature is clear when we consider the historical context in which Sāṃkhya developed. This system of thought was closely linked to the search for liberation from this world. People are born and reborn in this world as a result of the actions they perform. This is the famous law of karma, already mentioned above. Sāṃkhya showed the way to liberation from the effects of one's actions, by pointing out that one's real self, one's soul, never acts at all. This insight allows people to take distance from their activities, which strictly speaking — as they now realize — do not belong to them, i.e. to their soul, but to nature.

[12]

Sāṃkhya, then, presents an analysis of human beings. All mental and physical activity are delegated to nature (*prakṛti*), which is, in and by itself, not conscious. Human behavior is to be explained in terms of this inanimate nature. Is there place in such a scheme for

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<sup>11</sup> As observed by others, e.g. Chakravarti, 1951: 235; Furtado, 1992: 74; Weerasinghe, 1993: 92 ff. See however §§ 5 and 9, below.

purposes? Can one explain in this way the goal-oriented nature of human activity?

An inspection of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā, the oldest surviving text of the classical school, brings to light that goal-orientedness is a vital and unanalysable part of classical Sāṃkhya. It remains somewhat unclear whether this goal-orientedness belongs to the soul or to nature; it only comes into play when the two are in "contact". Some passages seem to attribute it to both. Some verses argue quite explicitly that goal-orientedness is part of the material universe, and is not confined to human beings and other higher forms of living beings. Seen in this way, Sāṃkhya did attempt to describe the world, and human beings in particular, in non-anthropomorphic terms. Goal-orientedness, not being an anthropomorphic feature, did not need an explanation in simpler terms.

Sāṃkhya Kārikā 11 confirms that nature and its derivatives are unconscious.<sup>12</sup> This is obviously a fundamental feature of the system. A necessary consequence, one might think, should be that nature be free from features that depend on consciousness, such as goal-orientedness. However, goal-orientedness is ascribed to nature at various places in the Sāṃkhya Kārikā.

Consider kārikā 17:13 "The soul exists, because composite objects are for something else, ... and because there is activity for the sake of [its] isolation." This kārikā speaks of composite objects and activity in nature and its derivatives. This is confirmed by kārikā 10, which describes the manifest (*vyakta*), i.e. that what derives from nature (*prakṛti*), as composite (*sāvayava*); it adds that the non-manifest, i.e. nature itself, is the reverse, and therefore non-composite.<sup>14</sup> These composite objects and this activity are there for the soul; the activity in particular takes place in order that the soul may reach isolation, i.e., liberation. There is here question of intention or goal-orientedness; but where does it belong? Does the soul have intentions and goals, or do these belong to nature (*prakṛti*) and its derivatives? Both positions are problematic. The soul is indifferent according to kārikā 19:15 "And because it is the reverse of that [nature] [13] this soul (*puruṣa*) is established to be witness, isolated, indifferent, seer, and inactive." And nature and its derivatives are non-conscious.

Kārikā 20 offers the following solution:<sup>16</sup> "Therefore, because it is in contact with the [soul], the *liṅga*, though unconscious, is as if possessing consciousness. And although [only] the strands (*guṇa*) are agents, the indifferent one (*udāsīna*) is, in a similar manner, as if an agent." The word *liṅga* refers to the evolutes of nature that are most

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12 SK 11: ... *acetanaṃ ...vyaktaṃ tathā pradhānaṃ ...*

13 SK 17: *saṃghātaparārthatvāt .../ puruṣo 'sti ... kaivalyārthaṃ pravṛteś ca//.*

14 SK 10: .../ *sāvayavaṃ paratantraṃ vyaktaṃ viparītaṃ avyaktam//.*

15 SK 19: *tasmāc ca viparyāsāt siddhaṃ sāksitvam asya puruṣasya/ vaikalyaṃ mādhyaस्थ्यam draṣṭṛtvam akartṛbhāvaś ca//.*

16 SK 20: *tasmāt tatsaṃyogād acetanaṃ cetanāvad iva liṅgam/ guṇakartṛtve ca tathā karteva bhavaty udāsīnaḥ//.*

closely related to each individual soul.<sup>17</sup> This part of the evolutes of nature, "though unconscious, is as if possessing consciousness". And the "indifferent one" is, of course, the soul. It is "as if an agent", even though it is nothing of the kind in reality.

One may have doubts as to the explanatory power of kārīkā 20. Its first word "therefore" (*tasmāt*) must refer back to kārīkā 19 considered above, which reads: "And because it is the reverse of that [nature], this soul (*puruṣa*) is established to be witness, isolated, indifferent, seer, and inactive." It is hard to grasp the logic of the implied argument: soul and nature are each others' opposites, and that is why the soul seems to behave like nature, and vice-versa. The argument obviously leaves much to be desired.

Some other places in the Sāṃkhya Kārīkā ascribe goal-orientedness to both the soul and to nature. Kārīkā 21 states:<sup>18</sup> "The contact between these two (viz., soul and nature), which is like [the one between] a lame man and a blind man, is for the sake of seeing in the case of the soul, and for the sake of isolation in the case of nature (*pradhāna*). Creation is made by that [contact]." Kārīkā 31 has:<sup>19</sup> "[The instruments] accomplish each its own function, which has as cause the intentions (*ākūta*) of each time the others. Their cause is the aim (*artha*) of the soul and nothing else (*eva*); not is an instrument made to act by anything." This kārīkā ascribes goal-orientedness to both the instruments of living beings — i.e., to evolutes of nature (*prakṛti*) — and to the soul. Moreover, the last part of the kārīkā, according to which there is nothing which makes any of the instruments of living beings act, appears to indicate that nothing "pushes" them from "behind"; they are only "pulled forward", for "their cause is the aim of the soul and nothing else". The expression *puruṣārthahetuka*, which also means "whose cause is the aim of the soul", [14] occurs in kārīkā 42 qualifying *liṅga*, the term which refers to the evolutes of nature that are most closely related to each individual soul, as we have seen. These evolutes have the aim of the soul as cause, that is to say, their function is to bring about the aim of the soul, presumably liberation. Essentially the same is expressed in kārīkā 56:<sup>20</sup> "In this way this [world] made by nature (*prakṛti*) and called *tattva*, *bhūta* or *bhāva*, acts for the sake of the liberation of each soul. This activity, which seems to be for [nature] itself, is [really] for something different from it (viz., the soul)." The same idea comes back in kārīkā 58 (the non-manifest acts for the liberation of the soul), 60 (nature, *prakṛti*, acts for the sake of the soul), 63 (*prakṛti* liberates for the sake of the soul), and 69 (this secret is for the aim of the soul; or: this secret knowledge is for the soul).

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17 See Larson, 1979: 189.

18 SK 21: *puruṣasya darśanārthaḥ kaivalyārthas tathā pradhānasya/ paṅgvand-havad ubhayor api saṃyogas taikṛtaḥ sargaḥ*//. The reading *saṃyogas* rather than *sayogas* is confirmed by the Yūktidīpikā. The Yūktidīpikā further gives an alternative interpretation for *puruṣasya darśanārthaḥ*: the contact is caused by the seeing on the part of the soul.

19 SK 31: *svām svām pratipadyante parasparākūtahetukīm vṛttim/ puruṣārtha eva hetur na kenacit kāryate karanam*//. The reading *hetukīm* instead of *hetukām* is accepted in the Yūktidīpikā.

20 SK 56: *ity eṣa prakṛtikṛtaḥ pravartate tattvabhūtabhāvākhyāḥ/ pratipuruṣa-vimokṣārthaṃ svārtha iva parārtha ārambhaḥ*//.

Only from *kārikā* 57 (and the commentaries thereon) can we conclude that the Sāṃkhyas themselves, and Īśvarakṛṣṇa in particular, realized that the ascription of goal-orientedness to non-conscious things was not unproblematic. It tries to justify its position, in the following manner:<sup>21</sup> "Just as non-conscious (*ajñā*) milk acts for the growth of the calf, so nature (*pradhāna*) acts for the liberation of the soul." This is an argument in defense of the thesis that the material universe is, by its very nature, goal-oriented. *Kārikā* 58 answers an altogether different question: why should activity (*pravṛtti*) on the part of nature lead to cessation (*nivṛtti*) of suffering etc.?<sup>22</sup> The answer is:<sup>22</sup> "Just as people in the world engage (*pravartate*) in actions in order to pacify (*nivṛtti*) anxiety, in the same way does the non-manifest act (*pravartate*) for the sake of the liberation of the soul." The author of this verse goes to the extent of drawing a parallel between nature and human beings. This again supports the idea that, at least according to this Sāṃkhya thinker, goal-orientedness is not something that we only find in human beings, or in higher living beings. Quite on the contrary, it is a fundamental feature of nature, and psychology is not called upon to find an explanation of this feature in human beings.

It is no doubt significant that the development of Sāṃkhya which is known by the name *śaṣṭitantra*, when it enumerates the ten fundamental teachings of the school, includes two which emphasize its teleological nature. These two are the belief that nature is goal-oriented (*arthavattva*) and serves the aims of something else (*pārārthya*).<sup>23</sup> This very emphasis suggests that Sāṃkhya con-  
[15]sciously held on to this position, against other schools which did not accept teleological explanations. We will see that there were indeed other schools which tried to do without such explanations.

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21 SK 57: *vatsavivṛddhinimittam kṣīrasya yathā pravṛttir ajñasya/ puruṣavimokṣanimittam tathā pravṛttiḥ pradhānasya//*

22 SK 58: *autsukyānivṛttyartham yathā kriyāsu pravartate lokah/ puruṣasya vimokṣārtham pravartate tadvad avyaktam//*

23 Frauwallner, 1953: 321 f.

[17]

#### §4. Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya psychology<sup>24</sup>

One Brahmanical school which has seriously tried to explain human behavior in non-teleological terms is Vaiśeṣika. This system gives a description of reality, and of the human person, which is fundamentally different from Sāṃkhya. However, Vaiśeṣika has one important feature in common with the latter. Like Sāṃkhya, the soul in Vaiśeṣika is conceived of as being by its very nature motionless. Unlike Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika does not introduce an absolute distinction between the soul and the rest of the world. Quite on the contrary, in Vaiśeṣika the soul is looked upon as a substance among other substances which, like those other substances, can have qualities. Many of the qualities that can inhere in certain other substances — such as color, or smell, and many others — cannot, to be sure, inhere in the soul. And the qualities that are typical for the soul cannot inhere in any of the other substances.

The list of qualities that can only inhere in the soul are together responsible for Vaiśeṣika psychology.<sup>25</sup> As enumerated in the Padārthadharmasamgraha, alias Praśastapādabhāṣya, they are: knowledge (*buddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), pain (*duḥkha*), desire (*icchā*), repulsion (*dveṣā*), effort (*prayatna*), virtue (*dharma*), sin (*adharma*), subliminal impressions (*saṃskāra*). The order of this enumeration is not arbitrary. Knowledge of an object — usually perception — precedes the experience of happiness or pain connected with it; this in its turn gives rise to desire and repulsion respectively; next in line follows effort in order to obtain or avoid that object; as a result virtue and sin come into being, as well as subliminal impressions.

If for the moment we leave aside the issue of virtue and sin, we see that the Vaiśeṣika scheme tries to explain human behavior without resorting explicitly to any intrinsic goal-orientedness. The Vaiśeṣika scheme has a behaviorist flavor about it, although it does not avoid terms relating to "inner" experiences. Behavior that leads to good experiences is repeated, behavior that leads to bad experiences is henceforth avoided. Desire and repulsion, seen in this [18] way, are not intrinsically future-oriented; they accompany conditioned behavior, and cause repetition or avoidance of repetition of earlier behavior.

Nyāya Sūtra 1.1.2 states that the disappearance of incorrect knowledge (*mithyājñāna*) is followed by the disappearance of the faults (*doṣa*), this in its turn by the disappearance of activity (*pravṛtti*), this by the disappearance of birth (*janman*), this again by the disappearance of

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<sup>24</sup> Cp. Sinha, 1961: 91-96.

<sup>25</sup> See Bronkhorst, 1993: 62.

suffering (*duḥkha*); the result is liberation (*apavarga*).<sup>26</sup> This suggests that in ordinary circumstances incorrect knowledge gives rise to the faults, these to activity, this to birth, and this to suffering. This is indeed confirmed by the Nyāya Bhāṣya, of which I cite the following passage:<sup>27</sup>

"From this incorrect knowledge result attraction (*rāga*) towards agreeable things, and repulsion (*dveṣa*) towards disagreeable things. Under the influence of attraction and repulsion faults (*doṣa*) such as untruth, jealousy, deceit and greed come into being. Prompted by [these] faults [a person], while acting with his body, practices violence, theft and forbidden forms of sexual intercourse; [while acting] with his voice [he engages in] lying, abusive speech, slander and incoherent [speech]; [while acting] with his mind [he engages in] plotting against others, craving other people's property and apostasy. This sinful activity gives rise to *adharmā*. As to pure [activity]: with his body [he practices] liberality, protecting [others] and serving them; with his voice [he speaks] what is true, beneficial and agreeable, and [he does] his Vedic recitation; with his mind [he practices] compassion, non-desiring and trust. It gives rise to *dharma*."

Sūtra 1.1.18 and its Bhāṣya confirm that the faults prompt a person into action.<sup>28</sup>

A short description of Nyāya psychology is the following:<sup>29</sup>

"A [soul] which, being conscious, recognizes that happiness can be produced through a [certain] means and which, desiring to obtain that [happiness], makes an effort to obtain the means, will be connected with [19] happiness, not [a soul] which is the opposite [of this]. And a [soul] which recognizes that pain can be produced through a [a certain] means and which, desiring to avoid that [pain], makes an effort to give up the means, will be abandoned by pain, not [a soul] which is the opposite [of this]."

The very presence of a desire proves that there must have been an agreeable experience preceding it. This argument is used in the Nyāya Sūtra and Bhāṣya to establish that the soul is eternal, or more precisely,

26 NS 1.1.2: *duḥkhajanmapravṛttidoṣamithyājñānānām uttarottarāpāye tadanantarāpāyād apavargah.*

27 NBh p. 76 l. 10-15 (on NS 1.1.2): *etasmān mithyājñānād anukūleṣu rāgaḥ, pratikūleṣu dveṣaḥ/ rāgadveṣādḥikārāc cāsatyersyamāyālobhādayo doṣā bhavanti/ doṣaiḥ prayuktaḥ śarīreṇa pravartamāno hiṃsāsteyapraṭiṣiddhamaithunāny ācarati, vācā 'nṛtaparuṣasūcanāsambaddhāni, manasā paradrohaṃ paradavyābhīpsām nāstikyaṃ ceti/ seyaṃ pāpātmikā pravṛttir adharmāya/ atha śubhā: śarīreṇa dānaṃ paritrānaṃ paricaraṇam ca, vācā satyaṃ hitaṃ priyaṃ svādhyāyaṃ ceti, manasā dayāṃ asprhāṃ śraddhāṃ ceti/ seyaṃ dharmāya/.*

28 NS 1.1.18: *pravartanālakṣaṇā doṣāḥ*; NBh p. 220 l. 3 (on NS 1.1.18): *pravartanā pravṛttihetutvam, jñātāraṃ hi rāgādayaḥ pravartayanti punye pāpe ca.*

29 NBh p. 917 l. 9-11 (on NS 3.2.72): *yaḥ khalu cetanāvān sādhananirvartanīyaṃ sukhaṃ buddhvā tad īpsan sādhanāvāptaye prayatate sa sukheṇa yujyate na viparītaḥ/ yaś ca sādhananirvartanīyaṃ duḥkhaṃ buddhvā taj jihāsuḥ sādhanaparivarjanāya yatate sa ca duḥkheṇa tyajyate na viparītaḥ/.*



that the soul existed before its present birth, for a new-born being desires the breast of its mother:<sup>30</sup>

"The soul is also eternal for the following reason: **Because of the desire for maternal milk in the case of a person who has died [and is reborn]**<sup>31</sup> **which has been brought about by the repeated experience of being fed [in this way] (NS 3.1.21).** A desire for maternal milk, characterized by activity, is observed in the case of a just born living being. This is not [possible] without the repeated experience of being fed. Why? Since it is seen that embodied beings that are suffering from hunger develop a desire to be fed as a result of the series of memories created by the repeated experience of being fed. This [desire] is not possible in the case of a just born being without the repeated experience [of being fed] in an earlier body. An earlier body is therefore inferred, in which this [just born living being] repeatedly experienced being fed."

In all these passages human behavior is depicted as prompted by proximate causes.

Wilhelm Halbfass seems to overlook this aspect of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika thought in the following passage:<sup>32</sup> "Der 'Zweck' (*prayojana*), so erklärt Nyāyasūtra I 1, 24, ist das Objekt oder Phänomen, dessen Vorstellung oder Projektion zum Handeln motiviert (*yam artham adhikṛtya pravartate, tat prayojanam*). Das Erreichen des Angenehmen (*sukha*) und das Vermeiden des Unangenehmen (*duḥkha*) gelten dabei als weitgehend massgeblich. Uddyotakaras Nyāya Vārttika reduziert das menschliche Streben nach den vier Lebenszielen insgesamt auf solche Motivierung durch *sukha* und *duḥkha*. Die dergestalt das Handeln motivierenden, als Resultate (*phala*) vorgestellten Phänomene sind offenkundig Finalursachen, nicht aber psychologische oder physiologische Wirkursachen. Solche Finalität ist ja im Begriff des [20] *puruṣārtha* grundsätzlich vorausgesetzt." We have seen that the situation is somewhat more complicated in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, where an effort is made to replace ultimate causes with proximate causes.

In view of these reflections it seems possible to ascribe to Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya a quasi-behaviorist view of human psychology, even though I know of no texts that elaborate this position. However, some Vaiśeṣika authors criticize the Sāṃkhya position for ascribing intention to unconscious objects, thus confirming that they looked upon their own theory as different, and superior, in this regard.

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30 NBh p. 745 l. 6 - p. 746 l. 2 (on NS 3.1.21): *itaś ca nitya ātmā: pretyāhārā-bhyāsakṛtāt stanyābhilāṣāt (NS 3.1.21)/ jātamātrasya vatsasya pravṛtti-liṅgaḥ stanyābhilāṣo grhyate/ sa ca nāntareṇāhārābhyāsam/ kayā yuktyā? dṛśyate hi śarīrīnām kṣudhā pīdyamānānām āhārābhyāsakṛtāt smaraṇānubandhād āhārābhilāṣaḥ/ na ca pūrvasarīrābhyāsam antareṇāsau jātamātrasyopapadyate/ tenānumīyate bhūtapūrvaṃ śarīraṃ yatrānenāhāro 'bhyasta iti*. Preisendanz (1994: 365 f., n. 100) refers to other texts, also outside the Nyāya tradition, that use this argument.

31 On the difficulty of interpreting *pretya* here, see Preisendanz, 1994: 369 f.

32 Halbfass, 1994: 132.

Vyomaśiva, while criticizing Sāṃkhya, objects against the notion that *buddhi* and the sense organs obtain intention under the influence of the desire (falsely) attributed to the self:<sup>33</sup>

"[Some Sāṃkhyas hold that] the *buddhi* obtains an intention (*ākūti*) when it thinks that the soul (*puruṣa*) has a desire for experience, and because it has that experience the sense organs [too obtain an intention]. This is incorrect; because [they are] unconscious. For the *buddhi* is unconscious, and so are the sense organs. If they do not experience intention (*ākūta*), how can their modification into the shape of the objects be decided upon?"

Uddyotakara, criticizing Sāṃkhya in his Nyāya Vārttika on NS 4.1.21, presents a long argument against the validity of ultimate causes, of which the beginning reads:<sup>34</sup>

"Those (i.e. the Sāṃkhyas) who consider nature (*pradhāna*) to be the cause [of the world] describe the aim of the soul as guiding nature. Prompted by the aim of the soul nature acts. And the aim of the soul is twofold: perceiving sound and other [qualities], and observing the [21] difference between the soul and the constituent strands [of nature] (*guṇa*). Neither of these two is [possible] without the activity of nature. -[This is] not [correct], for the [aim of the soul] is not present before the activity [of nature]. As long as nature (*pradhāna*) does not transform itself into 'the great' (*mahat*) etc., there is no perception of sound and other [qualities], nor perception of the difference between the soul and the constituent strands [of nature]. Activity of nature is therefore impossible, because there is [at that moment] no cause [that could prompt it].

-[The opponent maintains:] [The cause] is there, because something non-existent does not come into being, and something existent does not disappear. Such being the case, the existing aim of the soul prompts nature; as a result the activity of nature is not for the sake of the aim of the soul [but prompted by it]. For in this world something that belongs to something else does not [need] to exert itself for [the production of] that other thing.

-[In that case] there would always be activity [of nature], because the [proximate] cause [would always] be present. If the aim of the soul is the [proximate] cause of the activity [of nature], there must always be

33 Vy II p. 104 l. 20-23: *yac cedam puruṣasya bhogotsukatām manyamānāyā buddher ākūtiḥ sampadyate, tatsamvedānāc cendriyānām iti, asad etat, acetanatvāt/ acetanā hi buddhis tathendriyāṇi, teṣām ākūtasamvedanābhāve katham niyato viṣayākāratayā pariṇāmah?*

34 NV p. 945 l. 16 - p. 946 l. 6 (on NS 4.1.21): *tatra pradhānakāraṇikās tāvat puruṣārtham adhiṣṭhāyakam pradhānasya varṇayanti/ puruṣārthena prayuktam pradhānam pravartate, puruṣārthaś ca dvedhā bhavati śabdādyupalabdhir guṇapuruṣāntaradarśanam ceti, tad ubhayam pradhānapravṛtter vinā na bhavātīti/ na, prāk pravṛttes tadabhāvāt: yāvat pradhānam mahadādībhāvena na pariṇamate tāvan na śabdādyupalabdhir asti na guṇapuruṣāntaropalabdhir iti hetvabhāvāt pradhānapravṛttir ayuktā/ athāsti, nāsad ātmānam labhate na san nirudhyata iti/ evam ca sati vidyamānaḥ puruṣārthaḥ pradhānam pravartayatīti na puruṣārthāya pradhānasya pravṛttiḥ/ na hi loke yad yasya bhavati sa tadartham punar yatata iti/ satatam ca pravṛttiḥ prāpnoti kāraṇasya sannihitavād iti puruṣārthaḥ pravṛtteḥ kāraṇam iti puruṣārthasya nityatvāt satatam pravṛtṭyā bhavitavyam iti/.* A part of this passage is repeated and discussed at the end of § 9, below (with n. 114).

activity [of nature] because the aim of the soul is [from your point of view] eternal."

Uddyotakara clearly rejects the ultimate cause presented by the Sāṃkhyas, and will only consider proximate causes as explanations for activity in inanimate nature.

We must conclude that the early Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika thinkers avoided teleological explanations, and that their psychology can and must be understood accordingly.

[23]

## §5. Sāṃkhya and Yoga psychology

It must here be remarked that Sāṃkhya, most probably under the influence of Vaiśeṣika, came to introduce a number of states (*bhāva*) of the *buddhi* which correspond roughly to the qualities of the soul of Vaiśeṣika enumerated above.<sup>35</sup> The Sāṃkhya states of the *buddhi* are not, of course, qualities, and nor do they belong to the soul; they are modifications of *buddhi*, and therefore ultimately of nature (*prakṛti*). Eight such states are distinguished: virtue (*dharma*), sin (*adharmā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), ignorance (*ajñāna*), passionlessness (*vairāgya*), passion (*rāga* or *avairāgya*), power (*aiśvarya*), impotence (*anaiśvarya*). Together they are meant to account for the psychological processes in the human mind. But whereas the Vaiśeṣika qualities easily lend themselves to a psychological interpretation along 'behaviorist' lines, the same is not true for the eight states of Sāṃkhya.

The relevant verses of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā read:<sup>36</sup>

"Through virtue one goes up, through sin one goes down; through knowledge, it is said, one obtains liberation, through the opposite bondage; as a result of passionlessness dissolution into nature takes place, as a result of passion, which is constituted of the constituent called *rajas*, the circle of rebirths comes about; as a result of power there are no obstacles, as a result of the opposite the reverse situation arises."

Note that happiness (*sukha*) and pain (*duḥkha*) are not part of this list of states of the *buddhi*. The reason is that these two are identified with the constituents (*guṇa*) called *sattva* and *rajas* respectively, while the third constituent (*tamas*) corresponds to confusion (*moha*). These three constituents are not considered to be mere attributes of the mind, or states of the *buddhi*, but to belong to the objective world as well. This may explain why the elaboration of a more detailed psychology in Sāṃkhya was confronted with major difficulties.<sup>37</sup>

[24]

The Yuktidīpikā contains a discussion about the possibility of attributing happiness, pain and confusion to the objects of the senses:<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Frauwallner, 1953: 340 f.

<sup>36</sup> SK 44-45: *dharmēṇa gamanam ūrdhvaṃ gamanam adhasād bhavaty adhar-meṇa/ jñānena cāpavargo viparyayād iṣyate bandhaḥ// vairāgyāt prakṛtilayaḥ saṃsāro bhavati rājasād rāgāt/ aiśvaryaḥ avighāto viparyayāt tadviparyāsaḥ//*

<sup>37</sup> Cp. Joshi, 1967: 130.

<sup>38</sup> YD p. 144 l. 2-17 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 64 l. 20-30 (ed. Pandeya) (under SK 15): *asti ceyam sukhaduḥkhamohaiḥ śabdādīnām samanugatih/ .../ āha: na asiddhatvāt/ sukhādibhiḥ śabdādayo 'nugamyanta ity etad aprasiddham/ kena kāraṇena pratipattavyam iti/ ucyate: tadbuddhinimittatvāt/ iha śabdasparśarūparasagandhānām sannidhāne svasaṃskāra viśeṣayogāt*

"There is this connection between [the objects of the senses, viz.] sound etc. on the one hand, and pleasure, pain and confusion on the other.

[Objection:] [This is] not [correct], for it has not been established [to be the case]. [The claim to the extent] that [the objects of the senses, viz.] sound etc., are connected with happiness etc., has not been established.

For what reason should it be accepted?

[Answer:] Because they cause that experience (*buddhi*). In this world, when sound, touch, form, taste and smell are present, as a result of their connection with their appropriate subliminal impressions (*saṃskāra*), experiences of the form happiness, pain and confusion arise in living beings. And if something produces an experience of a certain kind, it is connected with that. ... That is why it is not correct to say that the connection has not been established.

[Objection:] This connection is really not established, because one can see that effects that are not similar [to their causes] do arise. For there is no rule [that states that] only an effect that is similar to its cause can arise. Quite on the contrary, fire, smoke, sound, and other [examples] are dissimilar [to their causes]. For fire is not of the nature of [its cause] grass etc., or smoke of the nature of fire. And nor is sound of the nature of the kettle-drum, the stick and other [instruments that cause it]. It follows that the idea that sound etc. are connected with happiness etc. is mere wishful thinking.

[Reply:] [Your objection is] not [correct], because [this case] has been shown to be different. Sound and the other [objects of the senses] have happiness etc. as their essence, [so that] in their presence experiences (*pratyaya*) of the form happiness etc. arise;<sup>39</sup> this we have right from the [25] beginning distinguished [from the examples you give]. And for this reason [sound etc.] are not dissimilar [to happiness, etc.] ..."

A much more recent author, Vijñānabhikṣu (16th cent. C.E.?), expresses still very much the same point of view in his *Yoga Vārttika*:<sup>40</sup>

"The meaning [of the Bhāṣya passage under consideration] is: Just like the ideas of the mind, in the very same manner all objects, of whatever form, are characterized by happiness, pain and confusion. For this reason

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*sukhaduḥkhamohākārāḥ prāṇināṃ buddhaya utpadyante/ yac ca yādrśīm buddhim utpādayati tat tenānvitam/ .../ tasmān nāsiddhiḥ samanvayasyeti/ āha: asiddha evāyaṃ samanvayaḥ/ kasmāt? vilakṣaṇakāryotpattidarśanāt/ na hy ayaṃ niyamaḥ kāraṇasadrśam eva kāryam utpadyate/ kiṃ tarhi? vilakṣaṇam agnīdhūmaśabdādi/ katham? na hy agnis tṛṇādisvabhāvako 'gnisvabhāvako vā dhūmah/ na ca bherīdaṇḍādisvabhāvah śabdaḥ/ tasmāt sukhādyanugataḥ śabdādaya itīcchāmātram/ ucyate: na, viśeṣitatvāt/ sukhādisvarūpāḥ śabdādayaḥ, tatsannidhāne sukhādyākārapratyayotpattir ity etad ādita evāsmābhir viśeṣitam/ tasmān na bhinnajātīyās ta iti/ etc.*

<sup>39</sup> Wezler and Motegi read °*pratyayotpatter*, against all the manuscripts. If we accept their reading, the translation becomes: "Sound and the other [objects of the senses] have happiness etc. as their essence, because in their presence experiences (*pratyaya*) of the form happiness etc. arise".

<sup>40</sup> YV on YS 2.15 (ed. Rukmani II p. 75): *yathā cittasya pratyayā evam eva sarve padārthāḥ sarvarūpāḥ sukhaduḥkhamadharmakā bhavanti, ata ete guṇāḥ sattvādayo ghaṭādirūpenāpi pariṇatāḥ parasparasāhityenotpāditasukhaduḥkhamohātmakapratyayā ity arthaḥ/ na hi viśayagataviśeṣaṃ vinā viśayasambandhamātreṇa sukhādyātmakacittavṛttir udetum arhati, avyāvasthāpatteḥ/ viśayagataviśeṣasya cittagatasukhādīniyāmakatve viśeṣaḥ sukhādirūpa eva viśayeṣu kalpyate, kāryānurūpasyaiva kāraṇasyaucityāt/ ato viśaye 'pi sukhādidharmāntaram sukhādivat sidhyatīti bhāvah/.*

these constituents *sattva* etc., even when they have been modified into a pot or something else, produce by mutual association happy, painful or confused ideas. For no mental fluctuation that is happiness etc. by nature can arise through the mere contact with an object, without a special feature that is in the object; because in that case there would be no regularity. If the special feature that is in the object determines happiness etc. that are in the mind, the special feature is considered to be of the nature of happiness etc. in the objects, because it is only proper that the cause is in agreement with the effect. It follows that also in the object there is the characteristic happiness etc. which, though different, is similar to happiness etc. [that reside in the mind]. This is the implication."

The *Yuktidīpikā* contains a passage explaining human behavior, or at least a certain form of it, in terms of the activities of the various organs. Note that this explanation makes no mention of earlier experience and uses intention as a primitive element.

The passage reads:41

"The following has been stated: When the color of a mango, of a pomegranate or of some other fruit has been observed by the organ of sight, then the organ of taste, noticing (*saṃvedya*) the activity of the organ of sight which has now taken hold of an object (viz. color), undergoes a [26] modification which possesses eagerness, on account of its desire to take hold of its own object (viz. taste). The feet, noticing the activity of the organ of taste, start to walk and the hands start to grasp, until that object has been made accessible to the organ of taste. The organ of taste then occupies itself of its own object. With regard to other [organs] something similar should be stated."

The *Yoga Sūtra* and *Bhāṣya*, though presenting the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy (if their colophons are to be believed), differ from the *Sāṃkhya* texts so far considered in as far as the question of teleological explanation is concerned. The *Yoga Bhāṣya* in particular does not hesitate to ascribe a purpose to the material world, but contains other passages which try to give an explanation in terms of proximate causes to certain aspects of the material world, including human behavior.

When *Yoga Sūtra* 2.18 states that "the seeable, which consists of the elements and the faculties, is for experience and liberation", the *Yoga Bhāṣya* explains: "The [seeable] is not however without purpose; on the

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41 YD p. 213 l. 34 - p. 214 l. 5 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 111 l. 5-8 (ed. Pandeya) (on SK 31): *etad uktam bhavati: yadā cakṣuṣāmrādādimādirūpam upalabdham bhavati tadā rasanendriyam upāttaviśayasya cakṣuṣo vṛttiṃ saṃvedya svaviśayajighṛkṣayautsukyavadvikāram āpadyate/ rasanasya vṛttiṃ saṃvedya pādau viharāṇam ārabhete hastāv ādānam tāvad yāvad asau viśayo rasanendriyayogyatām nītaḥ/ tato rasanam svaviśaye pravartate/ evam itareṣv api vaktavyam/*. The expression *autsukyavadvikāram* "modification which possesses eagerness" is strange, but the situation hardly improves by reading, with Wezler and Motegi, *autsukyavad vikāram* "(undergoes), like eagerness, a modification".

contrary, it acts having taken on a purpose."<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the constituents (*guṇa*) of nature do not arise again after dissolution in case there is no purpose guiding them.<sup>43</sup> One of the aspects (*rūpa*) of the elements is their purposefulness; the constituents of nature act in order to produce experience and liberation for the soul, and are themselves present in the atoms, the elements and the objects made by them; as a result everything has a purpose.<sup>44</sup> The mind (*citta*), though diversified by countless impressions (*vāsanā*), is there in order to provide experience and liberation for something else, viz. the soul; this follows from its composite nature.<sup>45</sup> The Yoga Bhāṣya also frequently speaks of the 'obligation' (*adhikāra*) which attaches to the mental organ (*citta, cetas, buddhi*) or to the constituents of nature (*guṇa*).<sup>46</sup> This seems to be another way of stating that goal-orientedness belongs to nature.<sup>47</sup> [27]

Against such passages stand other ones which appear to try to avoid teleological explanations:<sup>48</sup>

"Happiness (*sukha*) arises from virtue (*dharma*), pain (*duḥkha*) from sin (*adharma*); from happiness arises passion (*rāga*), from pain repulsion (*dveṣa*); from these [two] arises effort (*prayatna*). Someone who acts through that [effort], be it with mind, speech or body, favors or injures someone else. From that arise anew virtue and sin, happiness and pain, passion and repulsion. In this way this six-spoked wheel of existence revolves. And the person who turns round [like this] from moment to moment, is guided by ignorance (*avidyā*), the root of all torments (*kleśa*)."

This is so close to the Vaiśeṣika understanding of human psychology, that we can safely speak of a Vaiśeṣika view adopted by the author of the Yoga Bhāṣya.

The Bhāṣya on sūtras 2.7 and 8 adds that passion and repulsion are not only directed towards happiness and pain respectively, but also towards the means (*sādhana*) that bring them about. The commentator Vācaspati explains this as follows:<sup>49</sup> "For remembering that such an object is a cause of happiness, or inferring that it, by being such, is a cause of

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42 YS + YBh 2.18: ... ***bhūtendriyātmakam bhogāpavargārtham drśyam/ .../ tat tu nāprayojanam api tu prayojanam urarīkṛtya pravartata iti bhogāpavargārtham hi tad drśyam puruṣasyeti/ ...***

43 YBh 2.27: *na caiṣāṃ [guṇānām] pravilīnānām punar asty utpādaḥ, prayojanābhāvād iti.*

44 YBh 3.44: *athaiṣāṃ [bhūtānām] pañcamam rūpam arthavattvam, bhogāpavargārthatā guṇeṣv anvayinī, guṇās tanmātrabhūtabhautikeṣv iti sarvam arthavat.* On the meaning of *tanmātra* in the Yoga Bhāṣya, see Bronkhorst, in preparation.

45 YBh 4.24: *tad etac cittam asaṃkhyeyābhir vāsanābhir eva citrīkṛtam api parārtham parasya bhogāpavargārtham na svārtham saṃhatyakāritvād gṛhavat.*

46 E.g. YBh 1.51; 2.3; 10; 24.

47 The role of *adhikāra* is further discussed in § 9, below.

48 YBh 4.11: *dharmāt sukham adharmād duḥkham sukhād rāgo duḥkhād dveṣas tataś ca prayatnas tena manasā vācā kāyena vā parispaṇḍamānaḥ param anugrṇāty upahanti vā/ tataḥ punar dharmādharmau sukhaduḥkhe rāgadveṣāv iti pravṛttam idaṃ śadaram saṃsāracakram/ asya ca pratikṣaṇam āvartamānasyāvidyā netrī mūlam sarvakleśānām.*

49 Vācaspati on YBh 2.7: *drśyamānam api hi sukhasāadhanam tajjātīyasya sukhaheturam smṛtvā tajjātīyatayā vāsya sukhaheturvam anumāyecchati.*

happiness, they desire the means of happiness even when it is seen [rather than remembered]." This brings in the associative faculty of the mind. Vācaspati also observes that passion and repulsion only arise in those who have experienced happiness and pain, not in those who haven't. This may sound obvious in this context, but confirms that we have to do here with an attempt at explanation in terms of proximate causes.

The Yoga Bhāṣya on sūtra 4.3 dedicates a discussion to the way in which *dharma* and *adharma* determine the development of matter:50 [28]

"Causes such as *dharma* do not direct the evolving elements (*prakṛti*). For a cause is not made to act by its effect. On the contrary, as a result of that [*dharma*] an obstacle is removed, as in the case of a farmer. Just as a farmer who wishes to flood a field, and similarly a lower one, and an again lower one, from a first field filled with water, does not remove the water with his hand, but rather breaks the [dike] which stops the [water]; once that [obstacle] broken the water floods the other field all on its own. In the same way *dharma* breaks *adharma* which obstructs the evolving elements; once the [*adharma*] broken, the evolving elements flood each their own modification all on their own. Or, just as that same farmer, in that same field, cannot make the watery or earthy juices enter into the roots of the rice-plants, but rather removes from it [the plants that obstruct this process,] such as *mudga*, *gavedhuka* and *śyāmāka*; once those [plants] removed, the juices enter into the roots of the rice-plants all on their own. In the same way *dharma* merely causes that *adharma* stops [its activity], because purity and impurity are in total opposition to each other. But *dharma* does not cause the evolving elements to become active. Nandīśvara and others can be taken as examples for this. The other way round, *adharma* can also block *dharma*. The result is a modification [of the evolving elements] toward impurity. Here too there are examples [from mythology], such as Nahuṣa the serpent etc."

Note the sentence: "For a cause is not made to act by its effect" (*na kāryeṇa kāraṇam pravartyate*). This can be taken to be the exact opposite of what Uddyotakara's Sāṃkhya opponent maintained in § 4, above: "the existing aim of the soul prompts nature; as a result the activity of nature is not for the sake of the aim of the soul [but prompted by it]" (*vidyamānaḥ puruṣārthaḥ pradhānaḥ pravartayatīti na puruṣārthāya*

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50 YBh 4.3: *na hi dharmādi nimittam tat prayojakam prakṛtīnām bhavati/ na kāryeṇa kāraṇam pravartyate iti/ katham tarhi? varaṇabhedas tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat/ yathā kṣetrikāḥ kedārād apām pūrṇāt kedārāntaram pīplāvayīṣuḥ samam nimnam nimnataram vā nāpaḥ pāṇināpakarṣaty āvaraṇam tv āsām bhinatti, tasmīn bhinne svayam evāpaḥ kedārāntaram āplāvayanti, tathā dharmāḥ prakṛtīnām āvaraṇam adharmāḥ bhinatti, tasmīn bhinne svayam eva prakṛtayah svam svam vikāram āplāvayanti/ yathā vā sa eva kṣetrikas tasmīn eva kedāre na prabhavaty audakān bhaumān vā rasān dhānyamūlāny anupraveśayitum/ kiṃ tarhi? mudgagavedhukaśyāmākādīms tato 'pakarṣati/ apakṛṣṭeṣu teṣu svayam eva rasā dhānyamūlāny anupraviśanti, tathā dharmo nivṛttimātre kāraṇam adharmasya, śuddhyaśuddhyor atyantavirodhāt/ na tu prakṛtipravṛttau dharmo hetur bhavatīti/ atra nandīśvarādaya udāhāryāḥ/ viparyayenāpy adharmo dharmam bādhatē/ tataś cāśuddhipariṇāma iti/ tatrāpi nahuṣājagarādaya udāhāryāḥ/.*



*pradhānasya pravṛttiḥ*).<sup>51</sup> The Yoga Bhāṣya rejects a teleological explanation where the Sāṃkhya criticized by Uddyotakara employs it. (We will see below, § 9, that Uddyotakara's Sāṃkhya opponent is no mere figment of his imagination.)

The precise significance of the two examples given at the end of the above passage is elucidated elsewhere in the Yoga Bhāṣya (on sūtra 2.12), where it is explained that "the youth Nandīśvara left the human state (or transformation, *pariṇāma*) and was transformed into a god" and that [29] "Nahuṣa, the king of the gods, left his own state and was transformed into an animal".<sup>52</sup>

It seems, then, that the Sāṃkhya philosophy which finds expression in the Yoga Bhāṣya differs from the philosophy of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā where teleological explanations are concerned. Another difference concerns the role of the mind (*citta*) in deriving pleasure, pain, confusion or indifference from one single object. The Yoga Bhāṣya emphasizes the sameness of the object in all these situations, and ascribes the different reactions to the different conditions of the observing mind. It explicitly contrasts this with the Sāṃkhya position, which emphasizes the variable nature of the constituent elements that make up the object, which in combination with the conditions of the observing minds produces different effects.

The passage concerned reads:<sup>53</sup>

"One thing, being the object of many minds, is common [to them all]. That [object] is not imagined by one mind, nor indeed by many minds, but it is grounded in itself. This because different minds and one and the same object [are involved]. Even though the object is the same, the mind

51 Strictly speaking the sentence from the Yoga Bhāṣya can be taken to be directed against an altogether different point of view, according to which a future object can be the cause of a present object. This point of view is exceedingly rare in Indian philosophy, but is exemplified by the Buddhist commentator Prajñākaragupta; see Bronkhorst, 1999a: § II.19. Compare however Vācaspati Miśra's comments, cited in note 116 below: "And an effect does not instigate its cause because, arising as it does in reliance upon it, it is dependent upon the cause." (*na ca kāryam kāraṇam prayojayati tasya tadadhīnotpattitayā kāraṇaparatantratvāt*)

52 YBh 2.12: ... *nandīśvaraḥ kumāro manuṣyapariṇāmaḥ hitvā devatvena pariṇataḥ ... nahuṣo 'pi devānām indraḥ svakam pariṇāmaḥ hitvā tiryaktvena pariṇata[h]* ... For details about Nahuṣa, see Mhbh 5.11-17; on Nandīśvara, see Oreṣkay, 1998.

53 YBh 4.15: *bahucittāmbanībhūtam ekaḥ vastu sādharmaṇam/ tat khalu naikacittaparikalpitaḥ nāpy anekacittaparikalpitaḥ kiṃ tu svapraṭiṣṭham/ katham? vastusāmye cittabhedāt/ dharmāpekṣam cittasya vastusāmye 'pi sukhajñānam bhavaty adharmapekṣam tata eva duḥkhajñānam avidyāpekṣam tata eva mūḍhajñānam samyagdarśanāpekṣam tata eva mādhyaस्थ्यajñānam iti/ kasya tac cittena parikalpitaḥ? na cānyacittaparikalpitenārthenānyasya cittoparāgo yuktaḥ/ tasmād vastujñānayoḥ grāhyagrahaṇābheda bhinnayoḥ vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ/ nānayoḥ saṃkaragandho 'py astīti/*

*sāṃkhyapakṣe punar vastu triguṇam calaḥ ca guṇavṛttam iti dharmādi-nimittāpekṣam cittair abhisambadhyate, nimittānurūpasya ca pratyaśyotpadyamānasya tena tenātmanā hetur bhavati/*

experiences happiness depending upon *dharma*, pain in relation to the same [object] depending on *adharma*, confusion in relation to the same [object] depending on ignorance, indifference in relation to the same [object] depending on correct insight. Whose mind [could] imagine [all] this? It is not correct [to assume that] the mind of one person is affected by an object imagined by the mind of someone else. That is why object and knowledge [of that object], which are respectively the object to be grasped and the means of grasping [it], travel different roads. There is not a whiff of confusion [possible] between these two.

[30]

According to Sāṃkhya, on the other hand, an object is constituted of the three constituents of nature, whose activity is fickle. It is therefore connected with the minds [of people who observe it] in a way that depends on various causes, such as the *dharma* [of each observer]. [As a result it is the object which] is the cause of the notion corresponding to the causes [related to the person concerned] that arises in this form or another."

[31]

## §6. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika on liberation

A special type of goal-oriented behavior that interests Praśastapāda and other Vaiśeṣikas in particular is the one leading to liberation. They describe the path to liberation in some detail. An essential element is that correct knowledge — and this means primarily knowledge of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy — enables people to see that all activity leads to suffering. As a result they decide to abstain from all activity and obtain liberation. The underlying supposition is that correct knowledge replaces wrong knowledge, which is responsible for passion, repulsion and for the resulting activities.

The Padārthadharmasamgraha describes the process leading to liberation as follows:<sup>54</sup>

"When someone — as a consequence of knowledge and of the activity resulting therefrom, viz., [activity] without intended fruit — is born in a virtuous family and desires to know means to get rid of suffering, goes to a teacher and acquires true knowledge about the six categories [of Vaiśeṣika], then he becomes free from passion because his wrong knowledge ceases. Because there is then no passion nor repulsion etc., virtue and sin which are born from those do not come into existence; and [the virtue and sin] which have been accumulated before disappear after producing experiences. When he has thus brought about contentment and happiness, as well as separation from the body, and passion etc. have ceased, only virtue characterized by inactivity remains. [This too,] after producing the happiness born from insight in the highest truth, ceases. Then because of the cessation [of virtue characterized by inactivity] the body etc. disappear of [this] soul which is free from seeds [for rebirth]. The tranquillity [which arises] since no body etc. come again into existence, and which resembles a fire whose fuel has been burnt, is liberation."

We have already seen how the Nyāya Sūtra and Bhāṣya depict the road to liberation as the removal, in this order, of incorrect knowledge, the [32] faults, activity, birth, and suffering. The Nyāya Bhāṣya gives the following descriptions:<sup>55</sup>

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54 WI p. 66 § 319: *jñānapūrvakāt tu kṛtād asaṃkalpitaphalād viśuddhe kule jātasya duḥkhavigamopāyajijñāsor ācāryam upasaṃgamyotpannaṣaṭpadārthataṭtvajñānasyājñānanivṛttau viraktasya rāgadveśādyabhāvāt tajjayor dharmādharmayor anutpattau pūrvasaṃcitayoś copabhogān nirodhe santoṣasukhaṃ śarīraparicchedaṃ cotpādyā rāgādinivṛttau nivṛttilakṣaṇaḥ kevalo dharmāḥ paramārthadarśanaḥ sukhaṃ kṛtvā nivartate/ tadā nirodhāt nirbijasyātmanaḥ śarīrādinivṛttih/ punaḥ śarīrādyanutpattau dagdhendhanānalavad upasāmo mokṣa iti/.*

55 NBh p. 78 l. 2- p. 80 l. 3 (on NS 1.1.2): *yadā tu tattvajñānān mithyājñānam apaiti, tadā mithyājñānāpāye doṣā apayanti, doṣāpāye pravṛttir apaiti, pravṛtṭyapāye janmāpaiti, janmāpāye duḥkham apaiti, duḥkhāpāye ca ātyantiko pavargo niḥśreyasam iti/.*

"But when knowing incorrectly disappears because of knowing correctly,<sup>56</sup> then with the disappearance of incorrect knowledge the faults disappear, with the disappearance of the faults activity disappears, with the disappearance of activity birth disappears, with the disappearance of birth suffering disappears, and with the disappearance of suffering there is complete liberation, the highest good."

And again:<sup>57</sup>

"But he who sees suffering, the range of suffering, that happiness is connected with suffering, that all this is suffering, he knows suffering. And once known, suffering is abandoned, because it is no [longer] grasped, like poisonous food. In this way he sees that faults and karma are the cause of suffering. And since the continuous sequence of suffering cannot be ended as long as the faults have not been abandoned, he abandons the faults; and when the faults have been abandoned, activity does not lead to rebirth. This has [already] been stated."<sup>58</sup>  
In all these passages we encounter a concatenation of proximate causes, no ultimate causes.

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56 For this translation of *tattvajñāna*, cp. Slaje, 1998, esp. p. 250.

57 NBh p. 1037 l. 4-8 (introducing NS 4.2.1): *yas tu duḥkhaṃ duḥkhāyatanam duḥkhānuṣaktam sukham ca sarvam idaṃ duḥkham iti paśyati sa duḥkham pari-jānāti/ pari-jñātam ca duḥkham prahīṇam bhavaty anupādānāt saviṣānnavat/ evaṃ doṣān karma ca duḥkhaḥetur iti paśyati/ na cāprahīṇeṣu doṣeṣu duḥkhaprabandhocchedena śākyam bhavitum iti doṣān jahāti, prahīṇeṣu ca doṣeṣu na pravṛttiḥ pratisandhānāyety uktam/.*

58 The reference is to NS 4.1.63 (*na pravṛttiḥ pratisandhānāya hīnakleśasya*). The Bhāṣya on that sūtra explains *pratisandhāna* as follows: "*Pratisandhi* (= *pratisandhāna*) is rebirth when the previous birth has come to an end" (NBh p. 1029 l. 4-5: *pratisandhis tu pūrvajanmanivṛttau punarjanma*).

[33]

## §7. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika on karmic retribution

The question of teleology comes up again in Vaiśeṣika in connection with karmic retribution. Here the school ran into difficulties. It is possible to follow the historical development in some detail, for three succeeding stages can be distinguished. The earliest one finds expression in the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, the fundamental text of the school, which does not however appear to have been preserved in its original form. Next we have information about karmic retribution as conceived of by the author of the Kaṇḍī, a text that has only survived in some fragments and whose author may have been called Rāvaṇa. The third stage of development is known from Praśastapāda's Padārthadharmasamgraha. We begin with the second stage.

Activities are thought of as leading to virtue (*dharmā*) and sin (*adharma*). Virtue and sin are qualities of the soul, and stick to it until retribution takes place. Since each soul is omnipresent, its virtues and sins can exert an influence on things that are not at the same place as the person — more precisely: at the same place as the body of the person — to whom they belong. In this way the deeds of living beings, through the intermediary of their virtues and sins, can and do determine each new creation of the world. The omnipresent souls are in contact (*saṃyoga*) with the atoms in which they induce activities at the moment of creation.<sup>59</sup> Karma determines not only the body, the sense organs and the amount of happiness or pain with which one will be connected, but also the objects which one will encounter.<sup>60</sup>

All this is described in the Padārthadharmasamgraha. There is however evidence to show that this Vaiśeṣika account of creation existed already well before Praśastapāda. Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtra [34] Bhāṣya (on sūtra 2.2.12) refers to a Vaiśeṣika position concerning the creation of the world in the following terms:<sup>61</sup>

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59 WI p. 10 § 58: ... *sarvātmagatavṛtilabdhādr̥ṣṭāpekṣebhyas tatsaṃyogebhyaḥ pavanaparamāṇuṣu karmotpattau ...*

60 WI p. 65-66 § 318: *aviduṣo rāgadveṣavataḥ pravartakād dharmāt prakṛṣṭāt svalpādharmasahitād brahmandraprajāpatipitṛmanuṣyalokeṣv āśayānurūpāir iṣṭaśarīrendriyaviśayasukhādibhir yogo bhavati/ tathā prakṛṣṭād adharmāt svalpādharmasahitāt pretatiryagyonisthāneṣv aniṣṭaśarīrendriyaviśyaduḥkhādibhir yogo bhavati/ evaṃ pravṛttilakṣaṇād dharmād adharmasahitād devamanuṣyatiryainārakeṣu punaḥ punaḥ saṃsārabandho bhavati/. The commentators Śrīdhara and Vyomaśiva interpret the expression *āśayānurūpa* as *karmānurūpa*.*

61 Ed. J.L. Shastri p. 435: *tataḥ sargakāle ca vāyavīyeṣv aṇuṣv adr̥ṣṭāpekṣaṃ karmotpadyate/ tat karma svāśrayam aṇum aṇvantareṇa saṃyunakti/ tato*

"Then, at the time of creation, a movement dependent on the unseen / unseens (*adr̥ṣṭa*) arises in the atoms of wind. That movement connects the atom in which it resides with another atom. Then, in the order of the dyad (*dvyaṅka*) etc., wind comes into being. In the same way fire, water, and earth." There is reason to think that this account was taken from Rāvaṇa's Kaṭandī, a commentary on the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra which is now lost but which must date from before Dignāga.<sup>62</sup> If in this account, too, the term *adr̥ṣṭa* (unseen) is just another expression for the qualities *dharma* and *adharma* — as it is in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha — we must conclude that the Kaṭandī advocated essentially the same mechanism of karmic retribution as the one presented in the passage of the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha just considered.

This mechanism of karmic retribution through the intermediary of the qualities *dharma* and *adharma* does not appear to have been part of original Vaiśeṣika. The Vaiśeṣika Sūtra does not include *dharma* and *adharma*, nor indeed *adr̥ṣṭa*, in its list of qualities. Some sections use the term *adr̥ṣṭa* in cases where no ethical, retributive, or psychological implications are suggested. One section, however, uses *adr̥ṣṭa* and *dharma/adharma* in a religious and ethical perspective, referring to the "invisible"<sup>63</sup> results and purposes of ritual and ethical activities, to their "merit" and "demerit".<sup>64</sup> This suggests that the mechanism of karmic retribution was not accounted for in any way whatsoever in the first stage of development of Vaiśeṣika.

This impression of earliest Vaiśeṣika is confirmed by a passage in the Nyāya Bhāṣya, which presents and then rejects the position according to which the body is formed under the influence of *adr̥ṣṭa*. This position is rejected with the argument that it is karma which forms the body. The rejected point of view appears to be, or be close to, the one held by earliest Vaiśeṣika.

[35]

The passage concerned reads:<sup>65</sup>

"Some hold the following opinion: '*adr̥ṣṭa* is a special quality of the atoms which is the cause of movement. Impelled by this [quality called *adr̥ṣṭa*] the atoms, once coagulated, produce the body. The mind enters

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*dvyanukādikrameṇa vāyur utpadyate/ evam agnir evam āpa evaṃ pṛthivī/ evam eva śarīraṃ sendriyaṃ iti/*

62 Bronkhorst, 1996; 1993b; 1993a.

63 On the potential use of verbal adjectives in *-ta* and *-na*, see Migron, 1999: 5 f.

64 Halbfass, 1991: 311-312. The section concerned is VS(C) 6.2.1 ff.

65 NBh p. 912 l. 2-6 (on NS 3.2.68): *kasyacid darśanam adr̥ṣṭam nāma paramānūnām guṇaviśeṣaḥ kriyāhetus tena preritāḥ paramāṇavaḥ sammūrcchitāḥ śarīraṃ utpādayantīti/ tan manaḥ samāviśati svaguṇenādr̥ṣṭeṇa preritaṃ samanaskē śarīre draṣṭur upalabdhir bhavatīti/ etasmin vai darśane guṇānucchedāt punas tatprasaṅgo 'pavarge/ apavarge śarīrotpattiḥ paramāṇu-guṇasyānucchedyatvād iti//*

that [body] impelled by its quality *adr̥ṣṭa*. Once the body has a mind, perception by the seer becomes [possible].'  
 [This is not correct.] Since in this opinion the same would take place in the state of liberation (*apavarga*), because the quality has not been cut off. [That is to say:] A body would come into existence [even] in the state of liberation, because the quality of the atoms (i.e. *adr̥ṣṭa*) is not to be cut off (when the soul reaches liberation)."

By introducing two new qualities — *dharma* and *adharma*, jointly called *adr̥ṣṭa* — that reside in the soul, and that can be thought to exert an influence on objects that are in contact with the omnipresent soul, this mechanism was believed to gain somewhat in intelligibility.<sup>66</sup> These qualities *dharma* and *adharma*, virtue and sin, are the means by which Vaiśeṣika of the second stage tried to explain the possibility of karmic retribution. Is this explanation satisfactory? Karmic retribution essentially brings about pleasant experience as a result of good deeds, unpleasant experience as a result of bad deeds. How does the system distinguish between good and bad deeds? Vaiśeṣika avoids the issue by concentrating on *dharma* and *adharma*. A good deed is evidently a deed that brings about *dharma*, in whatever way it does so. And a bad deed is a deed that brings about *adharma*.

This leads us to the real problem. How do *dharma* and *adharma* bring about pleasant and unpleasant experiences? The answer would be simple if they *only* brought about pleasant and unpleasant experiences, i.e., the qualities happiness and pain belonging to the same soul to which also *dharma* and *adharma* belong. Such an effect would be relatively easy to visualize. However, Vaiśeṣika claims more than this. *Dharma* and *adharma* bring about not only certain qualities different from themselves in [36] the same soul, they also have an effect on the material world: they bring about situations in the material world that lead to pleasant and unpleasant experiences for the living beings that inhabit it, in such a way that good deeds are rewarded, bad deeds punished. *Dharma* and *adharma*, therefore, bring about goal-oriented activity in the material world. How can they do so? How can Vaiśeṣika explain the mechanism of karmic retribution without resorting to teleology? The 'behaviorist' approach characteristic of Vaiśeṣika psychology is of no use here. It is not possible to maintain that each individual soul is 'conditioned' to seek agreeable or disagreeable experiences that correspond to the presence of *dharma* and *adharma* in it. We have seen that *dharma* and *adharma* were accepted to work directly on the material world, not — or not only — through the agency of living beings. They are supposed to determine the course of creation, before there can be talk of purposeful activity on the part of individual living beings.

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66 Reasons to think that the soul in Vaiśeṣika has always been looked upon as omnipresent have been given in Bronkhorst, 1993a: 87 f.; 1993c.

A passage in the Nyāya Sūtra and its Bhāṣya tries to avoid the issue by maintaining that the real result of karma is the experience obtained by the soul concerned, not the material circumstances that bring it about:<sup>67</sup> "(Sūtra 50:) [Objection:] Because the substrates are different, the comparison with the appearance of a fruit in a tree does not explain [the link between karma and its effects].

(Bhāṣya:) Tending [the tree] — i.e. watering its roots etc. — and the fruit both have the tree as substrate; deeds, on the other hand (*ca*), take place in this world, in the body, while their results belong to the next world. It follows that [the comparison with the appearance of a fruit in a tree] does not explain [the link between karma and its effects], because the substrates are different.

(Sūtra 51:) [Reply:] This objection is not valid, because happiness has the soul as substrate.

(Bhāṣya:) Happiness, being experienced by the soul, has the soul as substrate. The karma called *dharma* has the very same soul as substrate, [37] because *dharma* is a quality of the soul. It follows that it is not correct to state that [karma and its effects] have different substrates.

(Sūtra 52:) [Objection:] [This is] not [correct], because [material objects] such as sons, cattle, women, property, gold and food have been indicated [in the Veda] to be the results [of karma].

(Bhāṣya:) Sons and the like, not happiness, have been indicated as being the results [of karma] in [Vedic injunctions such as] ‘he who desires a village should sacrifice’, ‘he who desires a son should sacrifice’. It follows that what has been stated there to the extent that happiness is the result [of karma] is incorrect.

(Sūtra 53:) [Reply:] Because the result comes about by virtue of a connection with those things they are metaphorically called result.

(Bhāṣya:) The result, i.e. happiness, comes about by virtue of a connection with sons etc. For this reason sons etc. are metaphorically called the results [of karma], just as the word ‘breath’ is metaphorically applied to food in ‘breath is indeed food’."

Note that in this passage the word *karman* is not used in its usual sense of ‘deeds’, but as a synonym of *dharma*, one of the qualities of the soul. Only by using *karman* in this way could the authors of the Nyāya Sūtra and Bhāṣya maintain that it has the same substrate as happiness. (Deeds are not qualities of the soul in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ontology, but movements residing in the body.) They do not however deny that *dharma* and *adharma* work on the material world.

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67 NS + NBh 4.1.50-53 (p. 1003 l. 2 - p. 1005 l. 4): **āśrayavyatirekāḍ vrkṣaphalotpattivad ity ahetuḥ** (NS 4.1.50)/ *mūlasekādi parikarma phalaṃ cobhayaṃ vrkṣāśrayam, karma ceha śarīre, phalaṃ cāmutra ity āśrayavyatirekāḍ ahetur iti//* **prīter ātmāśrayatvād apratiṣedhaḥ** (NS 4.1.51)/ *prītir ātmapratyakṣatvād ātmāśrayā, tadāśrayam eva karma dharmasamjñītaṃ dharmasyātma-guṇatvāt tasmād āśrayavyatirekānupapattir iti//* **na putrapaśustrīparicchada-hiraṇyānnādiphalanirdeśāt** (NS 4.1.52)/ *putrādi phalaṃ nirdiśyate na prītiḥ, grāmakāmo yajeta putrakāmo yajeteti tatra yad uktaṃ prītiḥ phalaṃ ity etad ayuktam iti//* **tatsambandhāt phalanīṣpattes teṣu phalavadupacārah** (NS 4.1. 53)/ *putrādisambandhāt phalaṃ prītilakṣaṇam utpadyate iti putrādiṣu phalavadupacārah, yathānne prāṇaśabdo annaṃ vai prāṇāḥ iti//*



It appears that the Vaiśeṣikas themselves were not satisfied with the mechanism of karmic retribution through mere *dharma* and *adharma*.<sup>68</sup> This is shown by the fact that they soon abandoned their atheistic position (atheistic in the sense that they did not accept the existence of a creator), and assigned a central role in the retribution of karma to their newly introduced creator God. Assigning karmic effects is one of the principal functions attributed to God already in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda, who may have been the first Vaiśeṣika author to introduce this notion into the system.<sup>69</sup> [38]

The passage concerned reads:<sup>70</sup>

"When in this way the four composite elements have come into existence, a great egg (*mahad aṅdam*) is formed, caused solely by God's (*maheśvara*) meditation / volition (*abhidhyāna*), out of atoms of fire with an admixture of atoms of earth.<sup>71</sup> In it [God] creates Brahmā, with four faces like so many lotuses, the grandfather of all worlds (*sarvalokapitāmahaṃ brahmānam*), and all worlds; he then enjoins him with the duty of creating living things. That Brahmā, thus enjoined by God, and endowed with abundant knowledge, complete absence of passion and absolute power, **knows the effects of the deeds of living beings**; he creates the Prajāpatis, his mind-created (*mānasa*) sons, with knowledge, experience and span of life **in accordance with their [past] deeds**; [he also creates] the Manus, Devas, Ṛṣis and groups of Pitṛs (*pitṛgaṇa*), the four *varṇas* out of his mouth, arms, thighs and feet (*mukhabāhūrupādātāḥ*) [respectively], and the other living beings, high and low (*uccāvacāni bhūtāni*); he then connects them with

68 Similarly Chemparathy, 1967: 116-117: "In course of time, however, this explanation was felt to be unsatisfactory, most probably on account of the objections of the opponents, who pointed out that the Adṛṣṭam, under whose directing power the government of the entire universe was placed by the Vaiśeṣikas, could not give a satisfactory explanation of the universe; for being unconscious (*acetana*), how could this Adṛṣṭam guide the processes of this universe, which, in spite of the existence of pain and evils, presupposed the guidance of an intelligent director (*adhiṣṭhātā*)? The Vaiśeṣikas were thus compelled to seek a more satisfactory explanation by accepting an intelligent cause, namely Īśvara ..."

69 Bronkhorst, 1996.

70 WI p. 11: *evam samutpanneṣu caturṣu mahābhūteṣu maheśvarasyābhidhānamātrāt taijasebhyo 'nubhyaḥ pārthivaparamānusahitebhyo* (variants: *pārthivādiparamānusahitebhyo, pārthivānusahitebhyo*) *mahad aṅdam ārabhyate* (some editions read *utpadyate*)/ *tasmimś caturvadanakamalaṃ sarvalokapitāmahaṃ* (variant: *caturvadanakamalasakalalokapitāmahaṃ*) *brahmānam sakalabhuvanasahitam utpādya prajāsarge viniyuṅkte* (variant: *niyuṅkte*)/ *sa ca maheśvareṇa viniyukto* (variant: *niyukto*) *brahmā 'tiśayajñānavairāgyaiśvaryaśampānah prāṇināṃ* (variant: *sarvaprāṇināṃ*) *karmavipākam viditvā karmānurūpajñānabhogāyusaḥ sutān prajāpatīn mānasān manudevarṣipitṛgaṇān* (variant: *manūn deva<sup>o</sup>*) *mukhabāhūrupādātāś caturō varṇān anyāni coccāvacāni bhūtāni* (variants: *bhūtāni ca; anyāni coccāvacāni ca srṣṭvā*) *srṣṭvā, āśayānurūpair dharmajñānavairāgyaiśvaryaīḥ saṃyojayatīti*// Cp. Bronkhorst, 1996: 286.

71 Atoms of fire with an admixture of atoms of earth constitute, in Vaiśeṣika, gold.

*dharma*, knowledge, absence of passion and power in accordance with their residue of past deeds."

Whatever other reasons there may have been to introduce a creator God into the Vaiśeṣika system, it certainly solved the problem of the mechanism of karmic retribution.<sup>72</sup> However, this kind of explanation implies that the hope of finding a non-teleological explanation of karmic retribution had been abandoned.

[39]

This conclusion is confirmed by the discussion of God in the Nyāya Sūtra and its commentaries. Sūtra 4.1.19 observes that God is the cause (of the fruition of human deeds) because human deeds are seen not to bear fruit (*īśvaraḥ kāraṇaṃ puruṣakarmāphalyadarśanāt*).<sup>73</sup> The Bhāṣya explains that the circumstance that human effort does not always lead to the fruit aimed at justifies the conclusion that obtaining the fruit depends on someone else, namely God.<sup>74</sup> God, as is clear from these remarks, plays a role in connecting human deeds (and deeds of other living beings, we may assume) with their fruit; God, therefore, plays a role in karmic retribution. After an objection in sūtra 20, sūtra 21 and its Bhāṣya point out that God brings about the fruit of human deeds.<sup>75</sup>

Uddyotakara's Nyāya Vārttika dedicates much space to God, and to the need to give him a place in the system. God must be the efficient cause (*nimittakāraṇa*) of the world, for other factors — Uddyotakara mentions *pradhāna* (the source of the material world of Sāṃkhya), atoms (*paramāṇu*), and karma —, being unconscious (*acetana*), must be guided by a conscious cause (*buddhimatkāraṇādhiṣṭhita*) in order to come into action, just like an ax.<sup>76</sup> Of these three factors karma interests us most at present. Karma is unconscious, and cannot come into action without depending upon a conscious cause. Here the following problem arises. Karma is represented, in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, by the two qualities *dharma* and *adharma*, which reside in the soul, and are therefore dependent on a conscious (i.e., possessing consciousness, *buddhimat*) cause. Can this soul, rather than God, be considered the conscious substrate which allows *dharma* and *adharma* to produce their fruit? Uddyotakara rejects this option, pointing out that the soul to which *dharma* and *adharma* belong is incapable of perceiving even perceivable things as long as it has no instruments to bring about effects (*kāryakāraṇa*); no doubt a body and its organs are meant. How much less can this soul perceive the

72 The fact that God apparently has no freedom whatsoever in Praśastapāda's scheme recalls Stephen Hawking's (1988: 140-141) remarks to the extent that God may not have had any role in creating the universe (because it may have no beginning); Hawking concludes from this that there is no place for a creator in the universe.

73 On this passage of the Sūtra and Bhāṣya, as well as on Uddyotakara's reflections, see Jacobi, 1923: 50 f.; 71 f.

74 NBh p. 940 l. 6-7 (on sūtra 4.1.19): *puruṣo 'yaṃ samīhamāno nāvaśyaṃ samihāphalaṃ prāpnoti tenānumīyate parādhīnaṃ puruṣasya karmaphalārādhanam iti, yadadhīnaṃ sa īśvaraḥ*./

75 NBh p. 943 l. 3 (on sūtra 4.1.21): *puruṣakāram īśvaro 'nugrṇṇāti, phalāya puruṣasya yatamānasyeśvaraḥ phalaṃ sampādayatīti*./

76 NV p. 945 l. 12-13 (on sūtra 4.1.21): *pradhānaparamāṇukarmāṇi prakṛavṛtter buddhimatkāraṇādhiṣṭhitāni pravartante acetanatvāt vāsyādivad iti*./

unperceivable *dharma* and *adharma*.<sup>77</sup> A few lines later Uddyotakara wonders whether [40] *dharma* and *adharma* can directly affect the atoms. This is of course close to the earlier position of Vaiśeṣika, before it introduced the idea of God. Uddyotakara formulates his views as follows:<sup>78</sup>

"And if [we accept that] the atoms come into action, being taken hold of by *dharma* and *adharma*? This is not possible, because they are not conscious. ... .

-And even if you accept that *dharma* and *adharma* have the capacity to get atoms into action, [we must say] no, for an instrument by itself does not have the capacity to get an activity going. For no instrument by itself that gets an activity going is [ever] perceived.

-But if [you say] that it is done by *dharma* and *adharma* in view of atoms, that is not possible either, because no such thing is seen. For we do not see any activity that is being produced by its grammatical object and instrument.

-What about the soul, can it be the agent? [No, for] it has already been said that [the soul, before it obtains a body and organs] is without knowledge."

The reason why something conscious must be involved in karmic retribution becomes clear in Uddyotakara's discussion of God's reason to act at all. It is not out of playfulness, nor in order to manifest his greatness (or the variety of the world). No, God acts because such is his nature. But if it is God's nature to act, he should be expected to always act, without interruption, and everything would come into being at the same time, not in a sequence. However, this would be overlooking that God is conscious. Being conscious, he does not need to be active all the time, nor to create everything at the same time. Most importantly, this conscious being which is God can wait for the ripening of *dharma* and *adharma* of individual beings.<sup>79</sup>

77 NV p. 947 l. 8-12 (on sūtra 4.1.21): *dharmādharmau buddhimatkāraṇādhiṣṭhitau puruṣasyopabhogaṃ kurutaḥ karaṇatvād vāsyādivad iti/ ātmaivādhiṣṭhātā dharmādharmayoḥ bhaviṣyatīti cet/ yasya tau dharmādharmau sa evādhiṣṭhātā bhaviṣyatīti na yuktam, prak karyakaraṇotpatteḥ tadasambhavāt/ yāvat karyakaraṇasaṅghāto nopajāyate puruṣasya tāvad ayam ajñāḥ upasandhātā pi upalabhyān api tāvad rūpādīn nopalabhate kuto nupalabhyau dharmādharmāv upalapsyata iti/.*

78 NV p. 947 l. 14-19 (on 4.1.21): *yadi punar dharmādharmābhyām evādhiṣṭhitāḥ paramāṇavaḥ pravarteran? na yuktam etad acetanatvāt/ .../ abhyupagamyāpi ca dharmādharmayoḥ paramāṇupravṛttisāmartyaṃ na karaṇasya kevalasya kriyānirvṛttāv asāmartyāt/ na hi karaṇam kevalam kriyām nirvartayad upalabhyate/ atha paramāṇvapekṣābhyām dharmādharmābhyām kriyate/ tad api na yuktam adṛṣṭatvāt/ na hi karmakaraṇābhyām kriyām janyamānām kvacid api paśyāma iti/ ātmā kartā bhaviṣyatīti? uktam etad ajñatvād iti/.*

79 NV p. 950 l. 4-12 (on sūtra 4.1.21): *tatsvābhāvvyāt satatapravṛttir iti cet/ atha manyase yadi pravṛttisvabhāvakaṃ tattvaṃ pravṛttinivṛtī na prāpnutaḥ/ na hi pravṛttisvabhāvake tattve nivṛttir yujyata iti krameṇotpattir na prāpnoti tattvasyaika rūpatvāt, idam idānīm bhavatu idam idānīm na bhavatu iti na yuktam/ na hy ekarūpāt karaṇāt karyabhedam paśyāma iti/ naiṣa doṣaḥ buddhimattvena viśeṣaṇāt/ buddhimat tattvam iti pratipāditam/ buddhimattayā ca viśiṣyamāṇam sāpekṣam ca na sarvadā pravartate na sarvam ekasmin kāle utpādayati yasya karaṇasānnidhyam tad bhavati yad asannihitakaraṇam tan na bhavati, na ca sarvasya yugapat karaṇasānnidhyam asti, ataḥ sarvasya yugapat*

[41]

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's Nyāyamañjarī gives the essential argument in a few lines:80

"The variety of the world is not possible without [the workings] of the deeds (*karman*) [of living beings]; that is why it is [generally] assumed that deeds, even though one does not see them [while they effect their results] are their cause. Such being the case, since it is not possible to produce [such] effects on the basis of unconscious actors (*kāraka*) that are not [even] guided by an animate being, a conscious agent that guides them must equally be assumed."

Problems remain, however. Uddyotakara rightly observed that the soul cannot be the agent in the creation of the world, because before it obtains a body and organs it is without knowledge and consciousness. But is the same not true of God? Does he not need a body? These and other questions are taken up by Udayana, a Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika author who wrote around the year 1000. His treatment of God has been admirably discussed by George Chemparathy (1972), and I will cite some of his observations. Chemparathy first resumes the situation (p. 139):

"Despite the fact that the 'materials' [i.e. the eternal realities recognized by the school, JB] necessary for the origination of the visible universe are ... present, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas consider the role of Īśvara indispensable for the origination of the universe. Subject as the world is to periodical dissolutions followed by new creations, a start has to be made at the time of every new creation, and this start can be had only if a conscious or intelligent (*cetana*-) being guides the causes. But none of the realities [accepted] as eternal (and hence existing even during the period of dissolution) are conscious at the beginning of the new creation. The only realities that are capable of conscious activity are the souls; but, in the view of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, even these remain devoid of any conscious activity when they are separated from their body. As the union of the souls with the bodies already presupposes certain combinations of atoms and the souls, and consequently a conscious being to guide them, the activity of a conscious agent other than these souls would be required. It is on the necessity of such a conscious agent who possesses an eternal cognition of all the causes, that [Udayana's] first and ... second proofs for the existence of Īśvara are based. The creative activity of Īśvara will thus consist in 'directing' (*adhiṣṭhāna*) the various pre-existing causes in such a way that they combine to produce a universe conformable to the desires of the living beings for the experience (*bhoga*) of which it is meant."

This shows that Udayana requires God for exactly the same purposes as the earlier authors whom we have considered so far. The causes of the universe — notably among them *dharma* and *adharma*, the [42] results of deeds — cannot by themselves explain the creation of this complex world which conforms to the desires of living beings.

What about the question whether God has a body or not? Ordinary souls need a body in order to act consciously. Would the same be true of God?

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*utpādo na prasaktaḥ, sa khalu pravartamāno dharmādharmayoḥ paripākakālam apekṣate kāraṇāntarotpādaṃ tadbhāgināṃ ca sattvānāṃ tatra sannidhānaṃ tadbhāgisattvadharmādharmaparipākaṃ ca tadapratibandhaṃ ceti/.*

80 NM p. 496/180: *atha jagadvaicitryaṃ karmavyatirekeṇa na ghaṭata iti karmanāṃ adṛśyamānānāṃ api kāraṇatvaṃ kalpyate tatra/ yady evam acetanebhyaḥ kārakebhyaś cetanānadhiṣṭhitebhyaḥ kāryotpādānupapatteḥ kartā pi cetanas teṣāṃ adhiṣṭhātā kalpyatām/.*

Chemparathy draws in this connection attention to Udayana's *Ātmatattvaviveka* (p. 140-141):

"In his *Ātmatattvaviveka* Udayana maintains that body is not pervaded with an agent (*kartravyāpana*), in other words, an agent need not necessarily be bodied. An agent requires a body for two purposes: either as abode or substratum (*āyatanatayā*), or as procurer of the instruments (*upakaranaprāpakatayā*) of his activity. But neither of these purposes can be found in *Īśvara*. For a body as abode or substratum is required only when the agent can have experience (*bhoga*). The body then serves as the substratum of the experience of pleasure or pain. But as *Īśvara* has no experience [of pleasure and pain], he does not require a body for that purpose. Nor does he require it for the purpose of procuring the instruments of his activity; for only an agent that cannot direct the other causes by immediate or direct effort (*sākṣātpṛayatna*) requires a body in order to effect the connection between the agent and the other causes. But *Īśvara* can direct the causes of the universe by his effort without any intermediary (*sākṣāt*)."

Similar arguments are also found in Udayana's later *Nyāyakusumāñjali*. Already Jayanta Bhaṭṭa observed:81

"Just as an unconscious body follows the wish of its soul, in exactly the same manner do atoms follow the wish of that [creator God]."

If our reflections so far are correct, one reason for which the thinkers of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika came to accept the notion of a creator God, is systemic. Without the assumption of a creator God their system could not account for the effects of karma.

Let us briefly consider another attempt to explain the acceptance of a creator God in these systems with the help of systemic considerations. Even though he may overstate his case, Chattopadhyaya (1969: 254 f.) is no doubt correct in assuming that Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika introduced the notion of a creator God primarily for systemic reasons: "the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of God was an extremely technical one, connected more with the head than with the heart. Designed to fill up the gap of a scientific hypothesis, it was a purely theoretical product, thriving mainly on dry logic." (p. 256-57). Chattopadhyaya is less likely to be correct in identifying the exact reason which made them do so. He expresses his hypothesis in the following passage (p. 254-56):

"What led the later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas to break away from their original atheism is itself an interesting question. It was something else than the [43] urge to rationalise the religious sentiment proper. At least one of the reasons for the admission of God in the later version of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika was, in all presumption, the purely technical need of defending an essentially scientific hypothesis, namely atomism. ... [T]he atomic theory ... was ... characterized by serious shortcoming[s]. Its main weakness was the want of a satisfactory explanation of the process of atomic combination, or, to be more precise, of the first combination of two inherently partless atoms, which, in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view, must have marked the beginning of the process of the atomic combination in general, i.e. the beginning of the shaping of the physical world in the form in which we find it.

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81 NM p. 508/185: *yathā hy acetanaḥ kāya ātmecchām anuvartate/ tadicchām anuvartsyante tathaiiva paramāṇavaḥ//*.

... [E]minent idealist philosophers tried hard to reject the atomic theory on the ground that it had no satisfactory solution of the problem of atomic combination. How could the atoms, being by definition partless, combine with each other? ...

In defense of the atomic theory, therefore, the atomists themselves had to offer some definite answer to this concerted attack of the idealists. ... The only thing possible for them was to attempt some solution of the problem inevitably *in terms of the technology known to them*. But this was essentially the technique of manual operation — of the potter producing the pot, the weaver producing the cloth and the mason building the house. ... Essentially in the image of the craftsman, therefore, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conceived of an intelligent agent to effect the first atomic combination. This agent, however, had to be super-human, because the act of combining two intrinsically partless atoms could be nothing short of a miracle. Therefore, argued the later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, just as the potter produced the pot by combining two *kapāla*-s (pre-fabricated parts of the pot), so did God produce the first dyad (*dvyaṇuka*: binary product) by combining two atoms. Thus was introduced God into the atomic philosophy, and this, as it is put in traditional Indian terminology, in the form of the *brahmāṇḍa-kulāla* or the grand macrocosmic potter."<sup>82</sup>

The "proof" of a creator God mentioned in this passage is known from later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika authors, such as Udayana (see Chemparathy, [44] 1972: 104-08).<sup>83</sup> There is, however, no indication whatsoever to think that the idea of a creator God was introduced for this reason. The earliest texts do not mention this function of God. They do, on the contrary, mention the function which was pointed out above: God's role in attributing punishment and reward to living beings. We must conclude that Chattopadhyaya's attempt to find a systemic reason for the acceptance of a creator God in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika is correct, but that the candidate he proposes is not supported by the available evidence. The primary task of the creator God was not to combine atoms, but rather to apply karmic retribution.

We may conclude that Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika initially made a serious effort to explain the world without resorting to teleological forms of explanation. This was most difficult in the cases of psychology and karmic retribution. In psychology, I submit, the Vaiśeṣika tried to develop, at least in principle, a mechanistic scheme of explanation.

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<sup>82</sup> Phillips (1995: 67) paraphrases this passage in the following words: "According to Chattopadhyaya, Praśastapāda, under the pressure of Buddhist Idealists, comes to see a systemic need for God: the Buddhists argue that the antinomy of combinations of partless indivisibles shows the external world to be unreal, and Praśastapāda apparently can find no way to solve the problem except to bring in God." However, Chattopadhyaya does not refer to Praśastapāda in this particular context. And indeed, when Phillips refers in a note (p. 343 n. 109) to the passage describing creation in Praśastapāda's Padārthadharmaśāstra (WI p. 9 § 57 f.), he overlooks the fact that this passage does not assign to the creator God the task of combining atoms. It does assign to God the task of looking after karmic retribution, as we have seen above. See further Bronkhorst, 1996.

<sup>83</sup> Phillips (1995: 343 n. 109) suggests that Uddyotakara on NS 4.1.21 (p. 945) and 4.2. 25 (p. 1065 ff.) "makes the same move", but I find no evidence to that extent in the passages indicated.

This scheme was remarkably close to the behaviorist scheme which enjoyed academic respectability in the modern world until quite recently. With the rejection of behaviorism nowadays we may have to conclude that Vaiśeṣika, too, had chosen for a solution which is ultimately unsatisfactory. They did however try to keep the teleological devil out of the realm of psychology. They were less successful in their attempts to give a mechanistic explanation of karmic retribution. Here they admitted in a way defeat by introducing the notion of a creator God who acted as a kind of book-keeper of the karmic accounts of all living beings.

The notion of God as something like a book-keeper of karmic accounts was no invention of the thinkers of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. They merely adopted here a position which others had held well before them. For example, the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad — which according to Oberlies (1988: 57 f.; 1995: 67) dates from the early centuries of the Common Era — speaks of God as the supervisor of karma (*karmādhyakṣa*) in the following verse:<sup>84</sup>

"The one God, hidden in all beings, all-pervading [and yet] the interior self of all beings, is the supervisor of karma, the dwelling-place of all beings, the witness, the judge, isolated and free from *guṇas*."

[45]

A similar role is played by Kāla in some younger portions of the Mahābhārata.<sup>85</sup>

Since the aim of the present study is not to find historical predecessors of the notions introduced to explain the mechanism of karmic retribution, but rather to understand the systemic reasons which induced, indeed forced, philosophical thinkers to accept those notions, no attempt will be made to trace the history of God as the book-keeper of karmic accounts.

Of course, karma does not only determine the shape of the world at the time of its renewed creation. It plays an equally important role in the creation of each new body at birth. Does God intervene here too? A passage in the Nyāya Bhāṣya suggests otherwise:<sup>86</sup>

84 ŚAŚUp 6.11: *eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ, sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā/ karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ, sāksī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca//*; the translation, and esp. the interpretation of *cetā*, follows Oberlies, 1998: 117. Cp. Krishan, 1997: 25.

85 Scheftelowitz, 1929: 21 f.

86 NS + NBh 3.2.60 (p. 899 l. 10 - p. 901 l. 1): ***pūrvakṛtaphalānubandhāt tadutpattiḥ*** (NS 3.2.60)/ *pūrvaśarīre yā pravṛttir vāgbuddhiśarīrārambhalakṣaṇā tat pūrvakṛtaṃ karmoktaṃ/ tasya phalaṃ tajjanitau dharmādharmau/ tatphalasyānubandha ātmasamavetasyāvasthānam/ tena prayuktebhyo bhūtebhyas tasyotpattiḥ śarīrasya na svatantrebhyā iti/ yadadhiṣṭhāno 'yam ātmāyam aham iti manyamāno yatrābhīyukto yatropabhogatrṣṇayā viśayān upalabhamāno dharmādharmau saṃskaroṭi tad asya śarīram/ tena saṃskāreṇa dharmādharmaalakṣaṇena bhūtasahite patite 'smiñ charīra uttaram niṣpadyate/ niṣpannasya cāsya pūrvaśarīravat puruṣārthakriyā puruṣasya ca pūrvaśarīravat pravṛttir iti karmāpekṣebhyo bhūtebhyāḥ śarīrasarge saty etad upapadyata iti/*

"Because of the connection with the fruit of deeds carried out before, that arises (NS 3.2.60). The activity in an earlier body, in the sense of what has been undertaken by word, mind or body, is called 'deeds carried out before'. 'Their fruit' are the *dharma* and *adharma* produced by them. 'The connection with their fruit' is the presence of [that fruit (i.e., of the *dharma* and *adharma* produced by earlier deeds)] inhering in the soul. 'That arises', i.e. the body [arises], out of the elements that are prompted by that [connection with the fruit of earlier deeds], not out of independent [elements]. The body of the [soul] is that in which the soul resides thinking 'This is me', to which it applies itself, in which it produces (*saṃskaroti*) *dharma* and *adharma* through craving for enjoyment while observing the objects of the senses. When through this production (*saṃskāra*) in the form of *dharma* and *adharma* this body has come to its end along with the elements, the next body arises, and this [newly] arisen body will manifest activity to obtain the human ends (*puruṣārtha*) just like the earlier body, and the person will act just like the earlier body. Since in this way the creation of the body takes place out of the elements which [in their turn] depend upon karma, this works out fine."

[46]

How is this possible? How can a new body be created without the help of God if the creation of a new world needs his help? The Nyāya Bhāṣya explains this in the immediately following lines:87

"It can be observed that objects such as chariots which are capable of activities that serve to obtain the human ends arise out of elements that are instigated by effort (*prayatna*), a quality of the soul (*puruṣa*). In the same way it must be inferred that the body, too, which is capable of activities that serve to obtain the human ends when it arises, arises out of elements that depend on another quality of the soul."

The teleological dimension of karmic retribution had been taken care of by a creator God in the case of cosmic creation. In the case of the creation of a new body the soul to whom this body is going to belong plays that role. This cannot but mean that the individual soul somehow creates its next body on the basis of its karmic residues. These residues themselves being incapable of exerting a goal-oriented activity, the intelligence of the soul is required.

It goes without saying that this position is not without its difficulties. Do we have to assume, for example, that the soul prepares its own punishment for bad deeds carried out in an earlier life? How would this be possible, given that the psychology accepted by both Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya is based on the assumption that activity is undertaken to obtain happiness and avoid suffering? The author of the Nyāya Bhāṣya was obviously aware of this difficulty. What he does is offer an "alternative psychology" to account for karmic retribution in the making of the

87 NBh p. 901 l. 1-4 (on 3.2.60): *dr̥ṣṭā ca puruṣaguṇena prayatnena prayuktebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ puruṣārthakriyāsamarthānām dravyānām rathaprabhrtīnām utpattiḥ/ tathānumātavyam śarīram api puruṣārthakriyāsamartham utpadyamānam puruṣasya guṇāntarāpekṣebhyo bhūtebhya utpadyata iti/.*



individual body. He proves this "alternative psychology" with the help of the following inference:<sup>88</sup>

"It can be seen that the presence of happiness or pain [of a person] derives from the presence of a quality of the soul [of that same person] (viz., effort). A [soul] which, being conscious, recognizes that happiness can be produced through a [certain] means and which, desiring to obtain that [happiness], makes an effort to obtain the means, will be connected with [47] happiness, not [a soul] which is the opposite [of this]. And a [soul] which recognizes that pain can be produced through a [a certain] means and which, desiring to avoid that [pain], makes an effort to give up the means, will be abandoned by pain, not [a soul] which is the opposite [of this]. Now there is this presence of happiness or pain belonging to conscious beings without [the quality] effort (*prayatna*) [being involved]; that [particular presence of happiness or pain] must have been produced by the presence of another quality of the conscious being."

This other quality is, of course, *dharma* in the case of happiness, *adharma* in the case of pain.

It is hardly necessary to point out that this analysis of the author of the Nyāya Bhāṣya goes one step too far. Recall that the ordinary psychology of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika had as task to explain teleological behavior in non-teleological terms, and we have seen that it succeeded reasonably well at this, about as well as modern behaviorism. Also the "alternative psychology", the one invoked to explain karmic retribution in the formation of a new body, should explain the teleological workings of karma in non-teleological terms. It doesn't. A vital ingredient of Pakṣilasvāmin's analysis of karmic effects on a new body is precisely the presence of a conscious, i.e., teleologically acting soul. Unlike his ordinary psychology, Pakṣilasvāmin's "alternative psychology" explains teleology with teleology. This means that it explains nothing.

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88 NBh p. 917 l. 8-12 (on 3.2.72): *dr̥ṣṭam hi puruṣaguṇavyavasthānāt sukhaduḥkhavyavasthānam/ yaḥ khalu cetanāvān sādhananirvartanīyaṃ sukhaṃ buddhvā tad īpsan sādhanāvāptaye prayatate sa sukhena yujyate na viparītaḥ/ yaś ca sādhananirvartanīyaṃ duḥkhaṃ buddhvā taj jihāsuḥ sādhanaparivarjanāya yatate sa duḥkhena tyajyate na viparītaḥ/ asti cedam yatnam antareṇa cetanānām sukhaduḥkhavyavasthānaṃ tenāpi cetanaguṇāntaravyavasthānakṛtena bhavitavyam/.*

[49]

## §8. Critical reflections on the role of a creator God

At this point it will be instructive to consider what Wilhelm Halbfass says about the nature of karmic retribution (1991: 297):

"Although the philosophers do not normally put forth specific schemes of karmic retribution, they seem nevertheless convinced of the validity of such schemes. They accept them as warranted by the sacred tradition, or by certain superhuman forms of insight (*yogipratyakṣa*). The explanatory role of karma in which they are interested is, above all, associated with the internal variety (*vaicitrya*) and apparent unevenness and injustice (*vaiṣamya*) in the realm of life. Why is it that living beings, in particular humans, are not alike? Why are some long-lived and some short-lived, some healthy, some sickly, some handsome, and some ugly? The answer is, of course, karma.

Explanation of this kind is obviously not explanation in the modern scientific sense, but something much closer to theodicy. As a matter of fact, the reference to karma in such cases is in some significant instances combined with an explicit vindication and exculpation of the 'Lord' (*īśvara*). The commentaries on Brahmasūtra II, 1, 34, in particular by Śaṅkara, provide an impressive example. Following the clues given by the Sūtra, Śaṅkara states that the Lord, in his role as creator or organizer of an uneven world, takes into consideration the good and bad karma of the creatures, and that therefore there is no unfairness or cruelty (*vaiṣamya, nairghṛṇya*) on his part: 'The creation is uneven in accordance with the merit and demerit of the creatures; for this, the Lord cannot be blamed' (*ataḥ sṛj-yamānaprāṇidharmādharmaṃpekṣā viṣamā sṛṣṭir iti nāyam īśvarasyāparādhah*). The association of karma and theodicy is also obvious, though perhaps less conspicuous, in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika."

Halbfass may be right in pointing out that the reference to karma is sometimes combined with an explicit vindication of God, but the reverse may be equally true: the reference to God may be a vindication of the karma theory, or rather: an explanation of how karmic retribution is at all possible. The Padārthadharmasaṅgraha does not offer a vindication of God, but it describes God's role in karmic retribution. And some passages in Śaṅkara's work, too, are more concerned with explaining how the karma theory can be maintained if only we accept God's role in it than with anything else.

[50]

An example is the following passage:89

89 Śaṅkara, Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya on sūtra 3.2.38, p. 665-666: *yad etad iṣṭāniṣṭa-vyāmīśralakṣaṇam karmaphalam saṃsāragocaram trividham jantūnām kim etat karmaṇo bhavaty āhosvid īśvarād iti bhavati vicāraṇā/ tatra tāvat pratipādyate phalam ata īśvarād bhavitum arhati/ kutah? upapatteḥ/ sa hi sarvādhyakṣaḥ sṛṣṭisthitisamhārān vicitrān vidadhad deśakālavīṣeṣābhijñatvāt karminām*

"The threefold fruit of action of living beings, which has *saṃsāra* as its scope and can be desirable, undesirable or mixed, does it arise from action [itself] or from God? This is what is at present reflected upon. Here it is stated, to begin with, that the fruit must arise from that God, because that is proper. For it is proper that He, who controls all, brings about the fruit in accordance with their actions for those who have acted, while ordering creation, preservation and destruction [of the world] in all their variety, because he knows the specific places and moments [that are appropriate for that]. It is, on the other hand, not proper [to think] that the fruit, which belongs to another moment, arises out of the action which disappears after a moment. Because nothing existent comes forth out of something non-existent.

[Objection:] Consider the following. A disappearing action disappears, having produced during its own time [of existence] a fruit that is in accordance with itself. That fruit will be experienced by the agent when time has passed.

[Reply:] That too is not right, because something cannot be a fruit [of action] before the connection with the experiencer [has been established]. In the world that is known to be the fruit [of action] which is experienced as pleasure or pain by the self during that moment. For people in the world do not understand pleasure or pain that is not connected with a self to be the fruit [of action].

But if it is objected that the fruit does not come into being immediately after the action, but rather as a result of *apūrva* which is itself the effect of action, [we must reply that] this is not possible either. For no activity is possible in the case of *apūrva*, which is unconscious [and therefore] similar to a log of wood or a lump of earth because it is not activated by a conscious being."

[51]

Śāṅkara's Bhāṣya on the Bhagavadgītā, too, assigns the same task to God. So when the Gītā says,<sup>90</sup> "From that [form of the godhead] he obtains his objects of desire, for those have been ordained by Me myself," Śāṅkara explains:<sup>91</sup> "by Me myself: by the omniscient highest Lord, because I know the classification of karma and its fruition". And the expression "upholder of all" (*sarvasya dhātāram*) in verse 8.9 he interprets as "the upholder, i.e. creator/organizer of the whole collection of karmic fruits, the distributor of them to the living beings in all their variety".<sup>92</sup>

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*karmānurūpaṃ phalaṃ saṃpādayatīty upapadyate/ karmaṇas tv anukṣaṇavināśī-  
naḥ kālāntarabhāvi phalaṃ bhavatīty anupapannam/ abhāvād bhāvānutpatteḥ/  
syād etat karma vinaśyat svakālam eva svānurūpaṃ phalaṃ janayitvā vinaśyati  
tat phalaṃ kālāntaritaṃ kartrā bhokṣyata iti/ tad api na pariśudhyati prāg bhok-  
trisaṃbandhāt phalatvānupapatteḥ/ yatkālam hi yat sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ vātmanā  
bhujyate tasyaiva loke phalatvaṃ prasiddham/ na hy asaṃbaddhasyātmanā  
sukhasya duḥkhasya vā phalatvaṃ pratiyanti laukikāḥ/ athocyeta mā bhūt  
karmānantaram phalotpādah/ karmakāryād apūrvāt phalaṃ utpatsyata iti/ tad api  
nopapadyate/ apūrvasyācetanasya kāṣṭhaloṣṭasamasya cetanenāpravartitasya  
pravṛtīyanupapatteḥ/. Cp. Potter, 1980: 258 f.*

<sup>90</sup> Bhag 7.22cd: *labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tān*. The translation follows Śāṅkara's somewhat artificial interpretation.

<sup>91</sup> BhagBh p. 267: *mayā eva parameśvareṇa sarvajñena karmaphalavibhāgajñatayā*.

<sup>92</sup> BhagBh p. 279: *sarvasya karmaphalajātasya dhātāram vidhātāram vicitratayā prāṇibhyaḥ vibhaktāram*.

We have seen that Halbfass presents the karma doctrine as a theodicy, as a vindication of God. Surprisingly, he does not draw attention to God's role in making karmic retribution work. He correctly emphasizes the need for an explanation of karmic retribution, and is no doubt right in pointing out that the modified interpretation of *adr̥ṣṭa* in Vaiśeṣika had much to do with this need. The result was not however felt to be fully satisfactory, and the introduction of God made the process a great deal more intelligible. True, this is no explanation in the modern scientific sense. We have seen that the introduction of such an "anthropomorphic" (or should one say "theomorphic"?) explanation amounts to admitting defeat on the part of Vaiśeṣika, which preferred "mechanical" types of explanation. However, it is to be recognized that it would be a daunting task to give a "mechanical" explanation of karmic retribution without falling victim to teleology.

We will see below that not all thinkers of classical India felt the need for a creator God in order to render the functioning of karma intelligible, and we will discover how some of them tried to deal with the situation. Here we have to mention one objection that might arise in the context of a creator God. Does the activity of a creator God not go beyond the mere explanation of how karma "works"? Doesn't he replace the functioning of karma, so that accepting God does not amount to explaining karma, but rather to abandoning it altogether? Why hold on to the doctrine of karma when there is a creator God who is powerful enough to do without it? Or is God's power somehow limited by karma?

[52]

At the end of § 13, below, we will come across a depiction of God — attributed to Vaiśeṣika by Pārthasārathi Mīśra — as someone whose activity is believed to go against the effects of karma. Here we will consider a passage which occurs in the chapter of Sāyaṇa Mādhava's Sarvadarśanasamgraha dealing with the Nakulīśa Pāśupata philosophy. As such it may have been taken from an earlier work of Pāśupata philosophy; Sāyaṇa Mādhava often draws upon the early sources of the schools he depicts.

Unfortunately the source has not been identified in this particular case. Contrary to practically all of the remainder of the chapter concerned, the present passage (with the sole exception of the first sentence) has no parallels in the surviving texts of the school. Minoru Hara (1958: 11-12) makes in this connection the following observations: "Two or perhaps three possible explanations of the concluding passages (to which the passage cited above belongs, DUB) suggest themselves. It may be Mādhava's own comment. It may be drawn from some other text now lost. Or possibly I may simply have overlooked parallels in the newly discovered texts." It is not therefore impossible that the argument presented in this passage does not represent the position ever held by any thinker or school, and may have been invented by Mādhava himself.

The passage contains the following discussion:93

"In other systems the cause [of things] (*kāraṇa*) acts in dependence upon something else (i.e. karma); but here the Blessed One is independent. ... But [an opponent might say]: This is a major delusion to think that the independent Lord is the cause, for if He were, two faults would appear: [53] deeds (*karman*) would produce no result and all effects would be produced at the same time.

[To this the Pāśupata may answer]: You should suppose no such thing. Because each factor has its place.

[Opponent]: But if the independent Lord were the cause, deeds would be fruitless.

[Pāśupata]: Suppose they were, what then?

[Opponent]: Then there would be no motive for action.

[Pāśupata]: We ask, to whom do you ascribe this absence of motive which causes deeds to be fruitless? To the doer or to the Lord? Not to the first, because the deed **is** fruitful when it is favored by the will of God, and can never bear fruit when it is not favored by the Lord as is seen in the case of the deeds of Yayāti and so forth. But this much is not sufficient to prevent us from work, for we see how the husbandman works, and men act because they are dependent upon the will of God. Nor to the second, for the Lord, inasmuch as all his desires are already satisfied, does not depend upon any motive furnished by karma.

In regard to the objection that all effects would be produced at the same time, this also does not hold. Because we must admit that the power of unobstructed action by which the Lord, who is of inconceivable power, causes [all] effects, is a power which follows his will. Accordingly, it has been said by those versed in [our Pāśupata] tradition:

‘[God] acts according to his will, independent of the deeds [of living beings] and so forth. From this cause he is said in scripture to be the cause of all causes.’”

The example of Yayāti is difficult to understand. Yayāti was cursed to lose his youth and become senile. However, he managed to pass on this fruit of his own deeds to one of his sons.<sup>94</sup> It is not clear to

93 SDS p. 171 l. 106 - p. 172 l. 117: *anyatra sāpekṣaṃ kāraṇam/ iha tu nirapekṣo bhagavān eva/ ... nanu mahad etad indrajālaṃ yañ nirapekṣaḥ parameśvaraḥ kāraṇam iti/ tathātve karmavaiphalyaṃ sarvakāryānāṃ samasamayasamutpādaś ceti doṣadvayaṃ prāduḥṣyāt/ maivaṃ manyethāḥ/ vyadhikaraṇatvāt/ yadi nirapekṣasya bhagavataḥ kāraṇatvaṃ syāt tarhi karmaṇo vaiphalye kim āyātam/ proyojanābhāva itī cet/ kasya prayojanābhāvaḥ karmavaiphalye kāraṇam/ kiṃ karmaṇaḥ kiṃ vā bhagavataḥ/ nādyah/ īśva-recchānugrhitasya karmaṇaḥ saphalatvopapatteḥ/ tadanānugrhitasya yayātiprabhrtikarmavat kadācin niṣphalatvasambhavāc ca/ na caitāvatā karmasv apravṛtīḥ/ karṣakādivad upapatteḥ/ īśvarecchāyattatvāc ca paśūnāṃ pravṛtteḥ/ nāpi dvitīyah/ parameśvarasya paryāptakāmatvena karmasādhyaprayojanāpekṣāyā abhāvāt/ yad uktaṃ samasamayasamutpāda itī tad apy ayuktam/ acintyaśaktikasya parameśvarasyecchānuvidhāyinyā avyāhatakriyāśaktyā kāryakāritvābhyupagamāt/ tad uktaṃ sampradāyavidbhīḥ: karmādinirapekṣas tu svecchācārī yato hy ayam/ tataḥ kāraṇataḥ śāstre sarvakāraṇakāraṇam// iti/.*

The translation follows Hara, 1958: 30 f., with modifications.

94 Mhbh 1.76-80.

me how this is supposed to illustrate that deeds not favored by the Lord never bear fruit. In any case, it is clear that the passage as a whole is meant to convey the message that God's independence should not discourage a person from acting. The fact that God is the cause of his harvest does not stop the husbandman from plowing his fields. It is true that God's activity does not depend on the law of karma, yet he normally favors it.

[55]

## §9. Sāṃkhya and Yoga on karmic retribution

At this point we have to return to Sāṃkhya. How did this school account for karmic retribution? At first sight one would expect that this issue was no more problematic to classical Sāṃkhya than human goal-oriented behavior. Goal-orientedness being part of both soul and nature, quite independently of the presence of any conscious being, karmic retribution might not need more explanation than human goal-oriented behavior.

In principle this expectation turns out to be correct. Sāṃkhya did not, as did other systems studied above, introduce the notion of a creator God, and obviously it did not feel the need to do so in order to account for karmic retribution. This does not imply that Sāṃkhya was fully atheistic, as has often been maintained. Sāṃkhya has always recognized the existence of gods, even of a highest God. I have shown years ago that Kapila himself was looked upon as an incarnation of the highest God who assumed this form in order to show favor to the world.<sup>95</sup> This highest God was not however a creator God. Similarly the Yoga Sūtra and Bhāṣya recognize the existence of a highest God who can be used by yogins as an object of veneration. But this God, too, is no creator God.

In spite of the fact that karmic retribution did not pose a fundamental problem, at least in principle, Sāṃkhya thinkers, possibly under the influence of the developments in Vaiśeṣika considered above, elaborated some notions meant to explain in further detail how it takes place.<sup>96</sup> We have seen how they introduced the notions of *dharma* and *adharma*, virtue and sin, which they believed played a crucial role in the process. But whereas the Vaiśeṣikas looked upon *dharma* and *adharma* as qualities of the soul, their ontological status had to be different in Sāṃkhya. In Sāṃkhya *dharma* and *adharma* could not but belong to nature (*prakṛti*). As a matter of fact, they are presented as being parts of *buddhi* ('intelligence'), the first evolute of nature.

[56]

The Yuktidīpikā on Sāṃkhya Kārikā 23 describes *dharma* in the following terms:<sup>97</sup>

"The disposition which is part of [the constituent called] *sattva*, and which resides in the *buddhi* as a result of carrying out acts that have been prescribed in the Veda and in the sacred tradition, is called *dharma*."

<sup>95</sup> Bronkhorst, 1983; also 1985: 194 f.

<sup>96</sup> Cp. Frauwallner, 1953: 404-06.

<sup>97</sup> YD p. 191 l. 33-35 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 94 l. 25-26 (ed. Pandeya): *tatra śrutismṛtivyihitānām karmaṇām anuṣṭhānād buddhyavasthaḥ sattvāvayava āśayabhūto dharma ity ucyate.*

*Adharma* is its opposite:98

"It has been stated that dharma is part of [the constituent called] *sattva* which has become a disposition as a result of carrying out that which has been enjoined in the *śāstra*. *Adharma* is part of [the constituent called] *tamas* that has become a disposition and resides in the *buddhi* as a result of not carrying out that which has been enjoined in the *śāstra* and ritual acts that should always be performed."

This relationship between *dharma* / *adharma* and *buddhi* leads to no major difficulty as long as we consider karmic retribution within one world period. However, at the end of a world period, when the world comes to its end, the psychic organism, including the *buddhi* and its states, also dissolves into nature. At the beginning of the next world period there are therefore no *dharma* and *adharma* which might determine its course of development. How does the Sāṃkhya solve this problem?99

[57]

We have already seen that the Yoga Bhāṣya attributes to the *buddhi*, or to nature in general, something called 'obligation' (*adhikāra*). As long as the soul is not yet liberated, nature has the 'obligation' towards it to act so as to bring about its liberation. Some passages of that text suggest that 'obligation' attaches also to a mental organ that has dissolved into nature. We read there, for example, that those dissolved into nature (*prakṛtilaya*) experience —

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98 YD p. 193 l. 9-11 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 96 l. 3-5 (ed. Pandeya) : *ātra śāstracoditānuṣṭhānād āśayaniṣpannasattvāvayavo dharma ity uktam/ śāstracoditasya nityasya ca karmaṇo 'nanuṣṭhānād buddhyavasthas tamo'vayava āśayatām pratipanno 'dharmah/*

99 This position is criticised by Vyomaśiva in his Vyomavatī (Vy. II p. 230 l. 7-14): *yeṣān tu buddhiguṇo dharmas teṣāṃ kathaṃ nākarmanimittatḥ svargaḥ? tathā hi pralayāvasthāyām buddheḥ pradhāne pralīnatayā dharmādharmayor abhivyaktau pradhānasya buddhyādibhāvena pariṇāmo na syāt, abhivyaktasya karmaṇaḥ kāraṇatvābhyupagamāt/ na cādāv anabhivyaktam eva kāraṇam, buddhisthañ cābhivyaktam iti vācyam, viśeṣahetvabhāvāt/ buddhyādisampāditaṃ karma kartur bhogasampādakam ity abhyupagame ca aviśeṣeṇa sakalapuruṣopabhogasampādakam syāt, niyamahetvabhāvāt/ tathā muktātmano 'pi śarīrādisampādanāya pravarteta, aviśeṣād iti saṃsāritvaprasaṅgaḥ/*

"Those who believe that dharma is a quality (or constituent; *guṇa*) of the *buddhi*, how [can they hold that] heaven is not caused by anything else but karma? Since the *buddhi* is, in the state of dissolution, dissolved in nature, there would be no modification of nature into *buddhi* etc. when dharma and adharma become manifest, because they accept [only] manifested karma as a cause. And they should not say that in the beginning the cause is unmanifest, and [becomes] manifest when residing in a *buddhi*, because there is no specific reason [to maintain this]. And if one accepts that karma that is effected in a *buddhi* etc. effects experience for the agent, it would effect experience for all *puruṣa*s without distinction, because there would be no reason to confine [this result to one single *puruṣa*]. In that case [karma] would lead to the production of a body etc. even for a liberated soul, because there would be no distinction [between the different kinds of souls]. The consequence would be that [liberated souls, too,] would be reborn."



when their mind along with the accompanying ‘obligation’ has dissolved — a state similar to isolation (*kaivalya*; liberation), until their mind comes back under the influence of that ‘obligation’.<sup>100</sup> It has already been observed that the introduction of the concept of ‘obligation’ (*adhikāra*) does nothing to solve the problem of goal-orientedness, and is barely more than a name given to it. This does not surprise us. Goal-orientedness is, and remains, an integral part of nature in Sāṃkhya, and this fact is presumably not in need of further elucidation or analysis.<sup>101</sup>

Some passages in the *Yuktidīpikā* show that, at least according to the author of this text, karma plays no role in the creation of the world. ‘Obligation’ (*adhikāra*) can account for the coming into being of bodies; karma and bodies subsequently produce each other. This implies that no karma carries over from one creation to the next.

[58]

One passage reads:<sup>102</sup>

"[The case of] karma [as presumed cause of the world] has been dealt with by [the case of] atoms (*anu*) [as presumed cause of the world]. Just as atoms are not the cause of the world because they are produced, in the

100 YBh 1.19: *tathā prakṛtilayāḥ sādḥikāre cetasi prakṛtilīne kaivalyapadam ivānubhavanti, yāvan na punar āvartate dhikāraśāc cittam iti.* Cp. Frauwallner, 1953: 406. Note that the *Yuktidīpikā* on SK 45 (p. 125 l. 22, ed. Pandeya; p. 236 l. 10, ed. Wezler and Motegi) explains the term *prakṛtilaya* as "who dissolves into the eight *prakṛtis*" (*aṣṭasu prakṛtiṣu layaṃ gacchati*). The eight *prakṛtis* are: *pradhāna*, *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, and the five *tanmātras*.

101 Before we yield to the temptation of ascribing this attitude to the primitive nature of Sāṃkhya philosophy — which, it may here briefly be recalled, was already in decline when other schools of Indian philosophy were developing —, it is only fair to recall that the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, did not fare any better in this regard. He, too, saw no difficulty in accepting goal-orientedness as a primitive term in his psychology (after failed attempts to do without).

102 YD p. 160 l. 31 - p. 161 l. 13 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 73 l. 10-22 (ed. Pandeya): *karmānubhir vyākhyātam/ katham? yathā kṛtakatvān na jagatkāraṇam aṇava evaṃ karmāpi na śarīranimittam/ tasmāt tad apy akāraṇam/ itaretaranimittatvād adoṣa iti cet/ syān matam/ yathāntareṇa śarīraṃ karma notpadyamānaṃ dṛṣṭam evam antareṇa karma śarīrasyāpi kāraṇāntaram aśakyam kalpayitum iti parasparanimittatvān nāsya parivartanasya pūrvakoṭiḥ prajñāyate/ tasmān nāsty anayoḥ kāraṇāntaram iti/ etac cāyuktam/ kasmāt? anavasthānānām avasthānapūrvakatvadarśanāt/ tad yathā śukraśoṇitāc charīraṃ śarīrāc chukraśoṇitam ity asya parivartanasya pūrvakoṭiḥ adṛṣṭā, pratijñāyate cāyonijātvaṃ iśvaraśarīrānām ādisarge ca/ tathā ca bījād ankurādayo 'nkurādibhyo bījam ity anavasthā/ bhavati cātrādisarge paramāṇumātrād api bījaprādurbhāvas tathā śarīrakarmaṇor anavasthā/ idānīm api cādisarge cādḥikāramātravaśāc charīrotpattiḥ syāt/ sādḥāraṇavīgrahatvaprasaṅga iti cet/ syād etat/ yady adhikāranimittā śarīrotpattiḥ ādisarge 'bhyupagamyate prāptam ekena śarīreṇa sarvapuruṣāṇām abhisambandho niyamahetvabhāvāt/ tataś ca śarīrāntarānarthakyam/ tenaiva sarveṣām upabhogasāmarthyād iti/ etad anupapannaṃ/ kasmāt? pratyakṣavirodhāt/ satyam etad anumānataḥ/ pratyakṣatas tu śarīrāni pratipurūṣam/ tasmān nāyaṃ prasaṅgaḥ/.*

same way karma, too, is not the cause of the body, and therefore it is not the cause [of the world] either.

[Objection:] Nothing is wrong here, because they are each other's cause.

[To explain:] Consider the following. Just as no karma has been seen to come into being without a body, in the same way no other cause of the body can be imagined except karma. Because the two are in this way each other's cause, no beginning is known of this repeated occurrence. And therefore these two (viz. karma and body) have no cause different [from themselves].

[Reply:] This is not correct. Because situations without a fixed basis are known to have been preceded by a fixed basis. For example, from semen and blood arises a body, from a body arise semen and blood; no beginning is seen of this repeated occurrence. Yet it is known that the bodies of God, as well as bodies at the beginning of creation (*ādisarga*),<sup>103</sup> are not born from wombs. In the same way a shoot etc. arise from a seed, a seed from a shoot etc.; this is a situation without a fixed basis. Yet in this case [too] a seed has arisen even from a single atom (*paramāṇu*) (i.e., not from a shoot etc.) at the beginning of creation. In the same way do body and karma not have a fixed basis. (In other words, they are without fixed basis now, yet they did come into being at the beginning of creation.)

[59]

Both now and at the beginning of creation a body can come about through the mere power of 'obligation' (*adhikāra*).

[Objection:] It would follow that [all souls] possess a body in common. If it is accepted that a body comes into being at the beginning of creation caused by 'obligation', it follows that all souls (*puruṣa*) are connected with one body, because there is no reason why [a separate body] should be linked [to each soul]. As a result other bodies will be superfluous, because all [souls] will be capable of experience through that single [body].

[Reply:] This is not correct, because it is in conflict with perception. It is true according to logic (*anumāna*), but [we know] from perception that there are bodies [one] for each soul. That is why it does not follow [that all souls possess a body in common]."

The Yoga Sūtra and Bhāṣya, unlike the Yuktidīpikā, appear to maintain that karma does carry over from one creation to the next; the former speaks of the impressions (*vāsanā*) as being beginningless,<sup>104</sup> the latter betrays its position by such remarks as that karma is "accumulated since beginningless time".<sup>105</sup> Note however that karma is here stated to determine three things: the kind of birth (*jāti*), the length of life (*āyus*), and the kind of experiences one will undergo (*bhoga*).<sup>106</sup> This suggests that karmic retribution is limited to the person concerned and plays no role in the formation of the world at large. A similar situation prevails in Jainism; see § 14, below.

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103 Wezler and Motegi propose to delete the word *ca*, which would result in the following translation: "Yet it is known that the bodies of God at the beginning of creation are not born from wombs." The reading with *ca*, attested by all manuscripts, seems preferable.

104 YS 4.10: *tāsām (vāsanānām) anāditvam ...*

105 E.g. YBh 2.13: *anādikālapracitasya ... karmaṇaḥ ...*

106 Cp. YS 2.13 (*satī mūle tadvipāko jātyāyurbhogāḥ*) and its Bhāṣya; further Potter, 1980: 244 f.

Elsewhere in the *Yuktidīpikā* we read that the subtle body is created at the beginning of creation and accompanies a soul throughout a world period; it is not determined by one's *dharma* and *adharma*, but dependent on 'obligation' (*ādhikārika*).<sup>107</sup> The *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* appears to confirm this position where it states:<sup>108</sup> "A twofold creation operates, the one called [that of] the subtle body, the other [that of] the states." The first of these two is described in the *Yuktidīpikā* as "characterized by 'obligation'" (*adhikāralakṣaṇa*).  
[60]

The *Yuktidīpikā* further explains:<sup>109</sup>

"In the case of those *Sāṃkhya*s who say that nature (*pradhāna*) acts on account of both *dharma* and *adharma* and of 'obligation' (*adhikāra*), one of their two assumptions is superfluous. For if 'obligation' alone were sufficient for the activity of nature, what would be the good of *dharma* and *adharma*? And if without these two 'obligation' is not capable to [bring about] the activity of nature, in that case too, what is the good of 'obligation'? For [in this case] only the two (*viz.* *dharma* and *adharma*) would be capable to [bring about] the activity of nature. For this reason creation [operates] in a twofold manner, [one kind of creation] is caused by 'obligation', [the other one] by *dharma* and *adharma*."

It is interesting to observe that by denying the carrying over of karma from one creation to the next, *Sāṃkhya* did away with one central reason that induced others, most notably the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* thinkers, to postulate the participation of a creator God in each new creation. It may well be that this idea of karma restricted to one single creation was a relative novelty, introduced in order to avoid the theoretical difficulties linked to the opposite opinion. This position allowed *Sāṃkhya* to maintain that no God played a role in the creation of the universe. It does, however, evoke other difficulties. It implies that the deeds of living beings at the end of a world period remain without retribution. An even more serious consequence would be that souls that had reached liberation in one world period might find themselves subject to rebirth all over again in a next world period.

These consequences are criticized by *Pārthasārathi Mīśra* in the following passage:<sup>110</sup>

107 Cp. YD p. 231 l. 32-33 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 122 l. 23-24 (ed. Pandeya): *na dharmādharmanimittam vaivartam śarīram, kiṃ tarhi ādhikārikam*; and p. 232 l. 14-15 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 123 l. 3-4 (ed. Pandeya): *tasmād upapannam etat puruṣārtham ādisargotpannam sūkṣmaśarīram saṃsarati*.  
108 SK 52: *liṅgākhyo bhāvākhyas tasmād dvidvidhaḥ pravartate sargaḥ*. Larson (1980: 314) understands this *kārikā* differently, if I understand him correctly.  
109 YD p. 256 l. 1-6 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 137 l. 16-20 (ed. Pandeya): *ye 'pi ca sāṃkhyā evam āhuḥ dharmādharmādhikāraśāt pradhānasya pravṛttir iti teṣām anyataraparikalpanānarthakyam iti/ katham? yadi tāvad adhikāra evāyaṃ pradhānapravṛttaye 'lam, kiṃ dharmādharmābhyām? atha tāv antareṇādhikārasya pradhānapravṛttāv asāmarthyam, evam api kim adhikāreṇa? tayor eva pravṛttisāmarthyāt/ tasmād adhikārabhāvanimitto dvidhā sargaḥ/*

[61]

"Moreover, during the dissolution of nature only *prakṛti* and the souls remain, and all the souls are the same because they are all nothing but consciousness. No difference between the souls due to *dharma* and *adharma* is possible, because these two do not characterize the soul and are functions of the inner organ; the latter, moreover, does not at that moment exist. All this has [already] been stated. While in this manner the *puruṣas* exist without difference and devoid of *dharma* and *adharma*, if [you maintain] that *prakṛti*, at the time of creation, binds the souls by constituting bodies [for them], [you will have to admit that] it would bind all the souls, both those that were liberated in the preceding creation, and those that were not; this because there is no difference [between these two kinds of souls]. In the same way, both those who have performed a horse sacrifice in a preceding creation but have not [yet] experienced the result, and those who have killed a Brahmin, all of them would be of the same kind, because *dharma* and *adharma* as produced earlier have [according to you] disappeared."

Not all Sāṃkhya were happy with all this. We know of one Sāṃkhya teacher in particular, Mādhava, who maintained that nature (*pradhāna*) evolves by the energy which is preceded (caused) by karma, and that *samsāra* is beginningless; this appears to mean that he rejected the idea of world periods followed by renewed creation.<sup>111</sup> His major changes in the Sāṃkhya system earned him the nickname "destroyer of Sāṃkhya" (*sāṃkhyavaināśika* / *sāṃkhyanāśaka*).

It is probable that the following passage in the *Yuktidīpikā*, which presents an opinion which is subsequently rejected, expresses Mādhava's point of view:<sup>112</sup>

"With regard to the [creation] there is a difference of opinion among the teachers. Because<sup>113</sup> *dharma* etc. do not arise without a body, and nor does a body arise when there is no *dharma* etc. Since no other cause is

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110 Tarkapāda p. 114 l. 8-14: *kiṃ ca prākṛte pralaye prakṛtimātram ātmānaś ca kevalam avatiṣṭhante, sarve cātmāno nirviśeṣāḥ sarveṣāṃ caitanyamātrarūpatvāt/ na ca dharmādharmaḥ prakṛtam api vilakṣaṇyam ātmanāṃ sambhavati, tasya ātmadharmatvābhāvāt, antaḥkaraṇavṛttitvāt tasya ca tadānīm abhāvād ity uktam/ evaṃ ca dharmādharmaḥ prakṛteṣu nirviśeṣeṣu puruṣeṣu avasthiteṣu sargakāle prakṛtiḥ śarīrārambheṇātmāno badhnātīti cet, ye pūrvasṛṣṭau muktā ye cāmuktās tān sarvān badhnīyād aviśeṣāt/ tathā ye 'śvamedham anuṣṭhāya phalam abhuktvā pūrvasṛṣṭau sthitāḥ, ye ca brahmahatyākāriṇās teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ aikavidhyam eva syāt pūrvakṛtayoḥ dharmādharmaḥ prakṛtayoḥ naṣṭatvāt/.*

111 Hattori, *Dignāga* p. 156 n. 5.40; Frauwallner, 1953: 407-408; Solomon, 1974: 153-169. For a description of his death at the hands of the Bodhisattva Guṇamati, see Li, 1996: 236 f.

112 YD p. 255 l. 4-7 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 137 l. 1-4 (ed. Pandeya): *atredānīm ācāryānāṃ vipratipattiḥ/ dharmādīnāṃ śarīram antareṇānutpatteḥ/ śarīrasya ca dharmādyabhāve/ nimitāntarāsambhavād ubhayam idam anādi/ tasmād ekarūpa evāyam yathāivādyatve tathāivātikrāntāsv anāgatāsu kālakotiṣu sarga iti/.*

113 Perhaps we must assume, with Wezler and Motegi, that the original text contained a statement preceding this sentence.

possible, both of these (i.e., body and *dharma* etc.) are without beginning. For this reason creation takes exactly the same form: as it happens now, so it [happened and will happen] at all times in the past and in the future."

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[62]

Sāṃkhya underwent a revival in the second millennium. It is remarkable that the texts of this second period of Sāṃkhya, which belong to the fourteenth century and later, still reject the notion of a creator God, and maintain that karmic retribution can be explained without resorting to that hypothesis. The Sāṃkhyas, even at this late period, failed to look upon teleological explanations as problematic.

The fundamental text of revived Sāṃkhya is the Sāṃkhya Sūtra, a text attributed to Kapila, though probably dating from the fourteenth century of the Common Era. Adhyāya 5 deals with objections against the Sāṃkhya position, and the topic of a creator God comes up right at the beginning. Sūtras 2-12 present various arguments against the need of such a God, the first one of which, significantly, is that karma can look after itself, and does not need him. Sūtra 5.2 states:<sup>114</sup> "The accomplishment of the fruit does not [take place] in something superintended by God, because it is established by karma." In other words, there is no need for God to explain the mechanism of karma. This first argument is also the most important one. The remaining arguments deal with various conceptual difficulties linked to the idea of God. Sūtras 3 and 4 point out that God would be guided by his own interest, as is the case in this world. Sūtra 5 states that he would be a God in name only. Both the alternatives that he is with or without passion are problematic according to sūtras 6 and 7. He is either connected with the energy of *pradhāna* or not; both possibilities lead to difficulties (sūtras 8 and 9). No means of knowledge, including inference and Vedic texts (*śruti*) prove his existence (sūtras 10, 11, 12). The author of the Sāṃkhya Sūtra obviously knows the main role which God had to play in the other philosophies: to explain the mechanism of karma. He does not however offer a solution to this problem. He merely repeats that karma is good enough to look after itself.

It is not a little ironic that the last important author in the Sāṃkhya tradition is Vijñānabhikṣu (16th century CE?), whose commentary on the Sāṃkhya Sūtra concludes the above rejection of God with the following words:<sup>115</sup> "I have already explained that this rejection of God is nothing but pompous speech whose aim it is to promote indifference towards godly power, and to teach [the possibility] of liberation without knowledge of God." The time for Sāṃkhya was apparently gone, and its [63] claims of a world without creator were at this time no more than pompous speech. Sāṃkhya was no longer a force to be reckoned with, and one of the reasons may well have been that it had no place for a creator God, and therefore for a more or less convincing explanation for the workings of karma.

114 SS 5.2 (p. 249): *neśvarādhiṣṭhite phalasaṃpattiḥ karmaṇā tatsiddheḥ.*

115 Vijñānabhikṣu, Sāṃkhyapravācanabhāṣya p. 253: *ayaṃ ceśvarapratīṣedha aiśvareya vairāgyārtham īśvarajñānaṃ vināpi mokṣapratipādanārtham ca prauḍhivādamātram iti prāg eva vyākhyātam.*

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In the tradition of the Yoga Sūtra and Bhāṣya the idea of a God directing the process of karmic retribution made its appearance much earlier than in Sāṃkhya proper. In his commentary on the passage of the Yoga Bhāṣya (4.3) which we studied above and which compares the workings of *dharma* and *adharma* with the removal of an obstacle preventing water from flowing down, Vācaspati Miśra brings in the notion of God. Recall that the Yoga Bhāṣya had stated that causes such as *dharma* do not direct the evolving elements (*prakṛti*). Vācaspati raises the question what then directs them. He comes to the conclusion that it can only be God, who does so with the purpose of the soul in view. Note that while introducing God Vācaspati makes at the same time an effort to remove the teleological dimension from the philosophy he comments.

The passage reads:116

"Truly *dharma* etc. are the cause but not the instigators, because they too are the effects of *prakṛti*. And an effect does not instigate its cause because, arising as it does in reliance upon it, it is dependent upon the cause. And [only] something independent [can] be instigator. Not indeed are earth, stick, wheel, water and other [causes of a pot], without [the intermediary of] the potter, instigated by the pot, whether [this pot be] about to be produced or already produced. [They are], on the contrary, [instigated] by the potter who is independent. And nor does the aim of the *puruṣa* set [the process] in motion, but God with that in view. The aim of the *puruṣa* does set [the process] in motion, but merely as the object [aimed at by God]. This is being stated. But it is correct [to say] that this [64] aim of the *puruṣa* when it is about to be produced is the cause of existence of the manifest. And it is not [correct to think] that *dharma* etc., on account of these [arguments], are not the cause, because they are appropriate, like the farmer, by the mere fact of removing obstacles. God's activity, too, should be known to be merely removing obstacles in order to guide *dharma*."

Mention must also be made of the references to a so-called *seśvara sāmkhya* 'Sāṃkhya with God' which one finds in the literature of other schools. It is hard to identify the school concerned,<sup>117</sup> but some descriptions show clearly that 'Sāṃkhya with God' accepts a

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116 TV 4.3: *satyaṃ dharmādayo nimittam na tu prayojakās teṣām api praktikāryatvāt/ na ca kāryaṃ kāraṇaṃ prayojayati tasya tadadhīnotpattitayā kāraṇaparatantratvāt/ svatantrāsya ca prayojakatvāt/ na khalu kulālam antareṇa mrddandacakrasalilādaya utpitsitenotpanna vā ghaṭena prayujyante/ kiṃ tu svatantrēṇa kulālena/ na ca puruṣārtho 'pi pravartakaḥ/ kiṃ tu taduddeśeṇeśvaraḥ/ uddeśyatāmātreṇa puruṣārthaḥ pravartaka ity ucyate/ utpitsos tv asya puruṣārthasya vyaktasya sthītikāraṇatvaṃ yuktam/ na caitāvatā dharmādīnām animittatā pratibandhāpanayanamātreṇa kṣetrikavad upapatteḥ/ īśvarasyāpi dharmādhiṣṭhānārthaṃ pratibandhāpanaya eva vyāpāro veditavyaḥ/*

117 See Bronkhorst, 1981: 315 f.; Hattori, 1999.

creator God, not just the God mentioned in Yoga Sūtra 1.23 and elsewhere as object of contemplation.

Consider the following passage from Pārthasārathi Miśra's Śāstradīpikā:118

"The special feature [of Sāṃkhya with God] is as follows: Depending on God, who is to be designated a *puruṣa* and who is not afflicted by torments, results of deeds and mental dispositions, nature (*prakṛti*) creates the universe. Just as a seed, resting on a prepared field, produces, by virtue of its contact with that [field], first a shoot etc. and then a big tree, in the same way omnipresent nature, resting on God who is omnipresent, modifying itself, by virtue of its contact with Him, into [various stages of Sāṃkhya evolution such as] *mahad*, *ahamkāra*, the *tanmātras* etc., produces the visible universe right down to the *viśeṣas*. Also in the works called *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* by and large this same view is presented. The creation has nature as its material cause, God is nothing but the instrumental cause, the souls experience, nature alone makes all effects and is the object of experience."

Kamalaśīla's *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* paints a slightly different picture:119

[65]

"In this context some Sāṃkhyas say: These different effects are not produced from nature (*pradhāna*) only, because that is unconscious. Nothing unconscious has been seen to produce its effect without someone guiding it. And the soul cannot guide it, because it has no knowledge at that time. That is to say, the soul is aware of an object only when [that object] has been apprehended by the *buddhi*, and before it is associated with the *buddhi* it knows nothing at all, it never ever discerns any object. And no one can do a thing that has not been discerned; that is why the [soul] is not an agent. For this reason God makes the various effects while depending on nature, not all alone. Indeed, Devadatta and others do not all alone produce a son, and nor does a potter make a pot all alone."

Neither of these two passages mention karma or karmic retribution as a determining factor in the creation of the world.

Of course, Sāṃkhya could explore another way of accounting for karmic retribution. According to the doctrine of *satkāryavāda*, which

118 Tarkapāda p. 113 l. 6-11: *iyāms tu viśeṣaḥ: puruṣaśabdābhidheyam īśvaram kleśakarmavipākāśayair aparāmṛṣtam āśrītya prakṛtir jagat sṛjatīti/ yathā hi saṃskṛtam kṣetram adhiṣṭhāya tatsaṃparkavaśād bījam aṅkurādikrameṇa mahāntam vṛkṣam ārabhate tathā sarvavyāpinam īśvaram adhiṣṭhāya sarvavyāpinī prakṛtis tatsaṃparkavaśān mahadahamkāraṇatanmātrādikrameṇa pariṇamantī viśeṣāntam prapañcam ārabhata iti/ itihāsapurāṇeṣv api prāyeṇaitad eva matam/ seyam prakṛtyupādānā sṛṣṭiḥ, īśvaras tu nimittamātram, kṣetraijñās tu bhoktārah, prakṛtir eva tu sarvakāryāṅgāṃ kartrīti bhogyā/.*

119 TsP 94 (p. 74): *tatra kecit sāṅkhyā āhuḥ: na pradhānād eva kevalād amī kāryabhedāḥ pravartante, tasyācetanavāt/ na hy acetano 'dhiṣṭhāyakam antareṇa svakāryam ārabhamāno drṣṭaḥ/ na ca puruṣo 'dhiṣṭhāyako yuktaḥ, tasya tadānīm ajñatvāt/ tathā hi: buddhyadhyavasitam evārtham puruṣaś cetayate, buddhi-saṃsargāc ca pūrvam asāv ajña eva, na jātu kiñcid artham vijānāti/ na cāvijñātam artham śaktaḥ kartum iti nāsau kartā/ tasmād īśvara eva pradhānāpekṣaḥ kāryabhedānām kartā, ne kevalaḥ/ na hi devadattādiḥ kevalaḥ putram janayati, nāpi kevalaḥ kulālo ghaṭam karotīti/.*

it embraced, effects exist before they come into being. Transferred to the discussion of karmic retribution, this implies that the fruit of an action exists in a way simultaneously with that action. The only difference is that at that moment the action is present, while its fruit is still future. A passage from the Yoga Bhāṣya makes use of this doctrine.

The passage reads:120

"Moreover, if the fruit of an action which leads to experience or to liberation were inexistent when it is going to be produced, proper conduct in view of that [fruit], using that [action] as cause, would not be possible. A cause can make an existent fruit present; it cannot produce something new. A cause, when it is established, helps in a specific way that which results from that cause; it does not produce something new."

It is not clear to what extent the author of the Yoga Bhāṣya believed this position to be an answer to the problem of teleology.

The Sāṃkhya opponent cited by Uddyotakara (already translated in § 4, above) appears to invoke the *satkāryavāda*, but [66] confuses future causes and final causes. I repeat the passage concerned:121

"[The opponent maintains:] [The cause] is there, because something non-existent does not come into being, and something existent does not disappear. Such being the case, the existing aim of the soul prompts nature; as a result the activity of nature is not for the sake of the aim of the soul [but prompted by it]. For in this world something that belongs to something else does not [need] to exert itself for [the production of] that other thing."

The final cause here becomes a proximate cause, because it presumably exists already. The soul does not act in order to attain an end which lies in the future (final cause), but because it is being prompted by that same end which, though future, exists already (proximate cause).

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120 YBh 4.12: *kiñ ca bhogabhāgīyasya vāpavargabhāgīyasya vā karmaṇaḥ phalam utpitsu yadi nirupākhyam iti taduddeśena tena nimittena kuśalānuṣṭhānaṃ na yujyeta/ sataś ca phalasya nimittaṃ vartamānikaraṇe samartham nāpūrvopajanane/ siddham nimittaṃ naimittikasya viśeṣānugrahaṃ kurute, nāpūrvam utpādayatīti/*

121 NV p. 946 l. 4-6 (on NS 4.1.21): *athāsti, nāsad ātmānaṃ labhate na san nirudhyata iti/ evaṃ ca sati vidyamānaḥ puruṣārthaḥ pradhānaṃ pravartayatīti na puruṣārthāya pradhānasya pravṛttiḥ/ na hi lōke yad yasya bhavati sa tadarthaṃ punar yatata iti/* On the distinction between future and final causes, cp. n. 48 above.



[67]

## §10. Vasubandhu

We have seen that Sāṃkhya never really addressed the problem of teleology. This is true for Īśvarakṛṣṇa, the author of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā, but also, as far as I know, for subsequent thinkers of the school. Vaiśeṣika presents a different picture. The early thinkers of this school were aware of the problem, and tried to solve it. They succeeded to some extent — at least to their own satisfaction, it seems — in their account of psychology. In accounting for karmic retribution, on the other hand, they failed. They tried, by introducing the idea of *dharma* and *adharma* as qualities of the omnipresent souls, but soon gave up, and resorted to a trick to save the situation. They introduced the notion of a creator God, one of whose main tasks was precisely to look after karmic retribution. Are there examples of thinkers in classical India who succeeded any better in accounting for karmic retribution?

I think there are, and as an example I will now discuss the Buddhist thinker Vasubandhu. For ease of exposition I will assume that one and the same Vasubandhu was the author both of the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya, a text which normally takes the position of the Sautrāntika school of Buddhism, and of the Viṃśatikā, which presents the Yogācāra position. My argument does not however depend in any essential manner on this assumption. It remains valid if we assume the opposite, that the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya and the Viṃśatikā were written by different authors.

In the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya Vasubandhu describes both deeds and the series or chains that connect these deeds with their fruition as mind-events. The fruition of these deeds, on the other hand, is not exclusively mental. The Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya mentions quite explicitly the world with its mountains and continents as resulting from the deeds of living beings. How is this to be explained? How can mind-events influence the material world? And how can they bring about goal-oriented processes that bring about karmic retribution? Vasubandhu is here confronted with the same difficulty as the Vaiśeṣikas before they introduced the notion of a creator God.

The Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya of Vasubandhu discusses the problem of karmic retribution in its very last pages. It points out that the fruition arises [68] "from the final, critical state (-*viśeṣa*) of a process of change (*pariṇāma*) [initiated by intentional action] in the series (*saṃtati*) [of *dharma*s]" (*saṃtatipariṇāmaviśeṣāt*). When asked what the three constituent terms of this compound stand for, Vasubandhu replies:122

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122 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 477 l. 16 - 18: *yaḥ karmaṇā uttarottaracittaprasavaḥ sā saṃtatis tasyā anyathopattiḥ pariṇāmah/ sa punar yo 'nantaraṃ*

"The 'series' (*saṃtati*) is the sequence of mind-events that arises in the wake of an [intentional] action. The 'process of change' (*pariṇāma*) is the fact that this series changes as it proceeds. The 'final, critical point of the process of change' (*pariṇāmaviśeṣa*) is that [mind-event in the series] which has the power to give rise directly to the fruit [of the action]. It is [called] *pariṇāmaviśeṣa* (literally 'exceptional change') because it is distinguished (*viśiṣṭa*) by [the fact that it is] the culminating [moment of the process of] change."

Note that the series, or chain, that connects a deed with its fruition is explicitly described as "the sequence of **mind**-events (*-cittaprasava*) that arises in the wake of an [intentional] action". The same observation is also made elsewhere in the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya:123 "For the fruit arises, in the future, from the series of mind and mental factors." The deed itself, too, is considered to be a mind-event, viz. consciousness (*cetanā*). The view of the Sarvāstivādins to the extent that consciousness and the deeds resulting from consciousness are deeds,124 is specified in the Bhāṣya by the observation that the deeds resulting from consciousness are also a form of consciousness.125 The fruition, one would think, should then also be a mind-event. But this is not the case. The Abhidharmakośa states "The diversity in the world is born from karma"126 and the Bhāṣya does not seem to disagree with this. The description of the 'receptacle world' (*bhājanaloka*) with all its gigantic 'spheres' (*maṇḍala*), mountains and continents, often mentions the role played by the deeds of living beings in [69] its creation and maintenance. The sphere of wind, which rests on ether, has been accomplished *through the power of the deeds of all living beings*.127 On that sphere of wind, *through the deeds of living beings*, clouds collect and shed rain in streams that have the size of axles; that is the sphere of water.128 How is it that this water does not flow away on the sides? *Through the power*

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*phalotpādanasamarthaḥ so 'ntyapariṇāmaviśiṣṭatvāt pariṇāmaviśeṣaḥ*/. The translation follows Sanderson, 1994: 42 with 47 n. 54.

123 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 198 l. 14 (on Abhidh-k 4.4): *cittacaittasamṭānāc cāyatyām phalopatteḥ*.

124 Abhidh-k 4.1b: *cetanā tatkrtaṃ ca tat*. The Bhāṣya explains (Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 192 l. 10): *sūtra uktaṃ dve karmaṇi cetanā karma cetayitvā ceti*.

125 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 195 l. 19-21 (on Abhidh-k 4.3c): *yat tarhi cetanā karma cetayitvā cety uktam saṃkalpacetanā pūrvam bhavaty evam caivam ca kariṣyāmīti/ tathā cetayitvā paścāt kriyācetanotpadyate/ yayā kāyaḥ preryate sāsau cetayitvā karmety ucyate*/. I thank John Dunne for a discussion of this passage in the light of its Tibetan translation. Dargyay's (1986: 169-170) interpretation of this passage may not be quite correct.

126 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 192 l. 5 (= Abhidh-k 4.1a): *karmajam lokavaicitryam*. Cp. Griffiths, 1984: 482. See also Bhavya's Madhyamakahrdaya Kārikā 9.147: *sattvakarmādhipatyena kālajāḥ pādapādayaḥ/ narake svargaloke ca śāstraratnadrumā yathā*/. Lindtner (1997a: 116) translates: "It is due to the overwhelming power of the karma of creatures that trees etc. gradually grow. The same goes for the [trees with the] swords in hell and the jewel-trees in the world of heaven."

127 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 158 l. 2: ... *ākāśapratīṣṭhitam adhastād vāyumaṇḍalam abhinirvṛtam sarvasattvānām karmādhipatyena ...*

128 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 158 l. 6-7: *tasmīn vāyumaṇḍale sattvānām karmabhir meghāḥ sambhūyākṣamātrābhir dhārābhir abhivaṣanti*/.

*of the deeds of living beings.*<sup>129</sup> That water, being whirled around by winds that are united *by force of the deeds of living beings*, turns into gold in the upper parts.<sup>130</sup>

Deeds do not bring about their results blindly. This we must conclude from a passage which points out that deeds do not bring about a new birth until all the causes necessary for it are united. Birth as a worm depends on the presence of rotting meat, birth as a world ruler (*cakravartin*) can only take place at the time when human life lasts eighty-thousand years. Interestingly, this passage concludes with a remark by the Buddha to the extent that karmic re-tribution is incomprehensible.

The passage concerned is part of a longer section which presents some other points of view as well. It seems however likely that this passage expresses Vasubandhu's position:<sup>131</sup>

"How much time does [an intermediate being (*antarābhava*, *gandharva*)] last? According to the Bhadanta there is no fixed rule. Its [new] life-span [70] is not separately projected as long as it does not find all [conditions] for a new birth united, because [new birth and intermediate existence] are of the same kind. For otherwise, on account of the destruction of its life-span, there would be death.

If there were a heap of meat as large as mount Sumeru, it would all be filled with worms during the rains. Please tell, were the intermediate beings of those [worms already] waiting for that at that time?

Alternatively, whence have [the intermediate beings] come at that moment in order to [give rise to] those [worms]? This has been handed down neither in the Sūtra nor in the treatises.

This can be explained in the following manner. There are infinitely many creatures of short life-span that are desirous of smells and tastes. Having smelled that smell, those [creatures] desirous of smells and tastes, when dying, having awakened the karma that leads to the

129 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 158 l. 8: *kathaṃ tā āpo na tiryag visravanti/ sattvānāṃ karmādhīpatyena/*.

130 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 158 l. 10-11: *tās ca punar āpaḥ sattvānāṃ karmaprabhāvasambhūtair vāyubhir āvartyamānā upariṣṭāt kāñicanībhavanti ...*

131 Cp. Abhidh-k(VP) tome II p. 48 n. 2. Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 125 l. 20 - p. 126 l. 9; Abhidh-k-bh(D) p. 425 l. 1 - p. 426 l. 1. 1 (on Abhidh-k 3.14): *kiyaṃtāṃ kālam avatiṣṭhate/ nāsti niyama itī bhadantaḥ/ yāvad upapattisāmagrīm na labhate na hi tasyāyuṣaḥ prthag evākṣepaḥ/ ekanikāyasabhāgatvāt/ itarathā hi tasyāyuṣaḥ kṣayān maraṇabhavaḥ prasajyeta/ yady āsumeroḥ sthalaṃ māmsasya syāt tat sarvaṃ varṣāsu krimiṇāṃ pūryeta/ kim idāniṃ tatpratiksā eva teṣāṃ antarābhavā āsan kuto vā tadā tebhyo gatā itī vaktavyam/ naitad āgataṃ sūtre śāstre vā/ evaṃ tu yujyate/ gandharasābhigrddhānāṃ alpāyuṣāṃ jantūnāṃ anto nāsti/ te taṃ gandhaṃ ghrātvā gandharasābhigrddhāḥ kālam kurvantaḥ krimibhāvasaṃvartaniyaṃ karma prabodhya tayā tṛṣṇayā krimiṣūpapadyanta itī/ atha vā nūnaṃ tatpratīyapracura eva kāle tatsaṃvartaniyāni karmāṇi vipākābhinirvṛttau vṛttiṃ labhante nānyatra/ tathā hi cakravartisaṃvartaniye karmaṇi aśīti varṣasahasrāyuṣi prajāyāṃ bahutarāyuṣi vā cakravartīno jāyante nānyasyāṃ/ ata eva cokaṃ bhagavatā acintyaḥ sattvānāṃ karmavipāka itī/*

existence as a worm<sup>132</sup>, are reborn among the worms on account of that thirst. Alternatively, karma that leads to that [existence] only becomes active so as to bring about its effects at a time which is rich in causes [that could bring] that [about], not at any other time. For example, in the case of karma that leads to [the existence] as universal monarch (*cakravartin*), universal monarchs are only born in an epoch during which the life-span is eighty-thousand years or more, not in any other [epoch]. It is for this reason that the Buddha has said: 'Karmic retribution of living beings is incomprehensible'<sup>133</sup>."

Strictly speaking, then, acts do not bring about their results according to Vasubandhu the Kośakāra. He contrasts this view with some others. According to certain Vaibhāṣikas, he points out, acts do bring about all the causes that determine the situation in which a being is reborn.<sup>134</sup> This does not however appear to have been Vasubandhu's opinion at that time.

In the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya, as we have seen, deeds are mental, the series that leads to their fruition is mental, but the fruition is not [71] exclusively mental. This could be considered problematic, but the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya does not appear to raise this issue. It is raised in the Viṃśatikā and its auto-commentary, both ascribed to Vasubandhu, and a particularly interesting solution is offered. Let me quote the commentary to verse 7, which asks:<sup>135</sup> "The impression (*vāsanā*) of a deed enters into the series (*santāna*) of consciousness, nowhere else. Why don't you accept that the fruition [comes about] right there where the impression is, and is [therefore] a corresponding modification of consciousness? What is the reason that you imagine the fruition of an impression [to come about] there, where the impression is not?" In other words, by opting for idealism Vasubandhu solves — at least to some extent — the problem which the Vaiśeṣikas had not been able to solve. Deeds and the traces they leave are mental, and so is their fruition. The question how the mental traces can act upon the outside world cannot be raised,

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132 Yaśomitra's commentary, followed by Dwārikādās Śāstri's edition, reads here *kriminikāyasabhāgotpādakam* instead of *krimibhāvasaṃvartanīyaṃ*; one might approximately translate this "[karma] producing the class of worms".

133 Bhikkhu Pāsādika (Abhidh-k-bh(Pā) p. 54) gives as source Ekottarāgama TI 2, 657a20, but adds that nothing in the Chinese corresponds to *karmavipāka*. Cp. YBh 2.13: *karmagatis citrā durvijñānā ca*. One is here reminded of the following remark in the Devībhāgavata Purāṇa (cited, in translation, in Doniger O'Flaherty, 1980: 15): "The course of karma in a breathing creature tied to a body is deep and mysterious, hard even for the gods to comprehend; so how could men understand it?"

134 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 126 l. 10-13; Abhidh-k-bh(D) p. 426 l. 5-7: *alpaṃ kālam iti vaibhāṣikāḥ/ .../ niyataṃ cānena tasmin deśe tasyāṃ jātau janitavyaṃ bhavati/ tadā karmāny eva pratyayānāṃ sāmāgrīm āvahanti/*. I follow Pradhan's — rather than Dwārikādās Śāstri's and La Vallée Poussin's — punctuation.

135 Vasubandhu, Viṃśatikā p. 5 (415) on verse 7: *karmaṇo vāsanā ... vijñāna-santānasanniviṣṭā, nānyatra/ yatraiva ca vāsanā, tatraiva tasyāḥ phalaṃ tādrśo vijñānapariṇāmah kiṃ neṣyate/ yatra vāsanā nāsti tatra tasyāḥ phalaṃ kalpyate — iti kim atra kāraṇam?*

because they don't.<sup>136</sup> Certain mind-events give rise to other mind-events, that is all. The question of karmic retribution, seen this way, is no more complicated than that of an agreeable or disagreeable dream. Instead of being confronted with goal-oriented processes in the material world, we are now dealing with series of mind-events, some of which are painful or pleasurable and correspond to earlier deeds that were mind-events, too.

Recall that Nyāya Sūtra and Bhāṣya 4.1.50-53 (studied § 7, above) tried a similar solution to the problem of karmic retribution. There, too, karmic retribution is presented as a mental event, or rather as a quality of the soul (happiness) that is brought about by another quality of the soul (*dharma*). However, the Nyāya Sūtra and Bhāṣya do not go to the extent of denying that *dharma* and *adharma* have an effect on the material world, nor do they opt for idealism. Their solution remains therefore unsatisfactory.

The author of the Viṃśatikā asks the above questions at the end of a discussion which has a parallel in the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya. The latter raises the question whether the 'guardians of hell' are living beings, and answers that, according to some, they are not. The question as to how they then move is answered with the observation that they move through the [72] deeds of living beings, "like the seeds of the wind of creation".<sup>137</sup> The Viṃśatikā takes up this point, agrees that the guardians of hell are no living beings, and suggests that their appearance is nothing but a modification of consciousness.<sup>138</sup> After that it raises the question cited above, which is meant to justify the conclusion that all fruition is a modification of consciousness and nothing else.<sup>139</sup>

Whether or not we believe that Vasubandhu the author of the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya and Vasubandhu the author of the Viṃśatikā are one and the same person, it is clear that the author of the

136 Other minds do exist, however, and some kind of interaction with them is possible; see Yamabe, 1998.

137 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 164 l. 13-15: *kiṃ te narakapālāḥ sattvasaṃkhyātā utāho neti/ nety eke/ katham idānīm ceṣṭante/ sattvānām karmabhir vartanīvāyubījavat/*.

138 Vasubandhu, Viṃśatikā p. 5 (415), verse 6: *yadi tatkarmabhis tatra bhūtānām sambhavas tathā/ iṣyate pariṇāmaś ca kiṃ vijñānasya neṣyate //6//*.

139 Note that Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya mentions Yogācāras at some occasions, and ascribes to them the following position: "In this connection the Yogācāras teach that the object of the concentration (*samādhi*) of meditators is matter (*rūpa*) that comes into existence due to the strength of the concentration. [This matter] is invisible, because it is not the object of the organ of vision; it is without resistance, because it does not cover any space." (Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 197 l. 4-6 (on Abhidh-k 4.4): *tatra yogācārā upadiśanti/ dhyāyinām samādhiviśayo rūpaṃ samādhiprabhāvād utpadyate/ cakṣurindriyāviśayatvāt anidarśanam/ deśānāvarenaṭvād apratiḡham iti/*)

The Yuktidīpikā may reflect the Viṃśatikā in a passage which, while discussing the question whether the outside world exists, rejects the suggestion that the guardians of hell (*narakapāla*) do not really exist (YD p. 218 l. 22 - p. 219 l. 29, esp. p. 219 l. 11-22 (ed. Wezler and Motegi); p. 114 l. 27 - p. 115 l. 24, esp. p. 115 l. 11-19 (ed. Pandeya)).

Vimśatikā was aware of the problem of teleology, and saw its solution in the Vijñaptimātratā position. This agrees of course with the tradition according to which Vasubandhu converted to Yogācāra after writing the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya, but does not depend upon it in any way. The main conclusion to be drawn here is that the Sautrāntika doctrine of the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya contains a problem which allows of an easy solution, on condition that one is ready to accept a more or less idealistic point of view. This situation may have been responsible for Vasubandhu's alleged "conversion" from Sautrāntika to Yogācāra, but the problem is there, whether or not we believe that it troubled the author of the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya.

In the immediately following verses and their commentary the Vimśatikā raises the question why the Buddha has taught the existence of the realms of the senses (*āyatana*), and explains that the senses and their objects are, [73] respectively, the seed from which a perception arises, and that which it looks like. Their existence has been taught as a device (*abhiprāyavaśāt*) for those who need to be trained (*vineyajanaṃ pratī*). In reality they do not exist.

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We still have to consider the question whether, and to what extent, the Buddhists — and Vasubandhu in particular — tried to avoid teleological explanations in psychology. The Buddhists of Vasubandhu's time had inherited a chain of elements that supposedly depend upon each other — known as *pratītyasamutpāda* "origination in dependence". It is clear from this chain that many of the things a practicing Buddhist would most like to avoid, such as desire/thirst, old age and death, etc., ultimately result from ignorance (*avidyā*). The chain seems to have been interpreted as a chain of proximate causal elements. It is not however clear from the chain how and why correct knowledge should lead to liberation.

When later Buddhist dogmatism postulated that the world is constituted of momentary *dharmas*, the causal chain was somehow taken to represent the rules that govern the incessant succession of *dharmas*. This succession was conceived of as not being goal-oriented in any manner: earlier *dharmas* necessarily lead to the coming into being of succeeding *dharmas*; no purpose is discernible here. Little is said about the problem how to explain the appearance of goal-oriented behavior, but part of the chain lends itself to an interpretation along lines not dissimilar to the Vaiśeṣika position on the causality of human behavior.

The chain of dependent origination contains the following three factors. From touch (*sparsā*) as cause arises sensation (*vedanā*); from sensation as cause arises thirst/desire (*trṣṇā*); from thirst/desire arises grasping (*upādāna*). It is easy to read this as the description of a conditioning process. Grasping is the activity which results from an earlier

experience, which it tries to repeat or avoid, depending on the nature of the earlier experience.

Some remarks in the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya on the relationship between sensation and passion suggest that Vasubandhu, who here claims to present the position of the Sautrāntikas, accepts a causal mechanism of human behavior which is similar to that of Vaiśeṣika. The expression *kāmarāgānuśaya*, he claims, is to be analyzed as *kāmarāgasya anuśayaḥ* "disposition of sensual passion". This disposition is the inactive (*prasupta*) result of sensual passion. When therefore the Śaṣṭka Sūtra states *so 'sya bhavati sukhāyāṃ vedanāyāṃ rāgānuśayaḥ*, this must be [74] interpreted to mean: "then, when there is an agreeable sensation, [subsequently] the disposition of passion comes for him into being". In other words, the disposition follows, is caused by, the passion which accompanies the agreeable sensation.<sup>140</sup> This passage maintains that agreeable sensation gives rise to the disposition of passion which, we may assume, will in due time lead to activity that may re-establish the agreeable sensation.

Vasubandhu's position is not without precedents in the old Sūtra-Piṭaka. The Saṃyutta Nikāya, for example, contains the following passage, to which Tilmann Vetter has drawn my attention:<sup>141</sup>

"Brethren, if there were not this satisfaction which comes from body (*rūpa*), beings would not lust after body. But inasmuch as there is satisfaction in it, beings lust after it. If misery, brethren, belonged not to body, beings would not be repelled by body. But inasmuch as there is misery in it, beings are repelled by it."

Similar statements are then made in connection with the other four constituents of the person (*skandha*). It is tempting to read in passages like this one a first attempt at the kind of psychological explanation which we know from later texts.

There was more explicit interest in the mechanism of liberation. Like the Vaiśeṣikas, Vasubandhu and the thinkers with whom he was associated were interested in the precise manner in which liberation could take place. Condition for liberation is correct knowledge; this follows from the fact that ignorance was believed to be the first cause of rebirth, old age and death, and other disagreeable states, as we have seen. Which is the correct knowledge which leads to liberation, and how does it bring about this desirable result?

The answer lies in a theory initially developed by Dharmasreṣṭhin, one of Vasubandhu's predecessors. Erich Frauwallner

140 Abhidh-k-bh(P) p. 278 l. 18 - p. 279 l. 4: *evaṃ tu sādhu yathā sautrāntikānām/ katham ca sautrāntikānām/ kāmarāgasyānuśayaḥ kāmarāgānuśaya iti/ .../ prasupto hi kleśo 'nuśaya ucyate/ .../ yat tarhi sūtre kleśa evānuśaya uktaḥ ṣaṣṭke "so 'sya bhavati sukhāyāṃ vedanāyāṃ rāgānuśaya" iti/ bhavatīti vacanān nāsau tadaivānuśayaḥ/ kadā tarhi bhavati/ yadā prasupto bhavati/*

141 SN III.29-30 (§22.28): *no cedam bhikkhave rūpassa assādo abhavissa/ nayidaṃ sattā rūpasmim sārājjeyyuṃ/ yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi rūpassa assādo/ tasmā sattā rūpasmim sārājanti// no cedam bhikkhave rūpassa ādīnavo abhavissa/ nayidaṃ sattā rūpasmim nibbindeyyuṃ/ yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi rūpassa ādīnavo/ tasmā sattā rūpasmim nibbindanti// ...* Tr. Woodward.

speaks in this connection of the *abhisamayavāda*.<sup>142</sup> In this theory the "dispositions" (*anuśaya*) are the cause of entanglement in the [75] cycle of existences. These dispositions are identified as being of ten kinds, five of them being incorrect views (*dr̥ṣṭī*), further doubt, passion, aversion, pride, and ignorance. The five incorrect views and doubt can be directly eliminated by correct knowledge, the remaining four dispositions by correct knowledge and contemplation. This basic scheme is elaborated in such a manner that the four noble truths of Buddhism, which according to tradition constitute the content of liberating knowledge, can play this role and lead to the elimination of the dispositions. They are proximate causes in a process that is visualized in non-teleological terms.

The question may finally be raised whether the Sarvāstivāda described and criticized in the *Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya* gives rise to the kind of problem which confronts Vasubandhu's *Sautrāntika*. Does Sarvāstivāda doctrine, too, invite a development in an idealist direction?

A detailed and satisfactory explanation of the mechanism of karmic fruition is, of course, a challenge that few, if any, Indian schools of thought could fully handle. Of the two attempts so far considered *Sautrāntika* was particularly unsatisfactory because it was not clear how a series of completely mental events (the deed and its traces) could give rise to non-mental, material effects. In Sarvāstivāda the situation is different, because there neither deeds nor their traces are exclusively mental. Deeds, though the results of intentions, can be bodily and verbal (*viññaptī*), and as such they are material (*rūpa*). One of the immediate effects of deeds can be what is called *aviññaptī*, which too is material. It is not possible to enter into details here; the main point to be made is that in Sarvāstivāda deeds and their traces are not confined to the mental realm. Moreover, the Sarvāstivāda doctrine of the existence of past and future allowed to derive later fruition directly from a past deed.<sup>143</sup> So whatever the precise mechanism that accounts for "the diversity of the world", deeds and their traces are already present in the material world (*rūpa*). It seems safe to conclude that a Sarvāstivādin might be less tempted than a *Sautrāntika* to withdraw from the material realm altogether. Idealism is not the natural consequence of Sarvāstivāda thinking about deeds and their fruition.

142 Frauwallner, 1995: 149 ff. The original German was published in 1971.

143 Sanderson, 1994: 38-41. *Abhidh-k-bh(P)* p. 295 l. 20 - p. 296 l. 1. This position resembles the one of Uddyotakara's *Sāṃkhya* opponent and, perhaps, the *Yoga Bhāṣya* studied at the end of § 9, above.



[77]

## §11. Early Yogācāra

In 1973 Lambert Schmithausen published an article — "Spritueller Praxis und philosophische Theorie im Buddhismus"; an English translation appeared in 1976 — in which he argues that the origin of Yogācāra idealism is to be sought in certain meditation practices, especially such in which objects are visualized. His argumentation is as follows. Two hypotheses as to the origin of this philosophical position had been presented by earlier authors, among whom he mentions J. Masuda and E. Conze in particular. Masuda was an example of those who tried to explain Yogācāra idealism out of theoretical considerations within Buddhism. Conze had rather maintained that there was a link with meditational practices. Schmithausen observes that choosing between these two positions is only possible on the basis of the oldest textual sources of Yogācāra.

One such source is the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra. Chapter 8 of this Sūtra contains a statement to the effect that objects of meditation are not different from the mind, for they are nothing but perception (*vijñaptimātra*; Schmithausen translates "nothing but cognition / nichts ausserhalb des Bewusstmachungsaktes"). The immediately following section then states that also ordinary objects of perception are not different from the mind, and nothing but perceptions. No justification is given, so that Schmithausen feels justified to conclude that the validity of the statement about objects of meditation has here been extended to include ordinary objects. As he puts it: "the result of our examination of the oldest materials of the Yogācāra school clearly speaks in favor of the theory that Yogācāra idealism primarily resulted from a *generalization* of a fact observed in the case of meditation-objects, i.e. in the context of *spiritual practice*."

Since we are talking about the origin of Yogācāra idealism, Schmithausen's conclusion may be justified, if only we can be sure that this passage from the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra is the one that introduces idealistic notions for the first time. If such is not the case, it may be at least conceivable that this passage uses these notions in connection with meditational visualization, even though the original context of these notions, and the reason why they were developed in the first place, are different. That is why Schmithausen draws attention to a phrase in the Daśabhūmika Sūtra, [78] which is older than the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, and which, though not belonging to the Yogācāra school, has exerted considerable influence on that school. The phrase reads: "Whatever belongs to the Triple World is nothing but mind" (*cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*).<sup>144</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Tr. Harrison, 1990: 42. Harrison translates *citta* as 'thought'; I prefer 'mind'.

This older phrase, too, is expressive of a universal idealism, but unlike the statement in the Samdhinirmocana Sūtra, it is not mentioned in connection with meditational experiences. Quite on the contrary, it occurs in a completely theoretical context, which deals with dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). This earlier expression of universal idealism would therefore seem to rather plead against the thesis of an original connection with meditational experiences.

Schmithausen solves this problem by pointing out that the phrase concerned must have been borrowed from a source that is even earlier. Such a source can indeed be identified in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra, which Schmithausen refers to as the Bhadrapāla Sūtra. Since this Sūtra has recently been translated into English, I cite here the relevant section (3K-L) from Harrison's (1990: 41-42) translation:

"[3K] 'For example, Bhadrapāla, there are certain women or men with a natural bent for washing their hair and putting on jewelry, who might decide to look at themselves in a vessel of clear oil, or a vessel of clear water, or a well-polished round mirror, or a patch of ground smeared with azurite [?]. If they see therein their own forms, Bhadrapāla, what do you think? Does that appearance of the forms of the men or women in the vessel of clear oil, or vessel of clear water, or well-polished round mirror, or patch of ground smeared with azurite mean that there are men or women who have gone inside those things or entered them?'

Bhadrapāla said:

'No, Reverend Lord, it does not. Rather, Reverend Lord, because the oil and water are clear and undisturbed, or the round mirror is highly polished, or the patch of earth smeared with azurite is clean, the reflections stand forth; the bodies of the men or women have not arisen from the water, oil, mirror, or patch of earth, they have not come from anywhere nor gone anywhere, they have not been produced from anywhere, nor have they disappeared anywhere.'

[3L] The Lord said:

'Well done, well done, Bhadrapāla! You have done well, Bhadrapāla. So it is, Bhadrapāla. As you have said, because the forms are good and clear the reflections appear. In the same manner, when those bodhisattvas have cultivated this samādhi properly, those Tathāgatas are [79] seen by the bodhisattvas with little difficulty. Having seen them they ask questions, and are delighted by the answering of those questions. In thinking: 'Did these Tathāgatas come from anywhere? Did I go anywhere?' they understand that the Tathāgatas did not come from anywhere. Having understood that their own bodies did not go anywhere either, they think: 'Whatever belongs to this Triple World is nothing but mind (*cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukam*). Why is that? It is because however I imagine things, that is how they appear.'"

Contrary to the Daśabhūmika Sūtra, the statement "Whatever belongs to this Triple World is nothing but mind" occurs here in a context that does deal with meditational states. Schmithausen concludes therefore his discussion of the origin of Yogācāra idealism with the following words: "[I]n contrast to the Daśa-

bhūmikasūtra, in the Bhadrāpālasūtra the statement that the whole world is only mind (*cittamātra*) occurs in a context which perfectly corresponds to the idealistic sense suggested by its wording. Moreover, the statement is well introduced here and appears as the culminating point of a series of detailed preparatory reflections. As far as I can see, such a coherent exposition of the idealistic thesis that the world is nothing but mind (*cittamātra*) does not occur in any other of the early Mahāyānasūtras. This fact, in combination with the earliest *terminus ante quem* of our Sūtra, suggests that the Bhadrāpālasūtra was the first text to enunciate the thesis of universal idealism and to express this by the term *cittamātra*. If this is true, our investigation of the pertinent old Mahāyānasūtras has led to the same result as our examination into the proper Yogācāra texts: to the result that the thesis of universal idealism originated from the *generalization* of a situation observed in the case of objects visualized in meditative concentration, i.e., in the context of *spiritual practice*."

Two questions come to mind: 1) How certain is it that the formulation of universal idealism in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra has developed out of a generalization of reflections about certain meditational states? and 2) Even if we can be sure of this for the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra, does this allow us to draw conclusions for Yogācāra? We will deal with these two questions separately.

1) How certain is it that the formulation of universal idealism in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra has [80] developed out of a generalization of reflections about certain meditational states? Four observations are to be made here.

a) Harrison (1990: xix-xx) describes the relation between meditation and doctrine in this Sūtra in the following words:

"[The] emphasis on the emptiness or the unreality of all *dharmas* (sometimes referred to as the doctrine of *dharma-nairātmya*, literally the 'selflessness of *dharmas*') is one of the principal thrusts of the Prajñāpāramitā, and of the Mahāyāna in general, and is often held to have been a reaction against the Abhidharma theories of the powerful Mainstream Sarvāstivādin school. Unlike the Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra ..., nowadays believed to represent the earliest form of the Prajñāpāramitā, which tends to articulate the theory of emptiness or *sūnyatā* as a received truth, as something which needs only to be stated, not proved or demonstrated, the [Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra] approaches the question from the point of view of meditation experience. It first underlines the fundamental unreality of the entities experienced during the *samādhi* by comparing them with those things perceived in dreams or in the course of the 'meditation on the repulsive' (*aśubha-bhāvanā*, here understood as a purely imaginary exercise), and then — often without any shift of focus being made explicit — proceeds to emphasize the emptiness of **all dharmas**, which supposedly constitute the basis of our experience in the waking state.

The process, then, could be described as one of analogical extension or generalization, in which meditative discipline fosters an awareness of the emptiness of appearances which extends to all phenomena. ... One might also point out that this process of generalization, when pushed to its logical conclusion, brings us to the so-called 'Buddhist Idealism' of the Yogācārin, i.e. the view that all appearances are purely the products of mind (*citta-mātra*), which is to be distinguished from the previous theory of emptiness, which is more in the nature of an epistemological scepticism. A trace of this 'idealist' view — in fact, one of its earliest formulations — is indeed to be found in the [Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra] (in the well-known statement of 3L, q.v.), but it is not representative of the general tenor of the text. Rather, the attitude to phenomena propounded throughout the sūtra is one that we might characterize as essentially Śūnyavādin, in that all its more philosophical passages are given over to arguments in favor of the understanding of emptiness ..."

The presence of an idealistic statement in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra is not, therefore, unproblematic. Why, in a text which consistently denies the existence of all *dharmas*, should an exception suddenly be made in one single passage for the mental *dharmas*? Is it not equally conceivable that [81] this statement was borrowed from another context, without any intention to borrow its ontological implications with it?

b) There is another consideration that may be more serious. It is a commonplace in Indian philosophical literature to claim that the truths proclaimed in the school concerned, but which cannot be verified by simple observation, are confirmed by, or even based upon, the perception of spiritually advanced persons. Examples are numerous, and one must here suffice. The Vaiśeṣikas claim in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda that yogis, who are different from (i.e., superior to) us (*asmadviśiṣṭa*), directly see the elements of Vaiśeṣika which for ordinary people remain hypothetical: the soul of oneself and others, ether, direction, time, atoms, wind, minds, inherence, etc.<sup>145</sup> Few scholars would conclude from this that the specific doctrines of Vaiśeṣika came about as a result of yogic meditation. Yet it would be rash to claim that practicing yogis

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<sup>145</sup> WI p. 45 § 241-242: *asmadviśiṣṭānāṃ tu yogināṃ yuktānāṃ yogajadharmānugrhitena manasā svātmāntarākāśadikkālaparamāṇuvāyumanāḥsu tatsamaveta-guṇakarmasāmānyaviśeṣeṣu samavāye cāvītatam svarūpadarśanam utpadyate/viyuktānāṃ punaś catuṣṭayasannikarṣād yogajadharmānugrahasāmarthyāt sūkṣmavyavahitaviprakṛṣṭeṣu pratyakṣam utpadyate/*. "As for persons unlike ourselves — i.e., yogis engaged in yogic meditation — there appear precisely true cognitions of the real forms of such things as their own self as well as the selves of others, ether, space, time atoms, wind, mind, the qualities, actions, generalities and individualities inhering in these, and inherence; and the cognition of these is brought about by the mind as aided by faculties born of yoga. As for yogis who are not [at that moment] engaged in yogic meditation, direct sensuous knowledge appears with regard to subtle, hidden and distant objects, by means of the mind through fourfold contact, by the force of faculties born of yoga."

cannot have had, or cannot have believed themselves to have had, such experiences.<sup>146</sup> Once idealism had made its way into Buddhism, for whatever reason, it would be almost a matter of course that the correctness of this position would be "proved" by referring to meditators who had this experience.

c) No reference is made, in any of the passages cited so far, to anyone's personal experience. Indeed, as Sharf has pointed out in a recent article (1995, esp. p. 238), "the Buddhist tradition is ... hesitant to claim that *mārga* narratives were composed on the basis of personal experience. ... the major Buddhist path treatises do not include personal testimonials by their authors attesting to the veracity of the meditative states they describe. On the contrary, the authors seem to have gone to great lengths to efface their own [82] voices; these accounts are, for the most part, eminently impersonal, relying exclusively on scriptural proof-texts to substantiate their exegeses." So even if certain meditators had the experiences supposedly underlying the shift to idealism, how many people might have known about it?

d) Even if people had known about it, what reason is there to believe that a community of Buddhists would radically change its perception of the world, simply because some among them claimed to have experienced the world to be different? The least one would be tempted to expect is that the new perception would somehow have to "fit in", and not be something completely and utterly different from earlier notions. Some amount of continuity with already existing views, or a solution to an existing problem, might, one would think, greatly facilitate its acceptance.

e) Finally, we cannot exclude the possibility — proposed by Ch. Lindtner (1997: 160 f.) — that the expression *cittamātra* in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra and in the Daśabhūmika Sūtra does not refer to idealism, but that "*traidhātuka* is *cittamātra* in the sense that it appears as a result of someone's *vikalpa*". In other words, *cittamātra* may not in its earliest uses have indicated any sort of idealism, but rather nominalism.

2) The above observations concern primarily the formulation of universal idealism in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra. Let us now assume, for argument's sake, that this formulation has indeed developed out of a generalization of reflections about certain meditational states. Does this allow us to say the same about the statement in the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, or about Yogācāra in general? This is far from obvious. The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra is admittedly not the text that introduces idealistic notions for the first time. If it has borrowed these notions from other texts, it may have borrowed the link with meditational experiences along with them without the latter being the reason why those

<sup>146</sup> Cp. Bronkhorst, 1993c: 564-565.

notions were borrowed. It may have looked upon these meditational experiences as some kind of proof for the correctness of these notions. We have, however, seen that this kind of justification for philosophical notions is widespread in India, and is used in circumstances where no modern scholar would take this claim at all seriously. Yogācāra being a movement with clear links to the Abhidharma analysis of reality, and therefore with "real" philosophical tendencies, the question as to how these new notions [83] fitted in poses itself here even more emphatically than in the case of the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra.

Sharf, in the above-mentioned article, observes (1995: 238): "There is simply no need to trace the emergence of Buddhist idealism to experiences attained in meditative trance; idealist positions can be derived from philosophical inquiry into the status of perceptions arising due to simple epistemic error (the rope-snake analogy comes to mind), or from reflection on the ontology of dreams (as is found in the Taoist Chuangtzu)." This is true, and one is indeed reminded of the comparisons with dream states made in the portions of the Viṃśatikā following those studied above. One would, however, like to find more urgent reasons than some lost reflections on the ontology of dreams. Are there more urgent reasons in the case of Yogācāra?

Our reflections on Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya and Viṃśatikā have shown that there was a compelling reason to turn to idealism for Sautrāntikas similar to Vasubandhu. Since we cannot assume that Vasubandhu was the first Yogācāra idealist ever — the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra passage referred to by Schmithausen is certainly much earlier — the question has to be addressed whether Sautrāntika-like views about deeds and the mechanism of their fruition existed before the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya.

Our problem is not to study the early history of Sautrāntika, particularly its views about the relationship between deeds and their fruition, much less to study the links that may have existed between Sautrāntika and Yogācāra during this earlier period.<sup>147</sup> Our task is different. We have to find out whether the early Yogācāras, in particular those who introduced idealistic notions, were exposed to

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<sup>147</sup> The connection between Sautrāntika and Yogācāra has repeatedly been remarked upon in recent research. See, e.g., Hirakawa, 1973: X-XXVI. Robert Benjamin Kritzer, in his recent doctoral dissertation (1995), has gone to the extent of suggesting that the Dārṣṭāntika, Harivarman, and Śrīlāta — all of them traditionally considered Sautrāntikas or close to them — were Hīnayāna Yogācāras (p. 265). He further points out that what Vasubandhu, the author of the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya, identifies as Sautrāntika can often be found in the Yogācārabhūmi; and in at least several cases, when he does favor Sarvāstivāda over Sautrāntika, the Yogācārabhūmi position also is in agreement with Sarvāstivāda (p. 19). Vasubandhu, even more than the others enumerated above, might therefore count as a Yogācāra.

views about deeds and the mechanism of their fruition that were [84] similar to Sautrāntika in the sense that the connection between deeds and their fruition was believed to be completely mental. Let us recall that we are addressing the question why Yogācāra accepted, i.e. borrowed, idealistic notions. The reason why such notions appeared in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra and in the Daśabhūmika Sūtra is beyond the scope of this publication, and may not allow of the kind of analysis that is appropriate for Yogācāra. The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, on the other hand, where idealism appears to show up for the first time in the Yogācāra school, does deserve our attention.

Our task is much facilitated by Lambert Schmithausen's important study of the *ālayavijñāna* (1987), which is a veritable mine of information, along with carefully considered conclusions. I will freely and frequently quote from this book in the following pages, but without maintaining in all cases the emphases added by its author; occasionally I will emphasize words and phrases on my own accord without indication to that effect.

We learn from this book (p. 62, § 3.13.2) that "already in some parts of the *Basic Section* of the Yogācārabhūmi mind is unequivocally taught to contain the Seeds not only of **corporeal** matter but, occasionally, even of internal **and external** matter."<sup>148</sup> What Schmithausen calls the *Basic Section* is the Saptadaśabhūmika of the Yogācārabhūmi (1987: 12, § 1.6.3). With regard to its chronological relationship to the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra he observes on the same page: "[The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra] does not seem to be known to, or presupposed by, at least most of the *Basic Section* ..., nor, as far as I know, the Vastusaṃgrahaṇī. The [Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra] seems rather to presuppose some of the peculiar concepts and doctrines of the *Basic Section* of the Yogācārabhūmi."

There are also other notions, like that of Mind-containing-all-Seeds (*sarvabījakam vijñānam*), which "will have from the outset contained the Seeds of corporeal matter (*nāmarūpa, śaḍāyatana*) also" (p. 180).

Most importantly, there is the notion of *ālayavijñāna*. One of the functions that the *ālayavijñāna* came to adopt is that of connecting deeds with their fruition. Schmithausen has [85] convincingly argued that the notion of *ālayavijñāna* appears for the first time in parts of the Yogācārabhūmi that are older than the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra. He describes the role of *ālayavijñāna* in those early texts as follows (p. 43, § 3.5):

<sup>148</sup> Schmithausen cites in a note YBhū p. 52 l. 15f.: *sarveṣāṃ ādhyātmikabāh-yānām bhūtānām upādāyarūpānām cādhyātmaṃ citta-santatau bijāni sanniviṣṭāni*; and p. 55 l. 14: *citta-sanniviṣṭasya ca rūpa-samudāya-bījasya*.

"it would seem legitimate to understand *ālayavijñāna* in the first three chapters of the *Basic Section*, even in the absence of an express statement to that effect, as a continuous entity which, as the result of Maturation (*vipāka*) of previous karman, enters the mother's womb at the moment of conception and merges into semen-cum-blood, appropriating ... it so as to constitute it as a living organism, and keeping it appropriated throughout life, even in unconscious states, and which, comprising all Seeds (*sarvabījaka*), functions throughout life as the basis in the sense of Seed (*bijāśraya*) of every kind of sense-perception and mental cognition."

On pp. 62 and 63 Schmithausen points out that one would have expected that the material sense-faculties were regarded as arising from Seeds comprised or contained in *ālayavijñāna*. He then continues:

"Yet, such a view, involving as it does a genetic dependence of the material sense-faculties (or even of corporeal matter as a whole) on *ālayavijñāna*, is, significantly enough, not explicitly stated anywhere in the *Basic Section* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*. It is rather, in spite of *ālayavijñāna* being termed as 'containing all Seeds' (*sarvabījaka*), only the 'forthcoming' forms of mind (*pravṛttivijñāna*), i.e. sense perceptions and *manovijñāna*, and, occasionally, the mental factors (*caitasikā dharmāḥ*) accompanying them, that are explicitly stated to arise from their Seeds comprised in *ālayavijñāna* (or from *ālayavijñāna* as their Seed)."

However, after expressing his initial astonishment, Schmithausen goes on to provide an explanation for "the striking time-lag till it came to be conceived of also as containing the Seeds of the material sense-faculties" (p. 63). There is no need here to discuss this explanation — which looks plausible — apart from drawing attention to the observation that it may for some time have seemed reasonable to assume that Seeds of matter were a special form of matter.

Opinions, however, soon changed (p. 64, § 3.13.4 & 6):

[86]

"in the *Nivṛtti Portion*<sup>149</sup> ... *ālayavijñāna* is taught to be the cause not only of the 'forthcoming' forms of mind (*pravṛttivijñāna*) but also of the [material] sense-faculties along with their gross bases (*\*sādhiṣṭhāna*) and even of the surrounding world (*bhājana-loka*).<sup>150</sup> ... [I]t is ... likely that the idea is that they are the (indirect or by-)effect of karmic Impressions stored in *ālayavijñāna* ...

<sup>149</sup> The *Nivṛtti Portion* is defined in note 226 (p. 299) as the second half of the second part of the *ālayavijñāna* treatise in the beginning of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* Section of the *Yogācārabhūmi*.

<sup>150</sup> In a note, Schmithausen (1987: 342 n. 444) refers to the Chinese and Tibetan translations of a passage which he reconstructs as: (*tathā hi*) 1. *tat sattva-loka-nivṛtti-mūlam/ sādhiṣṭhānendriya-pravṛttivijñāna-janakatvāt/ 2. bhājanaloka-nivṛtti-mūlaṃ ca/ bhājanaloka-janakatvāt//*.



In [some] passages of the Abhidharmasamuccaya,<sup>151</sup> *ālayavijñāna* is said to be the Seed of, or to be impregnated with the Impression(s) of, (**all**) *skandhas*, *dhātus* and *āyatanas*. Likewise, in a passage of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* which appears to be an addition by the compiler himself, *ālayavijñāna* is expressly stated to contain the Seeds of **all** *dharma*s."

The fact that *ālayavijñāna* becomes the cause of the material world might be thought to lead to idealistic notions, but Schmithausen warns repeatedly against this conclusion. With regard to the very earliest occurrence of the term in the so-called *Initial Passage*, he remarks (p. 32-33, § 2.13.7):

"Like almost the whole of the *Yogācārabhūmi* and even many parts of other early *Yogācāra* texts, the *Initial Passage* does not show any trace of idealism or spiritualism, but on the contrary plainly contradicts such a position, since ... the sense-faculties are not only **not** taught to be mere images in *ālayavijñāna* but, on the contrary, *ālayavijñāna* is expressly taught to stick in the material sense-faculties. Besides, our passage only mentions, as arising from Seeds in *ālayavijñāna*, the *pravṛttivijñānas*, but not the material sense-faculties or the body or even the external world. And even if it did, this would not *eo ipso* imply their being nothing but mind or mental images. Rather we have to take into account the view that material things may **originate from mind**, ... and that this fact does by no means jeopardize their materiality and involve their ideality ... . Thus the origin of the *ālayavijñāna* theory does **not** seem to have any material connection with the origin of the doctrine of *vijñaptimātratā* ... ."

[87]

Later on he observes (p. 61, § 3.12.7):

"The commentary on [a certain] Abhidharmasamuccaya passage expressly includes, among the *dharma*s qualified as *vipāka-ja*, the material sense-faculties,<sup>152</sup> and this would seem to mean that they, too, have to be regarded as arising from Seeds in *ālayavijñāna* ... . This does not necessarily mean that they have no real existence outside mind ..."

And again (p. 203, § 10.3.1.3),

"Even the fact that in [a] passage of the [*ālayavijñāna* treatise in the beginning of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* Section of the *Yogācārabhūmi*]<sup>153</sup> *ālayavijñāna* is stated to be the root (*\*mūla*) = cause (*skyed par byed pa*) not only of living beings (*sattvaloka*) including their material sense-faculties and bodies (*\*sādhiṣṭhānendriya*) but even of the external world

<sup>151</sup> A note (1987: 343 n. 450) cites Abhidh-sam p. 12 l. 1: *skandha-dhātva-āyatana-vāsanā-paribhāvitam sarvabījakam ālayavijñānam*; and Abhidh-sam p. 32 l. 8f.: *\*skandha-dhātva-āyatanānām yad bījam ālayavijñānam* (retranslation changed by Schmithausen in accordance with the Tibetan).

<sup>152</sup> A note (1987: 338 n. 425) refers to Abhidh-sam-bh p. 44 l. 18-20: *ālayavijñānād anyat tu cakṣurādikaṃ vā sukḥduḥkhādikaṃ vā; tad vipākajam ity ākhyāṃ labhate, tato jātam iti kṛtvā* (text as corrected by Schmithausen).

<sup>153</sup> The reference is to the passage presented in n. 150 (Schmithausen's note 444), above.

(*bhājanaloka*) does not necessarily imply that corporeal matter, or even the external world, is *viññaptimātra*, i.e. nothing but a mental image; for the statement is equally well explicable by the fact that *ālayaviññāna*, containing all Seeds, contains also the Seeds of karman which, as is well-known, even according to Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma participates in the production or at least differentiation not only of the bodies of living beings but also of the external world. Such an interpretation is, after all, strongly supported by a passage from the Abhidharmasamuccaya where both living beings and the external world are taught to be differentiated by karman, viz. by common (*sādhāraṇa*) and peculiar (*asādhāraṇa*) karman, respectively."

Schmithausen is no doubt right in emphasizing that the fact that *ālayaviññāna* participates in the production or differentiation of the external world does not justify the conclusion that, for the authors of these passages, the external world is nothing but a mental image. The very fact that he reminds us of this time and again, however, shows that it is tempting to draw such a conclusion. Although the texts Schmithausen mentions do not do so, and nor does the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya, as we have seen, the fact that the author of the Viṃśatikā — perhaps the very same Vasubandhu who wrote the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya — looked upon this situation as problematic, shows that Indian thinkers of that time, too, were tempted to draw this conclusion. There is no reason to believe that [88] Vasubandhu was the first, or the only one to actually do so. The step from a completely mental link between actions and their fruition, to some kind of idealistic point of view, is inviting, not only for us, but also for Indian Buddhists of the period concerned, as the case of Vasubandhu shows.

Concretely speaking, I think Schmithausen has convincingly argued that the concept of *ālayaviññāna* had originally nothing to do with *viññaptimātratā*. Once, however, *ālayaviññāna* came to be looked upon as participating in the production or differentiation of the external world, at least some thinkers may, or must, have become aware of the question that occupied Vasubandhu some time later: by what mechanism are deeds related to their fruition? I find it extremely likely that some must have hit upon, and have had the courage to accept, the evident solution: the external world is nothing but a mental image. In other words, even though "the origin of the *ālayaviññāna* theory does **not** seem to have any material connection with the origin of the doctrine of *viññaptimātratā*", as Schmithausen concludes, the origin of the doctrine of *viññaptimātratā* may very well be connected with the presence at that time, in a suitably developed form, of the *ālayaviññāna* theory.

With regard to the Saṃdhanirmocana Sūtra — which introduces *viññaptimātratā* into Yogācāra, as we have seen — Schmithausen has the following to say (p. 46-48, § 3.9.1 & 2):

"... the Vth chapter of the [Saṃdhanirmocana Sūtra] looks like a first attempt at redrawing the theory of mind (*cittaṃ mano viññānam*) by

making the recently introduced new kind of mind containing all Seeds (*sarvabīja(ka)*) ... its central concept. ...  
 ... the [Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra] does not merely deal with rebirth as a man etc. ... or even other forms of rebirth in world-spheres where too there is corporeal matter, but expressly includes the possibility of being reborn in the **immaterial** world-sphere (*ārūpyadhātu*).  
 ... accepting the presence of *ālayavijñāna* in *ārūpyadhātu* (i.e. in the world-sphere characterized by **lack** of matter, especially of corporeal matter) inevitably implies that *ālayavijñāna* has to transcend its original character of mind sticking or hiding in corporeal matter ... But [this] consequence, obvious though it is, is not drawn [in the passage under discussion]."

Whatever the place of residence (or 'hiding') of the *ālayavijñāna*, it appears that the idea of something mental which supposedly will give rise also to the material world, is clearly present in the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra.

[89]

Schmithausen describes the relation between *ālayavijñāna* and *vijñaptimātratā* in the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra in the following words (1987: 88-89, § 5.5.1):

"[A]n awareness [of the problem of the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna*] appears to be documented for the first time in the VIIIth chapter of the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra ... . It is worth noting in this connection that [Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra] VIII appears to have made use of the definition of *vijñāna* as (mere) making known (i.e. perception/cognition) of an object (*\*ālabana-vijñapti(-mātra)*) also in the context of the question of whether the images visualized in meditative concentration ([Saṃdhis(ÉLa)] VIII.7) — and analogously also the contents of everyday experiences ([Saṃdhis(ÉLa)] VIII.8) — are different from mind or not. Since the theory of *vijñaptimātratā* is also alluded to in the subsequent part of the paragraph of [Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra] VIII which presents the subliminal form of mind as an actual perception (or "representation") of an object ..., it may even be that the first attempt to conceive of the subliminal *vijñāna* as a perception (or "representation") of an object was motivated not so much by the ordinary Abhidharma definition of *vijñāna* as *vijñapti*, i.e. cognition of an object, but rather by its specifically Yogācāra idealist reinterpretation, i.e. by the doctrine of *vijñaptimātratā* ... ."

This passage, when properly understood, may contain an additional argument for the assumption that *vijñaptimātratā* was created under the influence of *ālayavijñāna*. Schmithausen describes the "problem of the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna*" as follows (p. 85, § 5.2):

"... *ālayavijñāna*, in order to deserve being qualified as a genuine *vijñāna*, came to be expected to satisfy the Abhidharmic definition of a *vijñāna*. This definition, which in substance can be traced back to the canonical texts, takes *vijñāna* as that which performs the act of *vi-jñā-*,

or, more explicitly, as that which makes known (*vijñapti*), i.e. perceives or cognizes (*upalabdhi*), an object (*viśaya, ālambana*).<sup>154</sup>

However, "this *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna* turns out to be by no means unproblematic" (p. 85, § 5.1). Indeed, it "would seem to be hardly compatible with its presence in an unconscious state like *nirodhasamāpatti*, in essential connection with which, however, the [90] concept of *ālayavijñāna* appears to have been introduced for the first time" (p. 86, § 5.3).

How then can the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna* be upheld? The problem is largely solved if one accepts *vijñaptimātratā* as in the VIIIth chapter of the *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*. Here "*ādānavijñāna* (i.e. *ālayavijñāna* ...) is characterized as an 'unconscious (or: not fully conscious?) steady perception (or 'representation') of the Receptacle (i.e. of the surrounding world) (*\*asamvidita-sthira-bhājana-vijñapti*)'" (Schmithausen, 1987: 89, § 5.6.1). Seen in this way, *ālayavijñāna* preserves its *vijñāna* nature even in an unconscious state like *nirodhasamāpatti*, precisely because it is **unconscious** perception.

It should here be added that without accepting *vijñaptimātratā* it is much more difficult to account for the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna*, esp. with reference to unconscious states like *nirodhasamāpatti*. This is precisely what Schmithausen points out in the following passage (p. 92-93, § 5.7):

"... the admission that as a *vijñāna ālayavijñāna*, too, had to be conceived of as actually cognizing an object does not appear to be easily compatible with its presence in unconscious states like *nirodhasamāpatti*. This seems to hold good particularly in the case of the pertinent paragraph of the *Proof Portion*,<sup>155</sup> for in this paragraph, what must be the cognitive functions of *ālayavijñāna* (viz. a continuous perception of the surrounding world and of the [corporeal] basis [of personal existence] ...) is presented as a matter-of-fact experience (*upalabhyante!*). Since such an experience can hardly be imagined not to contradict the unconscious character of *nirodhasamāpatti*, it would seem that in this passage the specific connection of *ālayavijñāna* with *nirodhasamāpatti* had, probably, been lost sight of, as appears to be the case in some other texts, too."

With regard to the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, Schmithausen observes (p. 100, § 5.12.1):

<sup>154</sup> A note (1987: 379 n. 610) refers to various passages, among them *Abhidh-kbh(P)* p. 11 l. 7: *viśayaṃ viśayaṃ prati vijñaptir upalabdhir vijñānaskandha ity ucyate*; and *YBhū* p. 11 l. 8: *vijñānaṃ katamat? yad ālambanavijñaptau pratyupasthitam*.

<sup>155</sup> The passage concerned is *Abhidh-sam-bh* p. 13 l. 5-7 (cited in Schmithausen's note 630): ... *samāsataś caturvidhaṃ karma — bhājana-vijñaptir āśraya-vijñaptir aham iti vijñaptir viśaya-vijñaptiś ceti/ etā vijñaptayah kṣaṇe kṣaṇe yugapat pravartamānā upalabhyante/ na caikasya vijñānasyaikasmin kṣaṇe idam evaṃ-rūpaṃ vyatibhinnaṃ karma yujyate//*.

"... throughout [its] lengthy treatment of *ālayavijñāna* [in chapter I] there is no attempt to interpret it, on the lines of the actualist Abhidharma notion of *vijñāna*, as a perception or cognition of an object ... . **It is only in a passage of another chapter that *ālayavijñāna* is — in the [91] context of *vijñaptimātratā* ...! — described as a cognition or representation of an object or of objects (\**arthavijñapti*), but even here this idea is presented as a kind of supposition which the author himself need not have shared.**<sup>156</sup>"

Similarly (p. 102-103, § 5.13.1-2),

"... it is only in one passage of the Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya that *ālayavijñāna* seems to be stated to consist not only of Seeds but also of [a representation or image of] objects, viz. the Foundation or Receptacle (*pratiṣṭhā*, i.e. the surrounding world), the body (*deha*), and the [objects-of-]enjoyment (*bhoga*). ... It would seem that the view expressed in [this] passage is significantly different from that of [a certain portion of the Yogācārabhūmi] ...:

Firstly, it does not include [a cognition of] Impressions or Seeds but adds *bhoga*, which appears to mean the sense-objects.

Secondly, in contrast to [that portion of the Yogācārabhūmi] according to which *ālayavijñāna* is a cognition (*vijñapti*) which **has** the surrounding world, etc., for its object (*ālambana*), the Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya passage would seem to imply that *ālayavijñāna* **is** the surrounding world, etc. I.e.: taken as a veritable *vijñāna*, *ālayavijñāna* is, according to this passage, not a cognition of an object but a *vijñāna* appearing as an object, viz. the surrounding world, etc., without involving any real dichotomy of an apprehending *vijñāna* and an object that is apprehended.

**This view is**, in contrast to [that portion of the Yogācārabhūmi] ..., **essentially 'idealist' or 'spiritualist'.**"

(The "portion of the Yogācārabhūmi" here referred to is the *Pravṛtti Portion* — which is the first half of the second part of the *ālayavijñāna* treatise in the beginning of the Viniścayasamgrahaṇī Section of the Yogācārabhūmi (p. 299 n. 226). As was to be expected, "*nirodhasamāpatti* is not mentioned ... in the *Pravṛtti Portion*", and nor does it "— in contexts where one may expect [it] to do so ... — ... point out the (systematically inevitable) absence of the new *manas* in *nirodhasamāpatti*, which probably means nothing else but that [it] did not pay special attention to this state" (p. 394 n. 657).)

At the end of this survey we, inevitably, get back to Vasubandhu the author of the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya. We know that he probably wrote the *Vimśatikā*, but other works, too, may have to be [92] assigned to him: *Vyākhyāyukti*, *Karmasiddhi*, *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*, *Pañcaskandhaka*, *Trimśikā*.<sup>157</sup> Some of these works (*Karmasiddhi*, *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā*,

<sup>156</sup> A note (1987: 400 n. 699) cites Mahāyānasamgraha II.13 (ed. Lamotte, 1938 (repr. 1973): 30): *gaṇ du yaṅ kun gzi nam par śes pa'i nam par rig pa ni don gyi nam par rig par 'jog pa, der yaṅ ...*

<sup>157</sup> So Schmithausen, 1987: 262-263 n. 101.

Pañcaskandhaka) advocate *ālayavijñāna* but not *vijñāptimātratā*. How do they account for the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna*? In these works, interestingly,

"... Vasubandhu refrains, in the case of *ālayavijñāna*, from going into details: *ālayavijñāna*, to be sure, does have an object and a mode of apprehending it, but its object and mode-of-apprehending are not, or cannot be, distinctly ascertained or defined (*aparicchinnāmbanākāra*). To the objection that this does not solve the problem because one cannot understand 'how something can be a *vijñāna* and yet be thus', i.e. not have a clearly determined object and mode-of-apprehension, Vasubandhu answers by merely referring to the fact that 'the other theoreticians who admit the existence of [some form of] mind (*vijñāna*) in states like *nirodhasamāpatti* will have the same difficulty'.<sup>158</sup>" (p. 103-104, § 5.14.1)

Once again we are confronted with the fact that, even though *ālayavijñāna* can exist without *vijñāptimātratā*, it evokes problems which an idealist position could easily solve.

Let us resume. The earliest passage to introduce Yogācāra idealism is Saṃdhanirmocana Sūtra chapter 8. Idealism is here introduced in a context that mentions certain meditational experiences. However, the same chapter also documents, for the first time as it seems, an awareness of the problem of the *vijñāna* nature of *ālayavijñāna*. The first observation might be interpreted in the sense that meditational experiences are responsible for the introduction of idealist notions in Yogācāra; this is Schmithausen's position. The second observation tends to link their appearance to reflections relating to the nature of *ālayavijñāna*. How do we choose between the two?

The essential link with meditation in the passage of the Saṃdhanirmocana Sūtra loses much of its credibility through the circumstance that this passage appears to have borrowed the idealist notions, along with their link with meditation, from earlier non-Yogācāra texts. Whether those earlier texts introduced these notions because of experiences in meditation is difficult to decide with certainty, but general observations on the "rhetoric of meditative experience" justify skepticism in this regard. With regard to Yogācāra no such conclusion is in any case justified.

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What about the link with *ālayavijñāna*? This link has much more in its favor. Most importantly, there is the need to account for the mechanism of karmic fruition. Wherever this mechanism is conceived of in purely mental terms, the lure of idealism is bound to be great. Even before (and besides) *ālayavijñāna* Yogācāra did conceive of this mechanism in mental terms, and *ālayavijñāna* soon came to adopt this task in the school. Moreover, *ālayavijñāna* could not easily be accepted as *vijñāna*, as long as it had no object.

<sup>158</sup> References to the three texts in n. 733 (p. 408).

Conscious perception on the part of *ālayavijñāna* was hard to postulate, however, given that the very concept had been invented to account for unconscious states (or, in case one does not accept Schmithausen's theory, it had soon come to account for those states, too). Once again, an idealist position brought a solution: the *ālayavijñāna* could now be thought of as unconscious perception of the world.

If, then, we accept the link with *ālayavijñāna* as the most important factor<sup>159</sup> responsible for the appearance of Yogācāra idealism, we arrive at the following picture. Neither *ālayavijñāna* nor *vijñāptimātratā* owe their appearance, in Yogācāra, to meditational experience. The notion of *ālayavijñāna*, however, appears to have come into being as a result of **reflection about** a meditational state, *nirodhasamāpatti*. *Vijñāptimātratā*, on the other hand, seems to have made its appearance (at least in Yogācāra) as a result of reflections pertaining to the mechanism of karmic retribution and the nature of *ālayavijñāna*.

These conclusions are, of course, hypothetical, not less so than the alternative conclusions by Schmithausen. It seems to me, however, that the material so generously provided by Schmithausen favors, at least in the case of Yogācāra *vijñāptimātratā*, a hypothesis different from his.

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<sup>159</sup> It may not be necessary to recall that historical developments may have more than one single determinant. Other factors, too, may have played a role in the appearance of Yogācāra idealism. And indeed, what argument could exclude the possibility that the experiences in meditation of some of the authors involved may have played a role here?

[95]

## §12. The Mokṣopāya-Śāstra

A recent study by Walter Slaje (1994) argues convincingly that the text which has been handed down under the title *Yogavāsiṣṭha* contains as its oldest part a philosophical work called *Mokṣopāya* or *Mokṣopāya-Śāstra*. This *Mokṣopāya* — which, unlike the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, does not claim to be a revealed work — presents a picture of the world which is similar to Buddhist *Yogācāra* in being a form of subjective illusionism.<sup>160</sup> Unlike *Yogācāra*, and like the *Āgamaśāstra* ascribed to *Gauḍapāda*, it is further representative of the position known as *ajātivāda*: the world of our experience cannot have come into being. The world is nothing beyond a subjective illusion, not because only in this way the mechanism of karmic retribution becomes intelligible as maintained by *Vasubandhu* and others, but because it cannot possibly have arisen after the last universal destruction (*mahāpralaya*). Here, then, idealism has not been resorted to in order to solve a problem related to the doctrine of karma. In spite of this, the doctrine of karma as conceived of in this text does not present the difficulties of understanding which it presents to other schools of thought. The reason is clear. Karma plays no role in the creation of the world, since no such creation takes place. Inside a world period karma does play a role, but is itself in reality nothing more than subjective imagination.

Slaje cites the following passages from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* to substantiate these points:<sup>161</sup>

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"When the great destruction [of the world] takes place, nothing remains. All that stays is *Brahma*, which is peaceful, devoid of old age and limitations, mere consciousness free from objects of thought."<sup>162</sup>

"At the beginning of a [new] creation no one's previous karma (i.e. belonging to an earlier world-period) is present here. ... Just as *Brahmā* and other gods appear in the form of *Brahma* at the beginning of a [new] creation, so do hundreds and thousands of other living beings, too, appear [in the form of *Brahma*]. However, those who, though of pure

<sup>160</sup> With regard to the possibility of an interaction of individual *jīvas* in the *Mokṣopāya*, Slaje observes (1994: 202-203 n. 20): "Eine diesbezügliche, philologisch-historisch gehaltene Untersuchung wäre nicht zuletzt deshalb lohnend, weil das [*Yogavāsiṣṭha*] vorläufig die reichste Quelle mit Materialien zu einer solchen Interaktion zu sein scheint. Im *Vijñānavāda*, der hinsichtlich seiner idealistischen Grundhaltung dem [*Yogavāsiṣṭha*] nahesteht, wurde dieser Problembereich jedenfalls nur marginal thematisiert."

<sup>161</sup> The passages are cited in the form which Slaje has given them on the basis of new manuscript-material.

<sup>162</sup> *YogV* 3.2.36-37a; Slaje, 1994: 199-200: *mahāpralayasamṣattau na kiṃcid avaśiṣyate/ brahmāste śāntam, ajaram, anantātmaiva kevalam// cetyanirmukta-cinmātram .../*



birth, cognize a difference from Brahma go ever further down, having by themselves cognized this [world] as being the second which is called ignorance. It is observed that those [misguided living beings] will be re-born under the influence of their karma. ... Those, on the other hand, who, great on account of their [correct] knowledge, do not cognize a difference from Brahma, are the blameless, they are [the gods] such as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva here."163

Karma is mere subjective imagination:

"Just as in the dream of someone who sees [it] the previous karma of people seen [in that dream] is imaginary, not real, in the same way [the previous karma] of people [seen] in the dream of him who is awake (i.e. in the 'real' world) [is imaginary, not real]."164

"Having produced its own karma after [the renewed creation of the world], [the living being concerned] experiences it consciously through its imagination. ... Only when a creation has been conceived of as creation, the imagination of previous karma can take place.

Subsequently living beings roam about in this world, in the power of the chains of karma."165

Hulin (1987: 18-19) comments: "La rétribution karmique elle-même — le fait pour chacun de rencontrer dans ses existences ultérieures la récompense ou le châtement de ses actions passées, et cela sous forme de 'chance' ou de 'malchance' — n'est pas dispensée par quelque puissance transcendante qui de l'extérieur et d'en-haut jugerait l'individu. Elle représente l'émergence — au coeur même de l'interminable rêve [97] éveillé de sa destinée transmigrante — d'un sentiment subconscient d'innocence ou de culpabilité qu'il traduit en visions intérieures idylliques ou cauchemardesques et projette ensuite, sans le savoir, à l'extérieur pour les y rencontrer enfin sous l'aspect d'événements heureux ou malheureux dans le monde physique et social."

The Mokṣopāya-Śāstra, then, is a text which is not troubled by the conceptual problems linked to karmic retribution, this because it had already opted for idealism for some other reason. What this other reason is may not be easy to answer with certainty. It seems, however, likely that here idealism is directly related to the position that nothing can come into being, the so-called *ajātivāda*, which the Mokṣopāya-Śāstra shares with Gauḍapāda's Āgamaśāstra. Since this question has been dealt with elsewhere, I will not say more about it here.166

163 YogV 7.142.26ab, 27-29b, 30; Slaje, 1994: 201: *sargādau prāktanam karma vidyate neha kasyacit/ ...// yathā brahmādayo bhānti sargādau brahmarūpiṇaḥ/ bhānti jīvās tathānye 'pi śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ// kiṃ tu yair brahmaṇo 'nyatvaṃ buddhaṃ, te sāttvikodbhavāḥ/ adho 'dho yānty avidyākhyam buddhvā dvaitam idaṃ svayam// teṣāṃ uttarakālaṃ tatkarmanā janma drśyate/ ...// yais tu na brahmaṇo 'nyatvaṃ buddhaṃ bodhamahātmabhiḥ/ niravadyās ta, ete 'tra brahmapuṣṇuharādayaḥ//*

164 YogV 7.143.10; Slaje, 1994: 207 n. 32: *svapne draṣṭur drśyanṛṇām asti kālpanikam yathā/ na vāstavam pūrvakarma, jāgratsvapne tathā nṛṇām//*

165 YogV 7.142.38cd, 41; Slaje, 1994: 202: *paścāt svakarma nirmāya, bhūṅkte kalpanayā sacit// ... sarge sargatayā rūḍhe, bhavet prākkarmakalpanā/ paścāj jīvā bhramantīme karmapāśavaśikṛtāḥ//*

166 Bronkhorst, 1999a: § II.5.

[99]

### §13. Mīmāṃsā

Having studied the different solutions proposed for the difficulties connected with karmic retribution in some Brahmanical and Buddhist schools of thought, we now turn to Mīmāṃsā (by which I here mean Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā). Mīmāṃsā, too, was confronted with the question how deeds are related to their effects. The deeds, in their case, are ritual acts prescribed in the Veda. A properly executed sacrifice will bring about results, such as heaven. The following reflections will suggest that the classical thinkers of this school did not succeed as well as their competitors in finding a satisfactory answer to the question they were confronted with.

The relationship between the doctrine of karma as accepted in other schools of thought and the sacrificial point of view represented by the Mīmāṃsaka Śabara is complex. Madeleine Biardeau (1964: 90 n. 1) makes the following observation in this respect:

"[La théorie du *karman*] suppose des renaissances indéfinies, jusqu'au moment où les résultats des actes cessent de s'accumuler et où la délivrance est obtenue. La Mīmāṃsā ne parle que de *svarga*, et l'on n'a pas le moyen de savoir s'il est éternel ... ou s'il est un intermède entre deux renaissances; on n'a peut-être même pas à soulever la question car elle vient d'ailleurs: le *Bhāṣya* ne fait aucune allusion à une nouvelle naissance qui serait, par exemple, chargée de récolter le fruit de mérites accumulés en cette vie et dont les résultats ne seraient pas encore apparus au moment de la mort. On peut donc penser que la doctrine des rites est reprise par les tenants du *karman* et de la délivrance qui, ce faisant, l'intègrent à leur perspective."

Wilhelm Halbfass (1980: 273 f.) observes, similarly:

"[The Mīmāṃsā] disregards or rejects ideas or doctrines which have become basic premises for the other systems. Final liberation (*mokṣa*), commonly accepted as a leading theme or even as the basic concern of philosophical thought, does not play any role in the older literature of the system; Mīmāṃsā deals with *dharma*, not with *mokṣa*. Familiar ideas like the cyclical destruction of the world (*mahāpralāya*), 'yogic perception' (*yogipratyakṣa*), the 'Lord' (*īśvara*), and so forth, remain excluded even in its later literature. For our present discussion, the following is of peculiar significance: the Mīmāṃsā carries the heritage of the 'pre-karmic' past of the Indian tradition into an epoch for which karma and *saṃsāra* have become basic premises. As well as their counterpart, *mokṣa*, the concepts of karma and *saṃsāra* do not play any role in the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* and remain negligible in its oldest extant commentary, Śabara's *Bhāṣya*. These texts do not deal with 'works' or 'deeds' in general, and they do not refer [100] to or presuppose any general theory of an ethically committed, retributive causality inherent in such deeds. They deal only with the specific efficacy of the Vedic sacrificial works."

Roque Mesquita (1994: 451-452, 482) argues that already Jaimini and Śabara (who uses the term *niḥśreyasa*) accepted the idea of final liberation, but his arguments do not seem to me decisive. It is however

true that the early texts do not state clearly how long heaven may last, leaving open the possibility that it may last forever.

How does a sacrifice bring about heaven? The question attracted the attention of Śabara, the author of the *Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya*. Unfortunately his reflections are not quite as clear as one might wish, but it can be argued that Śabara tries to provide an answer by giving a psychological interpretation to all the factors involved. The essential part of the sacrifice is psychological, the mechanism that links it to heaven is psychological, and heaven itself is psychological. If this interpretation of Śabara's obscure text is correct, Śabara has succeeded, or at least tried, to move all essential elements to the mental realm, without for that matter having yielded to idealism as world view.

We must first consider the term *apūrva*, which has a special meaning in Śabara's *Bhāṣya*.<sup>167</sup> This term had already been used in the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, but in the innocent meaning of "new, without precedent". For Śabara this term can refer to an entity that survives the ritual act and connects this act with its result. Indeed, complex sacrifices may give rise, through their constituent acts, to various *apūrvas* which subsequently join up so as to produce one resulting *apūrva*.<sup>168</sup>

Regarding the nature of *apūrva* Śabara provides some hints under *sūtra* 2.1.5. Here his notion of *apūrva* is introduced on the grounds that without it a sacrifice could not bring about its result, for the sacrifice disappears as soon as it has been executed. Something must survive to link the sacrifice to its result. The question is then raised whether the sacrifice itself continues to exist until the result. Here Śabara excludes the possibility that this continuing sacrifice [101] inheres in the omnipresent self. The suggestion is then made that it subsists in the material substance offered, but this does not work either.

The passage concerned reads:<sup>169</sup>

<sup>167</sup> He was not the first to give it a technical meaning, as will become clear below.

<sup>168</sup> See Clooney, 1990: 232, which refers to Śabara's *Bhāṣya* on *sūtra* 11.1.57. Bhartṛhari, who never refers to Śabara's *Bhāṣya* and may have used earlier *Mīmāṃsā* works (Bronkhorst, 1989), is familiar with the notion of *apūrva*; see *Vkp* 2.119; 3.1.69; 3.7.34; further *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā* Manuscript p. 11a l. 11, 'Critical edition' *Āhnika* I p. 28 l. 8-9, ed. Abhyankar-Limaye p. 33 l. 24 - p. 34 l. 1, ed. Swaminathan p. 40 l. 11.

<sup>169</sup> Śabara, *Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya* on *sūtra* 2.1.5, p. 358 l. 16 - p. 373 l. 1 & p. 377 l. 1-7: *apūrvam punar asti yata ārambhaḥ śiṣyate svargakāmo yajeteti/ itarathā hi vidhānam anarthakaṃ syāt/ bhaṅgitvād yāgasya/ yady anyad anutpādyā yāgo vinaśyēt phalam asati nimitt[e] na syāt/ tasmād utpādayatīti/ yadi punaḥ phalavacanasāmarthyāt tad eva na vinaśyātīti kalpyate/ naivam śakyam/ na hi karmaṇo 'nyad rūpam upalabhāmahe/ yad āśrayam deśāntaram prāpayati [t]at karmety ucyate/ na tad ātmani samavetam/ sarvagatatvād ātmanah/ .../ yatra samav[e]tam āsīt tad vinaṣtam dravyam/ tasya vināśāt tad api vinaṣtam ity*

"But *apūrva* exists, because an activity is enjoined by the words 'let someone who desires heaven sacrifice'. Otherwise (i.e. without assuming the existence of *apūrva*) the injunction would be pointless, because the sacrifice is transient. If the sacrifice disappeared without giving rise to something else, there would be no result, there being no cause [to bring about that result]. It follows that the sacrifice does produce [something else].

[Opponent:] Suppose that the [ritual act (*karman*)] does not disappear, by force of the fact that the result is mentioned.

[Reply:] This is not possible, for we do not observe another form of the ritual act. Is called 'act' what moves its substrate to another place. It does not inhere in the self, because the self is omnipresent. ...

The material substance in which [the ritual act] inhered has disappeared. It is understood that as a result of the disappearance of the [material substance] also the [ritual act] has disappeared.

[Opponent:] Suppose that the substrate has not disappeared either.

[Reply:] This is not [possible], because we observe the ashes.

[Opponent:] Perhaps [the ritual act exists] even though there are ashes.

[Reply:] This is not [possible] because, even though we [can] observe what is there, [the ritual act] is not seen.

[Opponent:] The bringing about of a result may be an indication [that the ritual act continues to exist after its execution].

[Reply:] If such were the case, a justification must be given to explain that we do not observe [the ritual act after its execution]. If you think that [this justification] will be one of the [factors which prevent visibility], minuteness etc., something is being imagined. In that situation where either *apūrva* must be imagined or the [ritual act] there is reason to imagine [102] something non-specific (such as *apūrva*) rather than something specific (like the ritual act that has been executed)."

The role of the self in this discussion is startling. The fact that Śabara rejects the possibility that the ritual act inheres in the self could be construed to mean that he takes it for granted that *apūrva* does inhere in the self. How else would he have arrived at the idea that the sacrifice — ontologically an act (*karman*) — might come to inhere in the self once its execution is finished, after inhering in the material substances offered? The remark, elsewhere in the Bhāṣya, to the extent that the sacrifice is the giver of *apūrva*, and the person its receiver, might be understood to support this assumption.<sup>170</sup>

It may be objected that the passage under sūtra 2.1.5 is not clear and that some critics of Mīmāṃsā appear to have believed that Śabara's *apūrva* had no substrate. Vyomaśiva, at any rate, speaks of a substrateless *dharma* (*anāśrito dharmah*) while referring to what

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*avagamyate/ āśrayo 'py avinaṣṭa iti cen na/ bhasmopalambhanāt/ saty api bhasmany astūti cen na/ vidyamānopalambhane 'py adarśanāt/ phalakriyā liṅgam iti cet/ evaṃ saty adarśane samādhir vaktavyaḥ/ sauṣmyādīnām anyatamad bhaviṣyatīti yadi cintyate, kalpītam evaṃ sati kiṃcid bhavati/ tatrāpūrvaṃ vā kalpyeta, tad vety aviśeṣakalpanāyām asti hetuḥ, na viśiṣṭakalpanāyām/.*

<sup>170</sup> Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 3.7.6, p. 552 l. 4: *yāgo 'pūrvasya dātā/ puruṣaḥ pratigrahītā/*. Cp. Yoshimizu, 1997: 61-62.

appears to be the *apūrva* of Mīmāṃsā.<sup>171</sup> However, since Vyomaśiva does not mention Śabara by name, he may refer to other, perhaps earlier Mīmāṃsakas.

This last possibility finds confirmation in a passage of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's Nyāyamañjarī which suggests that the idea of a substrate-less *apūrva* belonged to Mīmāṃsakas preceding Śabara. These earlier Mīmāṃsakas were apparently still known to Jayanta and, we may assume, to Vyomaśiva.

The passage concerned deals with the ways in which other thinkers use the word *dharma*:<sup>172</sup>

[103]

"(1) The old Mīmāṃsakas apply the word *dharma* to the so-called *apūrva* produced by ritual acts such as sacrifices. (2) The followers of Śabara call the ritual acts themselves, i.e. sacrifices etc., [*dharma*]. (3) The followers of Prabhākara maintain that the meaning of the sentence which is of the nature of a command (*niyoga*) must be called *apūrva*, and that it is expressed by the word *dharma*."

These uses of the word *dharma* are then criticized:

"[Rejection of (1):] The position of the old Mīmāṃsakas (*jarajjaiminīya*) is not very intelligent, because there is no proof for an *apūrva* that exists during the interval between the sacrifice and heaven, is steady and **has no substrate** (*nirādhāra*). ...

[Rejection of (3):] Nor must the command which is the meaning of the sentence be called *apūrva*. ...

[Rejection of (2):] Nor is it correct to state that the [sacrifice] must be called *dharma* because [the word *dharma*] is used in syntactical agreement with the word 'sacrifice' etc. in 'He who performs a sacrifice is called *dhārmika*'."

171 Vy vol. 2, p. 230 l. 25 ff. Halbfass (1980: 282) states that "a pre-Kumārila version of the theory of *apūrva*, basically amounting to the idea of a substrateless and impersonal power which is invoked and manifested by the sacrificial performance, was already discussed and refuted by Uddyotakara in his Nyāya Vārttika on Sūtra 1.1.7." This is not, however, clear from the text. The fact that *apūrva* is understood as *dharma* and *adharmā* (*dharmādharmā*; p. 175 l. 3) suggests that no Mīmāṃsā concept is discussed. Nor is there any clear indication that *apūrva* is substrateless. Quite on the contrary, Uddyotakara takes it for granted that *apūrva* (along with heaven and deity) has a substrate, and uses this as evidence to show that it is perceptible to at least certain people (p. 174 l. 8-9: *kaḥ punar atra nyāyaḥ svargādayaḥ kasyacit pratyakṣā iti? brūmaḥ, sāmānyaviśeṣavattvāt, āśritatvāt kasyacit pratyakṣā iti/ yad āśritaṃ tat kasyacit pratyakṣam iti/*).

172 Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, Nyāyamañjarī part I p. 255 (ed. Śukla) = vol. I p. 664-665 (ed. Varadacharya): *vṛddhamīmāṃsakāḥ yāgādikarmanirvartyam apūrvaṃ nāma dharmam abhivadanti/ yāgādikarmaiva śābarā bruvate/ vākyārtha eva niyogātmāpūrvaśabdavācyaḥ dharmāśabdena ca sa evocyate iti prābhākaraḥ kathayanti/ .../ svargayāgāntarālavartinaś ca sthirasya nirādhārasyāpūrvasya niṣpramāṇakatvāj jarajjaiminīyaprovādo 'py apeśalaḥ/ .../ na ca niyogaḥ vākyārtha eva apūrvaśabdavācyaḥ/ .../ nāpi "yo yāgam anuṣṭhati taṃ dhārmika ity ācakṣate" iti yāgādisāmānādhikaranyena prayogāt sa eva dharmāśabdavācya iti yuktam vaktum/*

Both point (2) and its rejection clearly refer to Śabara's Bhāṣya.<sup>173</sup> This implies that position (1), according to which *apūrva* has no substrate, belongs to the old Mīmāṃsakas, who are different from Śabara.

Interestingly, the commentator Cakradhara appears to be no longer acquainted with these old Mīmāṃsakas, for he comments the words "*apūrva* which has no substrate" (*nirādhāra apūrva*) with the observation:<sup>174</sup> "For they say that the *apūrva* which is produced, i.e. manifested, by the [ritual] act resides [in something else]."

Jayanta does not suggest, much less state, that *apūrva* as conceived by Śabara has no substrate. He criticizes the concept of *apūrva* of the "old Mīmāṃsakas" and of the followers of Prabhākara, but not that of "the followers of Śabara". This should be taken as an indication that he had nothing to criticize here or, in other words, that Śabara's position coincided with his own. His own position is that sacrificial effects are stored as *samskāras* in the soul. Jayanta believed no doubt that Śabara's *apūrva*, too, resided in the soul.<sup>175</sup>

[104]

How is *apūrva* supposed to bring about the desired result? Śabara's Bhāṣya gives no clear answer to this question, but his comments on sūtra 6.1.2 are, again, suggestive. Recall that the result of most sacrificial acts is heaven (*svarga*). What precisely is heaven? Śabara dedicates a discussion to this question, in which he states that heaven is identical with happiness (*prīti*).<sup>176</sup> He explicitly rejects the suggestion that the word 'heaven' denotes something that is characterized by happiness (*prītiviśiṣṭa dravya*). He also maintains that the sacrifice is secondary to the happiness to be attained. He then continues: "Why so? Because human effort (*prayatna*) is for that. For a man makes an effort in order to [attain] happiness."<sup>177</sup>

It is difficult to read this passage without being reminded of the Vaiśeṣika psychology. There we encountered a number of qualities of the soul which together were meant to account for mental and physical activity. Two crucial elements were happiness (*sukha*) and effort (*prayatna*). Effort was believed to arise with a view to (re-)establish happiness. Another aim, to be sure, was to avoid pain (*duḥkha*). Śabara's Bhāṣya does not speak of pain for understandable reasons, since avoidance of pain is not one of the

173 Very similar statements occur in Śabara's Bhāṣya; see Frauwallner, 1968: 20 l. 11: *yajatiśabdavācyam eva dharmam samā[ma]nanti*; l. 5-7: *yo hi yāgam anutiṣṭhati taṃ dhārmika iti samācakaṣate/ yaś ca yasya kartā sa tena vyapadiśyate*.

174 Cakradhara, Nyāyamañjarīgranthibhaṅga p. 117 l. 18-19: *nirādhārasyāpūrvasyeti/ te hi kriyānirvartyam kriyābhivyaṅgyam āśritam evāpūrvam āhuh/*

175 Halbfass (1980: 283) is puzzled by the fact that Jayanta Bhaṭṭa "does not give any indication that he is aware of the *apūrvādhikarāṇa* of the Tantra Vārttika". If our interpretation is correct, the solution is obvious: he does not do so, because he agrees with it.

176 Cp. Verpoorten, 1981.

177 Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 6.1.2, p. 180 l. 7-9: *iha punaḥ svargaśabdaḥ eva prīter abhidhātā/ prītivacanaś cet yāgo guṇabhūtaḥ prītiḥ pradhānam/ kutaḥ/ tādarthyāt puruṣaprayatnasya/ prītyarthaṃ hi puruṣo yatate/*

aims of the sacrifice.<sup>178</sup> He does speak of happiness (*prīti*, sometimes *sukha*) and of effort, and recalls that human beings make an effort in order to attain happiness. He even goes further and points out that if the sacrifice were not for happiness, ritual activity would not bring it about, and would not find someone to carry it out.<sup>179</sup> [105] Śābara then concludes:<sup>180</sup> "[A sacrifice] that is for happiness is carried out, one that is not [for happiness] is not [carried out]." All this shows that Śābara is here guided by a psychological theory or concept which excludes the possibility of activity inspired by other factors than the prospect of happiness and, we may assume, avoidance of pain. Indeed, even a Vedic injunction to sacrifice will have no effect if it does not lead to happiness. It is hard not to conclude that Śābara follows here the Vaiśeṣika psychology or something closely similar to it. If this is what he is doing, some facets of his thought become much clearer.

If we are correct in interpreting Śābara here in the light of Vaiśeṣika psychology, we must assume that for him, too, effort and happiness are either qualities of the soul as in Vaiśeṣika, or at least that they somehow belong to the soul of the individual under consideration. This assumption is not problematic as far as effort and happiness are concerned, even though Śābara does not say anything about the nature of these two. However, we may have to make the same assumption about *apūrva*. The present passage, to be sure, does not mention *apūrva*, and nor does Śābara anywhere else express himself explicitly about the nature of this mysterious entity. We will see below that Kumārila does accept *apūrva* to be a quality of the soul, and we have seen that Śābara possibly did the same. All this allows us to understand how the mechanism of karmic retribution may have been conceptualized by Śābara. All the essential elements appear to be mental, i.e. most probably qualities of the self. These elements are: effort (*prayatna*), which leads to *apūrva*, which in its turn brings about happiness (*prīti*). The quest for such a concatenation of mental items, as we have seen, induced a number of Buddhists to embrace idealism. Śābara reaches the same end without having to go to that extreme.

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178 Kumārila's Tantra Vārttika (under sūtra 2.1.5, p. 368 l. 23 - p. 369 l. 5) does speak about an *apūrva* corresponding to the violation of prohibitions (*pratiśedha*), but only briefly. Halbfass (1980: 279) observes that Kumārila "has obviously reached a rather delicate border area of his theory of *apūrva* which would make it difficult for him to avoid various conceptual entanglements and to keep his discussion within the limits of a specifically Vedic context of causality and from lapsing into the general field of 'karmic', that is, retributive causality".

179 Śābara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 6.1.2, p. 180 l. 12-13: *yadi ca yāgo na prītyartha bhavet asādhakaṃ karma bhavet/ sādhayitāraṃ nādhigacchet/*.

180 Śābara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 6.1.2, p. 180 l. 13 - p. 181 l. 1: *yo hi prītyarthaḥ sa sādhyate, nānyaḥ*.

If this interpretation is correct we have to ask how he did it. How did Śābara solve the problem of karmic retribution without being obliged either to accept the existence of a creator God or to become an idealist? A closer inspection of Śābara's intellectual situation shows that the difficulties he had to face were quite simply less daunting than those the Vaiśeṣikas and Buddhists had to deal [106] with. To begin with, karmic retribution was limited for Śābara to the fruit of ritual activity, and consists essentially in nothing but heaven.<sup>181</sup> We have seen how Śābara (re)defined heaven in psychological terms, thus opening the way to a completely psychological interpretation of karmic retribution. To this it may be added that the sacrificial activity of the sacrificer is very limited indeed: "In Mīmāṃsā, only the *utsarga*, the official act of initiating the sacrifice, has to be done by the sacrificer; the actual performances themselves may be left to 'paid agents'."<sup>182</sup>

It is true that Śābara's Bhāṣya contains a discussion about a sacrifice believed to procure cattle for the sacrificer. An opponent points out that no cattle is observed immediately after that sacrifice, and concludes from this that the Veda cannot be trusted. This objection is refuted with the observation that the Veda does not claim that the result will occur at the very moment when the sacrifice has been executed. In other words, it is not denied that cattle will be obtained as a result of this sacrifice. This may show that Śābara's attempts to make the workings of karmic efficiency intelligible did not amount to a full systematization. It is however to be kept in mind that exactly the same argument which Śābara uses to show that heaven cannot be a thing (*dravya*) could be used to demonstrate that cattle itself cannot be the object of desire. With respect to heaven he states: if heaven is a thing, the act will be most important, the thing secondary.<sup>183</sup> The same could of course be repeated with regard to cattle. It may not be coincidence that the discussion about the sacrifice procuring cattle was borrowed by Śābara from an earlier commentator (the *vṛttikāra*) who himself appears to have borrowed it from a predecessor, as Frauwallner (1968: 112) has argued.<sup>184</sup>

[107]

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181 Cp. Biardeau, 1964: 89: "On ne discute jamais la relation du bétail désiré avec le sacrifice qui doit le procurer, ... mais c'est l'exemple du *svarga* qui est invoqué pour montrer que le terme important d'une phrase védique est le verbe commandant l'action."

182 Halbfass, 1980: 282. On the sacrifice as a psychological phenomenon, see further below.

183 Śābara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 6.1.1, p. 175 l. 1-2: *yadi dravyaṃ svargas tataḥ pradhānam karma, dravyaṃ guṇabhūtam*; and on sūtra 6.1.2, p. 180 l. 10-11: *dravyaṃ hi yāgasādhanam, na ṛte dravyād yāgo bhavati*.

184 The passage has been edited in Frauwallner, 1968: p. 32 l. 14 - p. 34 l. 5 and p. 48 l. 16-24 and translated into German on the immediately following pages.



Śabara's Bhāṣya on sūtra 4.3.27 contains the following observation:<sup>185</sup>  
 "Therefore [when a Vedic injunction states that the performance of a certain sacrifice will procure cattle for the sacrificer] this is to be understood as follows: as a result of a ritual act which has cattle as fruit there will be a fruit in the form of a specific body along with specific sense-organs etc. which enable him to make a connection with cattle."  
 This statement belongs to the *pūrvapakṣa* and is used to defend the position that the result of such a sacrifice will take place in a next life. Śabara's *siddhāntin* does not agree with this position and leaves open the possibility that the fruit will come about in this very life. The idea, however, that the immediate effect of the sacrifice is not the cattle but the body and sense-organs, i.e. the person of the sacrificer, may not be against Śabara's intentions.

A second problem Śabara's contemporaries had to deal with concerned the creation, i.e. recreation, of the world at the beginning of a new world period. Here in particular the traces of earlier deeds were supposed to determine the shape of the world. We have seen how various thinkers attributed features of the objective world to the deeds of living beings carried out in earlier world periods. Śabara did not have this problem to deal with, because he and his fellow Mīmāṃsakas did not accept the periodic destruction and recreation of the world. We have seen how the Sāṃkhya thinker Mādhava modified the doctrine of his school in order to arrive at this so much more comfortable position. Śabara probably inherited this position from his predecessors, which made the question of karmic retribution for him more manageable than for most of his contemporaries.

The preceding observations do not permit us to claim that Śabara solved the difficulties linked to the mechanism of karmic retribution by fully and consciously reducing the sacrifice and its result to psychology. He may not have been enough of a theoretician to have done so.<sup>186</sup> There is however reason, as we have seen, to assume that he tended in that direction, without expressing a radical position in this matter.

[108]

Śabara takes great pains to show that there can be no region that is heaven:<sup>187</sup>

185 Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 4.3.27, p. 78 l. 13-14: *tasmād viśiṣṭendriyaśarīrādi phalaṃ paśusambandhasamarthaṃ paśuphalāt karmaṇo bhavātīty evaṃ boddhavyam.*

186 Cp. Frauwallner's (1968: 103) assessment: "Für philosophische Fragen hatte er weder Anlage noch Interesse."

187 Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 6.1.1, p. 177 l. 9-21: *nanu svargaśabdo loke prasiddho viśiṣṭe deśe/ yasmin noṣṇaṃ, na śītaṃ, na kṣud, na tṛṣṇā, nāraṭiḥ, na glāniḥ, puṇyakṛta eva pretya tatra gacchanti nānye/ atrocitate/ yadi tatra kecid amṛtvā na gacchanti tata āgacchanty ajanitvā vā na tarhi sa pratyakṣo deśa evaṃjātiyakāḥ/ nāpy anumānād gamyate, nānyena/ nanu cānye siddhā kecid dṛṣṭavantaḥ te cākhyātavanta iti cet/ na tatra pramāṇam asti siddhā evaṃjātiyakāḥ santi te ca dṛṣṭvācākṣīrann iti/ tasmād evaṃjātiyako deśa eva nāsti/ nanu ca lokād ākhyānebhyo vedāc cāvagamyaṭe, deśa evaṃjātiyakāḥ*

"[Objection:] The word 'heaven' is well known in the world to refer to a specific region, in which there is no heat, no cold, no hunger, no thirst, no dissatisfaction, no depression, and where those who have done good deeds go after death, but no others.

The answer is as follows. If not some people go there without having died, or if they come from there without having been born,<sup>188</sup> such a region is not accessible to the senses. Nor is it known from inference, nor by any other [means].

[Objection:] Some people with occult powers, different [from us], have seen [heaven] and have talked [about it].

[Answer:] There is no proof that there are such people with occult powers, and that they, having seen [heaven], talk [about it]. Such a region [called 'heaven'] does not therefore exist.

[Objection:] We learn from [people in] the world, from stories and from the Veda that there is such a region called 'heaven'.

[Reply:] This is not [acceptable]. The words of people constitute no proof, because they have no contact with such a region. Nor should stories be heeded, because they have been composed by human beings.

Even the stories about heaven in the Veda do not occur in injunctions.

They are eulogies to be construed with an injunction different from them."

Śabara's tendency to reduce all the essential elements linked to karmic retribution (as understood by the Mīmāṃsakas) to a psychological level finds expression in the way he deals with the deities to whom sacrifices are supposedly offered. The deities are reduced to nothing much beyond names, unavoidable elements in [109] the execution of the sacrifice but without power, and without anthropomorphic features. Śabara rejects in particular their power to bring about the fruits of ritual activity. He takes in this way position against the solution offered by the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas, studied above. He does not need their solution, for by reducing all the important elements to the level of psychology, karmic retribution has become no more problematic than dreams.

An opponent cited in the Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya presents the deities as links between ritual activity and its reward:<sup>189</sup>

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*svarga iti/ tan na/ puruṣāṇām evaṃvidhena deśenāsaṃbandhād apramāṇaṃ vacaḥ/ ākhyānam api puruṣapraṇītatvād anādaraṇīyam/ vaidikam api svargākhyānam vidhiparam nāsty eva/ bhavati tu vidhyantareṇaikavākyabhūtaṃ stutiparam/.*

188 I am not quite sure what "or if they come from there without having been born" means in this context. It suggests that Śabara's opponent in this passage conceives of heaven as a region that one can reside in for a limited time between periods in other regions. In other words, Śabara's opponent believes in an (infinite?) series of rebirths. Śabara's own position in these matters remains obscure.

189 Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 9.1.8, p. 74 l. 16 - p. 75 l. 3: **tataś ca tena sambandhaḥ** (sūtra 9.1.8)// *tato devatāyās tena phalena saṃbandhaḥ paricaritur bhavati/ yo devatām ijjayā paricarati, taṃ sā phalena saṃbandhnāti/ katham etad avagamyate/ smṛtyupacārābhyām/ smaranti hi devatā yaṣṭuḥ phalaṃ dadātīti/ tāṃ evaopacāreṇa smṛtiṃ draḍhayati/ paśupatiḥ anenopacaritāḥ*

"And because of that there is connection with that' (sūtra 9.1.8).<sup>190</sup> Because of that, the deity, there is connection with that, the fruit, for the one who honors [the deity]. Him who honors the deity through sacrifice, the [deity] connects with the fruit. How is this known? From tradition (*smṛti*) and custom. For tradition reports that a deity gives the fruit to the sacrificer. The observation that he who honored the Lord of animals got a son confirms this traditional statement with custom. Moreover, indicative texts show the same thing. (Here RV 2.26.3 and TaitS 2.5.4 are cited.) Therefore the deity is worshipped through the gift of an oblation and through the mention of its qualities; being pleased it gives the fruit. When Agni is worshipped by means of a ritual act, he gives the fruit of which he is in charge; Sūrya cannot give that [fruit]. One knows from a Vedic statement (*vacana*) who gives what. A Vedic statement (*vacana*) pertaining to Agni, for example, does not concern Sūrya."

Śabara's reply comes at the end of his commentary on sūtra 9.1.9. It rejects all the three arguments: tradition (*smṛti*), custom (*upacāra*) and indicative texts (*anyārthadarśana*). Tradition is based on *mantra* and *arthavāda*, which are not to be taken literally. Custom (*upacāra*) is mere custom, or mere metaphor (*upacāramātra*). The indicative texts, finally, are to be read in connection with other injunctions.

[110]

Sacrifice itself appears to be presented as essentially a psychological phenomenon by Śabara. This we may conclude from his explanation of sūtra 2.2.1, where he discusses three injunctions which prescribe sacrificing (*yajeta*), offering a libation (*juhoti*) and giving (*dāna*) respectively; all three apply to the same rite. Śabara comes to the conclusion that from among these three injunctions the first is the principal one, because it leads to a result (*phalavattvāt*), whereas the other two are subordinate to it. Moreover, he finds occasion to point out that the meaning of the verbs *yaj* (sacrificing) and *hu* (offering a libation) is giving up (*tyāga*), and contrasts this with the meaning of *dā* (giving) which concerns the transfer of property to someone else (*parasvatvārtha*). In other words, the sacrifice (and the libation) become personal phenomena, intimately linked to the person who carries them out, rather than objective activities in the inter-subjective world.

This conclusion is supported by Śabara's remark to the extent that a sacrifice in which a libation of milk is made is not executed by the mere libation of visible milk. Sacrifice is rather giving up connected with an invisible deity. Once again it is not the objective,

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*putro 'nena labdha iti/ tathā anyārthadarśanam imam evārtham darśayati/ sa ij janena sa viśā sa janmanā sa putrair vājam bharate dhanā nṛbhiḥ/ devānām yaḥ pitaram āvivāsati śraddhāmanā haviṣā brahmaṇaspatim iti (RV 2.26.3)/ tathā, trpta evainam indraḥ prajayā paśubhis tarpayatīti (TaitS 2.5.4)/ tasmād dhavirdānena guṇavacanaiś ca devatārādhyate, sā prītā satī phalaṃ prayacchati/ yena karmanāgnir ārādhitō yasya phalasyeṣṭe tat kartre prayacchati, na tat sūryaḥ pradātum arhati/ vacanād etad avagamyate kaḥ kiṃ prayacchatīti/ yathā agnau vacanaṃ na tat sūrye//.*

190 This translation of the sūtra follows Śabara's interpretation. Clooney (1990: 148) translates: "It is due to him that the [action] is related [to a purpose]."

material, activity that is central, but the psychological attitude that accompanies it.

The passage concerned occurs under sūtra 9.4.47:191  
 "When there is giving up of milk, the accomplishment of the sacrifice does not take place through the milk, though visible. For sacrifice is giving up (*tyāga*) connected with an invisible deity."

\* \* \*

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, though commenting on Śabara's Bhāṣya, does not share Śabara's tendency to interpret concepts psychologically. It is true that Kumārila accepts *apūrva* as a potency (*śakti*) that resides in [111] the soul.<sup>192</sup> He does not however do so without hesitation, because he is of the opinion that the potency really should belong to the sacrifice. The fact that the sacrifice is of a short duration and does not survive until the result takes place obliges him to look for a steadier substrate, for which he then chooses the soul.

We find a similar hesitation with regard to heaven. Kumārila does not — as had Śabara — reduce heaven to mere happiness. It is happiness that — at least in part — cannot be experienced in this world, and for which a special region is required.

*Apūrva* is explained in the following passage:<sup>193</sup>  
 "How does the potency of a sacrificial act that has disappeared survive? In this connection it is stated:  
 If the potency of ritual acts is accepted to inhere in those acts, it would no longer be there when those [acts] disappear; a potency that resides in the agent (i.e., the eternal soul), on the other hand, does not disappear.

How can the potency of one thing inhere in something else? Because action and soul are not absolutely different.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, [112]

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191 Śabara, Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya on sūtra 9.4.47, p. 234 l. 8-9: *na ca pratyakṣenāpi payastyāge yāganirvrttiḥ payasā/ apratyakṣadevatāsaṃbaddho hi tyāgo yāgaḥ/*. I have accepted the reading *apratyakṣadevatāsaṃbaddho* where the edition has *pratyakṣa*<sup>o</sup>. Since both readings can be derived from an original *payasāpratyakṣa*<sup>o</sup> and punctuation is rare and irregular in manuscripts, this emendation barely needs justification. Ganganatha Jha accepts nonetheless the reading of the edition, and is therefore obliged to translate: "it is only when the substance is directly connected with a Deity that the *giving* becomes an 'offering'."

192 Kumārila, too, does not accept yogic perception; see Panse Jha, 1998.

193 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 2.1.5, p. 369 l. 12-15: *katham vinaṣṭasya karmaṇaḥ śaktis tiṣṭhatīti cet/ atrābhidhīyate:*

*yadi svasamavetaiva śaktir iṣyeta karmaṇām/  
 tadvināṣe tato na syāt karṣṭhā tu na naśyati//*

*katham anyaśaktir anyatra samavāitīti cet/ na/ kriyātmanor atyantabhedābhāvāt/  
 api ca:*

*śaktiḥ kāryānumeyatvād yadgataivopayujyate/  
 tadgataivābhyupetavyā svāśrayānyāśrayāpi vā//.*

194 This puzzling remark may have to be interpreted in the light of Kumārila's peculiar understanding of the relationship called *samavāya*; see Harikai, 1997,

Since a potency is to be inferred from its effects, it must be assumed to reside there where it is of use, in its own substrate or in another substrate."

It is not necessary to explore Kumārila's arguments further to see that for him the presence of *apūrva* in the soul of the sacrificer was not completely satisfactory.

Also under sūtra 2.1.5 Kumārila's Tantra Vārttika reports the opinion of a critic of the notion of *apūrva*. One of his arguments is as follows:195 "One [should] not postulate *apūrva* to account for the production of results in another life. Why?

Also heaven and hell, because they consist in happiness and sorrow [respectively], exist in the very same life, in this world, immediately after the ritual act.

For what are called heaven and hell, whether they are extreme forms of happiness and sorrow or specific regions, are not such that they cannot be experienced in this world and in this life."

Instead of answering there and then, Kumārila refers to his comments on sūtra 6.1.1,196 where we find the following remarks in the discussion on whether heaven is a region or not:197

esp. p. 410. Harikai further draws attention to Kumārila's idea that action (*vyāpāra*) is a substance accompanied by a certain potency (*śakti*), but not to the preceding lines in the Tantra Vārttika (p. 369 l. 8-9), which state: "The soul is the substrate of the [*apūrva*], and the activity, too, resides in that same [substrate]. It has been established in the Ātmavāda that the [soul] is the agent with regard to all actions." (*ātmaiva cāśrayas tasya kriyāpy atraiva ca sthitā/ ātmavāde sthitam hy etatkartṛtvam sarvakarmasu//*). The reference is to the Ātmavāda chapter of the Śloka Vārttika, which discusses this issue in detail (vv. 74 ff.). Here we read, for example: "For us not just physical motion is activity, as it is for the Vaiśeṣika" (ŚIV, Ātmavāda, v. 74cd: *na parispanda evaikaḥ kriyā naḥ kaṇabhōjivat*). And again: "Not only activity that inheres in themselves is carried out by agents" (v. 75ab: *na ca svasamavetaiva kartṛbhiḥ kriyate kriyā*). The present passage in the Tantra Vārttika suggests that for Kumārila sacrificial activity **does** inhere in the soul and is not of the nature of physical motion. One is here reminded of the Nyāya Bhāṣya on sūtra 4.1.51, discussed above (§ 7), which treats activity (*karman*) as a quality of the soul.

195 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 2.1.5, p. 362 l. 13-17: *na ca janmāntara-phalotpattiyartham apūrvakalpanā/ kutah/*

*sukhaduḥkhātmakatvena samāneṣv eva janmasu/  
kriyānantaram eveha staḥ svarganarakāv api//*

*na hi svarganarakau nāma niratiśayasukhaduḥkhasvabhāvau deśaviśeṣātmakau vā yāv ihaiva janmani nānubhūyeyātām/.*

196 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 2.1.5, p. 368 l. 14-15: *svarganarakau ca niratiśayasukhaduḥkhātmakatvād deśāntarajanmāntarānubhavanīyau* (?), the edition has *°yam*) *na karmānantaram sambhavata iti śaṣṭhādye vakṣyāmaḥ*. ŚIV, Citrākṣepaparihāra 23ab states, similarly: *svargasyāmuṣmikatvaṃ tu śaṣṭhādye sthāpaviṣyate*. On Kumārila's comments on sūtra 6.1.1 f., see Verpoorten, 1983.

197 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 6.1.1, p. 176 l. 22 - p. 178 l. 12: *kiṃtu yasya prītir abhidheyā, tatsādhanam ca yāgaḥ, tena sā nānubhūyata ity arthāpat-tyāvācyo 'pi sa kalpyate/ yathāpūrvam/ nanv asminn api deśe śakyā prītir anubhavitum/ candanānulepanādibhiḥ kṛtair anantaram prītir upalabhyate/ yaiśā bhojanādiprītir eṣā kṣaṇikī/ karmaṇām tv alpamadhyamamahatām alpamadhyamamahatya eva prītayah/ tatrā yā prītir niratiśayānubhavitavyā, sā coṣṇasītādidvandvarahite deśe śakyānubhavitum/ asmimś ca deśe muhūrtaśata-*

"He who considers [the word 'heaven'] to refer to happiness, and the sacrifice to be the means to bring it about, does not experience that [happiness] by means of the [sacrifice], and assumes therefore the existence of that [region] by implication, even though it is not expressed, just like *apūrva*.

[113]

Objection: Happiness can be experienced in this region, too. Happiness is felt after the anointments of sandal paste etc. when they have been applied.

[Reply:] The happiness resulting from eating and so on is momentary. The happiness resulting from sacrificial acts, on the other hand, is small, medium or great, depending on whether the sacrificial acts were small, medium or great. From among these, an extreme happiness that is to be experienced can be experienced in a region which is free from the pairs of opposites such as hot and cold, etc. In this region, however, not even a portion of a hundred instants is ever free from these pairs of opposites. For this reason a different region must be assumed to exist for the experience of extreme happiness."

That heaven takes place in another life is stated under sūtra 4.3.28.198 Kumārila also states explicitly that heaven is of limited duration.199

Kumārila pays more attention than Śabara to sacrifices whose outcome is something concrete, such as cattle. The Citrākṣepaparihāra section of his Śloka Vārttika is meant to defend the efficacy of sacrifices that promise cattle etc. to their practitioners. Here he reaches the following conclusion:200 "[The result] is accepted to take place at any moment (i.e., in this or the other world), for a result in the form of cattle etc. is not limited to the other world. Also for him who is in an extreme hurry the [same] means is prescribed for such a [temporarily undetermined result]. But a result such as rain which is common to many and is naturally accepted as such, or which is desired by all to be near, that should take place in this world." Kumārila does not however say exactly how this result will be brought about — whether in this world or in the next.

A passage in the Tantra Vārttika shows that for Kumārila sacrifice is more than mere psychology. Where Śabara maintained

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*bhāgo 'pi dvandvair na mucyate/ tasmān niratīśayaprītyanubhavāya kalpyo viśiṣṭo deśah/.*

198 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 4.3.28, p. 78 l. 24-27: *svargas tu janmāntara eva/ sa hi niratīśayā prītiḥ karmānurūpā ceti na śakyeha janmany anubhavitum/ yato 'smirīl loke kṣaṇe kṣaṇe sukhaduḥkhe anubhavanti na ca prītimātram jyotiṣtomaphalam/.*

199 ŚIV, Sambandhākṣepaparihāra 105: *sukhopabhogarūpaś ca yadi mokṣah prakalpyate/ svarga eva bhaved eṣa paryāyeṇa kṣayī ca sah//.* Mesquita (1994: 456) translates: "Und nimmt man an, dass die Erlösung im Genuss von Freude besteht, so wäre sie tatsächlich der Himmel als Synonym, und *dieser ist vergänglich.*"

200 ŚIV, Citrākṣepaparihāra vv. 24-25: *yadā kadācid bhavad etad iṣyate phalaṃ hi paśvādī na sāmparāyikam/ tathā sthitasyaiva hi tasya sādhanam vidhīyate yo 'pi bhṛśam tvarānvitah// sādhanam yat tu phalaṃ bahūnām svabhāvatas tādrśam eva ceṣtam/ sarvasya vāsannatayaiva kāmyam vṛṣṭyādī tac caihikam eva yuktam//.*

[114] that sacrifice is giving up (*tyāga*), Kumārila states:201 "For the fruit does not come about through mere mental resolve (*saṃkalpa*), because the Veda states that the fruit results from the completed action along with all its 'obligations'." Once again Kumārila appears to move away from Śābara's psychologising.

The question of the mechanism of karmic retribution in Kumārila and his school remains problematic. Somehow it is assumed that karma can look after itself. The closest we may get to an explanation is the following verse in the Tantra Vārttika:202 "Or [rather,] the self is accepted to be capable by nature to obtain everything at any time; however, an obstruction to it is removed by ritual acts." The situation is further complicated by the fact, pointed out by Roque Mesquita (1994), that Kumārila had ideas about liberation which became more and more Vedāntic in the course of his life. The idea of a creator God, who played such a useful role in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, is not acceptable to Kumārila. This is no doubt connected with his conviction that the world has always existed and that there is no periodic destruction and recreation of the world.

Kumārila criticizes the notion of a creator God in the Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra of his Śloka Vārttika, in a passage in which he also rejects the notion of a universal destruction followed by a new creation:203

[115]

"68. For we have no proof for a dissolution in the form of universal destruction. And that activity (*karman*) on the part of Prajāpati would serve no purpose.

69. Moreover, it is not possible that beings that have engaged in activity (*karmavat*) would stop without experiencing [the results of] those [activities]; for the fruit deriving from one action cannot be stopped by another activity (*karman*).

201 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 2.1.5, p. 373 l. 2-3: *na hi saṃkalpamātreṇa phalanīṣpattiḥ/ samastāt samastetikartavyatākāc ca karmaṇaḥ phalaśravaṇāt/*

202 Kumārila, Tantra Vārttika on sūtra 2.1.5, p. 372 l. 10-11: *sarvāvāptisamartho vā prakṛtyātmā sadesyate/ kaścit tu pratibandho 'sya karmabhiḥ so 'panīyate//*. Cited Clooney, 1990: 244; Yoshimizu, 1997: 64 n. 56.

203 ŚIV, Sambandhākṣepaparihāra vv. 68-71ab:

*pralaye 'pi pramāṇaṃ naḥ sarvocchedātmake na hi/  
na ca prayojanaṃ tena syāt prajāpatikarmaṇā //68//  
na ca karmavatām yuktā sthitis tadbhogavarjitā/  
karmāntaraniruddhaṃ hi phalaṃ na syāt kriyāntarāt //69//  
sarveṣāṃ tu phalāpetam na sthānam upapadyate/  
na cāpy anupabhogo 'sau kasyacit karmaṇaḥ phalam //70//  
aśeṣakarmanāśe vā punaḥ sṛṣṭir na yujyate/  
karmaṇām vāpy abhivyaktaū kiṃ nimittaṃ tadā bhavet //71//  
īśvarecchā yadīṣyate saiva syāl lokakāraṇam/  
īśvarecchāvaśīṭve hi niṣphalā karmakalpanā //72//  
na cānimittayā yuktam utpattum hīśvarecchayā/  
yad vā tasyā nimittaṃ yat tad bhūtānām bhaviṣyati //73//*

70. The coming to a stop of all [beings] without [experiencing] the fruits [of their activities] is not possible. And nor is that absence of experience itself the fruit of any activity (*karman*).

71. Alternatively, in case all activities (*karman*) have been destroyed, no new creation is possible. Or if [you maintain that] activities manifest themselves [anew at the occasion of a new creation], what would cause this?

72. If you propose God's desire, then let that be the cause of the world. For it would be pointless to imagine [the efficacy of] actions (*karman*) if [the creation of the world] is controlled by God's desire.

73. Moreover, God's desire cannot come into existence without having itself a cause; or rather, the cause of that [desire] will be the cause [of the creation of] living beings."

Kumārila's commentator Pārthasārathi Miśra, in his commentary Nyāyaratnākara, presents in this connection the point of view of the Vaiśeṣikas in some detail. Interestingly, in this presentation God does not make karmic retribution possible, as we saw was the case in the Padārthadharmasaṃgraha of Praśastabhāṣya. Quite on the contrary, God here *interferes* with karmic retribution. In other words, according to Pārthasārathi Miśra, karmic retribution has no need for God in Vaiśeṣika, so all God can do in the process is obstruct it. It is clear that this is not a point of view that was held by real Vaiśeṣikas, but that the Mīmāṃsaka Pārthasārathi understood them or had to understand them this way.

The question has been dealt with in detail in another publication (Bronkhorst, 2001). Here it must suffice to quote some parts of Pārthasārathi's depiction of Vaiśeṣika:204

[116]

"The Vaiśeṣikas state the following: This succession of creations and destructions is without beginning. At the end of a hundred years by the measure of Brahman, the desire arises in God to destroy the whole world. As a result of the contact between God having that desire and the selves movements of separation arise in the atoms, and as a result of those [movements], because all wholes right down to the dyads are

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204 Pārthasārathi Miśra, Nyāyaratnākara on Sambandhākṣepaparihāra v. 66, pp. 465-466: *vaiśeṣikās tv āhuḥ: anādir ayam sṛṣṭipralayapravāhaḥ, brāhmamānena varṣaśatānte bhagavato maheśvarasya samastajagatsaṃhārecchā bhavati, tadicchāvadiśvarātmasamyogāt paramāṇuṣu vibhāgakarmāṇy utpadyante, taiś ca sarveṣu mitho vibhakteṣu yāvad dvyaṇukaṃ sarvāvayavināśād paramāṇava eva kevalāḥ pārvivāpyataiḥ savāyavīyā vyomakāladigāt māmāṃsi cāvatiṣṭhante, dharmād dharmās ca tāvantam kalam īśvarecchāpratibaddhāḥ phalam aprayacchantas teṣu teṣv ātmasv avatiṣṭhante, punas tāvati kāle gate tasyaiva bhagavataḥ karmopabhogaśūnyān ātmano dṛṣtvā anukampāparavaśasya sisṛkṣā bhavati, tataḥ sisṛkṣāvadiśvarātmasamyogāt paramāṇuṣu karmotpattes tadvaśān mithaḥ saṃyuktaiś tair dvyaṇukādikrameṇa pṛthivyādaya ārabhyante, tatas tadicchāvaśād evāpagatapatibandhair abhivyaktasāmarthyair vividhaiḥ karmabhir vividhānekanarapaśvādibhedabhinnam bhūtajātam ārabhyate, tataḥ sa eva maheśvaro dharmād dharmapatipādanāya vedān sṛjati/ tad evaṃ pratisargam anye 'nye ca vedāḥ, pravāhataḥ tu vedāḥ sṛṣṭipralayāś cānādayaḥ, kartā ca maheśvaro 'nādir eva, iha ca paramāṇūnām upādānatvān nānupādānavam sṛṣṭer iti/.*



destroyed in all those [atoms] separated from each other, only isolated atoms of the varieties earth, water, fire and wind remain, as well as ether, time, space, selves and minds. The *dharmas* and *adharmas*, *not producing an effect because interrupted by the desire of God*, remain in their respective souls during that whole period.

Then when all that time has passed, a desire to create arises in God under the influence of compassion, having seen that the selves are devoid of experience in accordance with their actions. Then, because as a result of the contact between God having the desire to create and the selves movements come about in the atoms, on account of those [movements] earth etc. are formed by those [atoms] which are in mutual contact, in the order dyad etc. Subsequently, many different living beings, such as humans, animals, etc., are formed by the various deeds (*karman*) whose potencies have become manifest *once the interruptions have disappeared by the mere force of that desire.*"

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The second major commentator on Śabara's Bhāṣya is Prabhākara, who may have been a younger contemporary of Kumārila.<sup>205</sup> A recent study by Kiyotaka Yoshimizu shows that Prabhākara does not even try to prove that there is a causal connection between the sacrifice and its result. The only reason to believe that the result will at all take place is the fact that it is promised in the Veda.<sup>206</sup> It follows that Prabhākara is not one of those thinkers who tried to make the mechanism of karmic retribution intelligible, and that his work need not be discussed here.

[117]

We arrive at the surprising conclusion that from among the three Mīmāṃsā authors considered — Śabara, Kumārila and Prabhākara — the first one seems to have been the only one who was to at least some extent aware of the problem that karmic retribution (even in those cases where karma is limited to Vedic ritual activity) needs to be accounted for. His tendency to psychologise all essential elements related to the sacrifice and its reward was not taken over by his two commentators, who seem not to have been bothered by the questions which occupied the minds of so many other thinkers.

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<sup>205</sup> Yoshimizu, 1997: 49.

<sup>206</sup> Yoshimizu, 1997: 82 ff.

[119]

**§14. Jainism**

A few words remain to be said about Jainism which, accepting neither the existence of a creator God nor idealism, might be expected to be confronted with difficulties when it tried to explain the workings of karmic retribution. In reality the Jaina thinkers were not confronted with this dilemma because their tradition never attributed to karma the same major role in the formation of the world as did other thinkers of their time.

The Jaina tradition conceives of karma as something like dust which sticks to the soul (*jīva*). The road to liberation consists in the gradual removal of all of this dust until the purified soul, free from the last traces of karma, rises to the highest level of the universe. This conceptualization of karma as dust that sticks allows it easily to visualize the acquisition of karma through activity; the presentation of the way to the highest aim as a path of purification — in which the soul is freed from karma just as the body can be freed from dust — has an obvious appeal, too. It is however difficult to see how this dust-like karma might be capable of exerting an influence on the world at large. And indeed, the Jaina intellectual tradition does not appear to have emphasized such an influence. Eight kinds of karma are distinguished, each of which has one particular effect on the soul to which it is attached. Judging by this analysis of the different kinds of karma, and in spite of what stories in the narrative literature of the Jainas might suggest, the working of karma is confined to the soul to which it sticks. Other occurrences in the world have to be explained through other causal processes.

Paul Dundas presents the eight kinds of karma in the following manner:<sup>207</sup>

"Karma is divided into eight categories, found as early as the 'Exposition of Explanations' (= *Viyāhapannatti*), which are in turn divided into two categories of four: the harming karmas and the non-harming karmas. The principal harming karma is called the 'delusory' (*mohanīya*) which is the keystone of the whole structure in that its destruction paves the way for the elimination of the other varieties of karma. This type of karma brings [120] about attachment to incorrect views and the inability to lead the religiously correct, Jain life.

The karma 'which covers knowledge' (*jñānāvaraṇīya*) is, to use Abhayadeva Sūri's similes, like 'a screen which blocks out the soul which is as bright as the autumn moon' or 'a cloud covering the sun of omniscience' (comm. on *Sth[ānāṅga]* 105). At one level, it interferes with the normal functioning of the intellect and senses; at another, it prevents the functioning of the developed mental capabilities of the *jīva* including the omniscience which is otherwise natural to it.

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<sup>207</sup> Dundas, 1992: 85-86; diacritics added. Cp. Jaini, 1980: 231 f.

The karma 'which obscures perception' (*darśanāvaranīya*) hinders the perception brought about by the sense-organs and the various types of knowledge.

The 'obstacle' (*antarāya*) karma obstructs, amongst other things, the innate energy of the soul.

The four non-harming karmas are, as their name suggests, non-deleterious to the *jīva*.

'Feeling' (*vedanīya*) karma dictates whether the experiences of the soul are pleasant or unpleasant.

'Name' (*nāma*) karma determines what sort of rebirth is attained, as well as the state of one's senses and spiritual potential. ...

'Life' (*āyus*) karma decides the duration of one's life which must be in accord with the species to which one belongs.

Finally, 'clan' (*gotra*) karma determines one's status, high or low, within a species and thus, like name karma, has a bearing on an individual's ability to progress on the spiritual path."

This short sketch suffices to show that the Jainas thought of karma and its working primarily in terms of the individual concerned. None of the eight kinds of karma here distinguished is claimed to have an effect on the world at large, and none have an effect on the creation of the world. As a matter of fact, Jainism considers the world to be without beginning, and denies that it has ever been created.

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**§15. Conclusion**

The examples discussed in the preceding pages show that goal-oriented activity was considered to be in need of explanation in the case of a fair number of thinkers of classical India. Indeed, these thinkers considered the problem serious enough to justify far-reaching measures. The introduction of a creator God in the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, which aimed at a mechanistic explanation of the world in terms of the karma doctrine, was no minor matter, and appears to have been largely determined by the problem of karmic retribution. Nor is the transition to idealism among certain Buddhists to be judged lightly. Yet there is reason to think, as we have seen, that Vasubandhu — and probably other Buddhists before him — made this transition primarily in order to find a solution to this particular problem.

Besides these thinkers there were others (most notably the Sāṃkhyas) who accepted teleological explanations. It is to be noted that these thinkers appear to have constituted a minority among the philosophers of classical India, and that Sāṃkhya itself barely survived besides the currents of thought that did not share its teleological orientation. We have also seen that Sāṃkhya — most probably under the influence of its teleology-rejecting rivals — tended to introduce non-teleological explanations besides the teleological ones.

It is hardly surprising that those thinkers who believed that karma does not merely determine the future life and experiences of individual persons in accordance with their earlier deeds, but also that the world at large is determined by the collective deeds of all its inhabitants, were particularly hard put to make the connection between deeds and their results intelligible. It is among these thinkers that we find the radical solutions mentioned above. Those who assigned a more modest role to karmic retribution, which would not exceed the bounds of their personal existences, were under no pressure to adopt those solutions. The followers of Jainism and Yoga (and perhaps Sāṃkhya in general) belonged to this last category. It goes without saying that their visions of the world left place for other determining forces besides karma; the Sāṃkhyas, as we have seen, introduced in this connection the notion of ‘obligation’ (*adhikāra*) which is independent of karma.

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We started this study with a discussion of the value attributed to teleological explanations in modern science (including psychology). We saw that there is a tendency to avoid these kinds of explanations,

but also that the explanation of apparently goal-oriented processes in terms of proximate causes is not always easy. We have now seen that many Indian thinkers were confronted with essentially the same problem, and were at times ready to take drastic step in order to arrive at explanations of processes which at first sight seem to be goal-oriented in non-teleological terms.

I do not think that modern science would be well advised to turn to God, or to idealism, in order to solve its problems. Such easy ways out are no longer possible. I do however think it worthy of our attention that certain thinkers of classical India introduced these and other notions primarily, as I have tried to show, in order to deal in an intellectually acceptable fashion with the difficulty of teleology.

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- Śaṅkara: Bhagavadgītā Bhāṣya. In: *Srīmad Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya of Sri Saṅkarācārya, with text in Devanagari & English rendering ...*. Translation by A.G. Krishna Warriar. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math. 1983.
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**Abbreviations:**

Abhidh-k	Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakośa
Abhidh-k(VP)	Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakośa, traduit et annoté par Louis de La Vallée Poussin, 6 vols., Paris 1923-1931
Abhidh-k-bh(D)	Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Ācārya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra, pts. 1-4, ed. Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, Varanasi 1970-1973 (BBhS 5, 6, 7, 9).
Abhidh-k-bh(P)	Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, ed. P. Pradhan, rev. 2nd ed. Aruna Halder, Patna 1975 (TSWS 8)
Abhidh-k-bh(Pā)	Bhikkhu Pāsādika, Kanonische Zitate im Abhidharmakośabhāṣya des Vasubandhu, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989 (SWTF, Beiheft 1)
Abhidh-sam	Asaṅga, Abhidharmasamuccaya, ed. P. Pradhan, Santiniketan (VBS 12)
Abhidh-sam-bh	Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya, ed. N. Tatia, Patna 1976 (TSWS 17)
ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
ANISt	Alt- und Neuindische Studien, Hamburg
AS	Asiatische Studien, Études Asiatiques, Bern
ASS	Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, Poona
BBhS	Bauddha Bharati Series, Varanasi
Bhag	Bhagavadgītā
BhagBh	Bhagavadgītā Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara
BIS	Berliner Indologische Studien
BORI	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
CalSS	Calcutta Sanskrit Series, Calcutta
GOS	Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda
Hattori, Dignāga	Masaaki Hattori, Dignāga, On Perception, Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya, Cambridge Mass. 1968 (HOS 47)
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series, Cambridge Mass.
IJ	Indo-Iranian Journal, Den Haag, Dordrecht
JIP	Journal of Indian Philosophy
KSS	Kashi Sanskrit Series, Benares
Mhbh	Mahābhārata, crit. ed. V.S. Sukthankar et al., Poona 1933-41 (BORI)
NBh	Nyāya Bhāṣya. For the edition see Nyāya Sūtra.
NM	Nyāyamañjarī of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa: 1) ed. K.S. Varadacharya, Mysore: Oriental Research In-

- stitute, 1969 (Oriental Research Institute Series, 116); 2) ed. Surya Nārāyana Śukla, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1971 (KSS 106)
- NS Nyāya Sūtra.
- NV Nyāya Vārttika of Uddyotakara. For the edition, see Nyāya Sūtra.
- ÖAW Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien
- Sam̄dhis(ÉLa) Sam̄dhinirmocanasūtra, L'explication des mystères, texte tibétain éd. et trad. É. Lamotte, Louvain 1935
- SAWW Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-hist. Kl., Wien
- SDS Sarvadarśanasam̄graha of Sāyaṇa-Mādhava, ed. Vasudev Shastri Abhyankar, 3rd edition, Poona: BORI, 1978
- SK Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Sāṃkhya Kārikā
- ŚIV Śloka Vārttika of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, edited, with the Nyāyaratnākara of Pārthasārathi Miśra, by Swāmī Dvārikādāsa Śāstrī, Varanasi: Ratna, 1978
- SS Sāṃkhya Sūtra of Kapila; for the edition see Vijñānabhikṣu
- StII Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik
- SWTF Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden, begonnen von Ernst Waldschmidt, ed. Heinz Bechert, bearb. Georg von Simson und Michael Schmidt, Göttingen 1973 ff.
- Tarkapāda Pārthasārathi Miśra, Śāstradīpikā, Tarkapāda
- TI Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō or Taishō Issaikyō, 100 vols., Tōkyō 1924 ff.
- TsP Kamalaśīla, Tattvasam̄grahapañjikā
- TSWS Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Patna
- TV Tattvavaiśārādī of Vācaspati Miśra; for the editions see YBh
- VBS Vishva-Bharati Studies, Santiniketan
- Vkp Bhartr̄hari, Vākyapadīya, ed. W. Rau, Wiesbaden 1977
- VKSKSO Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Süd- und Ostasiens, ÖAW, Wien
- VS(C) Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda, with the Commentary of Candrānanda, critically edited by Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji, second edition, Baroda: Oriental Research Institute, 1982 (GOS 136)
- Vy Vyomavatī of Vyomaśivācārya, ed. Gaurinath Sastri, 2 vols., Varanasi: Sampurnanand Sanskrit

- Vishvavidyalaya, 1983-84 (M.M. Śivakumāra-śāstri-granthamālā, 6.)
- WI Word Index to the Praśastapādabhāṣya: A complete word index to the printed editions of the Praśastapādabhāṣya, by Johannes Bronkhorst & Yves Ramseier, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994
- WZKS Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens, Wien
- YBh Yoga Bhāṣya. Two editions have been used: 1) Pātañjalayogadarśanam, ed. Nārāyaṇa Miśra, Vārāṇasī: Bhāratīya Vidyā Prakāśana, 1971. 2) Pātañjalayogasūtrāṇi, ed. Kāśīnātha Śāstrī Āgāśe, Pune: Ānandāśramā (ASS 47), 1904.
- YBhū The Yogācārabhūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga, ed. V. Bhattacharya, University of Calcutta 1957
- YD Yuktidīpikā. Two editions have been used: 1) ed. Albrecht Wezler and Shujun Motegi, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998 (ANIS 44); 2) ed. Ram Chandra Pandeya, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967
- YogV Yogavāsiṣṭha. For the edition see Pansikar, 1918. (YogV 6 refers to the Pūrvārdha and YogV 7 to the Uttarārdha of Prakaraṇa 6.)
- YS Yoga Sūtra. For the editions, see YBh.
- YV Yoga Vārttika of Vijñānabhikṣu. Two editions have been used: 1) see YBh 1. 2) see Rukmani, 1981 ff.
- ZDMG Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Leipzig, later Wiesbaden