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Dik, Kāla, Ākāśa: A Critical Appraisal of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Doctrinal Lineage with reference to Padārtha-tattva-nirupaṇam of Raghunātha

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Abstract

The objects with which this world is comprised of, are described as 'padārthas' in Vaiśeṣika ontology. The Vaiśeṣika thinkers spoke of seven-fold classification of those possible padārthas namely, 'Dravya', 'Guṇa', 'Karma', 'Sāmānya', 'Viśeṣa', 'Samavāya' and 'Abhāva'. *Dravya* again is subdivided into nine types viz. 'Kṣiti', 'Ap', 'Teja', 'Marut', 'Vyom', 'Dik', 'Kāla', 'Ātmā' and 'Manā'. This classification of categories has been strongly advocated in classical Vaiśeṣika tradition. This tradition however is not maintained by some modern scholars. It is Raghunātha in particular, who deviated from the tradition by enumerating a new list of categories. He is not also in agreement with the realistic account of *dik*, *kāla* and *ākāśa* that the ancient thinkers are seen to adopt. This paper is a humble attempt to judge the veracity of Raghunātha's claim in this regard.

Keywords: Raghunātha, Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa, *ākāśa*, space (*dik*), time (*kāla*)

Philosophical tradition cannot develop naturally unless there is intellectual independence grounded in both loyalty to inherited foundational doctrines established by experience and tested by reason, and creative freedom of thought. In particular cases, the methods that are adopted for the systematic progress of rational inquiry are those subject-matters of the tradition which are designated as "*vidyā*" (knowledge), "*śāstra*" (systematic teaching), or "*tantra*" (doctrinal framework). That intellect which is nourished by experience, guided by reasoning, beneficial in purpose, and oriented toward creative activity is called "*prajñā*" (wisdom). When wisdom follows scripture and scripture follows wisdom, then the tradition embodies a vigorous form of knowledge and is set in motion toward a victorious journey directed toward ever-expanding horizons.

Within the Indian ideological tradition, accords a position of particular prominence to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophical framework. At the very outset of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophy, however, the extensive discussion of means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), objects of knowledge (*prameya*), and categories of reality (*padārtha*) has occasionally given rise to doubt. Some critics even remark, with a tone of lament, that both systems, while promising liberation (*mokṣa*) as their ultimate goal, begin instead with a detailed exposition of categories— much like a person who, desiring to behold the ocean, sets out toward the

mountains. Nevertheless, in both systems, the knowledge of *padārtha* or *tattva* is regarded as the essential means to attaining the highest good (*nīḥśreyasa*). Consequently, the doctrine of categories occupies an equally indispensable place in both philosophical traditions. Although Nyāya accords primacy to *pramāṇa*, and Vaiśeṣika assigns primacy to *dravya* (substance), within the joint Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika tradition the conception of *padārtha* is ultimately derived from the Vaiśeṣika framework. It is upon this doctrine of categories (*padārthatattva*) that Raghunātha Śiromaṇi composed his treatise entitled *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam*. We shall now proceed to examine the concepts of *padārtha* and *tattva*.

In Vaiśeṣika system, *tattva* (reality) itself is designated as *padārtha*. In explicating the meaning of *padārtha*, Praśastapāda identifies existence (*astitva*), knowability (*jñeyatva*), and namability (*abhidheyatva*) as the marks of being *padārtha*. Kandalīkāra further clarifies that the intrinsic nature of a thing constitutes its existence; *abhidheyatva* denotes its capacity to be expressed in language, while *jñeyatva* signifies its capacity to be known. In other words, Vaiśeṣika philosophy maintains that whatever possesses existence is, in principle, knowable, and whatever can be expressed through speech or words qualifies as a *padārtha*. This also implies that entities lying entirely beyond the scope of human experience are not admitted within the Vaiśeṣika framework. At the very least, the system refuses to recognize as *padārtha* anything that cannot become an object either of knowledge or of linguistic expression.

The Vaiśeṣika conception of *tattva* (reality) is effectively clarified through the very term for it, namely *padārtha*. In Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the word *padārtha* is used to denote *tattva*, and its implicit meaning is that which can be expressed by a *pada* (word). In this context, the decisive factor is not so much the mere existence of an object as its cognition or apprehension. This traditional standpoint is further reinforced in *Saptapadārthī*, which defines *padārtha* as a '*pramitivoiṣaya*',¹ that is, "an object of valid cognition." In the Vaiśeṣika tradition, six or seven types of *padārthas* are acknowledged: substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), action (*karma*), universal (*sāmānya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*), and inherence (*samavāya*) as the original six, with absence (*abhāva*) later added as a seventh category. A survey of this classification makes it evident that, although substance and quality may be described as objectively real (*vastusat*), all the remaining categories are essentially modes of the manifestation of objects. Consequently, the Vaiśeṣika philosophers do not primarily intend to affirm objective reality as such in their notion of *padārtha*; rather, what is meant by *padārtha* is the cognition or apprehension of objects. These cognitions, moreover, are capable of being expressed through linguistic formulations. Thus, the Vaiśeṣika classification of *padārtha* may be understood, in effect, as a systematic taxonomy of cognitions.

Raghunātha Śiromaṇi's treatise entitled *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa* is founded precisely upon the doctrine of *padārtha*. In this work, Ācārya Raghunātha not only traces the development of Vaiśeṣika doctrines within the broader Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika tradition, but also brings together, from multiple perspectives, the various objections that had been raised against those doctrines. Among these objections, some are merely indicated in a suggestive manner, while others are articulated explicitly and in systematic form. The objections that

¹ Śivāditya, *Saptapadārthī*, kārikā-2.

Raghunātha presents with particular clarity include those concerning doubt (*saṃśaya*), recognition (*pratyabhijñā*), the causal status of perception (*pratyakṣa-kāraṇatā*), the problem of verbal cognition (*śābdabodha*), the number of categories (*padārtha-saṃkhyā*), and pervasive applicability (*vyāpyavṛttitā*). In addition, certain objections relating to specific qualities (*guṇa*) had already been clearly formulated by earlier Naiyāyikas such as Bhāsarvajña – for example, the denial of the independent existence of *viśeṣa* (particularity), and the rejection of *paratva* (priority/posteriority) and *prthaktoa* (separateness) as additional distinct qualities.

Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa is a composite work situated within the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika tradition. Nevertheless, the notion of *padārtha* articulated in this text must be understood strictly in accordance with the Vaiśeṣika conception. This, however, does not imply an uncritical or equal acceptance of the authoritative positions of both the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika schools. In this treatise, *padārthas* are not presented according to the conventional classificatory scheme of the tradition. Rather, attention is directed specifically to those categories in which conceptual inconsistencies had emerged within the inherited framework. The work thus undertakes a critical examination of precisely those *padārthas* that had become philosophically problematic in the course of the tradition's development. Not but what an independent and critical mode of inquiry within the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika lineage had already begun with Udayana, Raghunātha Śīromaṇi occupies a distinctive and decisive position in the further evolution of this tradition.

Although *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa* is composed with reference to the Vaiśeṣika doctrine of categories, the work does not begin with an explicit exposition or formal definition of *padārtha*. It may therefore be reasonably assumed that Raghunātha Śīromaṇi tacitly accepts the traditional characterization of *padārtha* as that which possesses existence, knowability, and verbal expressibility as its necessary conditions. This inference is supported by the fact that he neither explicitly states these defining characteristics nor subjects them to critical refutation. Yet, even while refraining from rejecting these traditional criteria, Raghunātha goes beyond the inherited framework by admitting a greater number of *padārthas* than those recognized in the classical Vaiśeṣika system. Thus, his position preserves the formal structure of the traditional definition of *padārtha* while simultaneously extending its scope through a critical re-evaluation of the received classification.

If we now turn to *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa*, we observe that Raghunātha Śīromaṇi begins the work, in accordance with established convention, with an auspicious benedictory invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*). He opens with the verse:

Om namaḥ sarva-bhūtāni viṣṭabhya paritiṣṭhate |
akhaṇḍānanda-bodhāya pūrṇāya paramātmane | |

Raghunātha Śīromaṇi employs this verse beginning with “*Om namaḥ*” in order to ensure the unobstructed completion of his treatise. The term *viṣṭabhya* is interpreted as denoting a special kind of sustaining relation, that is, a relation which prevents disintegration or collapse and thereby supports all beings. By *bhūta* (elements) are meant earth, water, fire, air, and ether (*ākāśa*); however, since *ākāśa* is all-pervasive and therefore cannot be sustained by such a relation, the term *bhūta* is here to be understood as referring specifically to the four material elements beginning with earth. The expression *akhaṇḍānandabodhāya* employs the qualifier *akhaṇḍa* (“undivided” or “eternal”) as an attribute of both cognition (*bodha*) and bliss (*ānanda*). Its import is thus to signify the

Supreme Self as possessing an eternal nature characterized by both perpetual consciousness and perpetual bliss. The term *pūrṇāya* is to be understood in the sense of “ever-complete” or “perpetually fulfilled.” The word *paramātmāne* derives from *ātman* in the sense of the substratum of knowledge; the qualifying adjective *parama* (“supreme”) is employed to indicate the excellence or transcendence of this cognitive principle. Accordingly, the overall meaning of the benedictory verse may be rendered as follows: “Salutations to the Supreme Self, who sustains all beings, who is of the nature of eternal bliss and eternal consciousness, and who is ever complete and fulfilled”².

He then proceeds with the declaration: “*Atha padārthatattoam nirūpyate*”³ (“Now the doctrine of categories is to be examined”). After determining the semantic powers of negative particles such as *nañ* in terms of absence of relation (*saṃsargābhāva*) and mutual absence (*anyonyābhāva*), Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, in the course of his discussion, turns to the categories acknowledged by the ancient Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools. Among these, he identifies certain entities as belonging to the class of well-established categories, while others he subjects to refutation, demonstrating through rational argument that they are either untenable or redundant in relation to the already accepted categories. In order to secure the attentive engagement of students, it had been customary since antiquity for authors to begin their treatises with a formal statement of intention (*pratijñā-vākya*). In conformity with this traditional practice, Raghunātha likewise employs such a promissory declaration through the use of introductory particles such as *atha*.

Thus, in *Padārthatattovanirūpaṇa*, the author situates his inquiry within the inherited scholastic convention while simultaneously preparing the ground for a critical re-evaluation of the received doctrine of categories. In this treatise, Raghunātha Śiromaṇi does not present the categories in the conventional systematic order inherited from the tradition. Rather, he undertakes an examination specifically of those categories with respect to which he himself entertains philosophical doubt. In Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the primary and fundamental category is *draṅya*. Among the nine substances traditionally accepted, Raghunātha raises no objection to earth (*kṣiti*), water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*), and air (*marut*). His position, however, diverges from that of earlier authorities with regard to *ākāśa*, space (*dik*), time (*kāla*), self (*ātman*), and mind (*manas*). Accordingly, at the very outset he states:

“*Dikkālau na īśvarādatiricyete mānābhāvāt |*
tattovanimittaviśeṣasamavadhānavaśāt īśvarāt eva tattat kārya viśeṣāṇāmupapatteḥ |
pareṣām ekaikasmāt digādeḥ iva vilakṣaṇānām prācyādīvyavahārāṇām |”⁴

That is to say, space and time are not entities distinct from God, because there is no valid means of knowledge (*māna*) supporting such a distinction (*mānābhāvāt*). Furthermore, the specific effects for whose explanation space and time were posited as independent causes can equally be accounted for by taking God alone as the causal ground. Hence, for the sake

² Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, 1946, *Padārthatattovanirūpaṇam*, ed. Shri Madhusudan Bhattacharya, Kalkata, Kalkata Sanskrit Mahavidyala, page-2.

³ Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, *Padārthatattovanirūpaṇam*, kārikā-1.

⁴ Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, 1946, *Padārthatattovanirūpaṇam*, ed. Shri Madhusudan Bhattacharya, Kalkata, Kalkata Sanskrit Mahavidyala, page-3.

of explaining particular effects, there is no necessity to admit space and time as additional and independent categories.

On this basis, Raghunātha maintains that the postulation of *dik* and *kāla* as separate *padārthas* is philosophically redundant, since their explanatory function can be subsumed under a single causal principle. This critical stance exemplifies his distinctive contribution to the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika tradition, as articulated in *Padārthatattoanirūpaṇa*.

According to the traditional order of classification in Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the sixth substance (*dravya*) is time (*kāla*). Unless the existence of time is first established, it cannot be subsumed under the class of other well-recognized categories. The existence of time is, however, evidenced by our ordinary linguistic and cognitive practices involving expressions such as “past,” “present,” “future,” “now,” and “then.” If time were not the object of cognition such as “now” (*idānīm*) and “then” (*tadānīm*), human beings would not employ statements of the form “now there is a pot” or “then there was a pot.” Yet such expressions are universally used. Accordingly, the very fact that cognitions of the type “now” and “then” arise, and that corresponding linguistic usages occur, serves to establish the existence of time. Thus, time is inferred and confirmed through temporal awareness itself, grounded in common experience and linguistic practice.

In determining the nature of time, the author of *Bhāṣāpariccheda* explicitly states, “*Janyānām janakaḥ kālo jagatāmāśrayo mataḥ,*”⁵ meaning that time is regarded as the producer of all originated entities, the efficient cause of all effects, and the substratum of the world. Time is further characterized as one, all-pervasive, and eternal. However, the mere assertion that time is the substratum of the world is insufficient to establish its ontological status; it must also be demonstrated in what manner time functions as such a substratum. In the cognition expressed as “*idānīm ghaṭaḥ*” (“the pot exists now”), the term ‘now’ denotes phenomena such as the motion or vibration of the sun and the moon. These motions constitute the limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*) of time. Since time itself has no sensible form, it is not an object of direct perception; rather, it is apprehended through such adjuncts as the motion of the sun, which serve as indicators of time. Consequently, in cognition such as “*idānīm ghaṭaḥ,*” the action in the form of the sun’s motion appears as the locus (*adhikaraṇa*) of produced objects like the pot, that is, as the objective basis upon which temporal cognition of such entities depends. Now, no relation such as conjunction (*saṃyoga*) can exist directly between the sun’s vibratory motion and entities such as a pot, because conjunction between the sun’s motion and material objects like the pot is not possible. Nor can the relation be described as inherence (*samavāya*), for although the sun’s vibratory motion inheres in the sun through the relation of *samavāya*, it cannot inhere in the pot as well. Therefore, in order to account for the relation between the sun’s vibratory motion and objects such as the pot, it is necessary to postulate a single all-pervasive substance that is related both to the sun and to the pot. Consequently, the relation that must be admitted between the distant sun’s vibratory motion and the pot is that of “conjunction with the conjunction of its own substratum” (*svāśraya-saṃyogi-saṃyoga*)⁶—that is, more specifically, “conjunction with the conjunction of the sun as its own

⁵ Viśvanātha, *Bhāṣāparicchedaḥ*, kārikā- 44.

⁶ Śri Pancānana Bhattācārya, 2016, *Muktāvalī Saṃgraha*, on *Nyāya Siddhānta Muktāvalī* by Viśvanātha, ed. Śri Pancānana Bhattācārya, kalkata, Mahabodhi book agency, page- 197.

substratum” (*svāśraya-tapana-samyogi-samyoga*). Alternatively, this relation may be described as “conjunction with what is conjoined to its own substratum” (*svāśraya-samyukta-samyoga*). Here, the term “*svāśraya*” (one’s own substratum) refers to the sun’s vibratory motion itself. Accordingly, the sun’s own vibratory motion has the sun (*Tapana*) as its substratum. Since the all-pervasive time is conjoined with that sun, time becomes the entity that is conjoined with the substratum of the motion (*svāśraya-samyogī*). Furthermore, because conjunction with time exists in all corporeal substances such as the pot, the sun’s vibratory motion is related to such objects through a mediated relation of the form “conjunction with the conjunction of its own substratum” (*svāśraya-samyogī-samyoga*). It is precisely because this mediated relation obtains that, in a cognition such as “*idānīm ghaṭaḥ*” (“the pot exists now”), the pot appears as the substantive (*viśeṣya*), while the sun’s vibratory motion appears as the qualifier or mode (*viśeṣaṇa* or *prakāra*). Thus, it becomes evident that there is no direct relation between the sun’s vibratory motion and objects such as the pot. Rather, it is time as a distinct ontological category that effects the relation between the sun’s motion and material objects. If time were not the substratum of all entities (that is, of the world), it could not serve as the mediator establishing the relation between the sun’s motion and all things. Because time is all-pervasive, it stands in the relation of conjunction with both the solar orb and with objects such as the pot. As a result, the relation between the sun’s vibratory motion and such objects is accomplished. In this way, the all-pervasive substance that is postulated as the *svāśraya-samyogī* within the chain of mediated relations expressed as *svāśraya-samyogī-samyoga* is precisely time. As Viśvanātha states: “Time alone is postulated as that which establishes this relation.”⁷

Now, although the reality of time has been established, it is still necessary to establish the reality of space as a distinct ontological category. *Dik* is the seventh category in the accepted ontological scheme. The author of *Bhāṣāpariccheda* states: “*Dūrāntikādi-dhī-hetur ekā nityā dig ucyate*,”⁸ that is, that single and eternal entity which is the cause of cognitions of distance and proximity is called ‘space’. In other words, *dik* is the unique instrumental cause of such cognitions as “near,” “far,” “north,” and “south.” The properties of remoteness (*paratva*) and proximity (*aparatva*)—which are unproduced by the sun’s motion yet produced by conjunction with material bodies—depend upon a certain conjunction as their non-inherent cause (*asamavāyi-kāraṇa*). The locus of this conjunction is space. Thus, it is space that serves as the substratum of that conjunction which functions as the non-inherent cause of the attributes of distance and nearness.

Since remoteness (*paratva*) and proximity (*aparatva*) in material objects are positive entities and effects (*bhāva-kārya*), they require the acceptance of three kinds of causes: inherent (*samavāyī*), non-inherent (*asamavāyī*), and efficient (*nimitta*) causes. A material object located at a farther place possesses spatial remoteness in relation to a material object situated nearer; likewise, a material object located nearer possesses spatial proximity in relation to a material object situated farther away. The substance in which remoteness and proximity inhere serves as their inherent cause. However, that substance does not possess any quality capable of functioning, in this context, as the non-inherent cause of these attributes. Moreover, neither conjunction with the self (*ātma-samyoga*) nor conjunction with

⁷ “*Kāla eva tat-sambandha-ghaṭakaḥ kalpyate*” - Viśvanātha, *Nyaya Siddhanta Muktaivali*, karika-45.

⁸ Viśvanātha, *Bhāṣāparicchedaḥ*, karika-46.

ākāśa-samyoga can be regarded as the non-inherent cause of remoteness and proximity, because neither the self nor *ākāśa* can be the locus of a conjunction that functions as the non-inherent cause of attributes belonging to other substances. Conjunction with time cannot function as the cause in the present context, for conjunction with time serves only as the non-inherent cause of temporal remoteness and proximity, not of spatial remoteness and proximity.

Therefore, the non-inherent cause of the remoteness and proximity under discussion must be a conjunction with some other all-pervasive substance. This follows from the principle that a distinct conjunction cannot arise without two distinct substances. Accordingly, in the case of a material object in which remoteness and proximity are present, it is the conjunction between that material object and space (*dik*) that possesses non-inherent causal efficacy for remoteness and proximity, whereas no other conjunction does so. Hence, the conjunction between *dik* and a corporeal object is established as the non-inherent cause of remoteness and proximity. Thus, that all-pervasive substance whose conjunction, inhering in the inherent cause of remoteness and proximity, produces these attributes – that is, the substance which serves as the locus of the conjunction functioning as the non-inherent cause of spatial remoteness and proximity in material objects – is precisely space.

Although *dik* is indivisible and unitary, it can nevertheless be denoted by terms such as “east,” “west,” “north,” and “south,” which express mutually opposed meanings. However, pure space in itself is never denoted by words that convey mutually contradictory senses; it is only in its conditioned or qualified state (*upādhi-bheda*) that it becomes expressible by terms signifying opposite space. For example, suppose several persons are seated facing one another around a round table. If one then asks, “In which direction is the table situated?”, one person will say, “The table is to my east,” another will say, “It is to my west,” another “to the north,” and yet another “to the south.” With reference to the same table, fixed in the same place at the same time, the employment of four mutually opposed spatial terms gives rise to the question: Is the table really situated in all four directions? The answer is no. The table exists only in space as such; it is merely through differences of adjuncts – namely, the relative positions of the observers that it becomes the object of such designations as east, west, north, and south. In reality, space is one and indivisible.

Both space and time are eternal, all-pervasive, unitary, and function as instrumental causes with respect to all effects. Nevertheless, actions such as the origination, persistence, and destruction of effects appear to indicate a plurality of times, while usages such as “the object is located to the north” or “the object is located to the south” likewise appear to indicate a plurality of spaces. Now, since material objects are innumerable, if time and space were to be regarded as distinct for each object in virtue of their conjunction with them, time and space would also have to be admitted as innumerable. Such an assumption, however, would result in an unacceptable theoretical prolixity (*mahāgaurava*). Therefore, time and space must each be accepted as one only. In reality, although time and space are each single and indivisible, a plurality of times and spaces becomes the object of ordinary usage solely due to differences in limiting adjuncts – such as moments and hours in the case of time, and north and south in the case of space. The apparent multiplicity of time

and space thus arises not from their intrinsic nature but from conceptual and relational qualifications imposed upon them.

According to the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika system, *ākāśa* (ether) is not an object of direct perception, since it possesses no colour or form; and substances devoid of colour cannot be apprehended by visual perception. A difficulty may then be raised: what is the cause of cognitions such as “the sky is blue” (*nīlaṃ nabhaḥ*) or “there is a bird here” (*iha pakṣī*)? In such cognitions, in reality, it is not ether that appears as the object, but rather light in the form of the sun’s rays, which functions as the locus of perception. Ether itself does not become the object of perception; only the illuminated region does. Therefore, according to the Nyāya view, ether is not perceptible, but is instead inferable as the substratum of sound. That is, *ākāśa* is known through inference, on the basis of its function as the support of auditory qualities, rather than through direct sensory cognition.

Since *ākāśa*, *kāla*, and *dik* are each single and unique substances, they do not possess a generic property (*jāti*) in the ordinary sense; that is, they are not denoted by a class-character such as *ākāśatva*. The term *ākāśatva*, when employed, signifies the property of being the substratum of sound or the inherent cause of sound (*śabdāśrayatva* or *śabda-samavāyi-kāraṇatva*). In this connection, the author of *Bhāṣāpariccheda* states: “Sound alone is to be known as the specific quality of *ākāśa*.”⁹ The term *vaiśeṣiko* in this verse carries a particular doctrinal significance. It is employed in order to emphasize that sound is the only specific quality of *ākāśa*, and that other specific qualities such as colour, taste, smell, and touch are altogether absent in ether. Thus, *ākāśa* is distinguished from other substances precisely by the exclusive presence of sound as its unique attribute.

If, in the above definition, the term “sound-quality” (*śabda-guṇa*) had not been used and only the word “sound” (*śabda*) had been employed—so that ether was defined merely as “that which is the substratum of sound”—the definition would have been over-extended (*ativyāpti*) to include space and time as well. This is because sound is related to *ākāśa* through spatial relations and to time through temporal relations, and thus may be said to be dependent upon them in those respective senses. For this reason, ether is not defined simply by reference to sound, but specifically by reference to sound as a quality. The meaning of this is that *ākāśa* is that entity which is the substratum of the quality called sound, or, more precisely, that in which sound inheres as an inherent cause (*samavāyi-kāraṇa*). In this way, *ākāśa* is distinguished from time and space, and the definition avoids the defect of excessive extension.

Although the existence of space and time has thus been established, it still remains to be examined whether they should be regarded as independent substances. In *Padārthatattovanirūpaṇa*, Raghunātha Śīromaṇi states at the very outset: “*Dik-kālau na īśvarādatiricyete mānābhāvāt*,” that is, space and time are not entities distinct from God, because there is no valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) establishing their independent existence. If, therefore, space and time are not distinct substances, the question arises: under which category of reality are they to be subsumed? According to Raghunātha’s view, space and time are nothing over and above the nature of God; they do not constitute separate ontological entities. Although earlier philosophers accepted them as independent substances, there is, in this matter, no authoritative or favorable proof supporting such an

⁹ “*Ākāśasya tu vijñeyaḥ śabdo vaiśeṣiko guṇaḥ*” — Viśvanātha, *Bhāṣāparicchedaḥ*, karika-46.

assumption. In order to clarify this issue, Raghudeva in his writing *Padārthakhaṇḍana-vyākhyā* explains that Raghunātha Śiromaṇi does not accept space and time as independent substances. A doubt may then arise: what is the proof that space and time are not distinct entities?¹⁰

Since neither space nor time possesses a produced form, both are supersensible (*atīndriya*); consequently, their non-distinctness cannot be established by perceptual evidence. But it may be noted, however, that some Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas have regarded space as perceptible; thus, it is stated in *Nyāyamañjarī*: “space too is perceptible, being known through cognitions such as ‘east’ and ‘west’.”¹¹

Now, if one were to attempt to establish, by means of inference, the non-distinctness of time or space, one would necessarily have to frame an inference whose delimiting condition (*pakṣatāvachedaka*) is the property of timeness (*kālatva*) or spaceness (*diktva*). But if such an inference were admitted, then the properties of timeness and spaceness themselves would already be established as real. Once these properties are thus established as delimiting conditions of inference, any further inference aiming to prove the non-existence or non-distinctness of time and space would be undermined by mutual obstruction (*vyāghāta*), since the very basis of the inference would presuppose what it seeks to deny. The implication, therefore, is this: if the properties of timeness and spaceness are already admitted as established, their negation cannot subsequently be proved by inference. Hence, no valid inferential proof can be provided for the non-distinctness of time and space, and the attempt to deny their independent status by such reasoning leads to logical inconsistency.

In reply to this objection, it may be stated that the indivisible properties of *kālatva* and *diktva* do not function as the delimiting conditions of the proposed inference. In fact, in cognitions such as “the pot is in the eastern direction” and “the pot exists now”, the delimiting condition of objecthood (*viśayatāvachedaka*) is the property of all-pervasiveness (*vibhūta*). It is by foregrounding this property that space and time must be taken as the subject of inference and their status as non-distinct entities is to be established. (Here, by *vibhūta* is meant a substance distinct from corporeal substances. This clarification is necessary because Raghunātha Śiromaṇi does not admit *parama-mahat-parimāṇa* in substances.)

A further question may then be raised: if space and time are not independent substances, how are cognitions such as “the pot is in the eastern direction” and “the pot exists now” possible at all? Such cognitions appear explicable only by presupposing space and time as their objective bases. Moreover, if these cognitions are to be accounted for solely through God, how can the mutual distinctness of cognitions such as “the pot is in the eastern direction,” “the pot exists now,” and “the pot existed then” be maintained? In response, the author of *Padārthakhaṇḍana-vyākhyā* states: “*Tattad-upādhi-avicchinādi īśvarādeva tādrśa-pratītinām vailakṣaṇya-niroāhaḥ iti bhāvah.*”¹²

¹⁰ Śri Rāghudev Nyāyāṅkār, 2008, *Padārthakhaṇḍana-vyākhyā*, on *Padārthattvanirūpaṇam* by Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, ed. Dr. Anita Rajpal, Delhi, Amar Grantha Publication, page-4.

¹¹ Jayanta Bhatta, 1982, *Nyāyamañjarī* (with commentary of *Granthibhāṅga*), ed. Gourinath Sastri, Varanasi, Sumpurna Anand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalay press, page-200.

¹² Śri Rāghudev Nyāyāṅkār, 2008, *Padārthakhaṇḍana-vyākhyā*, on *Padārthattvanirūpaṇam* by Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, ed. Dr. Anita Rajpal, Delhi, Amar Grantha Publication, page-5.

The purport of this statement is as follows: just as the earlier philosophers explained cognitions such as “*idānīm ghaṭaḥ*” by means of a unitary and indivisible time conditioned by particular limiting adjuncts, and cognitions such as “*pūrvāsyām diśi ghaṭaḥ*” by means of a unitary and indivisible space conditioned by specific adjuncts, so too the distinctness of such cognitions can be explained through God as conditioned by particular limiting adjuncts. In this manner, the diversity of spatial and temporal cognitions is accounted for without positing space and time as independent substances, by attributing their functional role to God as qualified by different adjuncts.

By the same line of reasoning through which the Ācārya raised doubts concerning the independent substantiality of space and time, he also questioned the existence of *ākāśa* as a distinct substance. Expounding this position, Raghudeva, the author of *Padārthatattoakhaṇḍana*, states that for every positive effect (*bhāva-kārya*), an inherent cause (*samavāyi-kāraṇa*) is necessarily required.¹³ According to the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika doctrine, if sound is regarded as a non-eternal quality, it must be a positive effect. The earlier philosophers, in order to account for the inherent cause of sound, therefore postulated, in addition to the eight material substances such as earth, a distinct, eternal, and all-pervasive substance called *ākāśa*.

It is precisely this position that Raghunātha Śīromaṇi challenges. He argues that just as every effect necessarily requires an inherent cause, so too it necessarily requires an efficient cause. If God is admitted as the efficient cause of all effects whatsoever, then He must also be the efficient cause of sound as a positive effect; there can be no reasonable objection to this conclusion. Consequently, that very God who is established as the efficient cause of sound can equally well be established as its inherent cause. Therefore, there is no necessity to posit an additional and distinct substance in the form of *ākāśa* solely for the purpose of serving as the inherent cause of sound. The acceptance of *ākāśa* as a separate ontological entity, motivated only by the requirement of explaining the inherence of sound, is thus rendered superfluous.

In response to the foregoing argument, one might object as follows: if the inherence-causality (*samavāyi-kāraṇatva*) of sound is attributed to God, then why should the same causal status not also be attributed to the individual self (*jīvātman*)? Both parties agree that God is the efficient cause of sound; therefore, by the same line of reasoning through which inherence-causality is accepted in God, it may equally be established – by both sides – as belonging to the individual self. Indeed, there is inferential evidence for this position as well, expressed in the syllogism: “*Śabdasta-janyaḥ tadadṛṣṭa-janyato vāt sukhādivat*”¹⁴ that is, sound is produced by the individual self, because it is generated by the unseen merit of that self, just as pleasure and pain are.

By means of such affirmative inference based on similarity of instances (*anvaya-dṛṣṭānta-mūlaka anumāna*), both the doctrine that sound is produced by the individual self and the doctrine that it is produced by God may be admitted without contradiction. Consequently, just as inherence-causality with respect to sound is hypothetically ascribed to God in the absence of a decisive refutation (*anabhīyupagama-vinigamanābhāva*), so too may inherence-

¹³ Ibid, page-8.

¹⁴ Raghunātha Śīromaṇi, 1946, *Padārthatattoanirūpaṇam*, ed. Shri Madhusudan Bhattacharya, Kalkata, Kalkata Sanskrit Mahavidyala, page-5.

causality with respect to sound be ascribed to the individual self. In this way, it becomes logically permissible to conceive the individual self, no less than God, as the inherent cause of sound, and the postulation of a distinct substance such as *ākāśa* for this purpose is thereby rendered unnecessary.

Moreover, if the inherence-causality of sound is admitted in God (Īśvara), that causal status must be grounded in the relation of identity (*tādātmya*). For *samavāyi-kāraṇatva* is defined as that causal status which is delimited by the relation of identity, as determined through effecthood delimited by the relation of inherence (*samavāya-sambandhāvacchinna-kāryatā-nirūpita-tādātmya-sambandhāvacchinna-kāraṇatva*)¹⁵. Consequently, if in God there is postulated a causal status delimited by the relation of identity together with inherence, then, by the very same reasoning, such causal status may also be established in the individual self in the absence of any decisive refutation. Thus, whatever form of identity-delimited causality and inherence is hypothetically admitted in God with respect to sound can, on identical logical grounds, be admitted in the individual self as well.

In reply to this objection, Raghunātha Śīromaṇi maintains that a valid inference cannot be constructed by taking sound as the subject (*pakṣa*), being produced by the individual self as the probandum (*sādhya*), and unseen merit (*adr̥ṣṭa*) as the reason (*hetu*). This is because such an inference lacks any supporting hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*) capable of eliminating the possibility of deviation (*vyabhicāra*); consequently, the inference is not valid.

Moreover, if the individual self were admitted as the inherent cause of sound, then, just as pleasure and pain inhering in the self are objects of ordinary mental perception, sound too would necessarily be subject to mental perception in the same manner. Since the requisite perceptual contact (*sannikarṣa*) for mental perception would then obtain in the case of sound, it would follow that a cognition such as “I am the substratum of sound” should arise. Such a consequence, however, is unacceptable. Therefore, the individual self cannot be admitted as the inherent cause of sound. Hence, the attribution of inherence-causality with respect to sound to the individual self must be rejected.

A further question may be raised: if a substance called *ākāśa* distinct from the eight material substances is not admitted, then what is to be identified as the auditory organ? It is commonly accepted that the auditory organ is ether delimited by the cavity of the ear (*karṇa-vivara-avacchinna ākāśa*). Hence, it may be argued that in order to account for the auditory organ, one must necessarily posit an additional substance called space beyond the eight substances.

In response, the Ācārya argues as follows: if, according to the earlier view, *ākāśa* can become the auditory organ by being delimited by a particular adjunct, then why should God not become the auditory organ when delimited by a particular adjunct? Just as the Supreme Self, when conditioned by specific bodily forms, is designated as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, so too, when delimited by the specific adjunct in the form of the cavity of the ear, the Supreme Lord becomes known as the auditory organ. According to Raghunātha Śīromaṇi, the auditory organ need not be identified with a distinct substance called ether, but may instead be understood as God himself, conditioned by the limiting

¹⁵ Ibid, page-7.

adjunct constituted by the ear-cavity and this constitutes the new doctrine (navya-siddhānta).

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