

Extrasensory Perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) in Jainism and Its Refutations*

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0.1. As we can see from a chapter in this volume, ‘Extrasensory perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) in Jainism, proofs of its existence and its soteriological implications’ (references to this chapter below are as ‘see *arguments*’), extrasensory perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) in Jainism was not only, in the form of its three subdivisions, a part of the taxonomy of epistemic faculties, but also fulfilled a rhetorical and argumentative role to prove a possibility of omniscience and perfection of the human being, in addition to its soteriological role.

The previous chapter presented a compilation of arguments for the existence of extrasensory perception and perfect knowledge (*kevala*), i.e. omniscience, and of an omniscient being advanced by the Jainas. A number of such arguments, as we could see, overlap or is perhaps even borrowed from other schools, primarily from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Buddhists. Some of them are, however, characteristically Jaina and were only possible granted Jaina specific ontological or epistemological presuppositions.

Such arguments gave rise to a range of counter-arguments, or arguments against the possibility of omniscience or of an omniscient being, formulated by the Mīmāṃsakas and materialists, often preserved a preliminary objection (*pūrva-pakṣa*) in mostly Jaina and Nyāya texts. Usually the counter-arguments are on the whole directed against the Naiyāyika-Vaiśeṣikas, not particularly against the Jainas. In this chapter, I will try to collect such arguments formulated in various schools of thought in ancient India. Since I will frequently refer to the proof of extrasensory perception and omniscience, an adequate appraisal of the counter-arguments outlined in this chapter may require a parallel reading of the arguments described in the other chapter, ‘Extrasensory perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) in Jainism, proofs of its existence and its soteriological implications’.

As against a common stereotype that Indian traditions were unanimous in their acceptance of supernatural perception, there were at least three notable exceptions to be mentioned, namely the followers of the schools of the early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika until the beginning of the fifth century¹, Mīmāṃsā and the materialists, or Cārvāka / Lokāyata. In their realistic approach, these philosophical schools rejected the suprasensory sphere, albeit for different reasons.

The materialist Cārvāka accepted the world as it was presented to us through our senses, and to illustrate their thesis they would cite the following *dictum* (*nyāya*): ‘empirical facts and everyday practice are explicable by this much only’ (*iyatāiva dṛṣṭa-vyavahārōpapatti*)². In other words, if an event or phenomenon, e.g. the

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¹ Supernatural perception was absent in the original *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, as it existed prior to Praśastapāda, see: WEZLER (1982), HONDA (1988), ISAACSON (1993) and BALCEROWICZ (2010: 308 ff.).

² Cf. e.g. the recapitulation of the Cārvāka’s argument in NAV 31.10: *nanu ca kāyākāra-pariṇatāni bhūtāny evātma-vyatirekiṇī? cetanām utkālayanti; sā ca tathā-vidha-pariṇāma-pariṇateṣu teṣu santiṣṭhate, tad-abhāve punas teṣv eva nilīyata iti; tad-vyatirekânubhave ’pi na para-loka-yāyi-jīva-siddhir, iyatāiva dṛṣṭa-vyavahārōpapatteḥ.*—‘Nothing but gross elements, transformed into the

occurrence of consciousness in a physical body, can be successfully explained without the assumption of some additional hypothetical or disputable entities, by taking recourse to lesser number of assumptions and in the most economic way, there is no ground for assuming such hypothetical entities. This approach is very much akin to Occam's razor, *entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem* ('entities are not to be multiplied without necessity'), a maxim ascribed to William of Ockham³.

Similarly, the Mīmāṃsaka did not admit the existence of supernatural perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) for the simple reason that it would undermine the authoritative status of the *Vedas* as the only source of information on moral law (*dharma*), the fundament of all dealings and social interactions in the world. In the system, *dharma* was defined as follows: 'Moral law is the desired goal an indication of which is injunction.'⁴ In his commentary, Śabarāsvāmin emphasises not only the moral and eschatological relevance of the Vedic injunction (*codanā*) but also its cognitive scope: 'The injunction enables [people] to know anything of the following sort: past, present, future, subtle, concealed [from sight] and distant; there is no other instrument [to know these]'⁵; and precisely these were the things that were believed by, e.g. later Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas, to be amenable to supernatural perception and were described by them in exactly the same terms.⁶ The *Vedas* are therefore the only means to know the moral law (*dharma*), which regulates all spheres of human life in this world and hereafter.⁷ The fear of the Mīmāṃsaka clearly was that the admission of any possibility of supernatural perception would render the *Vedas* unnecessary as the source of knowledge on extrasensory objects, including the postmortem human fate, as well as morality and *dharma*. The consequences the admission of extrasensory perception would have for the society and the world would be destructive, insofar as the fundament of morality and social and ritual order, i.e. the *Vedas*, would no longer be held relevant or valid. Kumārila, apparently referring to Praśastapāda's claim that there is something like intuition (*pratibha* or *pratibhā*) called the seers' perception (*ārṣa-pratyakṣa*),⁸ explains: 'Just like ordinary

corporeal form, bring consciousness, [that is] different from them, into being. And this [consciousness] persists invariably in (*sc.* has as its substratum) these [gross elements,] that have been transformed into a transformation of such a kind (*sc.* transformed into consciousness). When, however, this [transformation of gross elements into consciousness] does not [continue any longer], it disintegrates into these [gross elements] alone. Consequently, it is not established that the living element departs to the next world, even though [he is] experienced as different from these [gross elements], because empirical facts (*sc.* what is experienced) and everyday practice are explicable by this much only.'

³ As a matter of fact, an *expressis verbis* formulation of the maxim is absent from his extant works altogether. The idea, however, was already present in Duns Scotus' writings.

⁴ MS 1.2: *codanā-lakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah.*

⁵ ŚBh 1.2.2, p. 4.7–9: *codanā hi bhūtaṃ bhavantaṃ bhaviṣyantaṃ sūkṣmaṃ vyavahitaṃ viprakṛṣṭam ity evaṃ-jātīyakam arthaṃ śaknoty avagamayitum, nānyat kiñcanendriyam.*

⁶ See e.g. NMa₁, Vol. 1, p. 268.10–11 = NMa₂, Vol. 1, p. 157.6–7: *ataś ca yatrāśya paraḥ prakarṣas te yogino gīyante. darśanasya ca paro 'tiśayaḥ sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-bhūta-bhaviṣyad-ādi-viśayatvam.*

⁷ MŚV 2.115:

*bhaviṣyati na dṛṣṭaṃ ca pratyakṣasya manāg api /
sāmarthyam nānumānāder liṅgādi-rahite kvacit /*

—'The empirical fact is that with regard to future [events and *dharma*] perception has absolutely no efficacy, even slightest; neither has [the efficacy] inference and other [cognitive criteria] with regard to something that is devoid of any inferential mark.'

⁸ Kumārila does not mention Praśastapāda in accord with his general procedure not to mention his opponents by name. However, his commentator Pārthasārathi Mīśra refers to Praśastapāda directly, see NRĀ ad MŚV 4.32: *yathā śvo me bhrātāganeti...*

intuition, which does not depend on perception or other cognitive criteria, would not be adequate to [provide any reliable] judgement, so is [the intuition] of *yogins*.⁹

1. A refutation of the argument from progression in its various forms (see *arguments*, §§ 1–3), directed rather against Dharmakīrti’s version of it (see *arguments*, § 3) than against the Jainas’, is found for instance in the commentaries to the *Mīmāṃsā-śloka-vārttika*, i.e. Pārthasārathi Mīśra’s *Nyāya-ratnākara*¹⁰ and in Sucaritamīśra’s *Kāśikā*:

“And indeed it is an empirical fact that perfection (intensity, accomplishment) of cause ($S = sādhyā$) is pervaded by the perfection (intensity, accomplishment) of the result ($H = hetu$), for instance perfection of craftsmanship of a painter etc. [is pervaded by] perfection of a painting etc. And the cause of [supernatural] perception of any particular *yogin* who is engrossed in contemplation is undergoing a process of gradual perfection.”—thus runs [the invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) of] the logical reason as essential nature [accepted by the Buddhists]. But if this were really so, on what account could the perfection of the cause be known?¹¹

In other words, if we accepted the internal logic of the argument from progression, as Sucaritamīśra demonstrates, from perfection of craftsmanship of a painter (H) one can validly infer perfection of a painting (S), etc.: $H \rightarrow S$. But the problem the Buddhist or Jaina opponent has to face is the following: on the basis of what can we decide that a painter is indeed accomplished? Generally it is from an excellent painting that one infers that the one who has committed it is an accomplished artist: $S \rightarrow H$, not the other way round. Consequently, the argument from progression either reverses the established logic, whereby instead of judging the skill of an artist on the basis of his works it would have us evaluate the quality of an artefact on the basis of the talent of the artist, or is circular, in which: $H \rightarrow S$ and $S \rightarrow H$.

Precisely the same problem is observed in the case of the Buddhist and Jaina argument in which, too, from the intensity of contemplation (H) one infers perfection of supernatural perception (S): $H \rightarrow S$, instead the other way round. Accordingly, the argument that contemplation itself is the cause of perfection which brings about *yogi-pratyakṣa* is circular: we confuse cause and effect, the instrument and action. We can call this counter-argument circularity of the argument from progression.

2. A typical counter-argument is from the non-production of the future and the past, based on the presumption that all kinds of perception, to remain perception, grasp only present objects. Future and past objects are therefore, by definition, inaccessible to any kind of perception. A version of it is found e.g. in Jayarāsi Bhaṭṭa’s *Tattvôpaplava-siṃha*:

‘Similarly, the perception of the *yogins* cannot be produced by the perceived object, because past or future [objects] cannot produce

⁹ MŚV 4.32:

*laukikī pratibhā yadvad pratyakṣādy-anapekṣiṇī /
na niścayāya paryāptā tathā syād yoginām api /*

¹⁰ NRĀ ad MŚV 4.26, p. 102.15 ff.

¹¹ MŚVK ad MŚV 4.27, p. 215.15 ff.: *bhavati cātra kāraṇa-prakarṣo hi kārya-prakarṣeṇa vyāpto dṛṣṭaḥ citra-kārādi-silpa-prakarṣa iva citrādi-karma-prakarṣeṇa. prakṛṣyate ca kasyacid yogino bhāvanā-bala-bhuvah pratyakṣasya kāraṇam iti svabhāva-hetuḥ. athāpi syāt kutaḥ kāraṇa-prakarṣo ’vagamyata iti.*

[anything]. Or, if they could produce, they would lose their status of past and future things.’¹²

Jayarāṣi points out that an admission of supernatural perception, which is directly caused by the object being perceived in the very same moment, involves contradiction: cause and effect cannot be absolutely separated in time and space.

3. Jayarāṣi Bhaṭṭa extends this counter-argument to emphasise the inaccessibility of the future and the past:

‘Similarly, the perception of the *yogins*, which [is believed to] arise with regard to past and future objects, cannot make [the *yogin*] reach the object.’¹³

He is clearly alluding to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika concept of perception which is maintained to be non-belying, reliable, trustworthy (*avisamvādin*), and thus to provide a kind of dependable promise: if one acts in accordance with what a particular act of perception presents to consciousness, one will surely achieve this object. For instance, if perception presents a jug of water, one is justified to act towards it and grasp it in order to quench his thirst. That principle of ‘non-belying, reliability, trustworthiness’ (*avisamvāda*) can certainly not be met in the case of supernatural perception of past or future objects: no matter how much one could try to quench one’s thirst with past or future water, the efforts will be futile. In other words, such perception ‘believes its promise’, viz. it does not pass the test of practical verification. Jayarāṣi’s argument is therefore pragmatic.

In a discussion whether we should accept testimony (*āgama*, *śabda*) as another cognitive criterion in the *Nyāya-bhūṣaṇa*, Bhāsarvajña recapitulates a similar proof, albeit more extended, that supernatural perception cannot grasp past and future objects, which is an indirect proof that *yogi-pratyakṣa* cannot exist:

‘Furthermore, what would be the connection between supernatural cognition (perception) and past and future objects? It has already been made clear that such objects cannot produce cognition. If you say that the origination of [supernatural cognition] takes place in an uninterrupted series, this is not correct because past and future things cannot produce [any cognition] even in an uninterrupted series. For no cognition can be produced directly by these [objects], in consequence of which one should admit that this [cognition] is produced in an uninterrupted series of other cognitions as a sequence of reproductions of past impressions of these [objects]. [Let us then assume] that a cognition that belongs to the series [of the *yogin*’s cognition] generates it. But this is not the case, because [the cognition of the series] which generates [the final cognition of the *yogin*] already belongs to the past. But even if [one admits as the cause] a cognition that belongs to the series [of the *yogin*’s cognition], one knowledge produced by something cannot determine another [knowledge], because that would have too far-reaching consequences: [for instance] that would lead to the undesired consequence that one knowledge produced by one object such as a woman, piece of gold etc., would determine [the knowledge] of all women, pieces of gold etc.’¹⁴

¹² TUS₁, p. 168.1–3: *tathā yogi-pratyakṣasya pratīyamānārtha-janyatā na sambavati vyatītānāgatayor ajanakatvāt. janakatve vātītānāgatā hīyate.*

¹³ TUS₁, p. 170.1–3 = TUS₃, p. 64: *tathā yogi-jñānasyātītānāgatārthe samutpannasyārtha-prāpakatvaṃ na vidyate.*

¹⁴ NBhū, p. 384.3 ff.: *kiṃ cātītānāgatārthaḥ saha yogi-jñānānām api kaḥ sambandhaḥ? na hi tad-arthānām janakatvam astīty uktam prāk. pāramparyeṇa tat utpattir iti cet, na, anāgatārthānām*

4. Still another argument to counter the proof, primarily of Buddhist provenance, from progression by necessity is by pointing out that the actual object-field for a meditative contemplation, or supernatural perception, is merely a series of recollective mental images projected in a present moment (counter-argument from past images). This counter-argument is voiced by Pārthasārathi Mīśra in the *Nyāya-ratnâkara*:

‘For what you call [supernatural] perception produced by the power of contemplation is not possible, because contemplation consists in a series of memory-images of similar contents and is uninterrupted by [a thought of] another [object].¹⁵ And memory has as its contents something which has already been experienced, [hence] it does not refer to something not yet cognised [which is a characteristic of any cognitive criterion (*pramāṇa*); therefore the knowledge we acquire through memory is not valid]. Thus, if *dharma* could be cognised without any cognitive criterion, what would be the use of contemplation?!’¹⁶

The main points in the counter-argument are as follows:

- (1) Supernatural perception is said to be produced by meditative contemplation, but in fact it presents past images, therefore it is merely a kind of memory (*smṛti*); being such, the knowledge it brings about is not valid, inasmuch as memory (*smṛti*) does not count as a cognitive criterion (*pramāṇa*).
- (2) If the cognitive procedure of supernatural perception were accepted as valid (*pramāṇa*), that would amount to saying that we could grasp through it objects which are also past, future, distant etc., but in fact these could be cognised through memory only; therefore meditative contemplation and *yoga* would become redundant.
- (3) That would also mean that we could grasp moral law (*dharma*) through memory and no cognitive criteria (valid cognitive procedures) would be necessary.
- (4) Consequently, that would amount to the collapse of all philosophic inquiry (no validity of acts of cognition), the collapse of morality (*dharma* could be known through methods that are not valid) and collapse of the authority of *Vedas*.

5. Its variant, the counter-argument from the lack of cause, is briefly presented in Sucaritamīśra’s *Kāśikā*:

‘By the very [statement that suprasensory perception grasps] “past and future objects as well” [you] express the idea that there is no cause [of such a perception].’¹⁷

Such supernatural perception would therefore have to be admitted to be fictitious, because it would have no objective basis (*ālambana*), being uncaused.

pāramparyeṇāpy ajanakatvāt. na hi taiḥ kiṃcij jñānaṃ sāksād utpāditam yena tad-vāsanōtpattikrameṇa jñānāntarāṇām pāramparyeṇa tad-utpattiḥ¹⁴ kalpyeta. taj-jātīyasyāsti janakatvam iti cet, na, janakasyātītatvāt. na ca taj-jātīyatve ’py anyata utpannaṃ jñānam anyat paricchinnatti, atiprasaṅgāt. ekasmāt strī-suvarṇādy-arthād utpannasya jñānasya sarva-strī-suvarṇādy-artha-paricchadakatva-prasaṅgāt.

¹⁵ This directly refers to NBT 1.11, p. 67.5: *bhūtasya bhāvanā punaḥ punaś cetasi viniveśanam* (see Chapter 4 ‘Extrasensory Perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) in Jainism’, n. 65).

¹⁶ NRĀ ad MŚV 4.29, p. 103.3–4: *na hi bhāvanā-bala-jaṃ pratyakṣaṃ nāma sambhavati, bhāvanā hi samāna-viśayā vijātīyavyavahitā smṛti-santatiḥ, smṛtiś ca pūrvānubhūta-viśayiṇī nānanubhūtaṃ gocarayati. tad yadi dharmāḥ pramāṇāntareṇānubhūtaḥ kiṃ bhāvanayā?*

¹⁷ MŚVK ad MŚV 4.26, p. 214.23–24: *ata eva “atītānāgate ’py arthe” ity-ādinā hetv-asiddhi-bījam upadarśitam.*

6. An important and powerful line of reasoning—let’s call it the counter-argument from the limited domain—is presented by Kumārila to refute the argument from progression:

‘[Even then], in so far as there cannot be any going beyond the own domain [of sense organs], the culmination experienced with regard to some [domain, e.g. vision,] would concern only [e.g.] visual perception of things which are distant, subtle etc.; but this could not be the operation of the sense of hearing with regard to visual aspects.’¹⁸

Again, Kumārila directs his repudiation primarily against the Naiyāyikas, not the Jainas, as confirmed by a subsequent reaction of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, who quotes Kumārila’s verse:

‘Let us assume [for a while] that there be culmination [of perception] as long as it does not go beyond its own domain. But [even then] the moral law cannot become the domain for e.g. the eye. As it has been said by Kumārila...’¹⁹

Even if we accept that a progression in the case of one sense faculty, say, sight, culminates with a state in which that faculty exceeds its ordinary limits and grasps things normally invisible, being subtle, concealed from sight and distant, nevertheless such a progression in one sense organ could in no way affect a similar development in the remaining sense faculties, and such extrasensory perception would have to be restricted only to the visual aspect of such things, certainly not to all. By implication, that would exclude a possibility of omniscience.

7. Using a similar idea, Kumārila produces another counter-argument, from the overlapping of sensory data:

‘If the omniscient person can conceive [of everything] by virtue of any cognitive criterion (cognitively valid procedure), then this [cognitive criterion] could cognise all tastes etc. through the eye.’²⁰

The commentator Pārthasārathi Miśra adds the following remark:

‘Otherwise how could someone who knows the limitation of [sense organs’] own nature, [i.e. the restriction of each of sense organs to their own respective data only], experience the operation of perception or any other [cognitive criterion] with respect to all things which are not the respective domain?’²¹

¹⁸ MŚV 2.114:

*yatrāpy atīśayo dṛṣṭaḥ svārthānātīlaṅghanāt /
dūra-sūkṣmādi-dṛṣṭau syān na rūpe śrotra-vṛttitā //*

¹⁹ NMa₂ 2 (I, p. 157.8–9): *nanu sva-viṣayānatikrameṇa bhavatu tad-atīśaya-kalpanā. dharmas tu cakṣuṣo na viṣaya eva. yad uktam:*

*yatrāpy atīśayo dṛṣṭaḥ svārthānātīlaṅghanāt /
dūra-sūkṣmādi-dṛṣṭau syān na rūpe śrotra-vṛttitā //* [MŚV 2.114]

²⁰ MŚV 2.112:

*ekena tu pramāṇena sarva-jñō yena kalpyate /
nūnam sa cakṣuṣā sarvān rasādīn pratipadyate /*

²¹ NRĀ ad MŚV 2.112: *itarathā kathamaṃ svabhāva-niyamaṃ jānann aviṣaye sarvārthe pratyakṣasyānyasya vā pravṛttim adhyavasayed iti?*

Supernatural perception, including omniscience, would require that the typical ordering of particular perceptual data as related to particular perceptual cognitions would no longer be there.

This counter-argument could only be formulated and be meaningful given the ontology of such systems as Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya or Vaiśeṣika which assume that the self, or soul (*ātman*), normally cognises only through some medium, e.g. through the mind or sense organs. This argument would *formally* be a little less effective in the view of the Jaina ontology according to which the ultimate cogniser is the soul and does not necessitate any particular sense organ or other instrument. Jaina classifications generally distinguish five kinds of sensory perception (*indriya-pratyakṣa*), or conventional perception (*sāmvvyavahārika-pratyakṣa*), but do not explicitly draw such distinction in the case of extrasensory perception or omniscience. However, even without formally distinguishing varieties of extrasensory perception related to the five object-fields, the Jainas would find it difficult to meaningfully speak of extrasensory perception in which all kinds of data—auditory, ocular, olfactory, gustatory and tactile as well as mental (introspective, reflexive)—would mingle: such perception could not serve to make any basic distinctions that normally perception does.

The above verse is quoted by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa who tries to dispel Kumārila's criticism:

‘Also *yogins* have senses which grasp taste and other sensory data, and like [their] eyes, these [other sense organs] are indeed perfected. Therefore one does not have to assume any operation of [*yogins*] eye with respect to taste etc.’²²

What is important, even though Kumārila (MŚV 2.112) speaks of the omniscient person (*sarva-jñā*), in his rejoinder Jayanta Bhaṭṭa speaks of the perception of the *yogins*, which only confirms that the difference between *sarva-jñāna* and *yogi-pratyakṣa* was only quantitative and in degree, but not qualitative or in essence.

8. A straightforwardly commonsensical counter-argument is from the lack of evidence, advanced e.g. by Kumārila:

‘[117] Well, we and other people do not see any omniscient person nowadays and a line of reasoning [to prove that such an omniscient person ever] existed is impossible in the same way as one can negate [the existence of such people]. [118] Nor [the existence of] an omniscient person [can be proved] by scripture, because that would be a case mutual dependence (vicious circle). [Besides], how is the [full] validity of [a text] communicated conceivable?’²³

The idea is not simply that omniscient persons are never seen. What the argument purports to demonstrate is that their existence cannot be proved through mere observation, i.e. perception as one of the cognitive criteria, but there are no other cognitive criteria, such as inference or scripture, which could provide some kind of evidence for their existence. Reliance on scripture to prove its author's omniscience

²² NMa₂ 2 (I, p. 158.1–2): *rasādi-grāhīṇy api yoginām indriyāṇi cakṣurvad atīśayavanty evēti na rasādiṣu cakṣu-vyāpārah parikapyante.*

²³ MŚV 2.117–18:

*sarva-jñō dṛśyate tāvan nēdānīm asmad-ādibhiḥ /
nirākaraṇavac chakyā na cāsīd iti kalpanā // 117 //
na cāgamena sarva-jñāḥ tadīye 'nyonya-saṃśrayāt /
narāntara-praṇītasya prāmāṇyaṃ gamyate katham // 118 //*

would involve circularity. That being the case, one can still provide rational arguments *against* their existence.

This counter-argument from the lack of evidence is recapitulated in a fuller form by Hemacandra:

‘There is no cognitively valid procedure at all to prove the omniscient cognition or any other [supernatural perception]. [First,] the functioning of perception is limited to respective domains of colour etc. [for respective sense and] it cannot operate with regard to an extrasensory object. [Second,] neither can inference [grasp the extrasensory object], because it has as its basis that it is produced by force of relation between the inferential sign and the possessor of the inferential sign, both of which are grasped by perception. [Third, it is not possible through testimony because] if testimony is [believed to be] related to this [supernatural perception because it is] preceded by extrasensory cognition, then [we have a case of] mutual dependence.’²⁴

In a separate section of his *Pramāṇa-Mīmāṃsā* alongside the commentary (PMī 1.17, and PMīV 1.17 §§ 59–70, p. 16–18) devoted to this counter-argument, Hemacandra presents a few more interesting variants of it.

9. Kumārila provides also a counter-argument from misapplied definition:

‘The perception of *yogins* is not at all different from [the perception] of ordinary [people]. Insofar as also this [supernatural perception] is a perception, it should grasp present [objects] as well as it should be produced through the contact with a [really] existing [thing]. The concept which arises in these [*yogins*] with regard to an absent (*sc.* either future or past) object is, therefore, not perception, in the same way as desire (about the future object) or remembrance (about the past object) [is not perception].’²⁵

10. In an ingenious way Kumārila reverses the argument from no counter-proof (see *arguments*, § 14) into an effective counter-argument against omniscience:

‘[134] For how can it be ascertained that “he is omniscient” at the time of his existence by those who wish to know this but are devoid of the awareness of his knowledge (*sc.* his ability) and of what he knows (the contents of his knowledge), [i.e. are not omniscient themselves]? [135] You would have to assume numerous omniscient men [living

²⁴ PMīV 1.15 § 54, p. 13: *na ca mukhya-pratyakṣasya tadvato vā siddhau kiñcit pramāṇam asti. pratyakṣam hi rūpādi-*viśaya*-viniyamita-vyāpāraṃ nātīndriye ’rthe pravartitum utsahate. nāpy anumānam pratyakṣa-dṛṣṭa-liṅga-liṅgi-sambandha-balōpajanana-dharmakatvāt tasya. āgamas tu yady atīndriya-jñāna-pūrvakas tat-sambandhaḥ, tadetarētarāśrayaḥ.* He returns to the issue of the ‘no proof’ argument again in PMī 1.17, and PMīV 1.17 §§ 59–70, p. 16–18.

²⁵ MŚV 4.28cd–30:

*na loka-vyatiriktaṃ hi pratyakṣaṃ yoginām api //
pratyakṣatvena tasyāpi vidyamānōpalambhanam /
sat-samprayogajatvaṃ vāpy asmat-pratyakṣavad bhavet //
teṣāṃ avartamāne ’rthe yā* nāmōtpadyate matiḥ /
pratyakṣaṃ sā tatas tv eva nābhilāṣa-smṛtādivat //*

* Dvārikādāsa Śāstrī’s edition read *vā*, whereas the *Mīmāṃsā-śloka-vārttika* edited with Sucaritamīśra’s *Kāśikā* reads *yā*, which is the reading adopted by me for two reasons. First, it is a natural correlate to *sā* in the *pāda* 4.30c: *yā ... matiḥ ... sā pratyakṣam*; secondly, also NRĀ *ad loc.* correlates two clauses in the same way: *yad avidyamāna-*viśaya*ṃ ... tat pratyakṣaṃ na bhavātīti.*

contemporaneously], because someone who is not omniscient cannot know that the other person is omniscient. [136] And for someone who cannot [directly] see that a particular person is omniscient the own words of such [a person] have no cognitive validity if he does not know [any scriptural] basis (*sc.* unless he accepts the testimony of scriptures), just like statements of any other [ordinary person].²⁶

In his argument Kumārila points out that the ordinary Buddhists, Jainas, Naiyāyikas or Vaiśeṣikas who admit omniscience of the Buddha, the Jina or Īśvara should be omniscient themselves in order to substantiate the omniscience claim. Besides, that would also entail the necessary plurality of omniscient beings, which would go against the assumption of early Buddhists and Jainas, who believed that the birth of an omniscient Buddha or Jina is a unique event and two Buddhas or Jinas cannot co-exist in the same region side by side. This attitude changed with the Mahāyāna Buddhism and in mediaeval Jainism, which admitted of such a simultaneous plurality of omniscient Buddhas or Jinas, respectively, in various worlds (or parts of the universe). But even then they never admitted that two Buddhas or Jinas could co-exist within the same part of the world and have direct personal contact with each other.

Without being omniscient themselves, the believers in an omniscient being are left to rely solely on the testimonial evidence of those claiming to be omniscient, which would involve a fallacy of a vicious circle (*vide infra*, § 11). Thus to ascribe omniscience to anyone one should be at the level of omniscience ('meta-level') in order to verify it directly in another person: the required level (omniscience) is not accessible from the level of ordinary experience ('first-level').

Comparing two lines of reasoning— see *arguments*, § 14 (the argument from no counter-proof) and § 10 *below* (counter-argument from no counter-proof)—we encounter a collision of two conflicting approaches based on the same principle: to judge the other person's omniscience one has to be omniscient. One is a negative reasoning, to deny (falsify) the other person's omniscience, the other is positive, to prove (verify) the other person's omniscience. As indicated above (see *arguments*, § 14) both these arguments juxtaposed, as Kumārila presents them, are neither a mere play words and arguments nor an irreconcilable confrontation of arguments and counter-arguments, in analogy to the seemingly irresolvable conflict between theistic and atheistic world views. Kumārila attempts to demonstrate that any claim in philosophical discourse should first be proved and corroborated in order to enter the realm of discourse, otherwise it remains a matter of mere belief; and the weight of proof is always on the side of the propounder of a particular theory. Otherwise, any one could postulate the existence of any imaginable entity. Not to postulate entities which one cannot prove is some sort of the extension of the principle of economy in rational thinking and discourse. This principle of parsimony (*lāghava*, *kalpanā-gaurava-prasaṅga*) was widely accepted in India, including the Mīmāṃsaka and Cārvāka, who are reported to follow the *dictum* (*nyāya*): 'empirical facts and everyday practice are explicable by this much only' (*vide supra*, n. 2). In other words, if any event—e.g. the occurrence of consciousness in a physical body—can be explained without assuming additional hypothetical or disputable entities, by taking recourse to lesser number of assumptions and in the most economic way,

²⁶ MŚV 2.134–136:

sarva-jñō 'sāv iti hy eva tat-kāle tu bubhutsubhiḥ /
taj-jñāna-jñeya-vijñāna-rahitair gamyate katham // 134 //
kalpanīyās ca sarva-jñā bhaveyur bahavas tava /
ya eva syād asarva-jñāḥ sa sarva-jñam na budhyate // 135 //
sarva-jñō 'navabuddhaś ca yenaiva syān na taṃ prati /
tad-vākyānāṃ pramāṇatvaṃ mūlājñāne 'nya-vākyavat // 136 //

there is no ground for assuming such hypothetical entities. This approach is very much akin to Occam's razor.

11. In the last line of the above quotation in § 10 (MŚV 2.136cd: *tad-vākyānām pramāṇatvaṃ mūlājñāne*), Kumārila speaks of another requirement, apart from being omniscient, that could enable one to admit another person's omniscience: that person's own testimony. That is precisely the same counter-argument from circularity evoked also on another occasion, where Kumārila turns directly against the Jainas:

'In the same way [as the Buddhists, also the Jainas] admit that a living being (soul) who no longer depends on sense-organs etc.²⁷ possesses absolute cognition the contents of which are [things that are] subtle, past etc. But this cannot be proved without his own testimony (scriptures), and the [authority of] testimony (scriptures) [cannot be proved] without him.'²⁸

Kumārila points to the a major logical flaw in such a reasoning called 'the mutual dependence' (*itarētarāśraya*²⁹, also known as *anyōnyāśraya*), viz. *circulus vitiosus*: to accept omniscience we have to rely on the authority of the scriptures, which are the testimony imparted by the omniscient; and to rely on the authority of the scriptures we have to accept the omniscience of their author. Both ends of the vicious circle are equally imperceptible and cannot be verified solely by reference to our perception of quotidian experience. This paradox referred to by Kumārila is a general problem of authoritative character of all revealed monotheistic religions, but not only,³⁰ and is logically embedded in their doctrinal structure.

12. As was in the case of an earlier argument (§ 10), Kumārila reverses the line of reasoning (the scripture and the omniscient author reciprocally validating each other) which was at basis of the previous argument and which suffers from the flaw of mutual dependence, or circularity, and makes out of it a counter-argument against omniscience in a rather surprising manner:

'[130] My statement "The Buddha and others are not omniscient" is true because I am saying this, like in the case [of such statements]: "fire is hot and radiant". [131] And what I am saying is directly verifiable, whereas you should first prove what you are saying. Therefore, my [statement] is a proof (logical reason), whereas your [statement] is either doubtful or unproved [i.e. your proof suffers from the fallacy of the doubtful logical

²⁷ Cf. PSā 1.19: he becomes suprasensuous and has full powers, being the one who has destroyed *karmans* (*anindriya* = *indriya-viṣaya-vyāpāra-rahita*).

²⁸ MŚV 2.141–142ab:

*evaṃ yaiḥ kevalaṃ jñānam indriyādy-anapekṣiṇaḥ /
sūkṣmātītādi-viṣayaṃ jīvasya parikalpitam //
na rte tad-āgamāt siddhyen na ca tenāgamo vinā /*

²⁹ NRĀ ad MŚV 2.141, p. 65.25.

³⁰ On the paradox an Mīmāṃsā approach to it, see BIDERMAN (1994). This paradox of monotheistic religions (god is justified by scriptures, scriptures are justified by god) is also found in Indian tradition, e.g. in the *Yoga-sūtra* 1.24, p. 54.6–55.1: *yo 'sau prakṣṭa-sattvōpādānāt īśvarasya śāsvatika utkṣṭaḥ, sa kiṃ sanimittaḥ āhosvit nirmimittaḥ? iti tasya śāstram nimittam. śāstram punaḥ kim-nimittam? prakṣṭa-sattva-nimittam. etayoḥ śāstrōtkarṣayor īśvara-sattve vartamānayoḥ anādiḥ sambandhaḥ.*—'This eternal superiority of god results from his appropriation of a superior [kind of the quality of] subtlety. Does it have any justification or is without any justification? Its justification is the scripture. What is the justification of the scripture? Its justification is a superior [kind of the quality of] subtlety. The relation of these two, i.e. the scripture and superiority, both residing in god, is beginningless.'

reason or from the unproved logical reason]. [132] How can anyone postulate something (e.g. omniscience) in the case of which [a reason] such as being a cognoscible thing etc. which does not contradict perception etc. can disprove its existence?’³¹

In fact, this is quite an ingenious reversal of the argument from verifiability of the speaker’s statements (see *arguments*, § 16). What could be named the counter-argument from one’s own verifiable statements rests on one’s authority derived by analogy from the speaker’s other statements that can easily be verified empirically. Nevertheless, it is clearly logically flawed: even if we have positively verified the truth of a person *x*’s statement *p* as well as his subsequent statements *p*+1, and (*p*+1)+1 up to (*p*+1)+...+*n*, it does not follow that a future statement (*p*+1)+...+*n*+(*n*+1) is equally true (the problem of induction). Nevertheless, the reversal does not suffer from the fallacy of mutual dependence (circularity), as does the circular proof of omniscience from the scripture.

13. There is still one more counter-argument which Hemacandra targets with his argument from partial description (see *arguments*, § 13, n. 107), and which is referred to, e.g., by Dharmakīrti in the *Nyāya-bindu*, Siddharṣi-gaṇin in the *Nyāyavatāra-vivṛti* and Bhāsarvajña in the *Nyāya-bhūṣaṇa*:

‘This [particular person] is not omniscient, because he is endowed with passion (or: because he is a speaker), like a person in the street.’³²

This counter-argument from passions, indeed rather unconvincing, purports to demonstrate that it is not possible to determine on strictly behavioural grounds whether a particular person, who appears on all counts to be like any other member of the society, is omniscient. It is classified by Buddhists, Jains and the Naiyāyikas as a fallacy of the example (*drṣṭāntābhāsa*, *udāharaṇābhāsa*) type in which the property of the probandum and the probans is doubtful (*sandigdha-sādhya-sādhana-dharma*; NB, NAV) or in which the probans is doubtful (*sandigdha-sādhana*; NBhū). I have not come across its genuine instantiation in the Mīmāṃsā or Cārvāka literature, and it seems to be known to us only from its references in Jaina and Buddhist literature.

14. As in the case of the arguments for supernatural perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) and omniscience (*sarva-jñāna*, *kevala*), we can also summarise the counter-arguments, in the following list, knowing that it is not exhaustive and more proofs will surface in subsequent research:

- counter-argument circularity of the argument from progression (§ 1)
- counter-argument from the non-production of the future and the past (§ 2)
- counter-argument from the inaccessibility of the future and the past (§ 3)
- counter-argument from past images (§ 4)
- counter-argument from the lack of cause (§ 5)
- counter-argument from the limited domain (§ 6)

³¹ MŚV 2.130–131:

*buddhādīnām asarva-jñām iti satyaṃ vaco mama /
mad-uktatvād yathāivāgnir uṣṇo bhāsvara ity api // 130 //
pratyakṣam ca mad-uktamtvam tvayā sādhyā tad-uktatā /
tena hetur madīyaḥ syāt sandighāsiddhatā tava // 131 //
pratyakṣādy-avisamvādi prameyatvādi yasya ca /
sadbhāva-vāraṇe śaktaṃ ko nu taṃ kalpayiṣyati // 132 //*

³² NB 3.125: *asarva-jñō ’yaṃ rāgādīmatvād, rathyā-puruṣavat* = NAV 24.2; NBhū, p. 324: *nāyaṃ sarva-jñō rāgādīmatvāt, rathyā-puruṣavat*.

- counter-argument from the overlapping of sensory data (§ 7)
- counter-argument from the lack of evidence (§ 8)
- counter-argument from misapplied definition (§ 9)
- counter-argument from no counter-proof (§ 10)
- counter-argument from circularity (§ 11)
- counter-argument from one's own verifiable statements (§ 12)
- counter-argument from passions (§ 13)

15. Since no works of Indian materialists (*cārvāka*, *lokāyata*) survived except for the

Tattvôpaplava-siṃha of Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa, 'a sceptic loosely affiliated to the materialist Cārvāka / Lokāyata school of thought'³³, we cannot hope to find a plethora of counter-arguments retained first-hand in their works except for some stray excerpts, quotations and reports preserved in works of other schools, such as, e.g., Prabhācandra-sūri's *Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa* (PKM, pp. 247–254). These may yield more interesting counter-arguments.

However, from the extant sources it transpires that the main opponents of the idea of omniscience, i.e. Mīmāṃsakas and materialists, directed their arguments primarily against the schools of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Buddhists. The Jaina concept of omniscience and proofs thereof produced by them hardly ever became the butt of such criticism, which would attest to a rather secondary role played by Jaina thinkers in the actual development of Indian philosophy, at least the way it was perceived by Indian thinkers who were less interested in discussing the Jaina concept of omniscience as a viable alternative.

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