

The refutation of any extra-sensory perception in
Vedānta Deśika: a philosophical appraisal of
Seśvaramīmāṃsā ad MS 1.1.4

Elisa Freschi

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1 Introduction

Vedānta Deśika is the most authoritative theologian of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta after Rāmānuja. He lived in Southern India, around the XIII c. and was a polygraph, writing religious hymns, dramas, theological essays, in three languages.

His *Seśvaramīmāṃsā* (henceforth SM)¹ comments on the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* (henceforth MS), trying to harmonize it with the tenets of *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* (hence the title, meaning "Theistic *Mīmāṃsā*").

1.1 yogipratyakṣa

The *yogipratyakṣa* is a sort of direct apprehension of an object, non-mediated by inference, etc., nor by the sense-faculties, and which could be hence compared to Kant's intellectual intuition. It occupies only a marginal position in pre-Classical Indian philosophy, where it is attributed only to marginal categories (such as *yogins* and *ṛṣis*), whereas Classical authors tend to stress its role as an alternative to Sacred Texts as instruments of knowledge or as an integration of them.

A comparatively huge amount of books and articles² have been written on *yogipratyakṣa* and the debate about its role within the Buddhist *Pramāṇavāda* has led to an interesting controversy ultimately regarding the purely "rational" nature of Buddhism as interpreted by *Dignāga*, *Dharmakīrti* and their successors.³

In the following, I will focus mainly on *Vedānta Deśika*'s treatment of the issue, with a few references to other authors if they shed light on a specific part of the argument, since it highlights one of the dilemmas of *Vedānta Deśika*'s situation as a theist (hence, theoretically favourable to God's intellectual intuition) and a *Mīmāṃsaka* (hence, fiercely opposed to any infraction of common experience).

1.2 Context of SM ad MS 1.1.4

The text which will be analysed here comments on MS 1.1.4. The first *sūtras* of the MS are:

- MS 1.1.1 *athāto dharmajijñāsā*. Here starts the desire to know the dharma.
- MS 1.1.2 *codanālakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah*. The dharma is that purpose/meaning/useful thing which is characterised by a [Vedic] injunction.
- MS 1.1.3 *tasya pariṣṭiḥ*. [Now starts] the inquiry about it (dharma).
- MS 1.1.4 *satsamprayoge puruṣasyendriyāṇām buddhijanma tat pratyakṣam animittaṃ vidyamānopalambhanatvāt*. Once there is a connection with an

¹The two older editions of the SM (1971 and 1940) give no information at all about their textual basis. They differ in details, but these differences might be due to their editors alone. So far, I have had no access to the 1981 edition.

²See, to begin with, the volume dedicated to it, Franco 2009.

³See, on the one hand, the few lines dedicated to *yogipratyakṣa* by *Stcherbatsky* in his ground-breaking *Buddhist Logic* (*Stcherbatsky* 1962) and on the other **Steinkellner1978** **Pemwieser1991** *Steinkellner* 1999, p. 354.

existing thing of a person's sense-faculties, the arousal of a notion is sense-perception. It is not a condition [for knowing dharma] because it seizes [only] present things.

The second sūtra is of particular relevance also for the following discussion. Vedānta Deśika, in his commentary thereon, interprets it in two ways, following Kumārila (see Kataoka 2011, pp. 10, 61):

1) *lakṣaṇa eva*: 'the dharma is that purpose which is characterised *only* by a Vedic injunction'.

2) *lakṣaṇa* as *pramāṇa*: 'the dharma is that purpose whose instrument of knowledge is an injunction'.

The statement contrary to 1) were: there are other instruments to know dharma. The statement contrary to 2) were: there is no way to know dharma.

We shall see how both these interpretations suit Vedānta Deśika's denial of yogipratyakṣa as an instrument to know dharma.

1.2.1 MS 1.1.4

MS 1.1.4 is not an epistemological sūtra dealing primarily with the definition of sense perception. Rather, it aims at excluding sense-perception as a possible instrument to know dharma.

According to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, who is probably the most influential author of the Classical Mīmāṃsā and who founded the so-called Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, MS 1.1.4 aims at excluding also direct (and non sensory) perception, i.e., yogipratyakṣa.⁴

In fact, if intellectual intuition is possible, direct perception is no longer limited to sense faculties and can also grasp super-sensuous objects like dharma. If this is the case, one can justify, e.g., the Buddha's grasp of the four noble truths and one no longer depends on Sacred Texts as one's only source about dharma.

Interestingly, Vedānta Deśika might have chosen to defend yogipratyakṣa and attribute it to God alone (like in Classical and Post-Classical Nyāya), but he rather follows the Mīmāṃsā thesis and refutes yogipratyakṣa, seeing it as a threat to the uniqueness of the Veda.

1.3 Arguments in favour of yogipratyakṣa

Vedānta Deśika's opponent in his SM ad MS 1.1.4 brings forth several arguments in favour of yogipratyakṣa, i.e., of the possibility of a direct perception of things which are usually not in contact with one's senses. They can be grouped according to their sources:

–out of direct perception:

⁴On Kumārila's analysis of MS 1.1.4, see Taber 2005 and **Taberarticleonperception**

- one's perception could be enhanced by saṃskāras, due to repeated experience, like in the case of gem-experts, which are seen to notice details in gems that no one else notices
- one's intense visualisation could make an existing but unseen object visible, like in the case of the image of an existing but absent beloved person

–out of inference:

- some people could have sharper sense faculties, because one sees a graduation in the sharpness of sense faculties
- (specification of the above argument): dharma must be sense-perceptible, because it is a knowable item and all knowable items must, somewhere reach sense-perceptibility.

–out of Verbal Communication (śabdapramāṇa):

- Mahārṣis (in the Upaniṣad) state that they have seen dharma through their inner energy (vīrya).

Alternatively, one can rephrase the grouping by noting that either the *sense-perception* may be enhanced (through repeated exercise), or that the *object* of perception may be enhanced (by intense visualisation), or, lastly, that the *sense-faculty* can be enhanced (according to graduation).

1.3.1 Gem experts

The first case describes the case of experts of gems, who can see in a gem aspects a lay person is not able to see. One might argue that the example does not apply to the case of dharma, since one does not see dharma at all, whereas a gem is seen by everyone, although not everyone sees all its niceties. But the opponent embedded in the *Seśvaramīmāṃsā* has already stated that actions, substances and qualities —which everyone sees— may be referred to as dharma. Hence, an expert only needs to grasp their additional faculty to conduce to the summum bonum (śreyas). An expert would be able to see in dharmic actions also this aspect, whereas normal people would only see the action in its general character.

A possible reply to this claim, not stated by Vedānta Deśika, could run as follows: experts are made aware of further details in a gem only because of śabdapramāṇa. Someone instructed them about the peculiarities of a gem. So, their alleged perception of the peculiarities of the gem is in fact parasitic on śabdapramāṇa. A counter-objector should be able to demonstrate that one can learn to distinguish all features of a gem even on her own, without being instructed about them.

1.3.2 Love-sick

The second argument refers to the case of a love-sick man, who —due to his continuous thinking at his beloved one— eventually makes her appear before his eyes. Similarly, dharma —really existent, but not present before one’s eyes— becomes eventually perceivable by those who intensely meditate about it.

The same argument is discussed already in Vācaspati Mīśra’s Nyāyakaṇikā on Maṇḍana Mīśra’s Vidhiviveka:

Every meditation practised attentively, without interruption, and for a long time results in a cognition with the appearance of an object which is (like) a myrobalan held in the hand; as a love-sick person’s meditation with (these) three distinctions on the beloved is cause for the fact that the cognition whose object is the beloved is of clear appearance [...]⁵

A possible reply to this claim, not stated by Vedānta Deśika, could run as follows: the love-sick man knows his beloved one. One cannot visualise something one has never seen. In case this happens (for instance, one is love-sick of someone one has never met and imagines her), what one sees is only imagined and not corresponding to the real object.

1.3.3 End of graduation

The third argument presupposes the idea that the graduation must somewhere get exhausted —and that it can only get exhausted because it has reached the maximal possible degree. Hence, the point is not that a graduation must get exhausted because there cannot be an infinite graduation, so that it must stop *somewhere*. On the other hand, it has to reach its *outmost* degree. The idea is similar to the requirement of a *primus movens* or, I would argue, of the possibility that an indefinite progression towards moral perfection eventually ends up, so that one achieves the bodhi, the nirvāṇa, heaven, etc.

A possible reply to this claim, not stated by Vedānta Deśika, could run as follows: why should the fact that there is a graduation imply its exhaustion? And even more so, why should it imply its exhaustion only once its outmost level has been reached?

This third case allows, in Vedānta Deśika’s treatment, a further specification: the graduation in the sharpness of the sense faculties means that, for someone, dharma must end up being perceptible.

1.3.4 Ṛṣis

The fourth argument depends on Upaniṣadic statements to the effect that dharma has been seen by special maharṣis endowed with ascetical powers.

⁵tathā hi yā sādaranairantaryadīrghakālāsevītā bhāvanā, sā sarvā karatalāmalakāyamānālambananirbhāsaṅgānaphalā, tad yathā kāmāturasya kāmīnībhāvanā viśeṣaṇatrayavatī kāmīnīviśayavijñānaviśādābhatahetuḥ (Maṇḍana and Vācaspati 1907, pp. 145-6). Textual improvements and translation by Ernst Steinkellner, in Steinkellner 1999, p. 355.

A possible reply to this claim, not stated by Vedānta Deśika, could run as follows: The argument is circular. The maharṣis could only be reliable in stating that they have seen dharma if one already believes in the fact that they have seen it.

1.4 Why not *also* yogipratyakṣa?

An upholder of the Nyāya school might propose that accepting yogipratyakṣa does not harm one’s belief in the Veda as instrument of knowledge. In fact, the same information can be known through more than one instrument of knowledge according to Naiyāyikas. Mīmāṃsā thinkers (and Vedāntin ones, such as Vedānta Deśika) reply that, once a more powerful instrument of knowledge has satisfied one’s need to know something, there is no scope for any other instrument of knowledge. Hence, other instruments of knowledge just do not become active in regard to something which has already been known.⁶

To summarise, Mīmāṃsakas separate the realm of what can be known in two fields:

means of knowledge	sense perception	verbal communication (Veda)
objects to be known	sensory items	transcendent items

The Veda, as explained by Śābara, corresponds to sense perception in conveying a direct knowledge of transcendent items (see Freschi and Graheli 2005).

In contemporary terms, it is interesting to note that the Veda seems to be considered only as an instrument of knowledge. No Mīmāṃsaka proposes that the Veda might have a purpose beside being informative. Does this oppose the claim that also a connotative purpose might be taken into account? Not really, since the indirect signification would also be a plausible content to be conveyed by an instrument of knowledge.

Rather, this is an implicit criticism against these schools (e.g. Śaivasiddhānta or, later on, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism) who allegedly acknowledge the authority the Veda, but *de facto* abolish it, insofar as they propose other Sacred Texts/practices/rituals as more effective for the attainment of the summum bonum. The Śaivasiddhānta *Mokṣakārikā*, for instance, states towards its end (vv.146-147) that the Veda is a suitable means, but that the Śaiva path is quicker. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas claim that the Veda would be a suitable means, but that their path is more effective, since it relies on an unbroken tradition and can hence be transmitted by a spiritual mentor (unlike the Veda, whose tradition is now interrupted). Such seeming “homage” to the authority of the Veda, in fact, deprives it of its purpose (as noted by Renou’s well known remark) and is hence adversed by Mīmāṃsakas.

⁶On the requirement of novelty for the definition of an instrument of knowledge, see Kataoka 2003.

1.5 What is seized by yogipratyakṣa?

Among other thinkers, Utpaladeva in his *ĪPKvivr̥ti* (edited in Torella 2007 and translated in Torella 2008, which also comprehends a short history of the topic) elaborates on yogins being able to grasp objects remote in time or space (in the past or in distant regions). Vācaspati Miśra (see above, §1.3.2) also includes every object within the scope of yogipratyakṣa. Mīmāṃsākas deny that this is possible, on the ground that it contradicts everyday experience, but their strongest criticism is indeed devised against the specific application of yogipratyakṣa to dharma.

In which cases could dharma be perceived according to the upholders of yogipratyakṣa? If it were an established (*siddha*) thing, i.e. something existing in the present or in the past, no matter how remote.

1.5.1 Vedānta Deśika's refutation of yogipratyakṣa as able to seize dharma

Hence, Vedānta Deśika (here following the garb of a Mīmāṃsā argument found, e.g., in Śalikanātha's PrP and Rāmānujācārya's TR) refutes yogipratyakṣa as a means to know dharma by denying to dharma the status of an already established thing —no matter how remote—, ready to be seized. On the contrary, dharma is something yet to be established (*sādhya*), and what will eventually lead to it is not the (e.g. sacrificial) action one presently sees, and refers to as 'dharma'. This seems to imply that yogipratyakṣa cannot apply to future objects or objects pertaining to the domain of what *ought* to be (the elements of these two fields may coincide, but not the fields themselves).

1.6 Yogipratyakṣa and the risk of subjectivism

Why are Mīmāṃsākas and other thinkers so anxious to refute yogipratyakṣa? Some undesired consequence of its assumption, not spelt out by Vedānta Deśika, are the following ones:

1. If one allows to every individual the possibility to directly see dharma, the Veda and all spiritual mediators (Brahmans, gurus, yogins, etc.) become useless.
2. Moreover, one is left with no argument against subjectivism. Everyone could claim to have seen dharma (or apsaras, heaven, UFOs, etc.).
3. Furthermore, every alleged yogin could deny to the lay people the right to confute his or her "visions". If, indeed, only an expert yogin would be eligible for judging his or her own claims, then, no control on the epistemological content of such claims would be possible. (!)

One could now ask why is yogipratyakṣa widely accepted and how do the schools which admit it face these difficulties. In fact, the Indian traditions have already developed antidotes against the risks inherent in yogipratyakṣa, insofar as they:

- limit the scope of yogipratyakṣa to already acknowledged contents (e.g.: the Veda *as we know it* and not a new Sacred Text, or the Four Noble Truths and not a new dogma can be seen).
- limit the people eligible for yogipratyakṣa (only qualified yogins, in some cases (e.g., in Nyāya) only God himself).

Nonetheless, one can easily imagine how the guardians of the Vedic orthodoxy might have looked at yogipratyakṣa as a dangerous concession to subjectivism and to self-proclaimed religions (such as—in their eyes— Buddhism).

1.7 Again on the Circularity in the argument from śabdapramāṇa

I have already noticed (§1.3.4) how the fact that the ṛṣis have seen dharma and, hence, authored the Veda has been allegedly proven on the strength of statements of the Veda itself. This sounds obviously flawed to a contemporary audience: the authority of a text (even this of the Veda) depends on its author, hence one cannot rely on a text’s statement until one has independently established its author’s authority. In other words, the text itself has not an independent epistemological power to establish the characteristics of the one who authored it.

Similarly, Ernst Steinkellner and Masatoshi Nagatomi (and Tilmann Vetter before them, see Vetter 1964) argued that there is a similar circularity at the foundation of the validity of Buddhist thought:

the path taught by the Buddha is valid → because it is established by instruments of knowledge → the validity of these instruments has been established by the Buddha

Hence, the very instruments which should prove the Buddha’s authority are only justified through His authority:

The testing of the validity of the Buddha’s words requires a tool which was for Dignāga and Dharmakīrti the *pramāṇa*, the valid means of cognition. Such a tool, at least in principle, may be expected to be one which is universally acceptable to all and free from dogmatic premises and presuppositions. Both Dignāga and Dharmakīrti struggle to achieve that end by polemically refuting the number and definitions of *pramāṇas* of the non-Buddhist schools which were contradictory to their own. We must note, however, that the final authority by which they claimed the validity of their *pramāṇa* system was none other than the Buddha’s words which they accepted as authentic by faith.⁷

⁷Nagatomi 1980, pp. 245-6. The issue is more than controversial among Buddhologists and Eli Franco and Tom Tillemans strongly disagree with this view. See for instance Franco 1999 and Tillemans 1999.

A naïf Western reader may overestimate these cases, forgetting to look at comparable instances in Western thought. For instance, let me point out common statements in Christian sermons, such as “God is love, as stated in the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians”. In fact, that God is love is presupposed by the existence of his Revelation. Hence, the Revelation itself cannot independently prove it.

The above discussion is not meant in order to censure religious thought. In fact, circularity is not a flaw for a believer—who already trusts the Sacred Texts and is hence not disturbed by an appeal to their authority. One can imagine that an *emotive* commitment is used in order to found an *epistemological* one, so that one cannot strictly speak of circularity. Moreover, it might be suggested that religious thought cannot avoid such a commitment and is, hence, inextricably linked with a decision which cannot be a priori explained through epistemology (which can, however, a posteriori justify it).

1.7.1 Vedānta Deśika on śabdapramāṇa arguments for yogipratyakṣa

Vedānta Deśika’s position in the *Seśvaramīmāṃsā* is quite complicated. As a Mīmāṃsaka author, he denies the possibility of ṛṣis who actually saw the dharma and then authored the Veda. As a theist, however, he assumes that this is possible in the case of God, Viṣṇu. The terms he uses in this connection are: *śāstra*, *āgama*, *upadeśa*, *śruti*. *Śruti* seems to designate just the Veda. *Śāstra* designates the genuine Sacred Texts, i.e., the Veda and the Pañcarātra. *Āgama* refers to the Sacred Texts insofar as they have been uninterruptedly handed down. The same verbal root may apply, hence, also to non-śāstric texts, having a human origin, called *upadeśa*, which have also been handed down (presumably: since a very ancient time).

The Lord’s perception of dharma can be trusted, because it is *nitya*. Hence, it has not been acquired, unlike in the case of ṛṣis or yogins. In fact, the arguments listed above all pointed to the impossibility for a person to acquire such an extraordinary perception. They do not prove that such a perception cannot inhere forever in God.

1.8 A further example for the usage of Mīmāṃsā tenets by Vedānta Deśika: God and apūrva

A typical argument found in Mīmāṃsā texts and attributed to an opponent is that the action is, indeed, the instrument for the achievement of the desired result, although it does not last until the arousal of the result. In fact, the opponent continues, the action pleases God, who will, in a successive time, bestow the result to the sacrificer. This argument is usually refuted through the standard Mīmāṃsā arguments against this kind of God. The Mīmāṃsā solution of the gap between sacrificial action and arousal of its result is the assumption of an apūrva, an ‘unseen before’ potency originated by the sacrificial action and lasting until the result.

In Vedānta Deśika, the argument about God is found at the usual place, namely while discussing the inconsistency of a temporary action which should give raise to a much later result. However, Vedānta Deśika modifies it and embeds it in his final view. In fact, instead of denying the necessity of an apūrva, the idea of a pleased God is *equated* to apūrva. Such unprecedented potency is —so Vedānta Deśika— tantamount to the fact that God has been pleased. In this way, a Mīmāṃsā tenet is embedded and used for the sake of a Vedāntic agenda, as often the case among Vedānta usage of Mīmāṃsā hermeneutic and dialectical tools.

2 Vedānta Deśika’s Seśvaramīmāṃsā ad MS 1.1.4

1. sūtra and context 1.1.4: adhikaraṇa about the confutation of the validity of other [instruments of knowledge] [as far as grasping the dharma]. ONCE THERE IS A CONTACT, WITH something EXISTING, OF THE SENSES AND THE SELF/of the senses of a person, THE AROUSAL OF A CONCEPT IS A DIRECT PERCEPTION. THIS IS NOT A CONDITION [FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF DHARMA] SINCE IS SEIZES [ONLY] PRESENT OBJECTS || 1.1.4||

Once the investigation on dharma has been undertaken through the [question] on whether there is no instrument for knowing [dharma], and whether there is another instrument of knowledge, here first of all is confuted the validity of other [instruments of knowledge], according to the succession (krama) of the two established ascertainments in regard to the possibility of the compound-parts codanālakṣaṇa [in MS 1.1.2] [of having two meanings]3. Hence, in this case, can direct perception be an instrument for knowing dharma or not? –this is the point to be inquired. What is correct (kiṃ yuktam)? 2. PP 2. 1 Arguments in favour of yogipratyakṣa, especially insofar as it is able to seize dharma [PP:] It can (sambhavati-iti). To elaborate: here, substance, action (kriyā), quality, etc., which can be talked about through the word “dharma”, are established through direct perception –this is agreed upon by everyone. The fact that they can be instruments to realise something good, on the other hand, although it is difficult to be seized by people like us at once (sahasā), is nonetheless easily grasped through the direct perception, assisted by a heap of saṃskāras, of those who are used to that, like the reality of a precious stone (ratna) [is easily grasped by experts, but not by common people] (1st argument). [Moreover,] like in the case of the appearances of the beloved one for one who is love-sick (kāmatūra), an intense meditative visualization (bhāvanā) can raise a directly perceivable idea (dhī) [so, ṛṣis or yogis who constantly meditate on dharma can eventually see it] (2nd argument). [Furthermore,] one commonly experiences that there is a graduation in the grasp of sense faculties, like in the case of crows, owls, vultures, etc. [each of them seeing better than the preceding one]. And one commonly experiences that [among] those who take part to this graduation one reaches the pitch. And hence, [the inference] “the graduation in intensity [of eye, etc.] gets somewhere exhausted, because of its nature of graduation, like

the graduation of measures⁴” is either to be applied (prayuj-, caus.) to every sense faculty, or as referring to the graduation in intensity of direct perception in general (and not to a particular sense faculty). If this is the case, all super-sensuous object is established to be sensory in relation to someone [e.g. perception of small ants is sensory for one who has well trained eyes], because the exhaustion [of the graduation of intensity of direct perception] would not be possible without (before) the fact that everything [has become] its content (viṣaya) (3rd argument). As for the topic under discussion (prakṛta), this can be inferred in detail: dharma etc. can be grasped by someone’s sense faculties, because they are knowable things, like the palm of a hand (first syllogistic application of the 3rd argument). Or, for the mīmāṃsakas, there being such a premiss (“dharma etc. can be grasped by someone’s sense faculties”) (pratijñā) [the reason is:] because they are directly perceivable, like our own pleasure and [pain]⁵. [Lastly, we know that dharma is perceivable out of śabdapramāṇa. In fact,] the great ṛṣis themselves speak about the direct perception of great ṛṣis and yogins, engendered by their dharma’s energy: “Hence, he clearly sees all, as it is, through the energy of dharma” (4th argument).

2.2 Argument in favour of the inferability of dharma Hence, it is correct that dharma can be directly perceived. In the same way, it is also inferable. [UP: Why also anumānika? Would not pratyakṣa be enough? PP: No, we need anumāna because in the following example there is no difference in what is seen, hence we need to infer a further condition:] Since there is no distinction among the visible causes [for someone’s misery or happiness], namely service (sevā), learning (adhyāyana), etc., no difference of fruit (phala) can be seized without a further condition (nimitta, that is, dharma and adharma) (if one does not accept dharma and adharma, one cannot understand the manifoldness of the world, which cannot be justified just through visible causes. Two people who perform in the same way sevā and adhyāyana do not get the same results! See U veka and ŚV pratyakṣa 102). Therefore, in this way, since the dharma is directly perceivable and inferable, like it [occurs] in the case of Ayurveda and of politics (arthaśāstra) [whose texts are composed by human authors], also a human sacred text (āgama) [would] be possible (or: ”in regard to the dharma, which is knowable through direct perception and inference, a human text would also be possible, just like politics and medicine [in regard to artha]”).

2.3 Consequences Hence, if the object of a prescription (codanā, as in MS 1.1.2) could be ascertained as dharma through [all] these instruments of knowledge (pratyakṣa, anumāna and worldly treatises such as the Arthaśāstra), then prescriptions seizable only through much effort (āyāsa) (that is, the Vedic prescriptions, requiring hermeneutic efforts) would be fruitless. And the interpretation [of MS 1.1.2] as stating that “only the prescription” [is a means of knowing dharma] would not be suitable. If (atha) a certain meaning, not stated by a prescription [and] not contradicted by it [would be dharma], then there would not be anymore the thesis that “only the prescription” [is a means of knowing dharma]. If, on the other hand, a certain [meaning] opposed to the [prescription], like that taught by the Buddha, etc., [could be dharma], then also the interpretation (avadhāraṇa) [of MS 1.1.2] as “the prescription is an instrument

[for knowing dharma]” would not be suitable, because it (prescription) would be contradicted. Hence in all cases the [sūtra 1.1.2] “Dharma is a meaning having a Vedic prescription as its instrument of knowledge” (I am following here Vedānta Deśika’s interpretation of this sūtra) would be improper (durvaca).

3. Siddhānta 3.1 Rebuttal against the perceptibility of dharma, since it is not a present thing [S:] That he (Jaimini) refutes by the words “A contact with something existing” and the following ones of the sūtra (MS 1.1.4). In this regard, this is the succession of the connection [of the words in the sūtra 1.1.4]: In regard to dharma “perception is not a condition [for knowing it]”. Why? “Because it seizes existing [objects]”, that is, because it grasps present (vartamāna) objects. Again, why is it so? To this doubt it is said:... That is indeed [perception]: the usage (prayoga) of the sense faculties⁶. [PP:] “That” may well be perception. Hence, how could it not be also a condition in regard to dharma? In fact, dharma exists as something which is done at the moment and which has been done, according to its fruit [insofar as there is a fruit, one understands that it has been done]. Hence, direct perception must grasp it. [S:] By no means!⁷ If, first of all, the own nature of a substance or [a quality or an action] is seen (maybe: could be seen⁸) through direct perception as “dharma” in the form “this is dharma”, in the same way as one sees “this is a pot”, and if in its regard we could through the rule [of invariable concomitance] (niyamena) grasp that immediately after this object (artha, that is, dharma) –which has been determined [in the Veda] (nirdiṣṭa) as being the instrument to realise a [desired] result– that [result] comes into being, then through direct perception together with repeated instances of seeing we could ascertain “this is the instrument to realise something good”⁹. [But], since the [desired] result consisting in heaven etc. cannot now be seized, because of the fact that it will occur in another body, it cannot be grasped that [the dharma] is the instrument to realise it. Nor does the action last until the [desired] result is experienced. The unseen potency (apūrva) which is realised by the action, though it lasts [longer], is not perceivable by people like us. This consists, in fact, in the favour (anugraha) of the Deity [to whom the sacrifice has been performed]. [And] in fact the intention of one (the pleased Deity who wishes to favour the sacrificer) cannot reach perceptibility by another¹⁰. (Hence, apūrva is imperceptible because it consists in the Deity having been pleased, and the intention of one (the Deity who has been pleased) is not perceptible by another (a person like us)). Hence, since at the level of the result there is no act (karman) and at the level of the act there is no result, it is impossible for us to grasp the relation of thing to be realised and instrument realising it inhering in both (since we never grasp them together). Hence, the fact that [direct perception] seizes [only] present things is the best (absolute comparative) (siddh-) cause for the fact that direct perception cannot grasp dharma. [p.50]

3.2 Arguments against yogipratyakṣa Through that also the example concerning the nature of a precious stone is refuted (see above, 1st argument). In fact, although the reality of a precious stone has been pondered about thousands of times, [its] heaviness [or: preciousness?] is not grasped by the eyes¹¹. On the other hand, it is right that the difference among colours [of a precious

stone], which was first concealed by their similarity, is eventually made apparent as something sensual, through an accurate investigation (refutation of the 1st argument).

[PP:.] What about the fact that the very topmost level of visualisation (bhāvanā) makes [things] perceptible? [S:] This is not true. Out of visualisation it is not perception which arises, but rather only clearness of memory. In fact, the accumulation of mnemonic traces (saṃskāra) supplies sharpness to memory. Even when, for instance, a love-sick sees his [absent] beloved one, nothing exceeding what has already been known appears [in his image of her]. And the exceeding element appearing in “And on every tree I see Rāma, clothed (ambara) with the skin of an antelope (kṛṣṇājina) and a garment (cīra), with his arch, holding a noose [laccio] in hand like the Destroyer (Yāma)” (Rāmāyaṇa 3.37.1512) and similar [verses], this is not directly perceivable, since it appears in a different way. What [is directly perceivable] is, instead, its external look. (That is, the fact that Rāma appears on every tree and in Yāma’s garb is not directly perceived –through direct perception one would see trees as trees) (refutation of the 2nd argument).

As for the logical reason (sādhana) consisting in [the fact that] there is an end (viśrānti) (namely: the knowledge of dharma) in the graduation towards the pitch (prakarṣa) in the sense faculties, etc.¹³, this on the other hand, does not establish that a single sense faculty [has in its application sphere] all objects (viśaya)¹⁴. On the contrary, [a sense faculty] can have as content all [objects] connected to (samprayukta) it, if [only] [they] belong to what can be grasped by that sense faculty (and, hence, since dharma is not in the precinct of application of any sense faculty, it can never be grasped)¹⁵. In the world, the increasing (prakṛṣyamāna) sharpness of a sense organ is not seen to operate, not even for a [small] part (mātrā) in regard to the objects of the other sense organs, or to its own object once belonging to the past or future. And what is not proximate is said [in MS 1.1.4] not to be domain of the sense organs (refutation of the 3rd argument).

As for the logical reason consisting in the sensory quality of dharma etc. because of its being knowable and [perceptible (as in the Mīmāṃsā-targeted version of the syllogism)], that has also been refuted (niras-) because of the absence of a subsequent invalidating cognition (bādhaka) (in the contradictory case, vipakṣa). Else [if the PP’s syllogism should be accepted notwithstanding this lack], why should the [following syllogism] not establish [its own content’s validity]: “dharma, etc., and colour, etc., are seizable by the organ of smell of someone, because they are knowable, like odour”? [PP:] [The last syllogism fails to establish its content because] because the potency of [each sense faculty] is ascertained through the restriction [of every sense faculty’s sphere] to a specific content. [S:] Then, you should apply this also to the topic under discussion (since dharma is not in the precinct of application of sense perception altogether)! [PP:] Let us assume that also the sense of smell at a certain point reaches all objects. [S:] No, because of the answer said above (the potency of a sense-faculty is limited) and because it is not realised through the sheer fact of wishing it (refutation of the first syllogistic application of the 3rd argument).

As for the direct perception born out of dharma's energy in the case of ṛṣis and yogis¹⁶, which has been accepted because of passages of the Veda [asserting it], this (direct perception) is not the import of their practices (anuṣṭhāna¹⁷) (and, hence, it is not their effect¹⁸). [Rather, the opposite is the case,] since this [perception] is born out of practices determined in the Veda, because dharma etc. are made into objects of direct perception exactly through the fact that [they] are the meaning of the Veda. [Hence, dharma is not a new content for ṛṣis and yogins, and this perception would rather resemble the one arising out of bhāvanā and already criticised as consisting just of memory.] Nor [can it be] the import of practices of people like us, since the practices of a person do not help the perception of another one¹⁹. (That is, it cannot be the case that ṛṣis perform practices and consequently perceive dharma, since in fact their practices are based on the dharma as described in the Veda. One could claim that this does not apply to normal people, who could perform practices independently of the Veda, but our practices cannot lead to the ṛṣis' perception –and that normal people do not see dharma is common sense.) (refutation of the 4th argument). But, since the Teaching (upadeśa) of them (these ṛṣis) is of human origin, although it is being handed down (āgam-), learned people, depending on a reflection on [the dharma's] basis, must look for another instrument of knowledge in regard to this dharma, once it is eliminated its being based (lit.: is the rest of what is based) on the perception produced by the dharma's energy [or: “learned people must look for another instrument of knowledge as regards the dharma which can't be based on the perception produced by the dharma's energy, [as one understands] depending on a reflection on [its] basis”]. And this [other instrument of knowledge] is nothing but the Treatise (śāstra). The Pañcarātra Sacred Texts, which are based on the immutable (nitya) perception of the Lord, do not require the śruti (Veda) as their root [or: do not require the Vedic Revelation (mūla as Veda?) (mūla-śruti)] although they have as content the [same] object [as] the śruti (Veda). Nonetheless, [this is possible only because] this Lord is distinguished by an immutable direct perception [and hence can indeed perceive dharma, unlike human ṛṣis who should acquire such a perception –and actually cannot]. Hence, as for the establishment of the [dharma's] own nature, once there has been the refusal of the fault of a speaker as the [dharma's] root, only the [Vedic and Pañcarātra] Revelation is a [proper] shelter. Hence, the validity of the [dharma taught in the Veda and Pañcarātra Sacred Texts] bears no exception exactly since it relies on the validity of the [Vedic and Pañcarātra Revelation] (or: the validity of the Pañcarātra it is not effected, nir-upapāditam, because of the Veda, [rather because of God's immutable perception]). PROPOSAL: Hence, since a speaker has been refused and since His own nature is established, the Veda is a shelter [and] the validity of the [Pañcarātra] is not effected through it (nir-upapāditam ca). [PP: But one might object that the Pañcarātra Sacred Texts are not injunctive, like the Veda, and that, hence, their validity cannot be proven through MS.] [S:] The object of the [Pañcarātra] has indeed been taught by the Lord as “This is the object of the injunction” (cf. MS 1.1.2). Hence, according to the rule of the Lord Viṣṇu's Smṛti, the Gītā etc., also in regard to the object told by Him the validity of a

[Vedic] injunction is attained.

3.3 Arguments against the inferability of dharma In this way, since it is impossible for people like us to directly observe (adhyakṣ-) dharma in the form of an instrument to realise [one's] benefit, it is established that even inference, which requires [the observation] of mutual concomitance and exclusion [and, hence, depends on direct perception], is not an instrument of knowledge in regard to dharma. As for [the argument] “Even in case of an equal study and service [to God], one [inferentially] postulates a difference in the extra-sensory conditions because one sees a difference in result” –that also does not [hold], because it does not require a further condition, since it is possible that a subtle difference in study, service [to God], etc., is indeed visible. And, once a difference in condition has been postulated in general, would it be established through direct perception, etc. or through [Vedic] injunction and other [Sacred Texts]? Since the correct distinction (viveka) is not established, [the argument] is not useful for the [correct] practice. (Since through inference one only postulates a difference in study, service, etc., but cannot ascertain its nature, there is no way to know what one should do in order to achieve it. Hence, either one relies on the Veda, or one is stuck to impotence.) Therefore, only the Sacred Texts (śruti) are a [proper] shelter for the performance of dharma, together with [its] procedure.

4. Conclusions

Hence, in this way, through the refutation of the validity of sense perception and inference in regard to dharma, also the worldly Communication (āgama), which is based on it, is not established as the instrument to know dharma. On the other hand, the other instrument of knowledge, such as analogy, evidence (arthāpatti), inclusion, they do not exist at all, because they are included each in the suitable of the three [proper] means of knowledge (that is, analogy in sense perception, evidence in inference, inclusion in Verbal Communication?). This has been resolved by us in the Nyāyapariśuddhi and in the Tattvamuktākalāpa. Although [they (instruments of knowledge) are] external (to inference and perception), [they] do not have the dharma as content through the fact of having the same rule (as the other instruments of knowledge). Hence, in this way, through the instruments of knowledge other than [Vedic] injunction, although some of them are independent of it, neither what is said by the injunction, nor what is other than that, or contradicting it, is seized as dharma. Therefore, the ascertainment “only the Injunction” is correct.

5. Summary verses

But this fact of being born out of a contact with something existing [as in MS 1.1.4] is in regard to a person who has attained the level of “performer” (anuṣṭhātṛ) [of sacrifices or religious austerities]; [God's] divine, perceptible, etc. [perception] is well established || 28 || The perception of people like us [is] the thesis here admitted. Hence, there is no partial non-establishment, nor a succeeding validating cognition, due to the two reasons mentioned here || 29 || “Of the sense faculties of a person”: due to this predicate stating the multiplicity of what is one, a self is shown, different from the sum of body, sense faculties, etc. || 30 || The only one who unifies through the eyes (i.e, sense faculties) or

the limbs the objects which have been seized separately from each other, to say that this is nothing but those [sense faculties and limbs] is wrongly stated || 31 || In fact, the collection is not approved as a reality additional in respect to the collector | nor is there a parts-endowed one different from the collection of the parts || 32 || Nor, in this case, as in the case of a village (where a plurality of houses is indeed seized), is a plurality of knowers seized | nor is it commonly said that “I am the hand”, “I am the eye” || 33 || Also the otherness from the assemblage of the vital airs called “prāṇa is left over | because the postulation of a singular multitude is not fit || 34 ||

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