

Chapter 4

Self

As much as any topic broached in the Nyāya-sūtra, Nyāya's views on the self and consciousness need to be understood in the context of teachings of other schools. The early Nyāya position is flanked by opposition both by Buddhists who champion a doctrine of "no-self," *anātman*, and by the Sāṃkhya tradition, which argues that the real self is a source of awareness without the capacity to act, which comes from "materiality," *prakṛti*. As Nyāya matures, another opponent is the Advaita Vedāntin who views the apparent plurality of individual selves as illusion in the face of the reality of a single cosmic self.

Nyāya-sūtra 1.1.1 lists the major topics of the school, the second of which is *prameya*, "object of knowledge." The principal objects or types of objects are listed at sūtra 1.1.9. Heading that list is "self," *ātman*. Sūtra 1.1.10 gives a concise statement of the principal Nyāya arguments for the existence of selves, arguments that are fleshed out and supplemented by other arguments in a long stretch of sūtras in Nyāya-sūtra chapter three. There we find not only extended examination of the rival Buddhist theory but also refutation of a materialist theory of self and consciousness advocated by Cārvāka.

Udayana comments on 1.1.10 that although Nyāya views the self as known in part by apperceptions expressed by the word "I" (*aham*), as in "I am seeing a pot," some take the word in such sentences to refer to the body, or in another way try to confute the evidence of self-awareness. For this reason, he says, Gautama tells us right away what the inferential marks are that prove the self's existence. Later we learn that the self that is proved is an individual amongst other individuals and not Vedānta's cosmic self, and this

despite Nyāya's insistence that the Upaniṣadic scriptures championed by Vedānta give us testimonial knowledge that a self is a real and enduring entity.

Nyāya's arguments take place against a background of Buddhist challenges to Nyāya's realism about enduring objects, and especially Buddhist denial of self as a special sort of enduring object. Buddhists put pressure on the notion of a self by deploying a theory of momentariness: things exist for only a instant, and what we take to be enduring substances are rather "streams" of countless entities in causal sequences. According to this view of momentariness, what many Hindu philosophers take to be an enduring—indeed eternal—self is rather a stream of cognition-instances that is mistakenly taken to be an enduring entity. In their commentaries, our Nyāya philosophers devote much effort to refuting this position.

1.1.10: Inferential marks for the self are desire, aversion, effort, pleasure, pain, and knowledge.

Vātsyāyana [16.5–20]: From sensory contact with a certain type of object, pleasure arises and is experienced by a self. Observing another object of the same type, the person desires to have it. The desire to have, "This is the kind of thing I experienced before"—on the part of a single observer seeing multiple objects of the same type and recognizing them as such—is an **inferential mark for the self**. For, such a desire would not be possible if there existed only a series of distinct cognitions each with its own fixed content, just as it would not be possible with a body different from one's own.

Caused by pain, **aversion** also arises from such recognition, by putting together various experiences on the part of a single perceiver of many objects.

A person makes effort to have something, perceiving that it is the same type of thing as that which she knows causes pleasure. This is the **effort**, which would not occur without a self as a single perceiver of many objects of the same type over time (that is, without that which puts together the various experiences). For, again, such would

not be possible if there existed only a series of distinct cognitions each with its own fixed content, as with a body different from one's own. With this, **effort** motivated by pain or suffering is also explained.

Furthermore, a person remembering pleasure along with pain secures the relevant means to gain pleasure and to avoid pain. She experiences pleasure and she experiences pain. Remembering such experiences, she puts herself in a position to understand matters of pleasure and pain. The reason for this is just as was stated above. A person wanting to know something reflects, "Just what is that?" And she can know her own deliberation through introspection, "This deliberation." So that kind of **knowledge** requires the same agent that is continuous between the desire to know and the deliberation; such being grasped, there is an **inferential mark for a self**. The reason for this is just as was stated above (that is, that there is a self that puts together information from different occasions of experience).

Here the idea, "as with a body different from one's own," requires analysis. Proponents of the view that there is no self would admit that a series of distinct cognitions, each with its own fixed content, could not recognize previous experiences generated in connection with *bodies* other than one's own. Similarly (in the absence of an enduring self), distinct cognitions with content restricted by connection with one's own body could not be the basis of recognition, because the two scenarios are fundamentally the same.

It is well known that remembering belongs to the one who had some precise earlier experience, a single creature. One does not remember something experienced by another or something he himself has never experienced before. In the same way, it is well known that for all sorts of creatures one does not remember the things found in another's experiences. Proponents of the "no-self" view cannot account for either of these occurrences (the fact that one remembers things from one's own past experiences and that one does not remember things from the experiences of other people). In contrast, matters as we have presented them, namely, that there is a self, accords well with the phenomena described.

The core concern of all the commentaries under this sūtra is to refute the Buddhist theory that all we have are diverse sense experiences without an enduring subject who possesses and ties them together. The body is in constant flux, and, to use Buddhist language, even in the "stream" of momentary cognitions I mistakenly take to be myself, the "me" of back then is something other than the "me" of right now. Uddyotakara also hints in the next passage at the further argument that on the Buddhist view it would be impossible to recognize a single object presented through two different sense modalities. This will be discussed later at length in this chapter.

Uddyotakara [60.14–61.17]: Since the items mentioned in the sūtra come to be fused with fixed content provided by memory, they all prove that there is a single subject. For, recognition could not occur if there were a plurality of subjects, a plurality of cognitively fixed contents, and a plurality of causes for the ideas put together. The ideative flows of sights, tastes, smells, and touches are not made to come together to form a recognition on their own. Nor is it true that my visual experience in the past is something I am able to touch later. And it is also false that my tactile experience from the past is the sight I see now.

Furthermore, it is wrong that when something has been seen by Devadatta that very thing seen is recognized by Yajñadatta. Nor do we find it said, "Whatever Devadatta has directly experienced in the past, I, Yajñadatta, have thusly experienced." What's the reason for all this? It's because distinct cognitions have fixed content of their own. Having fixed content of their own, cognitions mutually exclude one another by nature. This is accepted by those who deny the self's existence. On their view, we should not expect any acts of recognition. Therefore, that which brings together contents into a recognition is precisely a self.

Opponent: Such recognitions happen because of causal relationships.

Reply: Then you hold that a recognition does not involve a single subject. How could that be?

Opponent: Because of the causal relationships. From each individual prior cognition comes a successor cognition, because the latter conforms to the causal power of its predecessor. In this way, a whole bundle of causal powers are strung together into a comprehensive whole. Recognition is thus produced by causal relationships alone, causal relationships among cognitions, even though there is a plurality of individual experiencers (in a single "stream" that comprises a person). It's like such things as a seed. It is only a distinct sort of sprout that appears immediately after a succession of rice globules, which is determined by what has preceded it in conformity to rice capacity (the capacity of rice as opposed to, say, the capacity of wheat). Later, it is again rice seed that is produced if the elements have been favorable, not wheat seed, because that is not what preceded it causally. Similarly, a recognition occurs from a determination through causal relationships among cognitions belonging to a single stream (*santāna*). They do not belong to another cognitive stream because they do not have those other cognitions as their predecessors. The operative principle is what immediately precedes what. It is false, let us repeat, that a recognition occurs because there is a single enduring subject or agent, since none is found. Therefore, such a recognition as you describe can occur otherwise than by your explanation, and it cannot be used to prove that a self exists.

Reply: Wrong, because you haven't given up the idea of a plurality of distinct individuals (that is, diverse cognitions). When you say that a recognition comes about from causal relationships, you haven't freed yourself from the idea of a plurality of distinct individuals. Why is this? It's because causal relationships presuppose such pluralities. Indeed, a causal relationship is based on a plurality of distinct individuals. And it is understood in common by both our sides that no recognition is found if there is only a plurality of distinct experiencers. How so? Because what has been experienced by one is not remembered by another. And no one is able to recognize an object of which she has no memory. . . .

A common strategy in early Buddhist philosophy is to argue that the roles commonly attributed to substances in maintaining continuity over time can be reduced to cause-effect

chains. Uddyotakara has his opponent suggest this very point to explain how recollection may take place even without a self that endures. Causal continuity between cognitive events in a "stream" of multiple experiencers that we mistakenly call a single person is all that is needed to account for recollection. The example of a seed employs the stream notion, where in Buddhist terms a seed right before sprouting and at the time of sprouting are two different things, united only by causal continuities between them.

Next we have Vācaspatimiśra pointing out that certain cases of cause-effect relationship do not generate recollection over time. Causal relationships are thus not sufficient to underwrite the sort of psychological events described in the sūtra. He imagines an opponent arguing that we don't always see the causal connections but that they are operative all the same. Vācaspatimiśra counters with an example of a small piece of fruit being replaced by another, such that a cause-effect tie between the object of cognition need not even be necessary, much less sufficient, for recognition of similarity.

Vācaspatimiśra [176.22–177.5]: . . . And it is not true that in spite of the differences among cognitions causal relationships alone could make possible recognition such as we have described. For, where there is a causal relationship very clearly evident, such as between threads and a piece of cloth, or between pot-halves and the pot they compose, even there, there is no putting together of experiences over time. There is nothing like a recognition in the form of, "Those threads previously experienced are this very piece of cloth," nor, "That which was a pot-moment is this moment of a pot-half."

Opponent: In truth, we often fail to observe the differences between the things that stand in a causal relationship. Yet we find that, being divided every moment, they are the basis for the experience of recollection.

Answer: Wrong. If you take away one piece of *āmalaka* fruit and put in its stead another *āmalaka*, you can recognize it as of the same type. And between the two pieces of fruit there is no causal relationship. . . .

Next is a different sort of argument by Uddyotakara that begins with the idea that qualities reside in substances. There

is no free-floating "red"; the color exists only as nested in substances such as this red scarf or that red apple. And things such as desire and aversion are qualities that require an appropriate, psychological sort of substance in which to rest. It is a self who plays the "supporting" role. Nothing short of an enduring substance can house such things that, like other qualities, require a support. That is to say, they need something to serve as their substratum and location.

Uddyotakara [64.12–18]: Some say that alternatively the sūtra "Inferential marks for the self are desire, aversion, effort, pleasure, pain, and knowledge" can be interpreted in another way. These items, desire and the rest, are qualities (*guṇa*), and qualities demand things other than themselves in which to reside. This is the reasoned position.

... (Thus) a self can be proved by means of an eliminative argument: because desire and the rest are impermanent, they are not self-supporting. Another reason they depend on things other than themselves is that they are effects. They are like color and other material qualities, which depend upon the substances in which they inhere. Furthermore, these are not qualities belonging to the body, since they do not inhere in material substances. And material substances being ruled out, we identify these as qualities of a self, a psychological substance. Thus, a self is proved.

The next sustained argument for the self is from Nyāya-sūtra chapter three. It focuses on cross-modal cognition, our ability to grasp objects through multiple sensory channels.

3.1.1: Because one grasps the same object through sight and touch, there is a self that is distinct from the body and sense organs.

Vātsyāyana [135.14–136.4]: Some particular object is grasped by sight; the same object is also grasped by touch: "That very thing which I saw with my eyes I am now feeling through my sense of touch," and "That very thing which I felt through my sense of touch I am now seeing with my eyes." The two instances of mental content that are each directed towards one and the same object have—in being comprehended—a

single subject. And it is not the case that the subject comprehending the two is simply the aggregate of bodily parts. Nor does there come to be a single subjectivity through the activity of any particular sense organ. Thus the grasper of one and the same object by the visual organ and the organ of touch comprehends two instances of mental content about one and the same thing, two instances of mental content that have distinct causal complexes and distinct instrumental causes, but have no other subject than the grasper. That one, in a special category, is a self.

Question: How, again, is it that the mere functioning of the sense organs cannot bring about a single subjectivity for both instances of content?

Answer: It is true that a sense organ is capable (in a sense) of comprehension in terms of grasping and repeatedly transmitting its peculiar content itself to a subject who endures the passage of time. But it does not grasp the other content which belongs to another sense faculty.

Question: Why is it that an aggregate of bodily parts cannot bring about a single subjectivity for both instances of content?

Answer: Because he is one and the same who is *conscious* of the two instances of mental content that have distinct instrumental causes but one and the same self as subject. No aggregate could be *conscious* of them.

Question: Why?

Answer: Because each item within such an aggregate of bodily parts would continue to fail to comprehend the other instances of mental content, like the case of a sense organ (which, as pointed out, cannot grasp another organ's content).

3.1.2: Objection: This is wrong. (There is no self that is distinct from the body and sense organs) because sense organs are restricted to their own proper content.

Vātsyāyana [136.7–17]: Objection: Other than the aggregate of body and the rest (the sense organs), there is no consciousness. Why? **Because sense organs are restricted to their own proper content.** That is to say, the sense organs

have objects or content that is strictly demarcated. When there is no organ of sight, no color is grasped.

And we accept the following rule: if x is absent when y is absent, but present when y is present, then x belongs to y . Thus, the grasping of color belongs to the visual organ. The two eyes are what see color. The other organs also work in this way on their own objects, the olfactory and the rest. Just these several sense organs are conscious, because what is grasped is content restricted to specific sensory modalities. The reason is that specific content is grasped because of the presence or absence of the separate sense organs. And so, what's the point in positing something else as the experiencer?

Response: You haven't given a good reason, since it's a dubious point. You contend that the nature of grasping content is fixed according to the presence or absence of the sense organs, and that, given this principle, the inference for a self as the conscious experiencer fails. But your contention remains doubtful, since there is an alternative: there is a conscious self *because* the sense organs are instrumental for conscious awareness but not themselves sufficient for the conscious grasping that occurs. Since there is this alternative view, a doubt remains.

And what you said, "because sense organs are restricted to their own proper content," is addressed in the following sūtra.

3.1.3: (Answer:) The very restriction of sense organs to their own proper content is a reason to suppose the existence of a self—thus, the self's existence is not contested.

Vātsyāyana [137.1–13]: If, let us suppose, a sense organ did not have content that was restricted to one sensory modality, then as an all-cognizing, all-content-grasping, conscious thing, we wouldn't have to infer a conscious being over and above that. But no, it is *because* the sense organs are restricted in content that there has to be something else, a conscious being capable of cognizing anything, a grasper of content of whatever sort, transcendent to that which is restricted in content. This is our inference.

It is easy to illustrate that such undeniable recognition as we have sketched out occurs in a conscious being. A person who sees something (such as a ripening fruit) that has a certain shape and color can infer its taste or smell based on previous experiences. And someone cognizant of something's smell can infer its color and shape or taste as well. The same is to be said for the rest of the types of specific content. . . . Hearing letters ordered sequentially, one is able to recognize a word in a sentence, and cognizing a fixed verbal arrangement in a sentence, one grasps complex content produced by it, content which none of the sense organs could grasp working independently. All this, which spans various arrangements and modalities, must be cognized by a being capable of cognizing anything, and not just through one specific mode of presentation. On the heels of this argument, you cannot just turn our point on its head. A simple case is all that is needed for illustration. Thus, what you put forth, that given that there is consciousness in the sense organs there is no use of positing a conscious being over and above them, is wrong.

A further argument in this section of the Nyāya-sūtra focuses on the need for moral, or "karmic," continuity. Nyāya argues that the Buddhist view that reduces the self to a stream of fleeting states cannot account for moral continuity. Normally, we hold that one who commits an act carries moral implications of the act long after it is completed, since she is the same person over time. But on the Buddhist view of momentariness, at every instant, when the current body/mind aggregate is destroyed, the current "me" would be annihilated. The later "me" instance is a different thing entirely, and should not be bound by the acts of another. Moreover, if at each moment the "self" is destroyed, why should an individual strive for a future salvation that she will not experience? Or for anything at all? The Nyāya complaint is that the Buddhist view not only undermines morality, but makes the struggle for enlightenment farcical. Note that the term "results" in the passage below refers to the moral or karmic consequences of one's own actions.

Vātsyāyana [137.17]: From what has been established (in sūtras 3.1.1–3), it follows that the self is distinct from the body and the rest. It is not simply the aggregate of the body and so on.

3.1.4: When a living body is harmed, no sin would be incurred (if there were no self).

Vātsyāyana [137.19–138.10]: Use of the word “body” in the sūtra is meant to express the aggregate of body, senses, cognition, and awareness that make up a living being. One who (for example) burns a living body causes harm to the living being, committing a wicked act called sin. “No sin” means that (for those who deny a permanent self) there would be no connection between the agent of sin and its results; conversely, there would be a relationship between the results and someone other than the agent. Indeed, in the flowing series of body, senses, cognition, and awareness, one aggregate would arise while another is terminated. And that there is a *sequence* in the form of a stream of arising and terminating would not mitigate the problem of the agent’s otherness, since each individual aggregate of body, etc., would stand distinct from every other aggregate. For, the fact that each stands distinct from every other is widely understood. And so, this being the case, the living being in the form of an aggregate of body, etc., who causes harm would not be the one connected to the karmic fruits of harm, and the one who would be connected would not be the one who caused the harm. Thus, on the view that there are distinct beings (in a series, as opposed to a single enduring self), there results the unacceptable consequence of losing what one has done and acquiring what one has not done.

Further, if it is true that an (entirely new) being arises and is terminated (constantly), individuals would not be shaped through the causal influence of karma. And religious ways of life such as celibacy for the sake of liberation would be meaningless. So if the living being were merely an aggregate of body, etc., when a person was burned and harmed, no sin would be incurred by the one who did the burning. This view is unacceptable. Therefore, the self is something

other than the aggregate of body, etc., and it endures the passage of time.

Uddyotakara [333.11–15]: On the Buddhist view, there could be no effort for liberation, since it would be achieved without effort. “Simply by being born, one would be liberated (as each self-instance is immediately annihilated).” Celibate religious life, undertaken for liberation (according to the Buddha’s own teachings), would be meaningless. Nor would there be the religious inquiry whereby *bhikṣus* (monks) respond to questions made by the Buddha himself (as recorded in the sacred texts). . . .

Among several arguments in favor of a self in Nyāya-sūtra chapter three, we have reviewed three: (a) diachronic recognition of one thing at two times, (b) synchronic perceptual synthesis concerning one thing through two distinct sensory transmissions, and (c) moral or karmic continuity. A fourth, somewhat less prominent line of argument opposes the view that the body itself, with all its parts in “intimate association,” is the seat of consciousness. One argument against this view is (d) a corpse has all the material elements and properties that a living person has without consciousness. To account for consciousness, there has to be something else. The arguments from diachronic recognition, from synchronic perceptual synthesis, and from karmic continuity occur in the passages translated above, but the fourth is more diffuse, running through several sūtras involving peculiar ideas about the body. At the end of our chapter, the anti-materialist argument will be presented and reviewed.

We turn now instead to arguments that aren’t concerned with the existence of the self but with its nature. Along with other schools under the umbrella of Vedic culture, Nyāya views a self as “eternal” or “constant.” The relevant Sanskrit word, *nitya*, means “continuous,” not necessarily “time-transcendent.” While a self experiences temporal succession, it is never threatened by non-existence. The main idea in the Nyāya arguments is that the continuity of the self stretches indefinitely into the past, because otherwise we wouldn’t be able to explain features of our psychology. That it extends indefinitely into the past is then our reason for thinking that

it also extends indefinitely into the future. The issue here is reincarnation. If there were no previous life, a new-born child would not express emotions such as happiness or fear, for which she gives every indication.

Vātsyāyana [146.3–8]: Question: This conscious being that is something other than the body and the rest, as has been argued, is it eternal or is it non-eternal? Now we have this doubt “because both ways of being are found to occur.”¹ That is, existent things exist in both ways; some are eternal, others non-eternal. And by our having learned that there is a self, this doubt is not yet resolved.

Answer: The arguments that establish that there is a self do indeed themselves establish that there is a state of the self prior to incarnation, because it is different from the body. Thus there is also one afterwards (that is, after death), because the self is different from the body. How so?

3.1.18: Because happiness, fear, and unhappiness are experienced by a new-born appropriately, through connection with what was previously practiced and remembered (a self endures beyond death).

Vātsyāyana [146.11–14]: A new-born is a child who has not in this lifetime experienced things that cause **happiness, fear, and unhappiness**. These emotions are nevertheless experienced by the new-born, since the baby shows signs by which these feelings may be inferred. And such experiences come about only through connection with memories. Such connection with memory does not come about without prior practice and experience. And in the case of a new-born, the prior practice and experience can only be during a previous lifetime. In this way we establish that there is a state of the self afterwards too, because the self is different from the body.

Uddyotakara [344.2–5]: Objection: The existence of a self has been proven by reasons that also establish that it endures even when separated from the body. Since that has been proved, there is no need for further discussion.

1 *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 2.2.22.

Answer: This discussion must take place. Why? That there is a single enduring being from birth until death has been established by the arguments so far. However, it has not been established that the self continues after the body's destruction. This is what remains to be proved by the sūtras at hand. The current section is directed to making this known.

Vācaspatimiśra [471.11–18]: Uddyotakara refutes an objection against embarking upon another section of text by means of the current sūtra. . . . By having been made to see that the body, senses, cognition, and pain (or feeling in general) are not identical to the self, and, by implication, having been made to understand that recognitions belong to a single self that is the same through changes of childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age, we also find that the self exists after the destruction of the body. Such is the motivation for us to open a new section. The question put concerns what remains to be done; that is, given what has been settled already, the doubt concerns whether the work of the new section has not already been done—this is Uddyotakara's meaning. He puts the question to rest with the words, “This discussion must take place.” Even though it has been proved that the self is different from the body and so on, and that it is continuous from childhood through old age, there is doubt about just what it is. Is it that a self endures from the birth of the body until death such that it only supervenes on the stream of those things such as the body that exist from birth to death? Or is it that even when those things have passed away, the stream of the body and the rest, it would really continue? This is the examination that is to be undertaken now. It has not been ruled out. To put such doubt to rest, a new section is opened. This is what Uddyotakara says.

Uddyotakara [344.6–17]: Here is the meaning of the sūtra. . . . As may be inferred from its smiling, thrashing about, and crying, a new-born child is found to have appropriate experiences of happiness, fear, and unhappiness. But the sense organs by themselves are not capable of generating such content (the child being newly born). And these feelings are produced through connection with memories. Connection with memories, furthermore,

would not be possible without there having been a previous incarnation. The connection to one's body, cognition, and feeling constituted by this birth demands a relationship with things that have been previously experienced. Such emotions are quite real and expressed by the child.

Happiness is pleasurable experience that happens when one gets whatever is the intended object of hope or expectation. **Fear** comes from an incapacity to avoid what one would like to avoid when causes of unwanted experience are about to coalesce. **Unhappiness** amounts to the expectation that it will be impossible to have again some desired experience which has been closed off. Possessing these emotions in accordance with how they are defined is what is meant by saying that they are held **appropriately**.

Practice and experience (which produce memory) require repeated cognition of the same content, or at least content of similar form or shape. For example, rice eaten by a subject on different occasions produces memory of such eating. Memory consists of cognitive content that is comprised of previous perceptions or thoughts when their objects have ceased to be present. Recognition amounts to cognitive content—content of previous perception or thought—that informs present content, thanks to the previous cognitions. The connection that is the cause of memory is the mental disposition (*saṃskāra*) subject to a kind of reawakening or triggering. By remembering content produced by something desirable, the child smiles, from food, for example, or a present being brought. By remembering content produced by something unwanted, the child cries, thrashing his limbs about, making particular sounds and shedding tears, indicating that he feels the presence of that which he wants to avoid.

All this and other phenomena—in particular, a new-born's action of reaching precisely towards its mother's breast for nourishment (sūtra 3.1.21)—are taken to show that the mental dispositions (saṃskāra) responsible for the memories have to have an enduring receptacle to make possible both the emotions and the purposive action of reaching. Like smiling, etc., goal-directed action requires previous cognition of the goal. The objection (sūtra 3.1.19) that the smiling, etc., could be like a flower opening and closing according to

the presence or absence of the sun, is met (sūtra 3.1.20) by the observation that in common experience smiling and the like have previous experience as part of the causal complex responsible for bringing them about.

Next, an objection is put forth (sūtra 3.1.22) that a new-born's reaching for the breast is instead like iron filings being pulled by a magnet, without need of conscious direction or purpose. This is answered (sūtra 3.1.23) by the observation that the child shows a certain flexibility and range within first-time action, whereas filings move only towards a magnet. These considerations are taken to prove that a conscious self exists prior to birth. And if one's current life has been preceded by events from a past life, which belong to a self that has retained the dispositions that the prior life's experiences formed—as in what is colloquially called “muscle memory”—then it stands to reason that our current lives will be followed by others or at least other states of a self (in case one achieves “liberation,” *mokṣa*).

Nyāya-sūtra chapter three has many more sūtras devoted to the self in relation to other items of our psychology, in particular the physical body as well as perception and the sense organs. The second “daily lesson” (each chapter has two; see Appendix A) opens with the transitory nature of occurrent cognition, which is changing all the time. After an excursion to refute the Buddhist view that not only cognition but everything is momentary, the topic becomes the location of occurrent cognition. While this has been discussed before, the current context allows Vātsyāyana to review and refine the view that the self is the locus of awareness, and not any particular cluster of physical elements or non-sentient intermediaries.

3.2.39: Cognition is a property of the self, since alternatives have been eliminated and undefeated reasons have been given above.

Vātsyāyana [197.1–18]: The current topic is the proposition that cognition is a quality belonging directly to a self. There has indeed been **elimination** of alternative candidates. Through elimination of alternatives shown to be unfit, the correct view will be that which remains because it has not fallen to difficulties. Certain candidates for locating

cognition, (a) the material elements that make up the body, (b) the sense organs, and (c) the mind, *manas*, have been eliminated. Another substance has not been eliminated—it remains—and that is (d) the self.

The words “along with undefeated reasons given above” mean that cognition is a property of the self also because the reasons that establish the existence of a self have not been ruled out, such as (sūtra 3.1.1) **Because one grasps the same object through sight and touch, there is a self that is distinct from the body and sense organs.** The expression “undefeated reasons given above” has two purposes: to establish that the self remains a candidate for the location of cognition, and to know how the topic at issue is resolved.

Alternatively, the words “undefeated reasons” may be taken to mean that this sūtra is simply presenting another reason. Being constant and continuous in its existence, the self we have been discussing would *emerge* on separation from the body, in a heaven among gods if righteousness (*dharma*) has been practiced. In contrast, if unrighteousness (*adharma*) has been done, the emergence on separation from the body would be in a hell. The word in the sūtra means “emergence” on this reading, emergence characterized by obtaining another body. Furthermore, given that the self exists constantly, the emergence would be its becoming a container or location of properties. But this would not be possible if there were merely a connected series of cognitions without a self, without a container or substratum. . . .

And if there were nothing but a stream of cognitions, everything produced from the everyday activity of living beings would become disjointed, because a being would be divided in itself. Nothing would be distinguishable, and nothing effected (since an act begun by one would be completed by another). This would follow because there would be no remembering. The principle is: no one remembers the content of another’s experiences. Moreover, remembering really amounts to a grasping—by one and the same knower—of something previously known, “This thing I know now is something I cognized previously.” It is this one-and-the-same knower who grasps whatever it is that was known

previously. And such grasping on her part amounts to remembering. Therefore, it would not be possible if there were merely a connected series of cognitions without a self.

It is commonly thought in Hinduism (as well as Buddhism and Jainism) that an individual emerges in another world—a heaven or a hell or a psychic holding-ground—before taking another earthly incarnation. Where she emerges depends on the righteousness or unrighteousness of her actions in this life, as does also her situation, talents, etc., in her next birth in this world. See Chapter 8, “The Right and the Good,” for further discussion of soteriology and its connection to morality.

Below, Vātsyāyana continues to engage with a materialist who holds that consciousness is a property of the body, not of a non-physical self.

Vātsyāyana [203.3–7]: Opponent: Consciousness is a quality of the body, because it exists when there is a body but not when there is not.

3.2.46: (Opponent:) There is doubt whether cognition is a property of a self, because substances exhibit their own qualities as well as the qualities of other things.

Opponent: That the one thing is present when the other is present leads to doubt. In the case of water, we find its own qualities occurring, such as fluidity, but also the qualities of other things like heat (when water is mixed with fire atoms). The doubt about consciousness runs as follows: Is it that consciousness is found to occur when there is a body because it is a quality of the body, or is it that consciousness belongs to another substance (a self)?

Response: Consciousness is not a quality of the body. Why not?

3.2.47: (Response continued:) (Consciousness is not a property of the body) because as long as the body lasts there will be properties like color, but not consciousness.

Vātsyāyana [203.11–16]: A body is never found to lack color or the like. But a body without consciousness (e.g., a corpse) is known to occur. The situation is like water which in

itself lacks warmth (but can be heated by the inclusion of fire atoms). Therefore, consciousness is not a quality of the body.

Objection: It could work like a dispositional property (*saṃskāra*).

Answer: Wrong, because its triggers could never cease (and thus it would always be manifest).

Objection: They would cease according to the type of substance that has the dispositional property.

Answer: No. On your view, if there were complete cessation of the triggers, there could be no dispositional property thenceforth. Whatever kind of substance the body is, such that it could locate consciousness, it would be exactly that kind of thing when consciousness ceased completely. Therefore, the response that consciousness is like a dispositional property is incorrect. . . .

Here Vātsyāyana has an opponent say that consciousness could be a dispositional property of the body, a property that exists even when it is not manifest, as water's capacity to freeze at certain temperature exists even when the water is in a liquid state. The idea reverberates with much contemporary philosophy of mind, and so the Nyāya response—that consciousness would be constantly triggered or never at all—is particularly interesting. In other words, the opponent has no theoretical resource to view a body as conscious or as not conscious, since its physical makeup would be the same in both instances. And if consciousness were a dispositional property, it would either be triggered even in death or never triggered even in life, since the bodily material would be the same in both instances.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Arindam Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya Proofs for the Existence of the Soul." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10 (1982): 211–38.

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Kisor K. Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Mind: The Nyāya Dualist Tradition*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Matthew R. Dasti, "Nyāya's Self as Agent and Knower." In *Free Will, Agency, and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy*, eds., Matthew R. Dasti and Edwin F. Bryant. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Jonardon Ganeri, "Cross-modality and the Self." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61.3 (2000): 639–58.

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C. Ramaiah, "The Problem of Personal Identity—Nyāya Vaiśeṣika Perspective." *Indian Philosophical Annual* 20 (1987): 68–84.

John Taber, "Uddyotakara's Defense of a Self." In *Hindu and Buddhist Ideas in Dialogue: Self and No-Self*, eds., Irina Kuznetsova, Jonardon Ganeri, and Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2012.

Study Questions

1. Both *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.10 and 3.1.1 present arguments for a unified, *sui-generis* self based on certain psychological features that we observe in ordinary life. Explain each argument in brief.
2. What does it mean to say that a psychological state such as aversion depends on recollection, which in turn requires an enduring self? Is this correct?
3. Nyāya arguments against a Buddhist no-self theory rely heavily on the notion that one individual cannot have another's memories. How is this used against the no-self view? Is Nyāya's objection a reasonable extension of the principle, which seems obvious in common life?
4. Why can't unified consciousness be produced merely by individual sense organs working independently or by an aggregate of bodily functions, according to Nyāya?

5. What is Nyāya's argument for reincarnation and the pre- and post-existence of a self? Is it a strong argument? Why or why not?
6. Explain the principle that certain emotions and all purposeful action require the input of memory to occur. Does this concur with our common experience?

Chapter 5

Substance and Causation

Nyāya's metaphysical picture is closely aligned with the realist, category-based schema of its "sister school," Vaiśeṣika. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika are generally considered to have merged during the time of Udayana (c. 1000 CE), but even from the earliest commentary of Vātsyāyana, Naiyāyikas consistently employ both the Vaiśeṣika categories and the school's theory of causality. The principal categories identified are: substance, quality, action, universal, individuator, inherence, and absence (this last, absence, was the latest to be recognized as an irreducible part of the ontology). The work of the great Vaiśeṣika Praśastapāda (c. 550 CE), who articulates both the major categories and the theory of causation in ways far more systematic than the early Nyāya-sūtra commentators, comes to be of central importance for later Nyāya efforts in metaphysics.

This chapter focuses on substances and causation, two fundamental elements in Nyāya's conception of the world. For universals, another important category, please see Chapter 7 of this volume, "Word and Object." We start with an overview of sorts. Nyāya-sūtra 1.1.9–22 lists and defines certain primary "objects of knowledge" (prameya), which become the major metaphysical topics with which the school is concerned. Examinations of several of these spill over from metaphysics into value theory, soteriology, and epistemology. It is noteworthy that in their commentaries on this sūtra, early Naiyāyikas make a point of noting that the Vaiśeṣika categories are also "objects of knowledge."

1.1.9: Self, body, sense faculties, objects (of the senses), cognition, mind (*manas*, the "internal organ"), purposive