

THE DEFINITIONS OF *NIMITTAKĀRAṆA*: A NAVYA NYĀYA APPROACH

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I

The Naiyāyikas have given much intellectual labour and pain in formulating the definitions of *samavāyī* and *asamavāyī kāraṇa*. It is very much astonishing to me when I see that they have adopted the method of residue (*pariśeṣānumāna*) in defining *nimittakāraṇa* or auxiliary cause. Though apparently it seems to be less significant, it actually bears a great logical excellence. The present paper concentrates to the definitions of *nimittakāraṇa* given by the Naiyayikas, which is followed by some conclusive and evaluative remarks.

Viśvanātha has defined the *samavāyī*, *asamavāyī* and *nimittakāraṇa* in the following way- *—Yatsamavetaṁ kāryambhavatijñeyantusamavāyijanakaṁ tat/ Tatrāsannaṁ janakaṁ, dvitīyamābhāyaṁ paraṁ tṛtīyayaṁsyāt.*¹ That is, *samavāyī-kāraṇa* (inherent cause) is that inhering which an effect comes into being. That which causes something existing in the *samavāyī* (inherent) cause is called *asamavāyī* (non-inherent) cause. The third one is different from these. This is what we get about the definition of *nimittakāraṇa* (auxiliary cause) in his *Bhāṣāpariccheda*. This definition is explained in *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* is as follows: *Nimittakāraṇa* is a kind of cause which is different from *samavāyī* and *asamavāyī kāraṇa* (*ābhyām samavāyikāraṇā-asamavāyikāraṇābhyāmparambhinnamkāraṇamtrītyamnimittakāraṇam ityarthah*).²

As the mutual absence of both (*ubhayabheda*) the *samavāyī* and *asamavāyī* causes have got exclusively affirmative character, it (the mutual absence of both) remains in both of them. Hence, there is the defect of *atīyāpti* in the *samavāyī* and *asamavāyī* cause if the literal meaning of the definition is taken into account.³ In order to remove this difficulty, it should be explained in a different way. The cause-ness which is being different from *samavāyikāraṇa* and *asamavāyikāraṇa* is called *nimittakāraṇatā*.⁴

With the help of this interpretation the above –mentioned problem may be removed. But it would give rise to a different type of problem. There would arise the defect of *avyāpti* to the conjunction of thread with weaver's shuttle (*turītantusamyoga*), the *nimittakāraṇa* of cloth, because there is the absence of the

mutual absence (*bheda*) due to its being *asamavāyikāraṇa* of the conjunction of cloth with weaver's shuttle.⁵ Moreover, if the definition of *nimittakāraṇa* is given in terms of pointing out the mutual absence (*bheda*) of *samavāyī* and *asamavāyī kāraṇa*, there is *avyāpti* to the cause which becomes a *nimitta-kāraṇa* in a particular effect but *samavāyī kāraṇa* to another and also to the cause which, through *asamavāyikāraṇa* to a particular effect, becomes *nimittakāraṇa* to another.⁶

In order to remove the above-mentioned defect a specific type definition should be formulated without giving the generic one. According to this, a particular cause of a particular effect becomes the *nimittakāraṇa* towards that particular effect if this particular cause is different from the inherent cause and the non-inherent cause of that particular effect.⁷ That is, a cause (C^1) becomes *nimittakāraṇa* (N^1) towards a particular effect E^1 if it (N^1) is different from the inherent cause of that very particular effect (E^1) and also different from the non-inherent cause of the same i.e. E^1 . According to this interpretation, the conjunction of thread with weaver's shuttle (*turītantusamyoga*) being different from the inherent cause and non-inherent cause of the cloth becomes the *nimittakāraṇa* of cloth.⁸ Hence, though the previous problem does not arise, it would again give rise to another problem. If this definition is accepted, there would be *avyāpti* (under coverage) of the definition in the *nimittakāraṇa-s* like *pratiyogī* (counter positive or absentee) etc. of the destruction (*dhvamsābhāva-pratiyogī*) whose inherent and non-inherent causes are not familiar.⁹ Moreover, the above-mentioned definition cannot be a generic one as it is formulated with the help of some specific particular effect.¹⁰ Other than this there would arise the defect of *gaurava* (defect of technical heaviness as opposed to the law of parsimony) if the above-mentioned definition is taken into account. If we formulate the definition with specific cases, we shall have to accept innumerable forms of *nimittakāraṇa* due to the innumerable cases of effect, which is also not acceptable.

In order to remove this defect, it has been stated in the super-commentary called *Dinakarī* (written by Dinakara Bhatta) that the implicative meaning (*lakṣaṇā*) should be taken of the terms 'inherent and non-inherent causes' and hence the meaning of them is to be admitted as being inherent and non-inherent cause after inducing the suffix 'iva' to them. Hence, *nimittakāraṇatā* exists in that which is different from inherent causeness and non-inherent causeness.¹¹ As per this

interpretation the conjunction of thread with shuttle, though non-inherent cause towards the conjunction of cloth with shuttle, may become *nimittakāraṇatā* towards cloth.¹² In the same way, the definition of *nimittakāraṇatā* may be applicable to the *pratiyogī* etc. of the effect in the form of destruction. In this *nimittakāraṇatā* there is the property of being different from *samavāyikāraṇatā* (inherent causeness) and from *asamavāyikāraṇatā* (non-inherent causeness).¹³

The counter positive (*pratiyogī*) of the destruction can be taken as a *nimittakāraṇa* by virtue of the fact there is auxiliary causeness different from inherent and non-inherent causeness. Though the destruction has no inherent and non-inherent cause, the counter positive of it must bear auxiliary causeness due to having the locus of inherent and non-inherent causeness in it. The fact that there is auxiliary causeness in an object entails that it is different from other remaining causes which may or may not be familiar. In this place, the *nimittakāraṇa* is assumed in terms of *itarabheda* (i.e., as different from other). That is, it is known to us as such due to its distinctive character from others which may be or may not be familiar. In fact, it is clear to us that in *nimittakāraṇatā* there is the property of being different from inherent causeness (*samavāyikāraṇatā*) and non-inherent causeness (*asamavāyikāraṇatā*).

The causeness limited by the relation of identity (*tādātmya*) determined by effectness limited by the relation of inherence is inherent causeness.¹⁴ In the case of *samavāyikāraṇa* the effectness (*kāryatā*) is limited by the relation of inherence and causeness (*kāraṇatā*) is limited by relation of identity. Between these there is *nirūpya-nirūpaka-bhāva* (the determined and determined relationship) and hence, the causeness limited by the relation of identity determined by effectness limited by inherence relation (limited by jarness) exists in *kapāla* (lower part of the jar) etc., the component in parts of a jar. On account of this *samavāyikāraṇatva* is originated in *kapāla* etc. The effect in the form of a jar is originated in its *samavāyikāraṇa* i.e. *kapāla* etc. through the relation called *samavāya* but not in other places. Because the inherent causeness becomes the property of substance only, but not in quality etc.

The causeness limited by the relation of identity determined by the effectness (i.e., jarness) is again limited by the relation of inherence. The effectness (i.e. jarness) existing in jar is limited by the relation called inherence as between 'jar and 'jarness'

and hence, there is the said relation. As an effect presupposes a cause, it may be described as determined by a cause. Hence, the causeness always determines the effectness, as there is a peculiar relation called *nirūpya-nirūpaka-bhāvasambandha*. The causeness in this present context remains in the cause which is *kapāla* as jar is taken as an effect. In other words, causeness exists in the cause in the form of *kapāla* through the relation of identity as the cause is identified with *kapāla* here. Hence, for being a *samavāyikāraṇa* (inherent cause) there must be a cause which is limited by the relation of identity and this cause determines the effect which is limited by the relation of inherence. Such characters remain only in *kapāla* if jar is taken as an effect.

The causeness limited by either of the relations called inherence determined by the effectness limited by inherence relation is called non-inherent causeness.¹⁵ In the case of effect in the form of destruction, the effectness existing in destruction is not limited by the relation of inherence and hence, there is the locusness of the mutual absence of the inherent causeness in the form of causeness determined by the effectness limited by the relation of inherence and the locusness of the non-inherent causeness. Hence, the causeness which is different from the above-mentioned two types of causeness is called *nimittakāraṇa*. In other words, if destruction is taken as an effect, the effectness existing in this effect is not endowed with the characters mentioned above. This effectness is not limited by the relation of inherence as we had in the case of the effect ‘jar’. Hence, there is the absence of the inherent causeness and also non-inherent causeness. The cause which is not endowed with such inherent and non-inherent causeness is called *nimittakāraṇa*.

II

Another general definition of *nimittakāraṇa* is found in the *Nṛsimhaprakāśikā* commentary on *Tarkasamgrahadipikā* which runs as follows: “*Atra nimittakāranasabdādādhīnajñānīyaparakāratvaṃprakāratāsambandhena tādrśajñānavattvaṃ vā nimittakāraṇatvasāmānyalakṣaṇam.*”¹⁶ That is, the chief qualifier ness (*prakāratva*) existing in the chief qualifier (*prakāra*) of the knowledge attained through the term *nimittakāraṇa* or the property of being the possessor of the above-mentioned type of knowledge through the relation of *prakāratā* is *nimittakāraṇatva*.

The principal adjective or chief qualifier of knowledge etc. is called *prakāra* and the property residing in the *prakāra* is the *prakāratā*. Hence, knowledge etc. are called *prakāra* i.e. chief qualifier-possessing. In other words, knowledge has got something which is the chief qualifier. The content of knowledge remains in its substratum i.e. knowledge through the relation of *prakaratā*. In the previous definition the content or chief-qualifier of the knowledge attained through the term *ṇimittakāraṇa*“ is called *nimittakāraṇa* itself. In other words, *nimittakāraṇatā* is the property of being the substratum of this type of knowledge through the relation called *prakāratā*.

The above-mentioned definition, I think, is not tenable. Because, the definition of *nimittakāraṇa* cannot point out clearly the object defined (*lakṣya*). It is a kind of linguistic play, but not definition in the true sense of the term. If it is said that the content of *prakāra* of the knowledge of a cow is *ṇcow*‘, it is insignificant to the enquire as it cannot give the true picture of a *ṇcow*‘. It directly cannot give us some essential features of a *ṇcow*‘ so that one can know it properly. The term *ṇproperly*‘ used here signifies that the definition will not have any under-coverage (*avyāpti*) or over-coverage (*ativyāpti*). Such awareness is not possible through this definition. Because, the content of an object may sometimes be false. In *Nyāya* both *pramā* and *apramā* are awareness (*jñāna*). In the case of illusion, the content of the awareness of snake may be rope. Hence such type of definition may be misleading. If this fashion of defining an object is maintained, each and every object of this world can be explained in the same way. If one is asked about the definition of some object like x etc. one may follow this line and can say that the content of the knowledge of x is the definition of the same. This is philosophically and logically untenable and hence, this definition should be rejected.

It may be asked why the Naiyāyikas do not accept the *samavāyikāraṇa* and *asamavāyikāraṇa* of the effect in the form of destruction. In reply, it can be said only *dravya* or substance can be the inherent cause (*samavāyikāraṇa*) of an effect. The *asamavāyikāraṇa* would be quality and action inhered in the *samavāyikāraṇa*. But the effect in the form of destruction, being an absence, does not have any *samavāyi* and *asamavāyikāraṇa*. As it is included under *abhāva* category, but not as *guṇa*, *karma* or *dravya*, it will be a *nimittakāraṇa*.

It may be argued that, when the two parts of a jar are divided, the destruction comes into being. Hence, *vibhāga* existing in *kapāla* and *kapālikā* which is enumerated as a quality may be regarded as non-inherent cause of destruction. This is not tenable. Because here *vibhāga* though enumerated as quality does not inhere in the inherent cause of the effect. Two parts of a jar, though regarded as the inherent cause of the origination of a jar, cannot be the inherent cause of destruction.

It may be highlighted in the following manner. Though the property *vibhāga* remains in two halves of a jar which is destroyed, it cannot be described as *asamavāyikāraṇa*. Because, that which is associated with the inherent cause is called *asamavāyi kāraṇa*. Here *vibhāga* is not so, because two halves of a jar, with which *vibhāga* exists is not *samavāyikāraṇa* towards the destruction of it. The *kapāla* and *kapālikā* of a jar are regarded as *samavāyi kāraṇa* towards the origination (but not destruction) of it. The order of action is also different. In the case of the origination of a jar the two parts of it are produced first and afterwards the quality called *samyoga* arises between them giving rise to its origination. But in the case of the destruction of a jar *vibhāga* comes in between two parts and afterwards we get the isolated two parts of the same. In the former case, the two parts of a jar are pre-requisites for its origination while in the latter case these two parts are found after the destruction of the same. In other words, in the earlier case two halves of the jar is the causes for its origination while in the latter case these are the effect of the destruction of the same. Hence, though *vibhāga* like *samyoga* exists between two halves of a jar, it is not *asamavāyi kāraṇa* of destruction due to the fact that the two halves of the jar here is not *samavāyi kāraṇa* of the destruction.

In the context of the discussion on *nimittakāraṇa* the Naiyāyikas have adopted a short cut method. This cannot generally be taken as a definition in the true sense of the term. Though this does not possess the defects called *avyāpti*, *ativyāpti* and *asamabhava*, it cannot be taken as *lakṣya* on account of the fact that it does not directly pinpoint to the characteristic features of the *nimittakāraṇa*. It is an indirect way of pointing out the truth. In other words, for the understanding of *nimittakāraṇa* the characteristic features of inherent and non-inherent cause are to be known. A cow, as for example, may be defined in two ways: (i) an animal having dewlap (*goḥ sāsnādimattvam*) and (ii) an animal which is different from non-horse

(*anaśvavyāvṛtta*). The former is the definition (*lakṣaṇa*) in the true sense of the term as it pinpoints to the characteristic features of a cow. The second also gives an idea which is dependent on the idea of horse etc. If we have an idea of a horse, it can give rise to the idea of a cow which is non-horse. The latter cannot be taken as definition due to the lack of preciseness. In the same way, it can be said that the way in which the *nimittakāraṇa* is defined is not at all definition. It can at best be considered as *uddeśa* (introduction). When an object is introduced with the help of name etc. it is called *uddeśa* (*nāmnā samkīrtanamuddeśah*), Both *uddeśa* and *lakṣaṇa* are essential for understanding something. While the former gives a rough idea, the latter gives a concrete idea about something. The *nimittakāraṇa* as proposed by the Naiyāyikas may be considered as mere introduction, but not definition.

REFERENCES:

1. *Bhāsāpariccheda* Verse no.18.
2. *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* Verse no.18.
3. *Tatra yathāśrutametallakṣaṇam na sambhavati samavāyikāranāsamavāyikāraṇobhayabhedasya kevalānvayitayā etallakṣaṇasya samavāyikāraṇāsamavāyikāraṇe cātivyāpteh.* *Surabhi* (Srikrishna Sarmā Felicitation volume) p.31 (Article of Dinesh Chandra Guha). Tirupati, 1970.
4. *Atah samavāyikāraṇabhinnatve sati asamavāyikāraṇabhinnatve sati kāraṇatvam nimittakāraṇatvam* Ibid.
5. *Paṇanimittakāraṇe turītantusamyoge tasya turīpaṭasamyogāsamavāyikāraṇatvena tābhinnatvavirahāt* Ibid.
6. *–Fathā sati ekam kāryam prati samavāyikāraṇātmake kāryāntaram prati asamavāyikāraṇātmake kāryāntaram prati ca nimittakāraṇe avyāpteh* *Navyanyāyabhāṣāpradīpa*, edited by Kalipada Tarkakcharya, Sanskrit college, Calcutta, 1973, p.92.
7. *Surabhi* p.32. (same edition). *–Na ca tatkāryasamavāyikāranāsamavāyibhinnatve sati tatkāryakāraṇatvam tatkāryam prati nimittakāraṇatvamiti viśiṣyaiva lakṣaṇam.* *Rāmarudri on Siddhāntamuktāvalī* (on *Bhāsāpariccheda* Verse no.18).
8. *Surabhi*, p.32 (same edition).
9. *–Fathā sati dhvaṁsam prati nimittakāraṇe pratiyogyādāvavyāpteh tasya samavāyikāranāsamavāyikāraṇayoraprasiddeh.* *Rāmarudrī* on verse no.18
10. *Navyanyāya-bhāṣā-pradīpa* p.93 (same edition).
11. *–Bhāvapradhāno ,yam nirdeśah samavāyikāraṇatvāsamavāyikāraṇatvābhyāmiti yāvāt* *Muktāvalīsamgraha* on *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* on verse 18.
12. *Tena turīpaṭasamyogam prati turītantusamyoga-syāsamavāyikāraṇatve* *pi na tasya patam prati nimittakāraṇatvamiti* Ibid
13. *Surabhi* p.32 (same edition).
14. *Rāmarudrī* on verse 18.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Nrsimhaprakāśikā* on *Tarkasamgrahadīpikā*, p.238, edited by Satkari Sarma Vangiya, Chawkhamba. 1970.