VII

The Role of God in Nyaya Morality

One of the preponderant issues in the theistic philosophical discourse centers round the study about the relationship between the concept of God and the concept of morality: for the question arises, if the supremacy of God is accepted, then how do the moral or immoral doings happen? And if God has been acknowledged as the controlling power of the whole universe, then, how is it possible to explain the spirit of freedom that has been inherent in any human being?

In Indian philosophy, not only the Carvakas, the Buddhists and the Jainas have agreed in denouncing the concept of God as the supreme principle of creation, preservation and annihilation of this world, but also the so-called orthodox school of Indian philosophy, i.e. the Mimamsa, the Samkhya and the Vedanta. It has often been a matter of great debate, doubt and uncertainty in accepting the ancient viewpoint of the Nyaya or the Vaisesika as being theistic. In the Nyayasutra of Gautama the mention of God is considered to be casual by many. The theory of divine causality is referred to in the Nyayasutra, though in interpreting the sutra a sharp division is created among the interpreters. In Kanada’s sutra no explicit reference to God is found. It is very doubtful whether the discussion of God (Isvara) was at all implied in the Vaisesika sutra of Kanada. We cannot designate Kanada as a nastika (nihilist), yet it appears that in stating his philosophy there had been no utility of God. In the Padarthadharmasamgraha
of Prasastapada, no argument about the existence of God is found, though in the
discussion on the object of ‘process of creation and destruction’ the role of the supreme
lord is essentially felt. However, in the main two commentaries of the Padartha
dharmasamgraha – the Vyomboti and the Nyayakandali, lengthy arguments have been
provided to establish the existence of God. The existence of God can be confirmed by
scriptural authority and inferential arguments. On the other hand, the Nyayasutra and its
different commentaries have expounded a couple of arguments in favor of the existence
of God. In the sutra Kanada traces the primal activities of the atoms and souls to the
principle of adrsta. There is only one Vaisesika sutra where some commentators have
tried to read a reference to God while others, at the same time, have categorically
registered their disapproval of the same interpretation and tried to explain the text in a
different way. As far as the Nyaya sutras are concerned, it must be admitted that the term
‘Isvara’ has not been specifically mentioned in the context where the nature of atman has
been discussed. In the Nyayasutra, God has been conceived as the ordainer of the
individual destiny which has, however, led to a controversy as to whether the author of
the Nyayasutra was a theist or not. It must be admitted that from all corners that that the
days of Vatsyayana, the author of the Nyayabhasya and Uddyotakara, the author of the
Nyayavartika, the Nyaya position has become absolutely theistic and they all share the
same view that contemplation (manana) of God is contributory to emancipation (moksa)
which is the ultimate God of human existence.
The Nature of God – As an agent

In this connection, one whose name would be worth mentioning is, Vatsayana, who in his Nyayabhasya, has expounded the concept of God with quite clearly. Vatsayana thus, supports theism. He has explained and analysed that (i) God is a soul, (ii) God is a distinct soul, (iii) the distinction of God from other souls is because God is endowed with certain qualities (a) absence of demerit, (b) absence of wrong belief and (c) absence of delusion. (iv) There are positive qualities also (a) presence of merit, (b) presence of knowledge and (c) presence of intuitiveness. Later Naiyayikas as well as Vaisesikas are theistic and entered into a discussion about the nature of God in considering the theory of atman. God controls the activity of the merit and demerit of each individual soul. God creates the world simply by willing it. God graces all beings selflessly. Just as a father cares for his sons, so also, God who is the father of all cares for all. God has to be regarded as a soul without a body. He is omniscient. Even the sacred texts assert that god is the seer, a knower. The Nyayasutra also explicates the fact that God creates the world depending upon the results of actions done by the beings he creates. If God acted irrespectively of the results of acts done by the beings created by him, then this view becomes open to those objections that have been urged against the view that ‘the creation is not due to the acts of souls’. Now the question rises, what is exactly meant by the term ‘creativity’ with which God has been qualified.

The older school of the Naiyayikas including Uddyotakara observes that God possesses direct cognition and will (aparokṣajnanacikīrṣavattva) which explain the origin of the phenomenal world. Uddyotakara does not find any necessity for postulating God’s
volitional effort. He simply asserts that God has unimpeded and unbounded desire (akliṣta icchā). That is to say, God’s will is devoid of any error (klesa). According to the Naivyikas, such error may be due to attachment (raga), aversion (devsa) and delusion (moha). As God is immune from all these types of error, he has an unbounded (apartihata) will which encompasses all—he can do whatever he desires. From a perusal of Prasastapada’s observation on the creation and destruction of the world, it will be evident that he, like Uddyotakara, admits the existence of knowledge and will in God. And God’s creative nature means his direct knowledge and will. But Vacaspati and Udayana assert that agency (kartrtv) on the part of God is nothing but volitional activity (krtimatv) generated by direct cognition and desire. They have gone so far as to discover Uddyotakara’s approval regarding the existence of volitional effort (kṛti) in God. It is worthy to note that later writers of this school, coming after Udayana, have almost unanimously accepted this view.

In this context, some writers may point out that the volitional effort in God, as the determining condition for creation, has been admitted by Uddyotakara. Uddyotakara has rightly pointed out the divergence underlying the nature of agency (kartrtv) in God and in the embodied soul. It is obvious that creativity in embodied soul springs from his volition. But when God is conceived as destitute of any psycho-physical organism, his creative nature is not contingent on volition. This is why Uddyotakara does not find any necessity of postulating volition in God. Later Naivyikas, like Udayana, further mentions that the divine volition generates motion in the atoms, the ultimate units of the universe, which lie separate from one another and when God creates, they are made
active so that they are conjoined and dyads etc are produced. Udayana has asserted that the atom serves the same purpose in regard to God, which a physical body accomplishes in regard to the embodied soul. In this connection, Udayana has suggested that the atoms may be conceived as the divine body and in that case, Udayana’s position stands in contradiction to the accepted dogma of the Nyaya-Vaisesika school. But, it must be remembered that the Naiyayika does not believe in any physical organism of God. Udayana’s suggestion, that the atom may be conceived as the divine body, is only to face the contention of the purvapaksins that krti is understood only with reference to a physical body. However, to find out the proper meaning of the Nyayasutra, we need to concentrate on what Gautama had said actually in his sutra. Gautama asserts that a physical body is the locus of effort and sense organs. It is also the locus of enjoyment. Here, effort means volitional activity for enjoyment. But a motion which is generated in the atom does not contribute anything to the enjoyment. Enjoyment is the experience of pleasure or pain. God has no enjoyment of pleasure or pain and as such motion generated by him in the atom should not be explained as an effort (cesta) on the part of God. As God does not possess any sense organ, the atoms are not the locus of divine sense-organs. The atoms are not also the locus of enjoyment, for God has nothing left to enjoy. Hence, it would be unwise to consider atoms as the body of God. In reply to this charge of the purvapasins, Udayana observes that he does not admit the definition of body as advanced by Gautama. According to him, body is that which is directly supervised by the volition if an individual. If this definition of body has been admitted by the Naiyayikas, then the atoms will inevitably turn out to be the body of God as they are directly guided by divine volition. Creative motion in atoms is generated by God’s volition in the same way as
activity in an individual body is generated by the volition of the individual. Uddyotakara does not admit atoms as constituting the divine body. And as such he does not feel any necessity for postulating divine volition in order to explain this creative nature. In Uddyotakara’s opinion, God is a disembodied being. But Udayana reluctantly postulates a divine body and as such he has to admit divine volition. The later Naiyayika is in complete agreement with Udayana when he also seeks to over that God is possessed of eight attributes including volition.

**Relationship between God and Morality**

The idea of a divine dispenser of the rewards and punishment for men’s actions as admitted by the school of Nyaya-Vaisesika has been provided to safeguard the ethicality of this doctrine. God as assumed to act in consonance with the *karmas* of men’s for the authors of this idea conceive of him as “a common cause in the operation of the law of karma”. Explaining the award of different rewards and punishments to different individual agents as the basis of their respective moral deserts, the Nyaya-Vaisesika thinkers try to minimize the power of omnipotent God. If, to counter the latter, God has been projected as the ulterior cause of men’s deeds, he would be responsible for men’s actions and therefore for the presence of evil and injustice in the world caused by them. If, to counter this, further argued that the law of karma is the will of God and as such cannot be considered as limiting his power, he would be construed as willing the suffering and punishments given to men and that would affect his goodness. Thus, the Nyaya-Vaisesika school, straightforwardly, has explained the fact that God is an essential part in the discussion of morality. From their different writings and literatures, it has been
observed that the God is the creator, in the sense of the efficient cause, not in the sense of
the constituent cause of the universe. Let us begin by referring to the *sutra* (4.1.19)
stating ‘Isvarakaranam, purusakarmaphalyadarsanat’, on which divergent interpretations are offered.

The theism supported by the *Naiyayikas*, however, need to be elaborated and explained.
In philosophy in general, and in Indian philosophy in particular, theism has been supported from different angles. One of the very commonest ways of arguing for the existence of cause is to suppose God to be the cause of this whole created universe. In the history of western philosophy we find the mention of causal argument to prove the existence of God. Similarly, in Indian philosophy, we talk about the *karyatvahetuk anumana*, i.e. inference with *karyatva* as a *hetu*, to prove the existence of God. The notion of cause has certain ambiguity, for it may mean *nimitta karana* (efficient cause) or *upadana karana* (material cause). Hence, to say that *Isvara* i.e. God is the cause, is to leave the matter ambiguous being amenable to broadly speaking, two to sorts of interpretations. Gautama in his *Nyayasutra*, (4.1.19), when stated, ‘Isvarah karanam, purusakarmaphalyadarsanat’, the very utterance of ‘Isvarah karanam’ gives rise to various interpretations. Translated into English, 4.1.19 says, ‘God is the cause, because we see the activities (under taken) by the *purusa* (individual) do not produce the (desired) result.’ Apparently, this clause seems to be quite simple, but the problem of interpreting this clause has been further complicated by the other portion of the clause, viz. ‘purusakarmaphalyadarsanat’, meaning thereby that God alone is the cause because of the failure of the activities of the individual. Both these clauses taken together, in one
straightforward manner, the sentence is taken to mean that God alone is the cause of all effects because we find that in spite of the best efforts on the part of the agent- the desired result does not ensue from the activities. In Indian philosophical tradition, this position is known as *kevalesvara karanavada*, to distinguish from plain and simple *Isvara karanavada*. According to the former theory of *kevalesvarakarana*, it is maintained that God alone is the cause of all effects without any dependence on individual beings. According to some, the position mentioned above is the Gautama’s opponent’s position. What are the probable arguments in support of ‘*Kevala Isvara karanavada*’? How does this view enjoy support from some people? The reason may not be far to seek. We find individuals performing various sorts of actions with a view to certain desired result or objective. But this cannot be asserted that as a rule whatever action an agent does, he gets the desired result. Rather, on many occasions an action does not lead to the desired result, hence it is called unsuccessful. From this, it has been supposed that no result or consequence of an action does depend on the intention or will of the individual. If the consequence of an act depended on the will of an individual then the individual could always have the desired consequence and so none of his actions would be unsuccessful. There would not have been any sorrow or suffering for the individual. Hence, all the results of an action, all happiness and sorrow of an individual are regarded by the will of one, who is an omniscient, all-powerful being who is the lord of the whole world. Thus, *Isvara* is supposed to be a being that creates, sustains and destroys – all by his own will. Hence, *Isvara* which is not the cause of everything by depending on anything. God, who is *karmanirapekṣa*, is the cause. *Bhasyakara* Vatsyayana and *Varttikakara* Uddoytakara have also taken God who is *karmanirapekṣa* as the cause; in this sense is the opponent’s
position that is being refuted by Gautama. It is one of the very old views, known as 
Pasupata view that maintains that God created the world. A line is quoted from Sarvadarsanasamgraha, 9, ‘karmadi nirapeksastu svecchacari yato hyayam. Atah karanatah sastre sarvakaranakaranam.’ In the ancient Buddhist Pali text, we find reference to this sort of Isvaravada, as the view of the other. In the writing of Asvaghosa in his Buddhacarita, we find reference to this theory. Hence, it is not without justification to hold that Gautama had in view this Isvaravada as his purvapaksa.

There are some interpreters who maintain a different view. In their opinion Gautama referring to the views of parinamavadi, and vivartavadi, who by ‘cause’ mean material cause. The opponents are here vivartavadi and parinamavadi. For according to Gautama’s own position God is not material cause of the world- but God is nimittakarana. Vacaspati Misra in his Tatparyatika, has clearly maintained that maharsi Gautama had refuted Brahmaparinamavada and Brahmavivartavada by this sutra 4.1.19. The intention of Gautama was to maintain God is the nimitta karana of the world but he does not consider God to be the nimitta karana with the individual’s karma. God without taking into account the activity of the individual, just by its own will does not provide pleasure or pain to the individual. If God by his own desire provides pleasure or pain to the individual, then God becomes partial and cruel. The Vaidika viewpoint is that God by taking into consideration the karma of the individual determines the provision for pleasure and pain of the individual.

Thus, we find that by making it clear the importance of the karma of the individual, the author of the Nyaya sutra makes it clear that in the absence of karma, by the individual,
no result is produced. Some may go to argue that only *karma* of the individual is sufficient to explain the pleasure and pain of the individual. God is not the cause. There are some differences of opinion of the *Naiyayikas* with the *Mimamsakas* and *Vedantins*. According to Jaimini and Badarayana, only *karma* is responsible for the consequence of happiness and sorrow and does not need to depend on God as well. But the *Naiyayikas* do not accept this view either. According to them both the suggested alternatives are:

1. God alone is the cause
2. *Karma* of the individual alone is the cause

However, these two alternatives are not acceptable. The *Nyaya* view is the juxtaposition of both of these alternatives, for according to them, God is the cause in relation to the *karma* of the individual. It is already known fact that according to the Indian philosophers the individual does not only enjoy fruits of his own *karma* performed in the present life. The *karma* or unforeseen potency of his previous life, the time of his enjoyment are also taken to be the causes. Only omniscient God knows all the details about the type of *karma* and fruits to be produced therefrom. Hence, all these are arranged by God.

Again from another consideration, the question may be raised about the all-powerfulness of the God. Thus, it may amount to raising doubt about God’s *sarvakarttva* i.e., all-powerfulness. Since, if God is supposed to be the cause of this creation by taking into account *karma* of the individual being, then God does not have any *karttva* or agency over the individual’s activity (which is taken as the auxiliary cause). Hence, God cannot be regarded as all-powerful etc. From this argument some would go back to the earlier
thesis that God alone is the creator. The Nyaya commentator Uddyotakara’s explanation is very relevant in this context. Uddyotakara tries to explain why this objection is a misconceived one. He does not find any ground for holding that God would lose his sarvakartrtva if God is supposed to be a creator by depending on the activity of the individual. Uddyotakara introduces the expression ‘anugraha’ i.e. favour and maintains that God favours the activity of the agent. What does actually ‘anugraha’ or favour means? The expression ‘anugraha’ means to determine the consequence of an act rightly by taking into account the nature of the act performed and also its time. God by depending on which activities of the agent is creating the world would are also done by God himself. Vacaspati Misra also supports this explanation. From the explanation provided by Vacaspati Misra, the following observations are made about the main contention of the Nyayasutrakara:

1. Only karmas of the individual or the jiva are not productive of consequences (phalajanaka) or the cause of the world (Jagatkaranatva)
2. God in relation to the karma of the jiva, is the efficient cause of the world.

God in relation to the karma of the agent is the cause. If God alone were the cause, then even when an individual does not perform any action good or bad consequences may be produced upon the individual. Without performing any good or bad act, the individual may have to go through good or bad consequences, suffer pain and sorrow. But then we have to explain how is it possible for the God who is all-benevolent to inflict pain and suffering upon an individual without any fault of his own. God becomes capricious in making some individual superior and another individual inferior. In the Gita(9/29) God
says, ‘samohaham sarvabhutesu na me dvesyosti na priyah’. According to the nature of the karma performed by the jives, they are enjoying consequences good or bad and accordingly are possessed of different types of body. In the Sruti, it has been stated,

Yathakari yathacari tatha bhavati,
Sadhu kari sadhubhavati, papakari papo bhavati, punyah punyena bhavati, papah papena.

In the Vedanta philosophy, Badarayana has said supportive of the above-mentioned Sruti as follows:

‘vaisamye nairgrhnye na sapeksatvat tatha darsayati’ (2.1.34) 11

This sutra implies that God creates men, animals, and other beings according to the deeds of the individual. For that reason, no charge can be brought about vaisamya or partiality or naighrnya or cruelty on the jivas. This has been elaborately explained with analogy by Sankaracarya in his Saririka bhasya. He has compared the role of God in matter of creation with that of a cloud, for as cloud is the common cause in producing different cereals like wheat, oat, barley, whereas the respective seeds of wheat, oat, and barley are the asadharana or specific causes, so here also adrsta of the jivas are responsible for producing different results. The charge of partiality and the charge of cruelty do not arise for God creates the world as per the deed of the individuals, and later on also destroys the world according to the karma of the individual. The main point of controversy centers round the notion of visama srsti, meaning thereby inequality in our pleasure and pain as created being. In the western philosophical tradition, the problem of evil is one of the very controversial issues and avoids any easy solution. God does not by attraction and
repulsion create somebody as happy and another as unhappy. Hence, God is never bound
by attraction and repulsion. Vacaspati Misra, in his Bhamatitika, commenting on
Sarirakabhasya, had also supposed this explanation. In a discussion, if the chairperson of
the session favours the rationalist and does not favour the irrationalist, then can it be said
that the chairperson is acting out of attraction and repulsion? Rather the chairperson in
that situation deserves to be respected as being neutral or impartial. Similarly, God who
favours the person who is treading the path of virtue and not favouring the person who is
treading the path of vice, retains the neutrality. The important question has been raised
about the autonomy of the individual. In the moral domain, the issue about the autonomy
of the individual always comes to the forefront. The individual’s actions, because of his
earlier habit to act in a particular way are not Isvara paratantra.

However, some may urge that isvara makes jiva acquire dharma or adharma according
to his previous karma. But does it answer the problem about the partiality of God? It may
be said that karmas of previous birth were also made to perform by God himself. The
karmas that are presupposed by God in order to make individuals enjoy pleasure and pain
in this life are also that God made the individuals perform. This sort of explanation
definitely robs individual of any autonomy. Then the individual has no autonomy as such.
In this interpretation again the charge of partiality would arise against God. To avoid this
charge of partiality on God is to accommodate autonomy of the individual. In the
Vedanta Darsana, it was stated by Badarayana¹², parattu tadhhtuḥ(2.3.41), to imply
that the individual has no agency whatsoever. Badarayana has said in the second sutra,
‘kṛtaprayātanapeksastu vihitapratisiddha vaiarthya dibhyoh’ thus it may be admitted, as
Badarayana points out, that the agency of the individual is dependent autonomy, but it has some agency, otherwise all the positive injunction and the negative of the Vedas will be futile. If the individual has no agency and also enjoyment of suffering and pleasure as consequences thereof, Sruti would lose its validity. Badarayana has very defended the agency of individual in the sutras’ katrardhikarane or kartr sastrarthavabtvat’. But he is in favour of admitting individual’s agency as God relative. Other Vedantins like Sankaracarya agrees with this analysis. He elucidates further this position by saying that individual is a prayojya karta and God is the prayoyaka karta. If the prayojya karta does not have any power, then prayoyaka karta does not have any agency. God does not have attraction or aversion. Nor does he have wrong knowledge. God does not motivate any individual to the path of dharma, not to the path of adharma. Hence, individuals have agency, because individual’s have agency, they strive for pleasure, avoid pain. Hence, agency of the individual is to say Isvara paratantra and jiva does not have autonomous agency. But that does not amount to an agency. The Mimamsakas do not admit God as the creator. We have already pointed out that according to them karma alone produces consequence. In their opinion if along with the admission of Isvara, it is said that Isvara produces consequence by taking into account dharmadharma of the jiva, and then the Isvaratva of Isvara loses meaning. According to them, existence of that sort of Isvara is not provable. The Samkhya philosophers also do not admit Isvara as a creator. To them unconscious prakrti is the creator of the world. Hence, in their views since unconscious cause is the creator of the world, the charge of partiality does not arise. The Naiyayikas, however, do not admit their views. According to the Naiyayikas both of these views are contradictory to the Vaidika viewpoint and are not logical. For the Naiyayikas believe
that *karma* of an individual or the *prakrti* admitted by the *Samkhyas* is unconscious entities and unconscious entities cannot produce any effect unless are located in some conscious being or motivated by some conscious beings. There is no uncontroversial instance of an effect which has been produced without the motivation of any conscious agent. Because of innumerable and varied instances of *adrsta* of *jivas* different creations will be made and for that as the loci of *adrsta*, some conscious beings are required. Finite *jivas* with their limited knowledge cannot be the seer or the locus of *adrsta*. Just prior to the creation, the bodies of *jivas* are also not available; hence *jivas* can not be the motivator of *adrsta* also. Thus by producing many arguments the Naiyayikas establish the existence of eternal omniscient *Isvara*. In different *Upanisads* and texts depending on *Upanisads* we find reference to certain theory of *Isvara* and making arrangement of fruits of *karma*. ‘Karmadhyaksa sarvabhisthadasah’ hence, *Maharsi* Gautama is also here accepting the conclusion of the *Sruti*. In the *sutra*, ‘Isvarakaritatvat’, Gautama is rejecting the old view that God without the *karma* of *jiva* is the efficient cause of the world. He is further refuting that either God alone or *karma* alone can be accepted as the efficient cause of the world. God and *karma* are mutually dependent as the efficient cause of the world. This conclusion of the *Nyaya* also silences the objection about the charges of cruelty or impartiality on the part of God. In the domain of philosophy lots of debates have arisen as to the nature of the material cause and efficient cause of this world. In the *Nyaya* philosophy *paramanus* or the atoms are regarded as the material cause of the world. *Maharsi* Gautama referring to the discussion of this *sutra* has already explained atoms as the material cause of the world. Hence, it seems that by these three *sutras*, *Maharsi* Gautama is establishing *Isvara* as the efficient cause of the world. Hence, it is
not correct to maintain that in Nyaya philosophy, there is no Isvaravada, or the founder of the Nyayadarsana, Gautama, did not admit the existence of God and his creatorship of the world. When Gautama was referring to the padarthas in the first verse of Nyayasutra, he did not mention (uddesa) ‘Isvara’ and did not offer like other prameya padarthas like pramana etc by definition (laksana) and examination (pariksa). But it should be noted in the first adhyaya, sutra 9, when Gautama was referring to twelve categories, he mentioned ‘atmasarirendriyartha’ etc, wherein by atma he has meant both jivatma and paramatma. Hence, there should not be any doubt that among the categories mentioned by Gautama, Isvara was certainly included.

In this connection, it must be noticed that Gautama has introduced the notion of God only causally. But, among the later Naiyayikas, Udayana, is the first Naiyayika who has concentrated on the concept of God as a central issue in his philosophy and has given elaborate analysis in the form of arguments to prove the existence of God, in his Nyaya-Kusumanjali. Now, it is our task to investigate how the Naiyayika does present the moral argument for the existence of God. The Nyayasutra do not, however, contain any specific argument which would unmistakably lead us to assume that this argument finds favor with Gautama, the author of the Nyayasutra. Udayana has followed in the footsteps of Vatsyayana and Uddyotakara and has set forth this argument with great boldness in the first chapter of his Nyayakusumanjali. The argument of the Naiyayika may be put in the following syllogism: All that which is not sentient fluctuates only when guided by some intelligent agent. Adrsta is an unconscious principle. Therefore, adrsta is guided by some intelligent agent. The Nyaya philosophers have explained the fact that the combination of
two atoms forms a dyad and the *adrsta*, which is, after all, an unconscious principle, are operated only when they are guided by a sentient being who is God. The *Naiyayika* proposes to justify their argument by an appeal to an instance from our everyday life. An axe, for instance, fluctuates only when it is used by the wood-cutter. And the wood-cutter can use it to some purpose if he has knowledge of its nature and capacity to successful activity. (*svarupa* and *sakti*). The wood cutter must be cognizant of all the looks of the axe. But it remains to be seen whether the individual soul can be equipped with this knowledge. The individual soul lacks omniscience and as such it is not possible for the individual soul to know the nature of *adrsta* which is responsible for the unification of atoms resulting in the birth of different effects. Thus, the omniscient God comes in our mind that has made the operation of *adrsta* possible. As the individual soul is not omniscient, it does not possess the capacity for cognizing *adrsta*. If this is so, the opponent may argue that God, which the *Naiyayikas* stated to be of kindred nature of the individual soul, can not be explained as endowed with the capacity for the supervision of unseen deserts. The, *Naiyayika*, in reply, points out that the evanescent character of knowledge possessed by the individual soul militates against the possibility of his supervision. Eternal Knowledge of God is the condition of supervising such unseen entities. Eternal knowledge is independent of any condition whatsoever and as such relates to each and every object of the universe irrespective of any spacio-temporal factor.

It is worthy to note that although it is admitted that there can not be any direct proof of eternal knowledge by means of observation still the same may be inferred with the help of cogent reasoning. At this stage, the opponent may argue that it could not be understood
what the *Naiyayika* has meant by saying that God’s knowledge is eternal and that of the individual soul is transient. The *Naiyayikas* have replied that it is not inconsistent to think that the knowledge of God is eternal and the individuals are not so. And they have explicated their position with the help of the following argument: The qualities such as colour, taste etc. of physical atoms is of an evanescent nature whereas those of aquatic atoms are held to be of eternal character. If there is such variation in the character of atoms, then there can not be any justification for the opponent’s contention that the knowledge of God can not be different in character from that of individuals since both of them, i.e. God and *jiva*, are described as atman as such. Instead of this, the opponent may argue: *Adrsta* inheres in the individual soul and the logician posits God as the supervisor of such *adrsta*. But, it is not possible to supervise things which are not related to him but to the individual soul. But the theist steers clear of this apparent difficulty by asserting a relation between God and *Adrsta* of the individual soul. It is pointed by him that God and the individual soul are related to each other, the relation being one of contact (*samyoga*) and as *adrsta* is a quality pertaining to the individual soul which is its substratum, the relation between the individual soul and *adrsta* is one of inherence (*samavaya*) God is, therefore, related to *adrsta* of the individual soul in the relation of being, inherence-in-the-thing-in-contact (*samyukta samavaya*). In this connection, one may argue that such an explanation involves further difficulty. In that case, the relation of contact between two eternal and ubiquitous entities has to be accepted, but this kind of a position can not be accepted. Eternal and ubiquitous entities can never be related through contact in view of the fact that if such contact be at all admitted, it would proved to be eternal. Further, Prasastapada have denied the relation of contact between eternal and ubiquitous entities.
With due reference, it has been mentioned that among the Naiyayikas, that Uddyotakara, has admitted the relation of contact between two eternal and ubiquitous entities. Though Uddyotakara, at first, refers to this view as being posited by others (aney ahuh), yet in his subsequent observations, he has made it clear that the eternity of contact does not militate against the thesis of the Naiyayikas. It is worthy to note that he has stepped a further and maintained that if the relation is held to be of contact –cum-contact-cum inherence (samyukta-samyogi-samavaya), then the difficulty involved in the supposition of eternal contact, will not arise. God is related by contact with atoms, the atoms and individual souls are mutually related by contact and adrsta inheres in the individual soul. Thus, the relation existing between adrsta and God turns out to be one of contact –cum-contact-cum-inherence according to Uddyotakara. It is a fact that adrsta is not independent in the matter of producing effects. Unlike activity (karma) it depends on some external conditions, such as space, time, etc to give rise to different effects. Activity, as the Naiyayika states, does not expect external conditions to produce effects. For instance, separation of atoms follows as a result of some activity, but this activity does not require the aid of any external conditions so far as the separation of atoms is concerned. But the case of adrsta is entirely different. Until and unless it is aided by external conditions, it fails to produce any effect. The aid comes from time, space, the intelligent agent and so forth. The adrsta, as an insentient being, can not give rise to any effect by itself. It can operate only when some intelligent agent regulates it. It may be further argued against the Naiyayikas position that the argument advanced by them would not enable them to establish God as the supervising agent of adrsta. In the case of an empirical event, say, for instance, the cutting of a log of wood with an axe, an intelligent agent, having a
psychophysical organism, may be reasonably posited, but as a supervising agent of
\textit{adrsta}, he is not endowed with a psychophysical organism. Thus it does not stand that
only an intelligent agent control \textit{adrsta}.

But, the \textit{Naiyayika} states that the contention of the opponent rests upon a bad analogy.
The analogy which the opponent tries to set forth between God and any empirical agent
does not hold good. The vital difference between God and an empirical agent lies in the
fact that whereas will and volition of the former are eternal entities, those of the latter are
never so. Hence, the postulation of God as an intelligent agent on who rests the operation
of \textit{adrsta} is not without foundation. It follows from the above fact that the \textit{Naiyayika}
possits \textit{adrsta} as an insentient principle and as an insentient principle can not work
independently, it has been found necessary to imagine a sentient principle to guide it and
this sentient guide is called God. Another question may arise: If \textit{adrsta} be regarded as a
sentient principle and not as an insentient one, as the \textit{Naiyayika} hold it to be, the
necessity for the assumption of a sentient principle ,i.e. God , as the guide of \textit{Adrsta} will
not be felt. The answer is that if it be assumed for the sake of argument that \textit{adrsta} is a
sentient principle it will fail to account for the diversity of the phenomenal world
satisfactorily, as the said sentient principle will itself be of a unitary character. Thus, the
unity of cause will fail to explain the diversity of the effect and this being so; the
assumption of \textit{adrsta} will serve no fruitful purpose.

In this connection, the illustrations have made by Dinakara Bhatta, the celebrated
commentator of the \textit{Nyayasiddhantamuktavali}. He not only agrees with Udayana on this
point but also advances some original arguments to strengthen his point of view. He
argues that motion is contingent on volitional effort (prayatna) and whosoever possesses this volitional effort is God. The opponent may decline to admit that motion in atoms is produced due to the effort of some external intelligent principle, which is declared to be God and aver that atoms, prior to the creation of the universe, may be active and come into contact by themselves without any extraneous instrumentality. But, such an assertion would involve self-contradiction. For, in that case, atoms would turn out to be conscious entities. With regard to this discussion, another point must be noticed that the power, adrsta is essential to postulate the diversity of the phenomenal world. And when God takes to creation, he is assisted by the adrsta. Hence, it is admitted that the primary actions in atoms leading to the creative conjunction are also contingent on adrsta. The Prabhakara Mimamsakas held that all effects may be explained to be due to adrsta alone and it would be superfluous to postulate a conscious supervisor of these merits and demerits (adrsta). Udayana, in reply, observes that the opponent could not understand the intended meaning of what the Naiyayikas have suggested. The Naiyayikas does not hesitate to accept adrsta as the necessary condition of all products. But that does not necessarily mean that the perceived cause should not be taken into account. Moreover, if unseen merits would alone suffice to produce objects, and then creation would have turned into a useless assumption. For, if no other cause besides individual merits be acknowledged, then there would have been no necessity of the body, the external objects to be enjoyed and the sense organs are the instruments for enjoyment. But, it is a fact that without the locus of enjoyment, no enjoyment is possible by virtue of adrsta alone. Thus, the locus, the objects and the instruments are the observed conditions for enjoyment and as such it is never judicious to deny their practical efficiency. Likewise, when the
supervision by an intelligent agent in the case of a product is attested by perception, it would hardly stand to reason to repudiate the casual efficiency of such an agent. Thus, it is very clear from the above fact that each and every product is determined by an agent. Thus, the act of eating in the absence of any eater is not conceivable and from this particular instance, it may be concluded that a necessary concomitance between activity which is a product and the concept of agency can be drawn. In the same way, the primary activity in atoms must be determined by some intelligent agent and that agent is God.

The opponent may, however, object that there is no concomitance between activity-as-such and volition-as-such. He may, however accept the position that in special cases there may be concomitance between a particular type of activity and a particular type of volition, if such concomitance is supported by empirical evidence. To illustrate: In so far as the volitional activity in human body is concerned, there is invariably intelligent supervision. But, this would not strengthen the necessity of admission of the concomitance relation between the activity in atoms and the intelligent supervision. The reason is not for to seek. For the volitional activity in human body is different from the activity in atoms, which, as the Nyaya-Vaisesika philosopher maintains, are the ultimate constituents of matter and not any physical organism. It is, therefore, that the opponent maintains that what holds good in the case of human bodies will not be so in the case of atoms. Not even divine volition is regarded as the volition of an enjoyer (bhoktr-pryatna), for God has nothing to enjoy. Thus, divine volition sharply differs from the volition of an embodied self. Hence, it may be safely argued that the activity in atoms does not stand in need of any intelligent supervision.
Udayana, here points out that if a particular instance of activity is determined by a particular instance of volition, a general concomitance may safely be drawn between all individual activities and all individual volitions. This generalization is logical and is endorsed by empirical observation. Thus, it is established that the activity in atoms is due to some intelligent volition and that agent is God. In this connection, Udayana further posits that God is not only the creator but also the destroyer of the Universe. Prasastapada has amply dealt with the creative and destructive nature of God. The entire Universe including the dyads is destroyed by the Lord. Destruction of dyads results in the wake of the disjunction of atoms and such disjunction cannot be effected by finite selves the atom lies beyond the ken of limited perception. Hence, some agent of unimpeded knowledge must be postulated and that agent is God.

Another argument for the existence of god is advanced by making him the agent for introducing connection between a world and its meaning. The Mimamsaka, do not believe in cosmic rest (pralaya). He, of course, admits day-to-day creation and destruction but he contends that it would be unwise to admit total annihilation and creation of the universe. The Naiyayika believes that the universe has an origin and as such the usages and connections do not exist from eternity. At the end of a cycle, connection are destroyed and it may be in the fitness of things to enquire about the identity of one who was responsible for introducing these connections in the beginning of a cycle. In the present dissertation, we need not deal with all the proofs for the existence of God in details.
Some Critical Observations of the Relationship between God and Morality

Two specific types of relationship are supposed to exist between God and morality. The couple of arguments for the existence of God that have been adduced by Nyaya are based upon its conception of the similarity of divine creatorship with self’s creatorship. The individual self creates things by means of his or her effort which is born of the desire to create, which arises as the result of the creator’s knowledge of the material causes of the things to be created. God is much a creator of the whole cosmos as he alone has the knowledge of the material cause of the cosmos and the desire and effort capable of producing the cosmos. So, Human and Divine creativity are in the Nyaya view, almost parallel with each other. If this is so, how can human creativity be supposed to be so thoroughly dependent upon the body? The dependence upon the body of self’s creativity is absolute, while divine creativity is absolutely independent. As a matter of fact, the Nyaya seems to have completely admitted the matter that the divine creativity is somehow similar to human creativity. God along with self’s destiny, space, time etc. is supposed to be the common efficient cause of everything. How can such a view of common causation of two such unlike entities be explained, especially so when divine causality is taken to be inferable from human causality? It is, therefore, quite pertinent on the part of some thinkers to raise objection against the inference of the divine creativity and argue that, since God has no body, He cannot create anything. The Nyaya answer to the objection is not quite convincing. The answer is to the effect that God’s knowledge, will and effort are eternal and absolutely unrestricted. Only because of the unrestricted and universal operation of his will and effort, God is supposed to be able to bring about the conjunction of atoms after the periodical annihilation of the world and its consequent

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disintegration into atoms. The atoms brought together, mainly by divine effort, give rise, in due course, to the whole composite structure of the world. Thus, the necessity of the embodiment for God in his creative activity is denied by Nyaya. In fact, neither body nor anything else can be needed by God’s will, effort knowledge etc. as they are all supposed to be eternal like God. From the Nyayakusumanjali of Udayana, it is worthy to note that God reincarnates Himself as a master or teacher of the use of words 17. The inference is as follows; ‘There must be a first teacher of the use of words. As this conscious being cannot be one of us, the existence of God is proved.’ Thus, it must be noticed that teaching is an activity which cannot be carried on without there being an embodied person as teacher and an embodied person as student. In this context, the objection may be raised in the following way. In the different explanation for proving the existence of God, the Nyaya forgets the very obvious fact that if for the omniscient, omnipotent and omnivolent God, no physical body is needed for creating the universe, and then it should not at all be needed for him to teach the scriptures to the first-born sages. God could directly make the first born enlightened about the scriptures by his infinite power. If despite his infinite power, God cannot do without physical incarnation in carrying out the teaching activity, he cannot do so even in the case of the creation of the world.

It may be urged by the Nyaya School against these arguments that the embodied nature of the individual self is a fact of experience. Also, the limitation of the individual’s cognitions, desires, conations etc. is an undeniable fact, God’s cognition, conation etc. are, however, not directly known, they are inferred on the basis of their broad similarity to the individual’s cognition, conation etc. This similarity between them is only in respect
of their co-objectivity, that is to say, the individual’s self cognition, conation etc have identified objects as God’s cognition, conation etc. But, in respect of their causation, there is no similarity between the two groups of qualities. The objection may arise that there is not the slightest similarity between the individual’s self’s and God’s qualities. The former are non-eternal, while the latter is eternal; the former have only a few things as their objects; while the whole world is the object of the latter. Further, there is a mutual causation among the former, but all the qualities of God are uncaused; the individual self depends upon the body of their origination, preservation etc. but the omniscient God, being eternal, does not depend upon anything. Moreover, the individual selves are causally related to specific effects, but the latter have everything as their effects. The only features common to these two types of qualities is their intentionality; but even this differs as limited and the unlimited in the two cases. In view of such radical difference between these, it would not be reasonable to base the inference of God’s creativity upon its similarity to individual creativity. Further, it is supposed by the Nyaya-Vaisesika philosophers that God is omnipresent in nature. One may argue that this quality of omnipresence may suppose to share with God. The reason for regarding the self as ubiquitous in nature is that the destiny of the individual is effective in places where the individual is not physically present. If the self alone is the connecting link between destiny and things predestined (for the self), then everything must be predestined for everybody. Moreover, how can the operation of the destiny of a self far away from the body it inhabits are explained? Can destiny- a quality of the self-be operative in the absence of the body-mind-contact? If it can, then even the goings-on in the body can occur without the operation of its destiny. If body-mind-contact is supposed to be needed
only for the origination and not for the operation of destiny, then even divine will and
effort would not be needed for the operation. So, God as the common efficient cause of
all that happens can not be inferred at all. After denying the fact that the divine self and
the individual self differ from each other, the next investigation is to clarify the matter;
whether the moral concepts as those of moral rightness, duty, goodness etc. related to the
individual self are logically dependent upon the concept of God, or not.

To discuss critically, it is noticed that it has been held by some thinkers that an action is
right if and only if it is approved by God. If these explanations are correct, or accepted,
then it will be inconsistent to say of an action A that it is right but not approved of by
God, and a tautology to say that it is right because it is approved of by God. In this
context, Prof. Rajendra Prasad has rightly pointed out that in the sense in which “right” is
ordinarily used, the former is not inconsistent, and the latter not tautologies. In fact, one
can maintain, without committing any inconsistency, that sometimes an action may be
right though not approved of by God, or that it may not be right even if approved of by
God. It is also quite sensible to consider it a genuine question whether an action is right
because God approves of it, or God approves of it because it is right. All this would not
be possible if “being right” and “being approved of by God” were logically dependent
concepts.\(^1^8\) In respect of its logic, the situation will not be changed if the phrase “being
approved of by God” is replaced by any other concept or conceptual complex that
involves a reference to God or the phrase “being right” may be replaced by any other
moral concept. In fact, similar difficulties will arise when an attempt is made to explicate
any moral concept in terms of a theistic concept.
Prof Prasad has rightly observed that “it is because of the logical independence of moral and theistic concept that it is not self-contradictory to say of some one that he leads a good moral life but does not believe that there is any God, or that he is a believer but has committed a moral sin”. In spite of these pre-discussed objections, however, it is true that a reference to the concept of God is very often made in discussions about morality. Sometimes, it is made with a view to procure a justification for morality, and sometimes to procure a motivation for it. In the former case, it is claimed that the final or conclusion justification of morality of an action, or that of the entire system of morality, i.e. the justification of moral life itself, cannot be had unless a reference to theistic concept is made. In the latter case, it is claimed that without such a reference, the motivation for doing a moral action or leading a moral life cannot adequately accounted for. In this context one may raise the question; why should one be moral? The justification of morality of a particular action has been made by appealing sometimes to a principle, sometimes to its actual or expected consequences. It is worthy to note that there is a very important difference between the attempt to justify the morality of a particular action, and that to justify the entire system of morality. While one justifies morality of a particular action, he does this being in the framework of the moral system and he accepts the morality of some principle, the moral value of a set of consequences. But one tries to justify the entire system of morality, then the system might be suspected.

To some thinkers, in order to discuss its justifiability, one has to transcend the domain of morality and it will be possible with special reference to the concept of God. The reference to the concept of God has been considered necessary in order to justify the
entire system of morality. In fact, some theologists may claim that justification, on either level, would not be final unless such a reference is made. In the same way, one may claim that one may lead a moral life because God wants to lead a morally good life and prohibits the individual not to lead a morally bad life.

Now, an attempt is made to justify the morality of an action on the ground that the doing of it is approved of by God. In any concrete case, it can be effectively used as premises only if it is empirically possible to ascertain whether or not the doing of the action in question meets with God’s approval. It is needless to mention that this is almost an impossible task to perform.

However, it is true that in almost all theological literature ‘God’ is quite often used as a moral term with the result that what God approves of becomes morally right or obligatory in a definitional sense. That is, it is taken to be a part of the meaning of ‘God’ that what God approves of ought to be done. If this can be admitted, then ‘what God approves of……’ definitely would not stand in need of any justification. In fact, it cannot be questioned as long as the moral sense of ‘God’ is not questioned. But, such a move to render it unquestionable makes it a tautology, and therefore trivial. In fact, a tautology cannot be used as a reason to justify the morality or otherwise of any action.

A theologian, to get out of this inconvenient situation, may try to retain non-definitional character of ‘what God approves of…..’ and still urge that the question of its justifiability must not be raised on the ground that we have to stop somewhere in our search for justification. One has to accept some premise as unquestionable; otherwise it goes to the
infinite regress. All this is true since ethical reasoning to be effective, like any other reasoning, must stop somewhere.

Rashdall tries to link morality with God via its objectivity or absoluteness. Moral obligation, it’s objective or absolute in the sense that its obligatoriness is independent of man’s idea and desire. If something is obligatory, it is obligatory irrespective of what people think of it, or of the desires they entertain about it. The reason for this, according to him, is the existence of the moral ideal in God. ‘The belief in God…… is the logical presupposition of an objective or absolute morality.’ A moral idea can exist nowhere and no how but in a mind, an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a mind from which all reality is derived. Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regardless as the revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God’. However, Rashdall has used this conception of the link between the absoluteness of morality and God as an argument for the belief in the existence of God. There is absoluteness in morality, according to him, because the moral ideal exists in God. If this is true, then a reference to the concept of God becomes necessary to at least explain or account for its absoluteness. Thus, one can interpret his argument for God’s existence also as an implicit attempt at justifying the entire system of morality or the obligatoriness of moral obligation. Then, if Rashdall’s reasoning is right, there is a sense in which a justification can be given for leading a moral life. But Prof. Rajendra Prasad has rightly pointed out that Rashdall’s argument is in no way less vulnerable than any other attempt at linking morality with God.
First, it is not clear what is meant by saying that the moral ideal exists in God. Rashdall seems to be identifying the moral ideal with an empirical object and thereby it consists a category mistake. Second, it is also not at all clear what it means to regard the absoluteness of morality as the revelation of a moral ideal existent in God. Third, even if this difficulty is ignored, and it is admitted that the former can in some sense be desired from the fact that the moral ideal exists in God, this derivation, though it may bestow in some way absoluteness on morality, will ipso facto convert morality into a matter of fact. This will amount to depriving it of its obligatoriness, or at least to making it questionable, since one can very well question the obligatoriness of a moral rule even when granting that its source lies in a (or the) moral ideal existing in God. ‘why should I do what has its source in God’ is neither a trivial nor a meaningless question. However, all this shows that Rashdall’s argument, when constructed as an attempt to justify morality, suffers from the same logical difficulty from which other similar attempts suffer.

In spite of all these objections, it is worthy to note that a certain moral principle might have arisen in a theistic context; i.e. theism might have provided an occasion for its enunciation. But this would not imply that the reason for its being obligatory is also theistic; it may not owe its justification to anything theistic. For example, the theistic belief that God is present in every form of life might inspire one to enunciate as a moral rule the principle of non-violence (ahimsa), i.e., the principle that ‘one ought not to do any injury to any living being.’ But this would not mean that the principle follows from theistic belief, or that it cannot be justified except in terms of the latter.
Moreover, the question of motivation can also be raised with regard to particular moral actions as well as with regard to the entire system of morality. Similarly, one can say ‘you should do what is moral, since doing so will please God’. There is no doubt that sometimes such theistic motives do work or that the motives which work behind some moral actions of some people are theistic, if it is claimed that theism alone can provide a satisfactory motivation for morality, the claim cannot be sustained. Such a claim can assume two forms (1) it may mean that, as a matter of empirical fact, whenever a moral action is done, or a person leads a moral life, the motive or motives behind it are invariably theistic. Or (2) it may mean that whenever there is a theistic motive, it always leads to some action or actions which are moral. This also has to be taken as empirical propositions and not as a definition, otherwise, it will analytic and consequently trivial. Therefore, if it is true, it will be only contingently true; it would not be necessary that a theistic motive always leads to a moral action.

Sometimes it is said that if one believes that a certain moral principle is a prescription or command issued by God, one will be more strongly motivated to act according to it than if one entertains a different belief about its source. This is a claim which can be considered valid only if substantiated by adequate empirical evidence. It is not a valid claim and counter examples can very easily be produced. The above belief will work only if one wants to please God, and to please him more than to please anyone else. But it would be very unrealistic to believe that all theists always want to please God more than they want to please anyone else. Such a desire may exist in some, but it would not be difficult to find others who feel more strongly motivated to obey the command of their
boss or beloved than to obey what they consider to be a command of their God. It is not empirically true that a theistic motive is always more potent or successful than all other human motives for action. It can, therefore, be safely asserted that a theistic motive can be considered to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition, nor stronger nor better, than every non-theistic motive, for doing a moral action, or for leading a moral life. 22

However, to some thinkers, the concept of God and that of morality are logically independent concepts. It is neither necessary nor helpful to refer to the concept of God for formulating either an adequate theory of ethical justification or an adequate theory of ethical motivation. But, being in the theistic framework, the most important modification of the Nyaya-Vaisesika view regarding the path to liberation is the introduction of the notion that God must at least permit, if not be operative, in the process. Thus, it is worthy to note that merit (adrsta) together with God’s injunctions produce the knowledge about reality which is necessary for liberation.
Notes and References


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12. 2.3.41, *Vedantasutra*, Badarayana, ibid


16. *Visesasya visesam prati prayojakataya samanya vyaptim party avirodhakatvat.*

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17. ‘*Padat*’, one of the causes for admitting the existence of God, *Nyayakusumanjali of Udayana*, edited and translated by Sri Mohan Tarkacaryya, Paschim Banga Rajya Pustak Parsad, Calcutta, 1988


22. ibid