

Bhartṛhari on *Śakti*: the Vaiśeṣika Categories as *Śaktis*

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0. According to Bhartṛhari, the phenomenal world is a manifold appearance of *śaktis* which *Śabdabrahman*, the seed of all (*sarvabīja*), is assumed to have and which in themselves are not susceptible of modification (*aparīṇāminī*). In his *Vākyapadiya* [VP] Bhartṛhari describes *śaktis* in the framework where the Vaiśeṣika categories (*padārtha*) are taken up and equated with them. The aim of this paper is to present, by examining VP III, *sādhana*, kk. 9(—)15 where such a framework is observed, a few aspects of the *śakti* Bhartṛhari conceives of. The ontological status of the *śakti* in relation to the ultimately real, that is, its unreality (*asatyatā*) the equivalents for which are *avicārit-aramaṇīyatā* ('the state of being beloved without having been well-considered') and *bhedā-bhedavicārānarhatā* ('the incapability of predicating the difference and non-difference'), shall be kept aside in this paper.

1. As shall be seen later, a set of *kārikās* in question begins with the assertion that for Sāmsargavādins an entity (*bhāva*) is a *śakti* or has a *śakti*. Helārāja identifies the Sāmsargavādins as Vaiśeṣikas. Before coming on to the main task, it is desirable to clarify the point of how it is to be understood that Bhartṛhari seems to describe a Vaiśeṣika view on *śakti*. It is well-known that none of the ancient Vaiśeṣika sources except **Daśapadārthī* recognizes the *śakti* in its system. It is less than likely that Bhartṛhari there is really describing a Vaiśeṣika view on *śakti* existing in his time. In order to determine how Bhartṛhari deals with the Vaiśeṣika system in relation to *śakti*, first let us consider the following *kārikās* in VP III, *jāti*, kk. 22—24.

[1] *sarvaśaktyātmabhūtatvam ekasyaiveti nirṇayaḥ/*

bhāvānām ātmabhedasya kalpanā syād anarthikā //22//

“The final and ultimate truth (*nirṇaya*) is that [Brahman which is] the One is identical with

all *śaktis* [it has]. [Such being the case,] it would be purposeless to assume that entities are in essence different from one another.”

*tasmād dravyādayaḥ sarvāḥ śaktāyo bhinnalakṣaṇāḥ/
saṃsṛṣṭāḥ puruṣārthasya sādhikā na tu kevalāḥ//23//*

“Therefore, [categories] such as substance (*dravya*) are all *śaktis* [of the One], which are known through its different [functions]. They, united and not separately, help man to reach his goal.”

*yathaiva cendriyādinām ātmabhūtā samagrātā/
tathā saṃbandhisambandhasamsarge’pi pratiyate //24//*

“Just as, [when cognition is produced,] an aggregate (*samagrātā*) which an organ (*indriya*) and so on constitute is understood to be identical with its constituents; in the same way, in the case of a conglomeration (*saṃsarga*) of what are related (*saṃbandha*) [i. e., *śaktis*] with a relatum (*saṃbandhin*) [i. e., Brahman] also, [it is understood to be identical with its constituents].”¹¹

From Bharṭṛhari’s monistic standpoint, the One, *Brahman*, has all the *śaktis* the manifoldness of which is inferred from that of its effects (*bhinnalakṣaṇa*, lit. ‘what is known through its different [activities to produce its effects]’). The manifoldness of its effects ultimately leads to that of verbal behavior (*vyavahāraicitrya*), since the reality, unlimited by anything, is beyond verbalization and hence the multiplicity of the phenomenal world can be accounted for by its *śaktis* as its limiting factors (*upādhi*). Bharṭṛhari draws this *śakti*—view of his own into the Vaiśeṣika category theory, saying that all categories postulated by Vaiśeṣikas, *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya*, are nothing but the substitutes of *śaktis* the One has. One can thus get a glimpse of his perspectivism here also. Interesting is that Bharṭṛhari intends to reduce the Vaiśeṣika categories to the One. He applies the logic that an aggregate (*samagrātā*) of *śaktis* realized as those categories is not a separate entity from the *śaktis* and the latter are not different from the One, and thereby tacitly accepts that the Vaiśeṣika system of thought is also conducive to the attainment of human goals (*puruṣārtha*). Although the categorial status of *śakti* has been subject to some debate within the Vaiśeṣika itself, to be concerned with its categorial independency is one thing and to identify it with an entity as postulated in that system is another. It is clear, therefore, that

in VP III, *sādhana*, *kk.* 9(—)15 Bhartṛhari never attributes to the Samsargavādins a view such that everything that is a *śakti* or has a *śakti* is an entity (*bhāva*). He is reformulating Vaiśeṣika-views in a *śakti*-terminology there, from his own view of the phenomenal world as Brahman's apparent unfolding through its *śaktis*.

2. Now let us turn to our main point. In the preceding kārikās (in VP III, *sādhana*, *kk.* 1—8), Bhartṛhari has explained that *sādhana* as the accomplisher of an action is the *sāmarthyā* (= *śakti*), in the view that *sāmarthyā* has an independent existence of a substance as its possessor (*dravyavyatiriktaśakti*). The basic argument for equating *śaktis* with the Vaiśeṣika categories is, as opposed to that, that a *śakti* is not different from a substance (*dravyavyatiriktaśakti*). Bhartṛhari opens the equation by saying as follows:

[2] *śaktayaḥ śaktimantaś ca sarve saṃsargavādinām/
bhāvās teṣv asvaśabdeṣu sādhanatvaṃ nirūpyate//9//*

“According to the Samsargavādins, every entity (*bhāva*) is a *śakti* and has a *śakti*. Their property of being a *sādhana*, which is referred to when they have [for their signifiers] the items denoting what is different from themselves, is [now] examined.”

Two points are made: 1) When entities (*bhāva*) produce their own effects, they themselves (*svarūpa*) and their cooperators (*sahakārin*) are respectively regarded as *śaktis*. Cooperators are *śaktis* and a cause (*kāraṇa*) is their possessor (*śaktimat*); similarly, for cooperators also, the cause is the *śakti* and they themselves are its possessors. Therefore, every entity (*bhāva*) is a *śakti* and has a *śakti*; separately from them, Helārāja adds, there is nothing called *śakti* that is beyond perception and that is other than six categories : *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, and *samavāya*.

2) A further point, which will be explained in detail in the kārikā [3], is that the property of being a *sādhana*, that is, the *śakti*, is not expressed as it is by its own word. It is expressed as it is by a nominal ending (*vibhakti*) and certain other linguistic elements. This is because the *śakti* which is of a dependent nature (*paratantra*) loses its property of dependence when it is substantialized (*dravyāyamāṇa*) and denoted by a nominal such as *śakti*. Recall that Patañjali looks upon it as *guṇa* (*MBh* on P3.2.115 : *guṇaḥ sādhanam*). And, in connection with this, it is to be noted that all characteristics that Bhartṛhari in VP III, *guṇa*, *k.* 1 describes as taken on by a *guṇa* should be attributed to the *śakti* also; thus, it is *saṃsargin* (‘what is connected with something’), *bhedaka*

(‘a differentiator’) and *paratantra* (‘something dependent’).

Next Bhartṛhari continues to adduce instances in the following kārīkās (VP III, *sādhana*, *kk.* 10—12ab) in order to answer the question: What entity (*bhāva*) of what is the *śakti* for what (*ko bhāvaḥ kasya kva śaktiḥ*)? It will be made clear what is meant by the word *bhāva* when Bhartṛhari says that every entity is a *śakti* and a *śakti*-possessor.

[3] *ghaṭasya dṛṣīkarmatve mahattvādīni sādhanam/
rūpasya dṛṣīkarmatve rūpatvādīni sādhanam//10//*

“[For example,] in the case where a pot is a *karman* in correlation to the action of seeing, the ‘largeness’ and others are the *sādhana*. [And] in the case where a color is a *karman* in a correlation to the action of seeing, the colorness (*rūpatva*) and others are the *sādhana*.”

1) The situation in which *ghaṭam paśyati* (‘He sees a pot’) is uttered and the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* VI. 1.6: *mahaty anekadravyavattvād rūpāc copalabdhiḥ* are taken into consideration by Helārāja. According to the Vaiśeṣikas, in consequence of the property of both *anekadravyavattva*²⁾ and *rūpa* (‘color’), there arises the perception with reference to a large (*mahat*) substance. In the case of the perception of a pot, therefore, the property of *anekadravyavattva* and the color (*rūpa*), which belong to the substance pot that has become the *karman* in correlation to the action of seeing (*darśanakriyā*), are deemed *śaktis* insofar as they inhere in the pot itself. The ‘largeness’ (*mahattva*) spoken of here as *sādhana*, which is a *parimāṇaviśeṣa* and hence a kind of *guṇa*, is regarded as indirect cause of that perception in that it conditions the domain of that perception.

2) Concerning the second line of the present kārīkā, the utterance *rūpaṃ paśyati* (‘He sees a color’) and the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* IV. 1.8: *anekadravyasamavāyād rūpaviśeṣāc ca rūpopalabdhiḥ* are taken into account. The same sūtra is given in the *Nyāyasūtra* (III. 1.38). Although Helārāja introduces the interpretation of *rūpaviśeṣa* as *udbhūtatva* (‘manifested-ness’), which accords that of the *Nyāyabhāṣya*, the word *rūpaviśeṣa* is to be taken as standing for the limited universal (*sāmānyaviśeṣa*), which is in conformity with what is meant by the word *rūpatva* here in this kārīkā. In the case of the utterance *rūpaṃ paśyati*, the universal ‘colorness’ (*rūpatva*) which inheres in the color itself and the inherence (*samavāya*) of the color in a substance formed of more than

one substance are considered to be *śaktis* in correlation to the action of seeing the color.

[4] *svaiḥ sāmānyaviśeṣaiś ca śaktimanto rasādayaḥ/
niyatagrahaṇā loke śaktayas tās tathāśrayaiḥ //11//*

“And, a taste and other [qualities] which are in the world understood in a fixed way through the limited universals of their own are holders of the śakti; and likewise, those [limited universals such as the ‘tasteness’] which are *śaktis* become [holders of the *śakti* when understood] through [their own] loci.”

As in the case of *rūpṃ paśyati*, in the case of *rasaṃ rasayati* (‘He takes a taste’), *gan-dham jighrati* (‘He takes a smell’), *sparśaṃ sprśati* (‘He feels a touch’) and *śabdaṃ śṅ-oti* (‘He hears a sound’), too, limited universals (*sāmānyaviśeṣa*) such as ‘tasteness’ or the property of being a taste (*rasatva*), inhering in their respective loci like taste are considered to be *śaktis* in correlation to actions such as taking a taste. A taste and others are those the understanding of which is invariably brought about through their respective limited universals (*niyatagrahaṇāḥ*); that is, they are invariably understood only by the force of their own ‘species’ or universals (*jāti*). And they are not those the understanding of which is brought about in no fixed way (*aniyatagrahaṇāḥ*), as is that of a substance. The very loci *per se* that hold properties like ‘tasteness’ (*rasatva*) and others, *śaktis* to bring about the understanding of their respective loci, become *śaktis* to bring about the understanding of the properties themselves, since they delimit the properties. In like manner, it is also to be known that a substance that is the locus of a taste is also the *śakti* to bring about the perception of it.

[5] *indriyārthamaṇḥkartṛsaṃbandhaḥ sādhanam kvacit/12ab/*

“In some cases, the object-external sense organ-internal organ—agent relationship is the *sādhanā*.

From the self-internal organ-external sense organ-object connection (*ātmandri-iyamanorthasannikarṣa*) is produced the knowledge of the color and other [qualities]; therefore the contact (*samyoga*) is a *śakti*. Moreover, from the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* IV.1.12:

saṃkhyāḥ parimāṇāni prthaktvaṃ saṃyogavibhāgau karma ca rūpidravysamavāyāc cākṣuṣāṇi, it may be said that *samavāya* is also a *śakti*. Thus the relation (*sambandha*) in general is also a *śakti*, which is affirmed in VP III, *sambandha*, k. 5 (*śaktinām api sā [=sambandhaḥ] śaktih*).

In this way, Bharṭṛhari shows that *mahattva* (*guṇa*), *rūpatva* (*sāmānyaviśeṣa*), *rasa* (*guṇa*), *dravya* and *sambandha* (*saṃyoga* and *samavāya*), being *bhāva*, can be identified with *śaktis*. What should be drawn from the identification of *śaktis* with the Vaiśeṣika categories is now described in the following *kārikā*.

[6] *yad yadā yadanugrāhi tat tadā tatra sādhanam //12cd//*

“[Or rather,] when a certain thing *x* renders service to a certain thing *y*, the thing *x* is the *sādhana* for the thing *y*.”³⁹

The pervasion (*vyāpti*) between *anugrāhītvā* (*upakāratva*) and *sādhanatva* (*śaktitva*) is shown here, in the formulation of which Bharṭṛhari's own view is clearly reflected. According to him, whatever renders service to others and hence is dependent upon others follows the definition of the *śakti* (Helārāja: *paropakāri paratantram sarvaṃ śaktīlakṣaṇam anupatati*). Interestingly Bharṭṛhari applies this pervasion to an action (*kriyā*) in VP III, *kk*. 16—17, stating that an action is also a *sādhana*. If we take it into account, it follows that all the Vaiśeṣika categories are covered by Bharṭṛhari, since the Vaiśeṣika notion of *karman* is included in Vaiyākaraṇas' notion of an action.

In the following *kārikās*, Bharṭṛhari elaborates on some essential features of the *śakti* as extracted from the equation of the Vaiśeṣika categories with *śaktis*.

[7] *svaśabdair abhidhāne tu sa dharmo nābhidhiyate/
vidhakyādibhir evāsāv upakāraḥ pratiyate //13//*

“When [the *śakti*] is denoted by its own word, however, that property [i. e., the property of being subordinate to an action,] is not denoted by it. The [function of] rendering service [to an action] is understood exactly from a *vibhakti* and others.”

*nimittabhāvo bhāvānām upakārārtham āśrītaḥ/
natir āvarjanety evaṃ siddhaḥ sādhanam iṣyate //14//*

“The property of being a cause (*nimittabhāva*) which belongs to entities is resorted to so that they may render service (*upakāra*) [to actions]. [That property], denoted by such words as

nati ('a bent for rendering service to actions'), *āvarjanā* ('an inclination to render service to actions'), is admitted to be a *sādhana*, when it is [known to have been] realized."

sa tebhyo vyatirikto vā teṣām ātmaiva vā tathā'

vyatirekam upāśritya sādhanatvena kalpyate //15//

"No matter whether it [i. e., the property of being a cause (*nimittabhāva*) or the *śakti*] be distinct from those [entities] or they themselves be such [a property], it is assumed to be a *sādhana* on the basis of the distinction [between *upakārya* ('service-receiver') and *upakāraka* ('service-renderer'), in other words, the one between entities]."

1) As has been stated, as in *ghaṭaḥ karma* ('The pot is an object [in relation to a certain action]'), by words such as '*karman*' and '*sādhana*' a substance in which the function of rendering service to an action (*kriyopakāra*) is observed is denoted as something principal. From these words, however, the property of being a *sādhana* which is characterized by the rendering of service to an action is not understood as springing up (*samudbhūta*). Therefore, when a certain entity is denoted by the word *sādhana*, it is in the state of being potentially capable of bringing about an action (*yogyatāmātra*).

2) The question of what property (*dharma*) is characterized by the *upakāra* and becomes *sādhana* (= *śakti*) is answered. It is, says Bhartṛhari, the property of being a cause (*nimittabhāva*, *hetubhāva*). This property is nothing but the *śakti* (Helārāja: *hetubhāvah śaktyaparaparyāyah*). However, it is when such a property is known as having been actually realized (*siddhaḥ = niṣpannatayā pratiyamānaḥ*) that it is regarded as the *śakti*; it is not called *śakti* on the basis of the mere possibility of its belonging to a certain entity (*sambhavamātreṇa*).

3) According to Bhartṛhari, whether the theory be accepted that a *śakti* is not distinct from an entity or *śaktis* be distinct from entities, one cannot have the notion of the *śakti* without the distinction (*vyatireka*) between *upakārya* and *upakāraka* which requires that there be different entities. For one arrives at a *śakti* only when there are different entities and some service is rendered from one thing to another.

3. Thus the features of the *śakti* which has been made clear through Bhartṛhari's above-mentioned identification of *śaktis* with Vaiśeṣika categories and his remarks on it are as follows :

- 1) In order for a certain entity to be treated as a *śakti*, there has to be the service-rendering (*upakāra*) and hence there must be the distinction between *upakārya* and *upakāraka*, in other words, the difference between entities. Whatever renders service to others is a *śakti*.
- 2) There is no fixed *śakti*. Related things (*samsargin*) mutually have the property of being the *śakti* since one thing cannot render service to another if there is no connection between them at all. On the assumption that a certain relation subsists between two different entities, if one entity is assumed to render service to another, the former in the state of rendering service is a *śakti* and the latter in the state of being rendered service (*upakārya*) its holder (*śaktimat*).
- 3) *Śaktis* are not expressed as they are by their own words.

1) Concerning the phrase *sambandhisambandhasamsarge'pi*, Helārāja suggests a variant reading and gives a different interpretation, which need not be discussed here.

2) Helārāja gives the following interpretation of the word *anekadravyavattava* : "The word *anekadravya* refers to the thing *x* which has for its *samavāyikāraṇa* more than one substance, such as a dyad (*dvyanuka*) and others. [And] the word *anekadravyavat* refers to the thing *y* which has the thing *x*, that is, that which is formed of the thing *x*. The word *anekadravyavattva* refers to the property (*bhāva*) of the thing *y*."

3) See VP III, *diś*, *k*. bcd also.

(Key Words) Bhartṛhari, *śakti*, Vaiśeṣika, *upakāra*, *padārtha*

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