

MARCUS SCHMÜCKER

## Yogic Perception According to the Later Tradition of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta\*

Normally knowledge depends on a corresponding object. In the case of perception the correspondence is even stronger; the object has usually to exist at the same time and place as the perception that gives rise to it. But can perception as a means of valid knowledge bring something into consciousness, at least in some special cases, if the object is absent? Must the validity of perception be confirmed by empirical evidence, or can it be valid even if its object is not presented to consciousness through a contact between sense and object?

These questions deal with general problems in a theory of knowledge. They are also crucial to the Rāmānuja School's division of perception (*pratyakṣa*) into sense perception (*indriyapratyakṣa*) and other types of perception such as perception of *yogins* (*yogipratyakṣa*). Rāmānuja himself discusses in his *Śrībhāṣya* the difference between sense perception and other types of cognition whose object was either perceived earlier or is in no way perceptible (Śrībh 27,15-20). In this context he considers recollection (*smaraṇa*) and means of valid knowledge, such as inference (*anumāna*), authoritative tradition (*āgama*) and the perception of *yogins*. Although these kinds of means of valid knowledge have no directly perceived object, they are nevertheless considered to be valid. He admits that means of valid knowledge like perception born from a sense faculty (*indriyajanman*), requires a simultaneous object, i.e. its nature is restricted (*svabhāvaniyama*) to an object being present at the moment it is perceived (*svasamakālavartin*). However, Rāmānuja argues, this is not the case for the above-mentioned means of valid knowledge and differentiates between them in the following way:

---

\* I would like to express my gratitude to Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek and Will Rasmussen for improving the English of this article. I am also indebted to Vincent Eltschinger and to Eli Franco for valuable suggestions with regard to my Sanskrit translations and the clarity of my thoughts.

“For such indeed is the natural restriction of a perception born from a sense faculty that it grasps an object which exists at the same time [as its perception]. [But] this is not the case for all cognitions and means of valid cognition, because one observes that recollection,<sup>1</sup> in-

<sup>1</sup> Although recollection is listed here together with inference, etc., it is not considered by Rāmānuja to be a means of knowledge (*pramāna*). For this reason he states “cognitions and means of valid cognitions”; recollection is to be subsumed under the former, but not under the latter. Cf. also n. 3 below, where Rāmānuja rejects the validity of yogic cognition on the ground that it is mere recollection. However, the status of recollection in the Rāmānuja School is somewhat ambiguous, for recollection plays a significant role in the process of gaining valid knowledge, as frequently pointed out by later exponents of the viśiṣṭādvaitic tradition. Their views, however, diverge. For Meghanādārīsūri the view that recollection lacks validity is not acceptable (NDy 183,17: ... *smṛtitvam aprāmāṇyam ity anaṅgīkārāt*). He distinguishes between two aspects of recollection. Recollection relies on an object that was previously perceived by some other means of cognition, and by which a mnemonic trace (*saṃskāra*) is left on the soul. In this respect recollection lacks validity. However, recollection does not amount only to an image of an object, but by the mere fact of its own independent existence (*svasattayā*) or by the fact of being a recollection (*smṛtitvam*) it distinguishes itself from its own basis/support (*svāśraya*), i.e. the preceding perception, and is in this respect independent and valid. Cf. NDy 183,18-19: *sāpekṣatvam evāprāmāṇyam. sāpekṣatā ca viśayaparicchede smṛter iti tatraivāprāmāṇyam. svasattayaiva svāśrayaṃ prati svaparicchedān na tatra sāpekṣateti na prāmāṇyahānis tatra*. “The invalidity [of recollection consists] only in its dependency [on a means of valid cognition like a previous perception]. And the dependency consists in the recollection’s determination of the object. Therefore only in this respect recollection lacks validity. [But] because it determines itself, by its mere existence, as different from its own basis/support (lit. it discriminates itself in respect to its basis), it does not depend on that [support]. Thus, it does not lack validity in respect to that [self-determination].”

For Parāśarabhaṭṭa, another important exponent of the Viśiṣṭādvaitic tradition, see Oberhammer 1979: 115; Oberhammer comments on the passage *smṛtiḥ pratyakṣaṃ aitihiyam anumānaṃ catuṣṭayam iti pratyakṣādyaviśeṣeṇa vedānūvādāc ca* quoted in Veṅkaṭanātha’s NP 67,15 (in Oberhammer 1979: 44-45 (Fragment 8): “Fest steht, daß er [Parāśarabhaṭṭa] die Erinnerung, die auf einer durch Erkenntnismittel hervorgerufenen gültigen Erkenntnis beruht, ebenfalls als gültige Erkenntnis betrachtet hat. [...]. Es sieht so aus, als sei der von ihm erwähnte *vedānūvādāc* im Anschluß an einen oder mehrere Gründe (vgl. *vedānūvādāc ca*) vorgebracht worden, um die Gleichwertigkeit der Erinnerung mit den anderen durch Erkenntnismittel entstandenen Arten gültiger Erkenntnis durch ein autoritatives Zeugnis zu belegen.”

For Veṅkaṭanātha’s discussion of *smṛti* see for example NP 45,1: *smṛtimātrāpramāṇatvaṃ na yuktaṃ iti vakṣyate, abādhitasmṛter loka pramāṇatvapariṅrahāt*. For more detailed explanation to relationship between perception and recollection cf. NP

ference, authoritative tradition, the perception of *yogins*, etc., grasp an [object] even if it exists in another time. And this is precisely the reason why the means of valid cognition are invariably connected to their objects. For a means of valid cognition's relation with [its] object does not consist in [its] invariable connection with a contemporaneous (*svasamakālavartin*) [object], but rather in its opposing the falsehood of the aspect [of the object] such as it appears [in the cognition] as related with this [i.e. the means of valid cognition's] space, time, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Although in this passage Rāmānuja presents a clear distinction between means of valid knowledges whose object is absent (*kālāntaravartin*) and means of valid knowledge whose object is present at the same time as the means itself (*svasamakālavartin*) and admits the validity of a means of knowledge, even if the contact between sense faculty (*indriya*) and object (*viśaya*) is not simultaneously given, in his *Śrībhāṣya* he does not elaborate much on *yogipratyakṣa* and its difference from a means of valid knowledge like sense perception.<sup>3</sup>

Perception (*pratyakṣa*), according to Rāmānuja, presupposes an object (*viśaya*) which usually has to exist at the same time (*svasamakālavartin*) as the cognition it gives rise to. This requirement becomes clear in his concepts of non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*) perception. Both perceptual forms of cognition – which are enabled by the differentiating features of the object (*saviśeṣaviśaya*) and which rely on sense faculties (*indriyāpekṣa*) – are dependent on

289-293. For Venkaṭanātha's commentary on the quoted passage of the *Śrībhāṣya*, especially to the word *smaraṇa*, see TṬ 144,27.

<sup>2</sup> Śrībh 27,15-20: *indriyajanmanah pratyakṣasya hy eṣa svabhāvanīyamah, yat svasamakālavartinah padārthasya grāhakatvam. na sarveṣāṃ jñānānāṃ pramāṇānāṃ ca, smaraṇānumānāgamayogipratyakṣādiṣu kālāntaravartino 'pi grahaṇadarśanāt. ata eva ca pramāṇasya prameyāvinābhāvaḥ. na hi pramāṇasya svasamakālavartināvinābhāvo 'rthasāmbandhaḥ, api tu yaddeśakālādīsāmbandhitayā yo 'rtho 'vabhāsate, tasya tathāvidhākāramithyātvapratyanīkatā.*

<sup>3</sup> The context of the other passage where Rāmānuja deals with yogic perception is the following: Having refuted that Brahman cannot be proved by normal perception, he goes on to refute that perception produced by *yoga* is a *pramāṇa* for Brahman, even if yogic perception as mentioned in the quotation above is accepted as means of valid cognition. He states Śrībh 97,16-18: “[...] Neither [can perception] produced by *yoga* [prove Brahman]. Even if this [cognition], which is born at the end of intense meditation, presents [its content] vividly, it has no validity as a means of knowledge, because it consists only in the memory of what has been experienced before.” (*nāpi yogajanyam. bhāvanāprakarṣaparyantajanmanas tasya viśadāvabhāsate 'pi pūrvānubhūtavīśayasṃtīmātratvān na prāmāṇyam.*)

each other and are necessary for reaching a complete knowledge of an entity (*vastu*).

Thus, although the first perception apprehends the object together with its differentiating features (*saviśeṣaviśaya*) and could be verbalised in words such as “this [object] is of such and such [quality]” (*ittham ittham*), it is nevertheless incomplete<sup>4</sup> in determining the object, because the generic structure (*saṁsthāna*) is cognised by the *nirvikalpakapratyakṣa* in only one perceived individual/object. Therefore, for Rāmānuja, the two perceptions deviate from each other by the fact that the recurrence (*anuvṛtti*) of the generic structure which is common to different objects or beings like cows cannot be grasped in the first perception, but is indeed recognised in the second and subsequent perceptions, the *savikalpakapratyakṣa*. The required succession of the two perceptions and their dependency on an object which is present at the same time it is perceived, is summarized by Rāmānuja in the following words:

“When grasping the object the first time, it is not known that [the universal] cowness, etc., has a form that recurs. [But] in the [following] second and subsequent cognitions of the thing, there is the knowledge of recurrence. [The fact] that cowness etc., which has the form of the generic structure of the object that is connected to the first cognition, is qualified by the property of recurrence, is to be ascertained by the second and subsequent cognitions of the object; therefore the second and subsequent cognitions are conceptual. The recurrence of cowness, etc., which has the nature of the generic structure of the object such as the dewlap is not grasped during the first cognition of an object; therefore the first cognition of an object is non-conceptual.”<sup>5</sup>

However, the manner in which Rāmānuja describes this process of the two perceptions is quite closely connected with the knowledge’s

<sup>4</sup> Śrībh 23,5-6: “A cognition [of an object] with some qualities is called non-conceptual, It is not devoid of all distinguishing qualities, because such a kind of cognition is never observed and is impossible.” (*nirvikalpakam nāma kena cid viśeṣeṇa viyuktasya grahaṇam, na sarvaviśeṣarahitasya tathābhūtasya kadācid api grahaṇādarśanād anupapatteś ca.*)

<sup>5</sup> Śrībh 23,9-14: *prathamapiṇḍagrahaṇe gotvāder anuvṛttākāratā na pratīyate. dvitīyādīpiṇḍagrahaṇeṣv evānuvṛttipratītiḥ. prathamapratītyanusamhitavastusaṁsthānarūpagotvāder anuvṛttidharmaviśiṣṭatvam dvitīyādīpiṇḍagrahaṇāvaseyam iti dvitīyādīgrahaṇasya savikalpakatvam. sāsnādivastusaṁsthānarūpagotvāder anuvṛttir na prathamapiṇḍagrahaṇe gr̥hyata iti prathamapiṇḍagrahaṇasya nirvikalpakatvam.*

dependency on sense faculty. But it seems that Rāmānuja does not pursue the matter further, for example he does not raise the question how yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*) could proceed even if the object is absent (*kālāntaravartin*) and can be known independent of sense faculties (*indriyānapekṣa*).

His follower Meghanādārisūri, an important 13<sup>th</sup> century exponent<sup>6</sup> of the Rāmānuja tradition, provides more details about *yogipratyakṣa*. In his *Nayadyumaṇi*, in the chapter defining the means of valid cognition (*pramāṇanirūpaṇa*), especially in the section defining perception (cf. *pratyakṣanirūpaṇa*, NDy 187-194), Meghanādārisūri describes not only the conditions under which an object (*viśaya*) can be known by means of valid knowledge, but also refers to yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*) and its taking place independently of a sense faculty (*indriyānapekṣa*), whereas perception (*pratyakṣa*) directed towards sense-objects is normally defined as arising through the contact between an object and the senses (*indriyārthasamnikarṣaja*). After explaining non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual perception (*savikalpaka*) he equates the first to sense dependent and the second to sense independent perception and identifies yogic perception with *savikalpakapratyakṣa* (NDy 191,20-24).

However, the definition of yogic perception as independent of senses – also defined as extrasensory perception (*atīndriya*) – requires some further explanation, because, for Meghanādārisūri, other beings like the highest Self, i.e. the *paramātman*, the released souls (*mukta*) and the eternal souls that have always been free from *saṃsāra* (*nitya-mukta*), are also characterized as having this kind of perception. But are they therefore to be classified as *yogins* and is their type of extrasensory perception to be characterized as conceptual perception (*savikalpakapratyakṣa*)?

To provide the background that clarifies where Meghanādārisūri places yogic perception between normal perception and perception of other transcendent beings, the following account will be guided by two questions: (1) What conditions define normal perception? (2) How does normal perception differ from yogic perception?

---

<sup>6</sup> Meghanādārisūri's lifetime cannot be dated exactly. Because he does not mention Venkaṭanātha (1268-1369), but quotes Śrīharṣa (1125-1180) he can be dated to the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## (1) DEFINITION OF NORMAL PERCEPTION

In comparison to Rāmānuja's view of objective reality and the individual being's process of cognition Meghanādārisūri's explanations seem to elaborate and do not deviate from the authoritative statements of the Śrībhāṣya. Nevertheless his exposition of the perceptions process are more detailed and facilitates its description.

Also for Meghanādārisūri empirical evidence is achieved by different qualifying properties (*dharmā*) such as being not separately (*apṛthak*) connected to an underlying substrate. Thus an object (*viśaya*) can be analysed as qualificand (*viśeṣya*) and qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*), i.e. a substrate together with its qualifying property (*dharmā*). It is important to note that this definition of an object's constitution is essential for speaking about perceptible objects which are qualified entities (*viśiṣṭavastu*). Thus, it cannot be argued that properties (*dharmā*) alone can exist if they are not based on an underlying substrate, nor can the substrate alone (*vastumātra*) exist if it is not qualified by properties.<sup>7</sup>

What kind of cognition of an individual being corresponds to such a defined objective reality and in which way is its cognition described? Even according to Meghanādārisūri already the first moment of perception, defined as non-conceptual perception (*nirvikalpakapratyakṣa*) enables the distinct identification of an object. Here again, one can point to the general thesis of the togetherness of qualificand (*viśeṣya*) and qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*): Just as no entity, i.e. an object, exists without qualifier, so is no cognition without an object.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The relation (*sambandha*) between a substrate and its qualifying properties is not defined as being a third, connecting entity; rather the substrate and its qualifying entity are defined as innately connected to each other. In general, it can be said that the Rāmānuja school's concept of a self-relating qualifier and qualificand differs from other views of the relationship between the two, as for instance the monistic Advaitic position, which argues that the mere substrate (*vastumātra*) is perceived, denying its relation to something else by rejecting the cognition of manifold qualifiers (*viśeṣaṇa*). In this respect, the tradition of Rāmānuja school also argues against defining the relation (*sambandha*) between qualifier and qualificand as inherence (*samavāya*). A discussion against inherence (*samavāya*) can be found in Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya to *Brahmasūtra* 2.2.12; for Meghanādārisūri's refutation of the relation (*sambandha*) as inherence (*samavāya*) compare NDy 193,3-14.

<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking, the term 'non-conceptual' (*nirvikalpa*) is possibly misleading against this background of such a fundamental thesis of the Rāmānuja school, because one is already aware of qualifying (*viśeṣaṇa*) properties (*dharmā*) in the first moment of perception.

The requirements for non-conceptual perception are illustrated by Meghanādārisūri in the following passage: “And a non-conceptual [perception] does not reveal a bare entity [i.e. without any qualifiers], because the appearance of such a bare entity is not possible without properties like universal, etc. [...]. Therefore, the knowledge of all [people] [arises] as indeed being qualified by some qualifiers.”<sup>9</sup> Again in this context one can point out that perception of reality is enabled by an object as being qualified. If one argues that the substrate alone (*vastumātra*) is the object of perception, a second perception that brings about full knowledge of the object would be impossible, because what has been perceived in the first instant must be recollected in the second perception. Neither the substrate alone nor only properties ungrounded in an underlying substrate can be recollected, but only something which is qualified by properties. Thus, Meghanādārisūri goes on to describe the process of knowledge in the following words: “Otherwise, in the second and subsequent cognitions [of the same object], no recognition of the object that is connected to the first [cognition] would be possible. And if there is no [recognition of the object that was initially perceived], there would be no cognition of [an object] being qualified by many qualifiers.”<sup>10</sup>

A person is unable to be entirely aware of an object in the first moment, because of the swiftness (*śaigrya*) of the first moment it is seen (NDy 188,13). Therefore the initial perception of an object does not enable a person to grasp it completely; this requires a second level of knowledge, i.e. the conceptual perception (*savikalpakapratyakṣa*). Nonetheless, in Meghanādārisūri’s view, what enables the transition to the second level, the knowledge of the object being qualified by many qualifiers (*anekaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭatvadhī*)? And what differentiates the two cognitions, i.e. conceptual and non-conceptual perception?

Even if an object is completely known, only a few qualities are perceived in the first moment. The difference between non-conceptual perception and conceptual perception lies in the fact that a normal person cannot cognize the particular generic structure (*saṁsthānaviśeṣa*) at

<sup>9</sup> NDy 188,8-9: *na ca vastumātrāvabhāsakaṁ nirvikalpakam, jātyādidharmavidhuratayā vastumātrasya pratibhāsānupapatteḥ. [...] ataḥ kenacid viśeṣeṇa viśiṣṭatayaiva sarveṣāṁ jñānam.*

<sup>10</sup> NDy 188,11-12: *anyathā dvitīyādipratyayeṣu prathamābhisamhitārthapratyabhiññānam na syāt. tadabhāve ca tasyānekaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭatvadhī na syāt.*

the initial non-conceptual stage. For the perceiving person, such a particular generic structure appears through its recurrence (*anuvṛtti*) which is itself explained as a property (*dharma*) and of which one does not become conscious (*ullekhita*) during the first moment of perception.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the process of knowledge can be described in the following way: initially one is aware of just a few qualifiers (*katipayaviśeṣaṇa*). This is followed by the knowledge of the object as qualified by many qualifiers (*anekaviśeṣaṇa*). The second perception, therefore, is a conceptual perception entailing the knowledge that an object is qualified by many different qualifiers and that the object's many qualifiers correspond to the manifold concepts (*vividhavalpa*) of the perception.<sup>12</sup> Only at this point is the full correspondence between a perception based on a sense faculty and an object completed. It is due to the recurrent nature of the universal that qualifies the substrate, qua qualifying property,<sup>13</sup> that the object that was initially incompletely perceived becomes completely known in the subsequent step of knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

Also in the next passage, Meghanādārisūri clearly states that an object is known as being qualified, and it is recognized through the qualifying property, i.e. recurrence, in a second perception: "In this manner, when one grasps [an object] as qualified by [a universal] such as cowness, which is called the generic structure of the entity, this

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also NDy 188,5-7: *nirvikalpakaṃ ca ghaṭāder anullekhitānūvṛttidharmaghaṭatvādīkatipayaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭatayārthāvacchedakaṃ jñānam*. "Non-conceptual [perception] is a cognition which determines an object such as a pot to be qualified by [just] a few qualifiers such as potness, whose properties [such as] recurrence have not [yet] been consciously figured out."

<sup>12</sup> Cf. NDy 188,15: *vividhatvaṃ ca dharmabhedakṛtam ity anekaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭadvadhīr eva savikalpakam*.

<sup>13</sup> It is perhaps quite important to point out in this context that the recurrence (*anuvṛtti*) is to be understood as a property (*dharma*) of the generic character (*saṃsthāna*), i.e. the universal (*jāti*) qualifying a certain individual; this is clear from compounds like *anuvṛtyādīdharma-* (NDy 188,16), *anullekhitānūvṛtyādīdharma-* (NDy 188,18), *anullekhitānūvṛttidharmaghaṭatva-* (NDy 188,5), *ullekhitānūvṛtyādīdharma-* (NDy 191,20); and from the following quotation (Śrībh 23,9-14): *gotvāder anuvṛttidharmaviśiṣṭatvam*. Especially a compound like *anullekhitānūvṛttidharmaghaṭatva-* (NDy 188,5) (for the translation, see fn. 7) makes clear that recurrence (*anuvṛtti*) is a *dharma* of the universal (*jāti*), i.e. the generic character (*saṃsthāna*) of the particular object.

<sup>14</sup> That Meghanādārisūri follows closely Rāmānuja's concept of perception is obvious from Śrībh 23,9-14.



[grasping] is conceptual, because in the second and subsequent cognitions, the concepts of properties such as recurrence [gradually] arise.”<sup>15</sup>

The last key-term which is necessary for demonstrating the process of cognizing briefly according to Meghanādārisūri is *saṁsthāna*, i.e. generic structure, which in turn he—following closely Rāmānuja—equates with a universal (*jāti*) (NDy 188,27 *saṁsthānarūpa-jāti*<sup>o</sup>, NDy 189,2 *gotvādisaṁsthāna*<sup>o</sup>). In the first perception one grasps only the object as qualified by the generic structure (NDy 189,4 *saṁsthānādiviśiṣṭavastumātragraha*); it is not known as the particular generic structure of an object; but in the second cognition, i.e. the conceptual perception (*savikalpakapratyakṣa*), a particular structure (*saṁsthānaviśeṣa*) is consciously figured out (*ullekha*). And for recognizing the particular *saṁsthāna* of the particular object it must become conscious by the cognition of its recurrence (*anuvṛttidhī*) in many individuals; such a cognition arises from the recurrence of the first perceived generic character not associated with the particular object (NDy 189,2 *gotvādisaṁsthānādimātrānuvṛtti*<sup>o</sup>).

The following list summarizes the key terms Meghanādārisūri uses to differentiate the two forms of perception:

<p><i>nirvikalpakapratyakṣa</i>  <i>katipayaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭa</i>  <i>anullekhitānuvṛttidharma</i>  <i>anuvṛttyullekhābhāva</i>  <i>saṁsthānādiviśiṣṭavastumātragraha</i></p>	<p><i>savikalpakapratyakṣa</i>  <i>anekaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭa</i>  <i>ullekhitānuvṛttidharma</i>  <i>saṁsthānaviśeṣollekha</i></p>
---	--

Thus both forms of knowledge, i.e. non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*), are necessary for someone who depends on the first cognition, i.e. on the use of sense faculty.

This presentation of Meghanādārisūri’s definitions of perception was necessary to understand the context in which he deals with perception of a *yogin* (*yogipratyakṣa*).

<sup>15</sup> NDy 188, 15-19: *tathā vastusaṁsthānākhyagotvādiviśiṣṭatayā grahe dviṭyādīpratīti-ṣv anuvṛtyādīdharmavikalpodayāt savika[l]patā tasya.*

(2) HOW DOES PERCEPTION OF A *YOGIN* (*YOGIPRATYAKṢA*) DIFFER FROM NORMAL PERCEPTION?

For explaining the way in which Meghanādārisūri deals with yogic perception two important issues must be taken into consideration. One is the sense-independency; the other is the difference between the *yogin* and other beings like the *mukta*, i.e. ‘liberated,’ the *nityamukta*, i.e. ‘eternal souls that have always been free from *samsāra*,’ and the highest Being, i.e. the *paramātman*, whose perception is also said to be independent of sense faculties. Because Meghanādārisūri understands the *yogin* as a being still existing in the *samsāra* (*samsārin*), perception is still affected by the influence of *karman*;<sup>16</sup> thus, the perception of the *yogin* is not to be equated with the cognition of these mentioned transcendent beings, which are liberated from bondage.

Apropos the first point: for Meghanādārisūri, the distinction between normal perception and yogic perception concerns exactly the necessity of a first, sense-relying immediate perception. Yogic perception, on the other hand, is immediate knowledge that nevertheless determines an object (*arthāvacchedaka*) independently of the sense faculties. Meghanādārisūri distinguishes between the two forms of cognition, i.e. normal perception and yogic perception, by stating: “The knowledge which determines an entity in an immediate manner is a conceptual [perception], because it is qualified by many qualifiers whose properties such as recurrence etc., are consciously figured out. And the exclusion from non-conceptual perception is [pointed out] through the words ‘consciously figured out’ (*ullekhita*) etc. And [such a conceptual knowledge] is twofold: *yogic* perception and non-*yogic* perception. Of these, the perception of a *yogin* is an immediate cognition determining the

<sup>16</sup> According to Meghanādārisūri, the knowledge (*jñāna*) of the souls still bound in the *samsāra* (*baddhāḥ*) as ‘contracted by the connection with the body which is caused by *karman*’ (NDy 249,1 *karmanimittadehasaṃbandhasaṃkucitajñānāḥ*). Compare also Venkaṭanātha’s passage in NP 70, 2-4, where he establishes his division of *pratyakṣa* in *yogipratyakṣa* and *ayogipratyakṣa* also by reason of *karman*: *asmadādi-pratyakṣam dvividhā – yogipratyakṣam ayogipratyakṣam ceti. tatra yogipratyakṣam prakṛṣṭādrṣṭaviśeṣajam. tat yuktāvasthāyām manomātrajanyam. viyuktāvasthāyām tu bāhyendriyajanyam api.*

object independently of the senses etc. The demarcation from non-yogic perception [is seen in the expression] ‘independent of the senses’.<sup>17</sup>

For the *yogin* every relevant factor for the progress of cognizing beginning with the non-conceptual perception (*nirvikalpakapratyakṣa*) like the swiftness (*śaigrya*) of the first moment of the object’s perception or the crossover to the knowledge of the recurrence (*anuvṛttidhī*) of many properties (*anekadharmā*) can be omitted, because he is able to determine the object (*artha*) without a simultaneous and sense dependent perception.

So far it is clear from this passage that yogic perception is a means of explaining how knowledge can have an object independent of the time and place in which it is perceived.<sup>18</sup> Meghanādārisūri characterizes such a knowledge later on by the expression *deśādiviprakṣṭārthāvacchedaka*, i.e. ‘[a knowledge, which] determines an object that is remote from the place, etc., [where it is perceived]’ (NDy 192,11). Nevertheless for such an object it is necessary to have been cognised in an earlier time through an earlier cognition, being then evoked again in a conceptual cognition.

To the second point: both, the *yogin* and the highest Self (*paramātmān*) together with the other kinds of souls (*mukta*, *nityamukta*) mentioned above are characterized as having perception that is independent of the senses. Meghanādārisūri’s discussion about the meaning of ‘independent of senses’ should be presented in the following. The passage in which he explains the difference between the perception of the *yogin* and that of the highest Self starts with an objection in which the opponent denies that the *Śrībhāṣya* teaches *yogipratyakṣa*. By showing

<sup>17</sup> NDy 191,20: *ullekhitānūvṛtyādīdharmakānekaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭatayā sāksādvastuvyavacchedakam jñānam savikalpakaṃ. ullekhitetyādīpadān nirvikalpakavyāvṛtīḥ tac ca dvidvidham – yogipratyakṣam ayogipratyakṣam ceti. tatra yogipratyakṣam indriyādyanapekṣam arthāvacchedakam sāksājñānam. indriyādyanapekṣam ity ayogipratyakṣavyavacchedaḥ.*

<sup>18</sup> Again it can be pointed out in this context that what is defined by Meghanādārisūri as non-yogic perception presupposes an object known by sense faculties and belongs to the above mentioned process of *nirvikalpika*- and *savikalpikapratyakṣa* of a normal person; he states NDy 192,27-28: *puodeśādisaṃbaddhapadārthānām indriyānām ca saṃnikarṣaviśeṣasāpekṣam sāksādvacchedakam jñānam ayogipratyakṣam.* “A non-yogic [conceptual] perception is a cognition which determines [its object] in immediate manner [and] which depends on a special connection between things that are connected to place, etc., [being located] before [the perceiver] and the senses/sense faculties.”

that even the highest Self can be called a *yogin* (cf. NDy 192,20-21) and can be connected with extraordinary qualities such as supernatural knowledge (*jñāna*) and power (*śakti*), Meghanādārisūri argues that Rāmānuja, too, considers yogic perception to be acceptable. And since other beings such as the above mentioned *nityamuktas*, ‘souls that have always been free from *samsāra*,’ *muktas*, ‘liberated souls,’ and even *samsārins*, ‘souls still bound in the *samsāra*,’ can be connected to such extraordinary qualities, they can, according to Meghanādārisūri, also be classified as *yogins*. But this does not imply that every being which is definable as a *yogin* cognizes by a conceptual perception (*savikalpaka-pratyakṣa*) and it does not imply that the sense-independent cognition of the *yogin* and of the other beings can be equated. For instance, the *yogin* remains still in contrast to the highest Being and other beings, because such a *yogin* is focused in the conceptual perception on particular objects (*artha*), albeit remote in time or space, whereas the highest Self’s cognition is turned to everything (*sarvatra*).

These distinctions become clear in the following passage, by which Meghanādārisūri tries to demonstrate that yogic perception is accepted in Rāmānuja’s *Śrībhāṣya*. He refutes the opinion of an opponent that Rāmānuja does not teach *yogipratyakṣa* by the following argument: “Even the perception of the highest Self and the liberated souls is included in yogic perception, because it is the same [as yogic perception] inasmuch as it is independent of senses etc. Precisely for this reason one can read in the section about the *antaryāmin* [=Śrībh 175,16-18]: ‘And for the highest Self, its being a seer, etc., does not rely on the senses’.”<sup>19</sup> But the opponent raises the objection against the equivalence, because it is the case that the *paramātman* is able to have immediate awareness of everything (*sarvasākṣātkārasāmarthya*), but for a soul still remaining in the *samsāra*, even if it is a *yogin*, immediate perception of everything is impossible. A second time Meghanādārisūri points out that also the perception of the highest Self (*paramātman*) is contained in the *yogin*’s form of perception; he argues: “Also for the highest Self, etc., their way of perceiving is contained in the way the *yogin* perceives, because of

<sup>19</sup> NDy 191,28: *paramātmamuktapratyakṣasyāpi yogipratyakṣa evāntarbhāvaḥ, tasyā-pīndriyādyanapekṣatvasāmīyāt. ata eva hy antaryāmyadhikaraṇe na ca parasyātmanah karaṇāyattam draṣṭṛtvādikam ity uktiḥ.*

their [i.e. the *paramātmans* and the *yogin*'s] identity by an added condition (*upādhi*) consisting in the independency from the senses, etc.”<sup>20</sup>

In the following passage he differentiates step by step the meaning of ‘independent of senses’ (*indriyānapekṣa*). The *yogin*'s way of knowing as conceptual cognition (*savikalpaka*) is still connected to a limited area of objective reality, while ‘being independent of senses’ ascribed to the highest Self means that such a being has a cognition of the reality on the whole; another aspect of their difference in perception consists of the meaning of the body (*śarīra*). The *yogin* like every other being in the *saṃsāra* has a body, which he can transcend in state of meditation, but, in contrast, for the highest Self never any dependency on a body and sense faculty is necessary. According to the School's tradition for the highest Self the cognition by senses connected with the body is only a play (*līlā*). It is further noticeable that Meghanādārisūri uses the expression *atīndriyārthajñāna*, i.e. ‘knowledge of extrasensory objects,’ for qualifying the cognition of every transcendent soul. But the *yogin*'s knowledge can be only qualified in this manner during the state of meditation (*yuktāvastha*), whereas Meghanādārisūri applies the independency of senses (*indriyānapekṣa*), when he discusses either the identity (*sāmya/aikya*) of perception between the *yogin* and the highest Self, or when he considers the conceptual perception of the *yogin* alone. The implication might be that independency of sense faculty does not entail cognition of extrasensory objects (*atīndriyārtha*), because it can be applied for the *savikalpakapratyakṣa* just as well. Nevertheless every knowledge of extrasensory objects (*atīndriyārtha*) is independent of senses. Meghanādārisūri continues his defence of yogic perception in the following words:

“If [perception] depends on the senses, etc., the fact that it (i.e., perception) determines objects that are spatially, etc., remote is not established. But the perception of a *yogin* is only a conceptual perception, because it does not depend on the grasping of the object. For, if the process of knowledge depends exclusively on the means of the senses, the recurrence, etc., of the generic structure, etc., is not known. [...] The cognition of *yogins*, however, determines all objects, together with their qualities, which are found in a place that extends only as far as the place connected [to the *yogins*]. In contrast, the support of the highest Self

<sup>20</sup> NDy 192,11: *indriyādyanapekṣatvarūpopādhyaiḥ paramātmādiipratyakṣasyāpi yogipratyakṣāntarbhāva eva.*

etc., is not only referring to yogic perception, but it is referring to everything. However, for souls still bound in *saṃsāra*, an object that is beyond the senses is only determined in the state of meditation; at any other time, there is [still] dependency on the senses.”<sup>21</sup>

Again Meghanādārisūri differentiates between the knowledge of these souls still bound in the *saṃsāra* and of the highest Self together with the liberated souls:

“The highest Self and the liberated souls always have knowledge whose objects are beyond the senses. For them, appropriating themselves a body, senses and so on, is only a play. At that time (i.e., when they play), [their] knowledge determines an object also by the way of sense faculty etc.”<sup>22</sup>

It is clear from this passage that the meaning of sense independent perception which determines an object varies and is not the same, when it is ascribed to the *yogin* and to the highest Self. But to establish why in fact even the highest Self could be called a *yogin* Meghanādārisūri refers to another meaning of the word *yogin*: the Self’s being a *yogin* is based on the meaning of ‘being connected with’ (*°yogitvam*) supernormal qualities.

The same kind of knowledge he applies for the souls ‘that have always been free from *saṃsāra*’ (*nityamukta*) and for the liberated (*mukta*) souls after the time of their release. But for the *yogin* still bound in the *saṃsāra* becoming qualities equal to the highest Self, i.e. to be connected with extraordinary qualities, is according to their merit (*puṇya*). Meghanādārisūri concludes the passage in the following words:

“And here and there it is observed that the highest Self, etc., is referred to by the word *yogin*, etc. The reason for the use of the word *yogin* to the highest Self is because it is also endowed with qualities like knowledge, power, etc. And it is only due to the innate natures of [the souls] that have always been free from *saṃsāra* that they are endowed

<sup>21</sup> NDy 192,11-17: *indriyādyapekṣatve deśādiviprakṣṭārthāvacchedakatvam asid-dham. yogipratyakṣaṃ tu savikalpakam eva, viṣayagrahaṇe vilambābhāvāt. jñāna-prasarāpekṣāyām hi saṃsthānāder anuvṛttatvādyapratītiḥ. [...] yoginām tu jñānasya yāvaddesaśaṃbandhaḥ taddeśasthasarvapaḍārthānām saḡuṇānām evāvacchedakatvam. paramātmīyādyanugrahas tu na yogipratyakṣa eva, kiṃ tu sarvatra. saṃsāri-ṇām tu yuktāvasthāyām evātīndriyārthāvacchedakatvam. anyadendriyādisāpekṣam eva.*

<sup>22</sup> NDy 192,17-19: *paramātmā muktās ca sarvadātīndriyārthajñānāḥ. teṣāṃ śārīren-driyādigrahaṇaṃ tu līlāmātram. tadendriyādidvārāpy arthāvacchedakatā jñānasya.*

with these qualities [i.e. *jñāna*, *śakti*, etc.]. But for [souls that have become] released, they manifest [these qualities] after their release. By contrast, for *yogins* still bound in *saṃsāra*, the degree of their manifestation [of these qualities] is due to the degree of their merit.”<sup>23</sup>

To sum up: By referring to passages in Meghanādārisūri’s section defining perception (*pratyakṣanirūpaṇa*) it could be pointed out that for different souls various forms of perception are required; their form of cognition alters according to the distance or the soul’s being bound to the *saṃsāra*. Non-conceptual perception (*nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa*) is connected only to perception relying on sense faculty. The normal soul, whose body is still affected by *karman* depends on such kind of first perception, but it is also able to cognize objects by yogic perception, i.e. a conceptual perception (*savikalpakapratyakṣa*). Even if the latter itself does not rely on sense faculty it is in line with empirically perceived objects. Already for transcendent souls, i.e. the liberated, the eternally liberated and the highest Self, complete independency from sense faculty (*atīndriyārtha*) can be established. Sense independent (*indriyānapekṣa*) means here a cognition which has an object, but which in no manner is experienced by normal sense faculty.

#### ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- NDy *Nayadyumaṇi* by Meghanādārisūri. Critical edition with introduction and notes by Krishnamacharya and T. Viraraghavacharya. [Madras Government Oriental Series 141] Madras 1956.
- NP *Nyāyapariśuddhi*: Nyāyapariśuddhiḥ by Sri Venkatanatha Sri Vedāntāchārya with a Commentary called Nyayasara by Sri Nīwāsāchārya ed. with Notes by Vidyābhusan Lakṣmanāchārya of Brindāban. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series 251. Benares 1918-1923.
- Oberhammer 1979 Gerhard Oberhammer, *Materialien zur Geschichte der Rāmānuja-Schule I. Parāśarabhaṭṭas Tattvaratnākaraḥ*. [Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Klasse = Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Südasien Heft 14]. Wien 1979.
- Śrībh *Śrībhāṣya* by Rāmānuja. Publishers: Academy of Sanskrit Research.

<sup>23</sup> NDy 192,20-24: *paramātmādeś ca yogiśabdādivācyatā tatra tatra dṛśyate. jñāna-śaktyādiyogitvam api yogiśabdapravṛttinimittam paramātmanah. nityamuktānām ca svabhāvād eva tadyogitvam. muktānām tu muktyuttarakālaṃ tadāviṣkāraḥ. saṃsāri-yoginām tu puṇyatāratamyāt tadāviṣkāratāratamyam.*

Melkote 1995.

TT

*Tattvaṭīkā*: Śrīmadvedāntadeśikagranthamālāyāṃ vyākhyānavibhāge  
tṛtīyasamputam. Tattvaṭīkā-Nikṣeparakṣā-Saccaritrarakṣā-Śrīpañca-  
rātrarakṣā-savyākhyāna-Bhugalonirṇayādika. Śrīkāñcī Prativādi-  
bhayaṅkaraḥ Aṅṅarācāryaḥ. Kanjīvaram 1941.