I. INTRODUCTION

THE COMMON VIEW is that Hindu philosophy is committed to one of the conceptions of the Transcendent: whether understood as Brahman (the Absolute) of Vedānta metaphysics; or as Iśvara, in one of his triune forms of Śiva, Viṣṇu, or Brahmā of the sectarian traditions; or as Sakti, an exclusively feminine divinity, such as the terrifying Goddess Kāli of the tantric sects; or perhaps as the divinely sacred offspring, such as the elephant-headed Ganesa and his brother Kārttikeya. And there are, of course, colorful variations to this wondrous theme, with a profusion of images in the vast pantheon of Hindu gods, goddesses, avatāras, partial divine embodiments, and so on. Understandably, then, scholars have attempted to encompass the bulk of Hindu beliefs variously under one of these categories: polytheism, organized polytheism, pantheism, panentheism, henotheism, monotheism, monism, non-dualism, or even more puzzling, all of these somehow wrapped into one (hence the ubiquitous "Oneness"). By and large, it is assumed that Hinduism progressed from a primitive polytheism (in its pre-Aryan, earthy roots) through henotheism (in Rg and Atharva Vedas) and monistic idealism (of the Upaniṣads), towards a form of monotheism, which the vast majority of Hindus are apparently seen to espouse. Not so well known, partly because of its neglect by Orientalists, is a contrary position that moves away from all such conceptions, and which could also be said to reject "God-talk" altogether; indeed, here we come rather close to atheism (even "a-theology") in the Hindu tradition. This is not merely a whimsical sentiment which could be perfunctorily dismissed as an aberration within the tradition. There seems to be an argument for this contrary position, or at least arguments against those whose theological discourse might persuade them otherwise. In general terms, let us say that there is scope within Hindu philosophy for an articulated...
critique of all theologies, resulting in the expression of profound doubts about the reality of a supremely divine being, and about the absolutes of metaphysics.

The term "Mimāṃsā," signifying an exegetical-hermeneutical enterprise and synonymous with the system or school known by this name, is associated with this critique or doubt; I say "doubt" and not the stronger "skepticism" associated with Buddhism, and later with Hume in the West, for reasons that will become clearer in the discussion. To hint at it just a little, I believe the Mimāṃsā was predisposed towards a deconstruction of "onto-theo-logos" of the kind that had emerged from within the broad Indian tradition, but did not develop this into a rigorous program, except to suggest its bare outline.

II. MIMĀMSĀ AS ĀSTIKA

1. Āstika versus Nāstika

The Mimāṃsā is one of the six major "orthodox" schools (darśanas) of Hindu philosophical theology. The term used in the tradition for "orthodoxy" is āstika, and it is contrasted with nāstika or "heterodoxy," or better still, "non-orthodox."

Much debate in Hindu theology centers around whether a particular view or system of thought is āstika or nāstika. The assumption in the tradition is that to be an āstika one must, at the very least, affirm the supremacy of the Veda, the scriptural canon that sets Hinduism apart from all other religions. The corpus of Veda, or Vedas, is collectively characterized as śruti, "that which is heard" (i.e., having been transmitted orally from many generations past). The Veda constitutes the primary "revelatory" tradition of Brahmanical Hinduism. A secondary or derivative source is characterized as smṛti, the "recollected." Those who deny the validity of the Veda are by definition nāstikas (literally, not of āstika) and comprise, in the broad Indian philosophical tradition, the materialists Cārvāka or Lokāyata, the Ājīvikas, the Jāinas, the Buddhists, and an assortment of sophists, skeptics, agnostics, and detractors from the Veda.¹ The Jāinas and the Buddhists, in particular, based the authority for their particular beliefs entirely on sources that would be regarded (by orthodox Hindus) as inimical to the authority of the Veda.

2. The Mimāṃsā as Āstikas

The Mimāṃsā invariably regarded itself as firmly rooted in the āstika or mainstream orthodox tradition. Moreover, later Mimāṃsā followers (post-sixth century C.E.) set out to revive and revivify the āstika tradition by giving prominence to Vedic sādhana or praxis, which was thought to have waned during the height of Buddhist influence in India. The Hindu sectarian renaissance, already gaining strength, was taken advantage of by the Mimāṃsakas (followers of the

MIMĀMSĀ DECONSTRUCTION

Mimāmsā). Although the Buddhist University of Nālanda was still flourishing and there were skilled Buddhist dialecticians around, certain other factors, possibly internal to the Buddhist community, are said to have contributed to the gradual decline of Buddhism after Nāgārjuna’s palmy days (c. 150 C.E.).

The Mimāṃsakas appealed to moral arguments in order to discredit the credibility of Buddhism. Was it, however, necessary for the Mimāṃsakas to reclaim the territory of Hindu Dharma or “Law” with assertions or arguments in favor of belief in God? It seemed not. What concerned them most was that the Vedic culture had been eclipsed.

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa was perhaps the foremost among the Mimāṃsā revivalists during this period. He lived in the seventh century (some say 590–650 C.E.; others 600–700 C.E.) and was probably a contemporary of the great Buddhist dialectician Dharmakīrti.

While defending the orthodoxy of the Mimāṃsā, Kumārila was moved to complain that the Mimāṃsā had, by and large, come to be looked upon as a “heretical” system. To the question “How so?” Kumārila replied that the Mimāṃsā had been reduced to the status of Lokāyata, or Carvaka-dāraśana, the system of naturalistic materialism with its patently hedonistic ethic.

Kumārila wanted to resist the incipient tendency to associate the Mimāṃsā with some form of debased belief in a “this-worldly” reality, and hence to reject identification of the prevalent materialist-naturalistic system(s) with the school he led. Should this, however, be taken to mean that Kumārila wanted to assert or re-assert belief in an “other-worldly” reality, such as a supra-natural order or a supremely transcendent being? No. It seems that his only concern was that the Veda should not be maligned with some corrupt form of naturalism that bordered on materialism and hedonism. (Perhaps he would have been less concerned had Mimāṃsaka been called “a realist who swears by the Veda”!). In order to regain orthodoxy for Mimāṃsā, Kumārila had to elevate the status of the Veda (śāstras) and make its authority unassailable.

There were two possible ways of rescuing the orthodoxy claimed by the Mimāṃsā: (a) by attributing the source of the Veda to a supreme divine being, whose very omniscience and omnipotence would sanction the authority of the


2Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Ślokavārttika (tarkapāda), 1.1. #10 (cf. Jha’s translation, p. 2—see note 9 below). Cf. Ganganatha Jha, Translations of “lokāyata” as “atheism,” and “āstika” as “theistic.” This is patently misleading, particularly in the case of the latter, for one could still be an āstika and not believe in God; otherwise the Mimāṃsā would have to be classified as nāstika, which is my knowledge no one has ever done. In his later works, however, Jha is more cautious.

It may be noted that to be classified as a nāstika (heterodox) one would presumably deny one or more of the following: (i) belief in an afterlife; (ii) belief in the Veda; (iii) belief in God. But it does not follow from this that a simple assertion of (iii) in itself is sufficient to render one an āstika, as noted above; and if that were the case, the Brahmanical priests would not have looked down upon the new arrivals on their land, namely, the Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as mlecchas (literally, barbarians or infidels)! It may be argued that, as far as the Mimāṃsā is concerned, in the āstika-making criteria, (iii) is not even necessary, while (i) is more or less contingent, and (ii) is both necessary and definite.
scripture—this source would be necessarily personal, or paurüṣeya; or (b) by attributing the Veda to a beginningless and timeless body of “authorless words,” with its own fixed or “originary” (auṣṭāvāika) relation between the words and their meanings—this source would be deemed apaurūṣeya, non-personal or, perhaps, “trans-personal.” Kumārila chose to assert the latter because he regarded the śrutī as beginningless and authorless. That is to say, the teaching of the Veda is without beginning, for in its present form the scripture stretches backwards through the uninterrupted succession of teachers and students to the very beginning when it was given along with the universe and subsequently “seen” or “heard” by the primordial “scors” (rūpa). The Veda as such is without an author, human or divine; moreover, were it authored it would of necessity be flawed by the author’s imperfections, and its authority thus diminished. It validates itself insofar as it is the sole source of knowledge about matters that extend beyond the senses.6

Thus the Veda was there from the beginning of the manifest universe and remains independent of the will or authorship of a transcendent being or God. God who might be conceived of as the original source and author of the Veda is thereby unnecessary; or He is necessary only for revivifying the lapsed or lost “self-revealing” scripture. Hence, a “divine revelation” as ascribed, say, to the Judaico-Christian scriptures is ruled out.

Accordingly, atheism seems to be a distinct possibility. Is this the Mīmāṃsā position? If so, how tenable is it within the āstika frame of reference, and is it consistent within the received Hindu tradition? Is it coherent on other accounts? Our discussion will be confined to the first two questions.

III. THE CONTRARY POSITION

Ganganatha Jha is most forceful and consistent in his examination of the claim under dispute. He refers directly to Kumārila’s texts:

Kumārila’s views with regard to God are found in the Ślokavārttika, Sambandhāyaka-papariḥāra chapter. He also denies the creation (śloka #47) and dissolution (#68) of the


7 The strongest assertion rejecting application of the epithet “atheism” to the Mīmāṃsā, on the grounds that this would disqualify from the school from the āstika tradition, is to be found in Purupathinath Shastri’s Introduction to the Pārva Mīmāṃsā (Calcutta: A. N. Bhattacharya, 1923; 2nd edition: Chaukamba Orientalia Varanasi, 1980), pp. 9–13, and passim. Shastri invokes as his authority the veteran Max Müller, who made a similar defense. Shastri’s supposition, however, that āstika entails “belief in God” cannot be supported, since “belief in God” is not a sufficient condition for one to be an āstika, and, contrariwise, belief in the supremacy of the Veda does not entail belief in God. See note 5 above.
universe as a whole (#113); he bases his denial of the creator on the same grounds as that of the 'omniscient person' (#47-59, #114-116).

Let us see how Kumarila develops this critique.

1. Kumarila Against the Cosmological Argument

First of all, Kumarila considers some circumstantial evidence that might support the view of the creation of the world. Some schools are of the opinion that the universe is subject to a periodic process of creation and dissolution attributed to the personal God, known in Vedic literature as Prajapati. Kumarila, however, takes a rather skeptical stance on such claims. (Indeed his form of skepticism might remind one, but only just, of David Hume.) He sets up the following questions:

At a time when all this (earth, water, etc.), did not exist, what could have been the condition of the universe? As for Prajapati Himself, what could be His position? and what His form?

And at that time (when no men existed) who would know Him and explain His character to the later created persons? (If it be held that He cannot be perceived by any man, then) without perception (or cognition of some sort, by some person), how can we determine this (fact of His existence)?

Then again, in what manner do you believe the world to have had a beginning in time? (If it be held that it is brought about by a desire on the part of Prajapati, then) since Prajapati is (held to be) without a material body, etc., how could He have any desire towards creation?

(Slokavārttika, = SV, Sambandhākṣepapaparīthāra, = s; #45-47)

Evidently, what worries Kumarila is that we cannot have any notion of what the world was like prior to the supposed creation and how it actually came about. For what could be beings who first appeared understand? What kind of cognition could they have had to record these events? Could they have understood from where and how they had suddenly come about, and what the state of things were prior to the creation? Could they even have understood that Prajapati was the creator (SV s#58-59)? At best we can make inferences on the basis of and in analogy with what we know now; but it is questionable whether we can infer from

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4Gangadhara Jha, Indian Thought Series, Benares Hindu University, Benares, 1994, vol. 11, p. 262, repeated in his The Prabhashkara School of Purva Mīmāṃsā (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), p. 88; similar discussions also occur in his Purva Mīmāṃsā in its Sources, p. 131ff.

5Slokavārttika of Kumarila Bhaṭṭa, with commentary Nyāyaratnakara of Pārthaśārathī Miśra, Prabhāsārati Series 10, ed. and rev. Swami Dvarikadāsa Sastri (Vrinda: Tara Publications, 1978). SV = Slokavārttika. l. xvi = "Sambandhākṣepaparīthāra" = s, followed by "#" to indicate sloka or verse referred to. English texts are from Gangadhara Jha's translation of Slokavārttika (1: tarkopāda section) with extracts from commentaries Katiśka of Svacarita Miśra and Nyāyaratnakara of Pārthaśārathī Miśra, Bibliotheca Indica 146 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1900–1908); reprinted Sri Garib Das Oriental Series No. 8 (Delhi: Sri Saiguru Publications, 1983), p. 356. Reference to Jha's translation after cross-checking with the original and commentarial works. The commentary referred to in the text and notes is Pārthaśārathī Miśra's Nyāyaratnakara.
such "evidence" anything about the state of the whole universe in some remote past.

Kumārila reasons that in order to create a material and corporeal world, either there has to be some pre-existing substance from which the creation is possible, or Prajāpati has a material body which is not eternal and out of which he creates or "emanates" the world. (We are here reminded of the classical Western maxim: *ex nihilo nihil fit.*) In either case, one would have to explain Prajāpati's coming to obtain such a body, or else accept the prior existence of material substance or matter. In the latter case, we would have to explain the origin of matter, or postulate another creator or universal cause responsible for this, and yet another for this, *ad infinitum* (SV s#48-49, #73 and comm.). Alternatively, if Prajāpati has a body that is not created, then this too would have to be explained, for "His body too must have had a beginning, inasmuch as it is also a body, like ours (made up of constituent parts)" (SV s#77). Suppose that God's body is *causa sui.* That is, God is the ground of his own body, which is therefore essentially uncreated. Kumārila again would want to question the essentialism implied here in regard to corporeality. Besides, if God's body were uncreated, why can we not assume that of ourselves, since we also have corporeal bodies: "If His body is everlasting, ours must also be everlasting."10 The commentator considers this consequence to be absurd.

More seriously, Kumārila expresses concern that even if we were to assume that the world had its origin in God's all-powerful desire or "will" to create the world, given that the world has a material (constituent) nature and has to be brought into being and manipulated somewhere in the process, this would require a more rigorous explanation than has been forthcoming. In other words, how can an eternal God be said to possess a non-eternal body, as would be the case if the world were formed or born from it? Would not a perfect God degrade Himself by working with or through a transient body? One might say in reply that God has full control over the world-body by virtue of His intelligence, will, etc., just as a potter does when he produces a pot. But this analogy of the potter using his intelligence to form or mold a pot does not hold, for the potter does not have full control over the constituents of the pot, namely, the clay, etc., let alone over his own body. Thus this analogy does not help explain "creation" as we are to understand it (SV s#74, 78). Further, if "control" by intelligence were all that was necessary, then we could say as well that the collective intelligence of all sentient beings through their action brings about creation. What then would be so splendid about God's intelligence and action in relation to what we are also in contact with, i.e., our own minds? In any case, the superintending function of a supra-natural intelligence is not established (SV s#74-76).

Kumārila is, in part, addressing the cosmological argument of the Nyāya rational theists. But Kumārila might have missed some of the subtleties of the reasoned arguments and causal assumptions which the Nyāyāvikas (followers of the Nyāya) came up with. The Nyāya relies on inference (*anumāna*) believing that it is possible to have knowledge of things which can never be perceived or directly known, on the basis of our knowledge of the class of things already

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10Commentary (*Nyāyasaṁśkara*) on SV s#47 (p. 356).
known or knowable through direct perception. God is the extreme case of the unknown. A simple inference is formulated on the basis of an analogy of the agency involved in the creation of a piece of art, or a pot from clay; the appeal is to causality, since agency is one form of causality. In most general terms, every finite cause (i.e., every cause of which we have experience), whether formal, material, final, or efficient, entails an agency or an efficient cause to bring it about. As in the production of a ceramic, the clay is shaped on a revolving wheel, and the kneading of the clay as well as the motion of the wheel is traced back to some person, viz., the potter. The argument is in respect to the kāryatva or being-an-effect, which is causally linked to an agent. (The possible infinite regress argument involved in this was not crucial to the Nyāyākās, so we shall ignore that.) Uddyotakara (500–600 C.E.) developed some initial arguments hinted at in the early Nyāya treatise of Gautama (?200 C.E.). Uddyotakara's formulation runs something like this: the different things in nature (physis) such as grass, shoots, earth, etc., must have an agent just as manufactured things (technē) such as pots, cloth, etc. have an agent, which in the case of the pot is the potter. And the cause of the natural effects, such as grass, earth, etc., is God.

Centuries later, Gādēsa (1300–1400 C.E.), the founder of the Navya-nyāya or "new logic" school, took up the simple inference (kṣītyādī sakārtikam karyatvat ghatavat) unpacked it into its (four) constituents parts, considered and examined its possible reformulations, and wove an extremely sophisticated defense of the inference, answering all possible objections raised against the validity of the inferential process involved. He offered his own formulation based on a complex reasoning by parity and concluded in favor of the existence of God, the omniscient Being who knows and directs the beginningless flux of atoms, dyads, triads, and the "unseen effectuality" (adṛṣṭa), and who through his all-extensive desire creates the world.

Basically, what the Nyāya position argues is that "being-an-effect," as in the case of pots, extends to the world as well; that "having-an-agent" likewise applies to both, since it clearly is the case with (the) pot; and to state otherwise would be contradictory. But God, in this view, does not have to produce through his bodily activity or agency each and every particular thing, nor does God have to promulgate every effect that we see and experience in the world. It follows that God does not have to possess knowledge of the particulars or be the direct cause of their existence. God is the formal and universal efficient cause (invoking the rule that the cause of the universal is the universal), and there are other finite efficient and material causes that bring about the particular things and events as there are in the world. Thus God depends, in part, on human effort to create the world. In other words, God knows the motive and general principles involved in the production of things in the world, but He does not actually involve Himself in

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12 Strictly speaking this is Aristotle's four-fold division of causes; the Nyāya basically recognizes two: efficient and material causes, under which formal and final causes are respectively subsumed. Nor is there in the Nyāya ontology the distinction between necessary and contingent causal relations.
13 Vattanky, p. 166, pp. 408ff.
14 Ibid., p. 204, and also pp. 326ff.
the process: He has, as it were, a remote telic and instrumental control over the world.

God indeed works in mysterious ways. In the final analysis, however, the God of Nyāya, since He does not create the world ex nihilo, or out of His own body as a spider spins a web from its bowels, is reduced to something like the demiurge of Plato, who as architect forms the world out of a pre-existing set of conditions and substance (viz., by causing the atoms to come into mutual contact), maintains a continuous relationship with the universe as its preserver, and dissolves the world when conditions require it to be dissolved. This is as far as the cosmogonic necessity of God can be taken.

Again, the Mimāṃsakas reply is unequivocal: if the basic substance of the world is not created by God, then how does God’s desire move the insentient substance (atoms, etc.) to organize itself into creation (SV s#81-82)? Does He engage in some sort of activity? And how does God manage this without a body? What kind of “agency” is involved (SV s#82-83)? If God is the First Mover, who moves God? Could we still say that He is the “creator” God, even if He were known in form (SV s#8)? Presumably, we are speaking of something far beyond the scale of operation involved in the potter making his pot, the clockmaker his clock, or the spider spinning a web from within its body, or even the acorn generating the oak tree.13 At this point, something like the Humean crunch comes in as Kumārila concludes: “There the theory of Creation and Dissolution must be admitted to resemble the every-day processes (of production and destruction); and any particular idea of these with regard to the production and destruction of the whole universe cannot be established, for want of proofs” (SV s#113). The reasoning here is that a mere logical possibility does not establish a necessity with any certainty.

We are here reminded of Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and the doubts that he expresses through Philo in taking “operations of one part of nature upon another for the foundation of our judgement concerning the origin of the whole (which never can be admitted).”14 That is to say, the doubt is with regard to taking empirical instances, such as a clockmaker making a clock or the organic processes of plants and animals, as models for the principles governing the planets and the universe at large. We have not witnessed another universe being created, as we see clockmakers making clocks, potters creating pots, etc.; thus no parallels can be drawn here. And from limited conjunctions in our relative field of experience, we cannot go on to generalize about the process or origin of the order and structure of the universe as a whole. The analogies and reasoning the Nyāya has advanced, while they may be suggestive of a logical possibility, provide only weak justification, and in themselves, Kumārila argues, lack the force to convince one that such is necessarily the case, namely, that the universe as a whole has a cause.15

Further, from a finite world of experience we can infer only finite “origins”

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14Hume, Dialogues, p. 121.
15Ibid., pp. 120-25.
and contingent causal connections; the ramifications of this inference will, however, not be acceptable to the theist. This attitude of skepticism is based, in part, on the recognition of the limitations of human reason, in particular of inferential reasoning, and on grounds of evidence which tend to suggest otherwise (e.g., the forest on a marooned island had no conscious agent as its cause, unlike the tree in my suburban garden). Kumārila therefore pronounces: "It is not at all necessary for people who are conscious of their bodies, to have an idea of Creation and Dissolution, beyond (their own bodies), with regard to the whole universe."11

The major logical grounds for Hume's doubt about causality, for which he is most famous, were not articulated with the same philosophical rigor by the Mīmāṃsakas, who were nonetheless predisposed towards a healthy doubt about personal agency that extends beyond the immediately experienced world. To be sure, they "play safe" on the larger issue of causality, for too radical a criticism of causality would undermine the Mīmāṃsā's own commitment to a more abstract principle of causality—indeed, impersonal agency—as is implied in their doctrine of apūrva or "unseen potency," and certainly in the law of karma (where Hume and all Indian skeptics, including the Buddhists, part company). The Mīmāṃsakas chide the Nyāya for its admission of the adṛṣṭa, the "unseen effectuality," which is said to be the repository of dharma and adharma (merits and demerits), and which is also effective in the delivery of "goods" of the world, and of liberation. What need is there, then, for a superior sentient agent? The earlier Vaiśeṣika ("atomist" school, whose developed ontology is largely adopted by the Nyāya) was content to explain the unity and functioning of the world on the basis of the interaction or fusion-effect of the uncreated atoms (substance) and souls (desire) and the principle of adṛṣṭa (efficiency), thereby ruling out the necessity of God. Dharma, by the same token, circumscribes the impersonal moral component of the universe.

2. The Moral Argument

There is, however, apart from the appeal to causality, another reason that some Nātyāyikas found persuasive for inferring the guiding hand of God. This amounts to a moral argument, namely, the necessity to account for the dispensation of the fruits of actions, which result from people's previous merits and demerits. Unless there were an all-knowing divine and intelligent agent, how could we conceive this to be possible? Surely, as we have just remarked, the Nyāya believes that actions create the unseen effectuality (adṛṣṭa), much like the apūrva of the Mīmāṃsā, but that in itself this is an inert property which continues into the life hereafter. Uddyotakara therefore reasons: "The same argument holds good here also: the merit and demerit of the dead people need to be activated by an intelligent agent. Only being activated by an intelligent agent, do the elements (earth, fire, water) up to air operate in their respective functions, like holding and so on."12 In other words, there has to be a superintendent being such as God who arranges a person's rebirth and dispenses the appropriate results in the new-born body.

11SV s112 (p. 368). See also Hume on re-examination of the principle "Like Effects prove like causes." Part V, Dialogues, p. 128.
12Vaitarky, p. 25.
The Mīmāṃsākās bring two objections against this argument, while agreeing with the Nyāya that in the absence of actions of human beings there would be no adṛśa, and hence no result or fruits. First, why would God, who is supposed to be impartial to all creatures, act in such a way as to bring about disproportionate fruits? Why would a kind and loving God allow such an iniquitous situation? If dharma (as merits and demerits) were absolutely under His control, why should there be pain (in the world) (SV s#82-83)? If on the one hand the activity of the world were to be dependent upon (i.e., regulated by) these (dharma, etc.), then this would entail accepting something else (i.e., an agency other than God's desire). But this would also deprive God of His independence. If on the other hand we accept God's will or desire, this would undermine the law of karma; that notwithstanding, God's will still must have a cause (if it is to activate dharma-advatma). In that case, the adṛśa might as well be accepted as the cause (of everything) (SV s#72-73). Again, as Hume would later put it, since there is so much pain and suffering, we have to assume either two world-powers, one working for good and the other for evil, or else a single morally neutral creator.20

Second, asks Kumārila, is it so very inconceivable that people's own actions could directly bring about the results? Is not the law of karma a sufficient postulate to explain the process of dispensation? And if the law of karma is inexorable, then what is the place and necessity of God? Or, alternatively, if God is so powerful, can He not annul that law (SV s#53, comm.)? Moreover, if there were some end absolutely essential to be achieved, could not God achieve this without needing to create the world, a world in which He is then said to destroy (SV s#54, 57)?

Some Naiyāyikas respond by suggesting that God merely creates the auxiliary causes by which individual dispensations take place, so that God does not have to attend to and deal with each and every individual action or the unseen. Or, as Newton might have said, God does not move His "hidden hand" or directly intervene each time an apple falls; the law of gravity, which God built into the universe, takes care of that. Presumably, the Naiyāyikas might concede that there is an autonomous and inexorable operation of the law of karma; they are, however, also quick to point out that God is both above merits and demerits (dharma-adharma) and that the law of karma is subordinate to God. That is to say, it is only when God activates the merits and demerits of the individual souls that the just reward to each soul is meted out.

The standard Mīmāṃsā rebuttal of the last position is that if a soul cannot direct its own merit and demerit, neither can God, who is simply another soul (in the Nyāya view), do it. Kumārila also doubts that God can "perceive" merits and demerits and that He has any contact with bodies in which these are located. Kumārila rules that it is unparsimonious to postulate an agency beyond the "unseen" to account for the dispensation of rewards, etc. Furthermore, it is possible to explain that the world itself comes about as a result of the meritorious and the unmeritorious deeds of the eternally existing individual souls. Actions of people produce apārva, and it is this unseen potency that is effective in bringing about things through which the fruits are enjoyed, etc. This aspect of the cosmogony is not developed by Kumārila, although this appears to be the

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20Hume, Dialogues, pp. 17ff.
accepted account of the \textit{Mim\r{a}ms\r{a}}'s doctrine of "continuous creationism" (namely, that the proposed theory must be consistent with the everyday processes of becoming and disappearing; cf. \#113, cited earlier). Kum\r{a}rla reinforces this by remarking that "we could only admit of a gradual process of creation, such as we see in the case of present living beings (creating the jar, etc.)."\textsuperscript{21}

3. The Problem of "Evil"

To diminish the \textit{Ny\r{a}ya} moral argument for God's role in the creation of the universe, Kum\r{a}rla once again invokes the perennial "problem of evil" and takes it a step further in order to discredit the existence of the supposed (benevolent) Creator. To Kum\r{a}rla the \textit{Ny\r{a}ya} account appears incoherent in light of the problem it creates in regard to the qualities attributed to God. He thus asks:

Then, again, in the first place, how is it that He should have a desire to create a world which is to be fraught with all sorts of troubles to living beings? For at the time (of the beginning of creation) He has not got any guiding agencies, in the shape of virtue (or sin) etc., of the living beings themselves.\textsuperscript{22}

If one were to insist that God created the world, then God would have to bear the blame for the "evil" that exists in the world. Would any conception of God as the all-loving and omnipotent being countenance such a fundamental discrepancy? This indeed is not an uncommon argument used for denying—or at least for casting serious doubt upon—the existence of the Creator-being in other, non-Indian, skeptical and philosophical traditions, as we have already noted in the work of Hume. The disconcerting problem in the \textit{Mim\r{a}ms\r{a}} or the broadly Indian discourse was not so much with (what elsewhere has been termed) "evil," as with the overwhelming fact of pain and a life of disproportionate adversities or suffering (\textit{duhkha}), and the cyclical recurrence of death after death (\textit{sams\r{a}ra}). The Buddhists had added further weight to this perception and developed it with much greater analytical rigor.

Kum\r{a}rla next considers the suggestion that God or \textit{Praj\r{a}pati} might have created the world out of pity. He is puzzled by this suggestion, and wonders for whom would God have had pity or compassion in the absence of beings (prior to creation) (SV \#52)?

Now if God were so moved by sheer compassion (for whomever), why did He not create either just happy beings or an everlasting happy world? Was it so beyond His will not to create a world of miserably painful creatures?\textsuperscript{23} It did not, however, occur to the \textit{Mim\r{a}ms\r{a}ka} that God could have created a world in which pain and pleasure, good and bad (or "evil") are finely poised in an equilibrium which human striving attempts ultimately to transcend and be liberated from. Indeed, the \textit{Ny\r{a}ya}, and to an extent the \textit{Ved\r{a}nta}, seem to have espoused such a position; not so the \textit{Mim\r{a}ms\r{a}}. And, of course, the cause of suffering may well be attributed to the sheer folly of humans who fail to recognize or adhere to God's moral plan. Besides, suffering could have its roots in the illusion-making power,

\textsuperscript{21}SV \#67 (p. 359).
\textsuperscript{22}SV \#49-50 (p. 356).
\textsuperscript{23}SV \#52-54 (p. 357).
(maya) people have been loathe to shun. God, all things being equal, has the best of intentions—or maybe in His infinite wisdom He remains indifferent to human suffering, for He has made the best of all possible worlds.

Perhaps, ponders Kumarila, God created the world merely for His own amusement or "play" (līda), as the Vedāntins say and as it is often narrated in folklore and mythology. To Kumarila's way of thinking, however, such a God would then only be an incredibly selfish being, calling down upon Himself a good deal of trouble and questioning.24

This, then, would not only contradict the theory that God is perfectly happy, but would involve Him in much wearisome toil. Kumarila does not believe it conceivable that there could be a supremely compassionate God who would create a world full of pain and adversity merely for "sport." But if amusement were God's intention, then, again, Kumarila cannot see how God could be said to be self-fulfilled and infinitely contented.25 One supposes that here Kumarila is questioning the claim to perfection in God, who nonetheless must resort to an imperfect creation to find lasting fulfillment. Kumarila wonders why any theory would want to ground itself, and its God, in such contradictory positions. If any artist's creation were to be marred by imperfections, how would he or she claim to be perfect!

Against those who claim that God creates and then after many millennia of normalcy (yugas) destroys or brings about a dissolution of the world—a culminating process known in Hindu cosmogony as pralaya—the Māmāsaka unleashes the scurrilous charge that this entails an awful suicidal tendency on the part of such a God (SV s#68 and comm.). It is beyond Māmāsaka logic why the good God would wish such a universal dissolution, any more than the leader of a kingdom would condemn his entire citizenry to the gallows in order to rid the kingdom of thugs and robbers.

Perhaps what this shows is the Māmāsaka's reluctance to take seriously analogical thinking, whatever its limitations, and to consider how we might begin to understand that which extends beyond ordinary human experience. The Māmāsaka was undoubtedly a stickler for not going beyond the immediately given, and in some ways was more positivist than the modern-day positivists. The irony, though, is that the Māmāsaka had no qualms about accepting the idea of apārva or the "unseen potency," attributed as it is to human action, and which seems to work with the same degree of automation as does the complex system of switches and signals used for controlling the operation of space shuttles. The reality of svarga, the heaven-like "kingdom of ends," is another of Māmāsaka's commitments, as also is the belief in the eternity and plurality of individual souls. Surely, on such matters, the Māmāsaka displays a distinct non-naturalistic tendency and appears to rest its faith on what goes beyond the perceptible. In themselves, however, these "imperceptibles" are not the class of "trancendentals" as any standard theistic system would wish to suppose. The "world beyond," or the "other-worldly" reality, is not something removed from the bounds of human reality. Even the gods or deities who are invoked in ritual sacrifices as "wit-
nerves'' to human offerings do not fulfill the function that God fulfills in, for instance, the Nyāya view.

4. Evidence in the Veda

Could scripture be the grounds for establishing the existence of God the Creator? Some, especially the Naiyāyikas and the Vedāntins like Rāmānuja (Śrībhāṣya on BS I i 3), argue that the assertion about God's creation is to be read in the Veda itself. The scripture further speaks in one voice of the creation of the world and the Veda. Indeed,Ṛg Veda X.90.9 appears to speak of the Veda as having originated from the Primordial “Man” (Puruṣa) in a cosmic sacrifice orchestrated by the gods. The Upaniṣads, notably the Mūndaka (II.1.4), speak of the Veda as having emanated from Brahma. Again, the Brāhmaṇas attribute the emergence of the Veda to the gods, namely, Agni (Fire), Vāyu (Wind), Āditya (Sun). Elsewhere, Brahma is described as having “breathed forth” (nihīvasita) the Veda (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II.4.10, IV.5.11). Most impressively, the Isa (I.i) and Śvetāsvatara (VI.18) Upaniṣads speak of the pervasiveness of the Supreme Lord, who gave the Veda to Brahmā (himself looked upon as the “Creator” aspect of God).

The Mīmāṃsakas, again, dismiss such claims with more than a touch of cynicism, for he considers the passages to be unreliable. Rather, these are to be interpreted metaphorically because they fall under the category of arthavādas or auxiliary statements, whose explicit purport is to eulogize and praise the central theme of the primary ritual text (vidhīs). But there is another reason why they might be thought to be unreliable—as we shall mention shortly. But it seems odd that a Mīmāṃsaka would declare the Veda to be unreliable. If the Veda is untrustworthy, one might then ask, how could the Mīmāṃsā sustain the claim that the Veda is infallible? The following response, which by any standard would seem to be pretentious, is made: “... because even though He may not have created the world, He might speak of having done so, in order to show off His great power.”

Commenting on this disavowal, Pārvatīkara Miśra is quick to point out that it is not at all the intention of his master to admit to the existence of God; rather, such an assertion about God and so on is to be expected in a (sacred) narrative. Thus the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, the literature from the smṛti tradition, fondly speak of creation emanating from Prajāpati. But such “story-telling,” argues Kumārila, is to be construed as being secondary to the primary intentionality of the text, whose basic aim is to coax the individual towards proper action, rightful duty, and a morally compelling “form of life.”

In such a minimalist reading of the text one need not assume the intentionality of an “intelligent being”: the text speaks for itself, it has no precursor other than another text; and it contains within its linguistic structure the potentiality (śabdadāśakī) for its own hermeneutics. Where the text appears to make reference to an author, it does so by way of narrative device, which, however, is not central to its primary thesis pertaining largely to injunctions about duty. Thus, since none of these references to creation is contingent upon the agency of an external

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"SV s#60 (p. 358).
"Ibid."
intelligence, or a "first stirrer," there is little need to accept the creator God. Consider also that, on the one hand, had the scripture come after creation, then it could not have recorded any impressions at the moment of creation, and hence such knowledge would have to be secondhand. If, on the other hand, the scripture preceded creation, then its utterances on creation would be a priori (SV s#61-62). What if the scripture was created with the universe? Kumārila might reply that this is an instance of yet another myth-making story intended to distract the believers and detractors alike.

God, then, on the accounts considered above, does not appear to the Mīmāṃsā to be a very useful postulate for explaining the creation of the world and the workings of the destiny of each human being. People's action through the instrumentality of the āpūrva is responsible for the coming-into-being of the world, and so there is no need to suppose that this process has to be controlled and regulated by any supernatural (personal) agency. Rather, the laws of action-retribution, of sacrifice-result, of duty-reward etc., operate, as it were, automatically, autonomously, and inexorably, as do the so-called laws of nature identified in the sciences; and they do not stand in need of a regulative intelligent principle as implied in any postulation about a creator God.

5. The Argument from Scripture

Another variation of the argument from scripture which Kumārila examines is the Nyāya attempt to argue for the existence of God on the grounds of the authority and sanctity of the Veda in respect to its pronouncements on Dharma ("Law"), which Nyāya readily accepts as an independent moral concept. The Nyāya rationalists championed the following argument: the remarkable authoritative and trustworthy characteristics of the Veda, as well as its internal structure, suggest a transcendental source of superior eminence, who alone is capable of such insights and ethical rectitude in His concern for sound human action and welfare. It is inconceivable, contended these rationalists (and as Udayana, c. 900-1200 C.E., later formalized9), that any being other than one who is omniscient and most benevolent would have been moved to "reveal" to an ignorant human race such elevating and pristine truths as are embodied in the Veda.

In other words, the impeccability and infallibility of the scripture inevitably point to a source or an author that cannot but be omniscient. Thus, God is to be accepted on account of the inviolability of the word of scripture (and not the other way around, namely, that "revelation" is accepted because it is the word of God). Common sense resists the suggestion that any art (or "text") is ever without an artist (or "creator") who, moreover, has attributes which are rather special to him or her.

At best, this argument of the Nyāya (with the familiar Thomist ring to it) unwittingly introduces the suggestion that the Veda must have been authored. The Mīmāṃsā is not prepared seriously to entertain this view, not because of what it does or does not establish in respect to God, but because of what it

attempts to establish in respect to the origin of the Veda. Kumārila finds the Nyāya line of reasoning to be utterly unpersuasive and highly speculative. There is no good reason to suppose that the virtues and sanctity of the scripture point to any source beyond itself. As Śaṅkara was to do more forcefully after him (BSB II ii 38), Kumārila points out a circularity in the Nyāya argument, namely, that first the omniscience of God is demonstrated on the basis of the authoritative character of the scripture, and then the authority of the scripture is established or confirmed on the grounds of the omniscience of God. What evidence is there, Kumārila asks, for the actual authorship of the scripture in question? Such an author has never been observed, and if the scripture mentions an author or authors, the reference is either to mythical beings or to names of persons, such as Kaṭhaka, who were entrusted with reciting particular portions of the Veda. He rejects the Nyāya "proof" on the same grounds on which he rejects all forms of the "Veda by design" argument: for the Veda was not fashioned or issued by any being.

Might not, however, the acceptance of a supreme being as author of the scripture serve to vindicate the infallibility of the Veda? Kumārila's response to this question is an emphatic "No!" For, given that the Veda is already regarded as infallible, Kumārila thinks it fruitless to attempt to locate its origin in an infallible being. Or, to do so would undermine the infallibility of the Veda. Furthermore, if the Veda is to be regarded as a creation of God, it might be difficult to accept all that is said about God, for the simple reason that we cannot accept just anything anyone says about himself or herself. In scriptures or elsewhere (see earlier #60). But to counter this response one must first demand proof that the Veda is unauthoritative and fallible, lest the opinions therein be dismissed as false and unreliable. But for the Nyāya, this position can be successfully opposed by proving the existence of an infallible author of the Veda. In defense of his master, however, Pārthasārathi Miśra musters this quixotic reply:

But then, this infallible author too would depend upon the Veda for proof of his existence; and the infallibility of the Veda resting upon the infallibility of such an author, the reasoning would become a case of arguing in a circle.

It is indeed curious that a divine author would need to rely on the Veda for proof of His own existence. But this puzzle is not pointless, for according to legend Brahmā, the demiurge-architect of the world, is said to have wandered, the Veda clasped in one hand, from one corner of the universe to another, looking for his own origin, before he disappeared down a lotus stem into Viṣṇu's navel. The upshot of all this is that a theorist would not consider postulating an author had he not accepted the possibility of an independent scripture. But if there is no good reason to doubt the authenticity of the scripture, then an author (as source of its authority) need not be assumed.


See Ślokavārttika section on Aporaśeya ("authorless text") 1 (tarkapāda) xxvii–xlvii, pp. 553ff.

SV #61 and commentary (p. 358). The second part of the argument is drawn from Ślokavārttika's Codana-sūtra 1.1.83–70 and commentary (p. 31); see also #92–97, 98–101 under same sūtra (pp. 34–35).

Commentary under SV Codana-sūtra #69 (Jha translation, p. 31).

101
It is clear also that Kumārila wants to place the onus of proof on the opponent. Furthermore, Kumārila wonders how the omniscience of such a superior being could be known or recognized unless there were other omniscient beings. But theists like the Naïyāyikas want to argue for only one omniscient being. The Mīmāṃsāka is pressed to say, it may be surmised, that even if there were an "omniscient" being or person who knows of His own existence, He would nonetheless know what is in the Veda—viz., the categorical imperatives of Dharma or sacrificial "duty" as means to the promotion of a more fruitful and liberated existence, here and hereafter. Hence His existence would be made redundant by dint of the fact that the knowledge He would possess is already contained in the Veda. In the final analysis, since all that is required is the realization of the truth of the assertion that "Dharma is knowable by the Veda alone," the Mīmāṃsā is not obliged to prove or accept the omniscience of any being, human or divine.\(^5\)

6. Kumārila's Worries about Omniscience

From Kumārila’s point of view, an omniscient being would at best be a metonym (for the Veda) and would at worst not be very kind (in view of the magnitude of suffering in the world), and is therefore not a desirable postulate.

The crucial point of the Mīmāṃsā argument is centered in this discussion of authorship and especially of "omniscience," which we should here emphasize a little more. After rejecting the Nyāya evidence, whose basis is an inference positing a God over and above the Veda, Kumārila next rejects any suggestion whatsoever of a being who is omniscient, on the grounds that ordinary humans, not themselves omniscient, would have no way of determining the omniscience of any being. Kumārila's motives, however, go much deeper than simply expressing difficulty of an epistemological kind. Clearly, his dispute is with the Nyāya method: the logician typically first establishes the existence of God by means of inference (from ordinary experience) and then attributes the composition of the Veda to God. This is clearly not acceptable, either from the logical or the āstika point of view.

In the crucial ślokas (SV s#114–116), Kumārila questions whether he would accept the evidence of the existence of the Creator God on the very assumption on which one is expected to accept the omniscience of a (human) being (sarvajñanatvam): sarvajñavannisēdhyā ca straṣṭuḥ sadbhāvakalpanā? (SV s#114). The Nyāya arguments seem to force one to do so. But there is great danger in this move, which Kumārila is at pains to arrest. The real or implied intent of this nagging doubt is brought out rather more clearly in Pārthasarathi’s elaboration on Kumārila’s foregoing cryptic statement: yathā ca buddhadeh sarvajñatvam puruṣatvādasmudādivan nīśedhyam, evam prajāpaterapi straṣṭravam (Nyāyaratnākara s#114);

\(^5\)SV s#114–116 (Sha translation, p. 368).
As the omniscience of the Buddha cannot be proved from such statements as 'He (the Buddha) is omniscient' because he was a man like ourselves, so is the creatorship of Prajapati (in doubt).  

The disquiet is not merely with the claim in regard to creation, but with any arguments that purport to establish the omniscience, and thereby the creatorship, of a personal being, such as of the Buddha. Suppose for now that Buddha wrote the scripture in which he describes himself as an omniscient person (sarvajña); should one naively trust this statement? Suppose also that someone else after the Buddha wrote this into the text; should one rely on this statement without being critical of its authority? In the same way, then, even if we supposed the Veda was created by God and God therein speaks of His omniscience, we should not rely on this statement (about His omniscience, etc.).

The fundamental criticism is here embedded in the simile "sarvajñavat: like the omniscience." The omniscience alluded to, however, is precisely the omniscience of the Buddha claimed by his followers. The worry is that, given the very flimsy grounds on which the Nyāya is prepared to accept the omniscience of the supposed author of the scripture, what is there to prevent the Buddha from claiming to be omniscient, the creator of the world and the authority above all authority, particularly that of the Veda? The Veda, then, would shrink in its significance, and Hinduism would suffer a further assault. If, on the other hand, it could be shown that the authority of the Veda logically precedes Prajapati (the God of creation), then it would follow that Prajapati knows what is already contained in the Veda, for no knowledge (about Dharma, right actions, etc.) is possible without the Veda (SV #115). Kumārila concludes, therefore, that we must accept that the Veda was prior to creation or to the existence of any sentient being. If the Nyāya refuses to accept this thesis, what hope is there that the Buddhists will accept it and refrain from thinking that another omniscient being, such as the Buddha himself, has knowledge superior to that of the Veda? (We may speculate whether a Veda-believing omniscient Buddha would have caused less of a problem for the Mīmāṃsā. They would, however, still question the need for two infallible authorities—viz., the Veda and the Buddha.)

IV. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion it appears that much of Kumārila's critique and attempted deconstruction of the then prevailing arguments for the existence and absolute nature of God could be attributed to his need to respond to the Buddhist onslaught against the Brahmanical faith in the authority of the Veda. Although it is said that the Buddha remained mute on the question of the existence of God and his role in religious discourse, the avowed non-theism of his followers was an issue of some concern to many a Hindu. But it was the attack on the Veda that was by far the more sensitive issue for the orthodox Brahmanical schools. Hence,

"Nīyantarandākara on SV #114. It is to be noted that Jha's translation of this is unreliable, for he avoids mention of the Buddha which actually occurs in the commentary. Kumārila in SV Codanasṭūra #95-96 (p. 35) mentions the Buddha by name and remarks that the Buddha's assertion, as with all human assertion, is not immune from defects and imperfections, suggesting that the Buddha is not to be regarded as being omniscient (SV #119). See also SV Codanasṭūra #47-59; #114-117, and #128-138; #169-172; #145-147.

103
leading the rebuttal, the Mīmāṃsāsakas concentrated their efforts on addressing the latter issue. Further, the Nyāya attempt to establish the existence of God on the basis of inferential reasoning, and by accepting the scripture as the creation of an omniscient author, simply opened up a Pandora's box that might allow recognition of the sanctity of any authorial text or scripture, as well as evoke similar claims to omniscience on behalf of the Buddha and other fundamental founders of religions. For the Mīmāṃsā, all of these would appear to be highly detrimental to Hindu orthodoxy.

Now it is possible that Kumārila had come to disbelief in God, or that this had been reinforced while (as it is sometimes claimed) he was with the Buddhists, or that he was a Buddhist himself. But he could not reconcile himself to this disbelief or seeming act of apostasy, even while he campaigned to raise the status of the Veda. Clearly, neither would he accept the omniscience of any human teacher or author (auctor). He had found in the Veda a pre-established, albeit impersonal, authority; hence there was no need for him to accept any personal "authority" (auctoritas) whether human or divine. The thrust of the argument in the passages we have considered thus appears to be tinged with these conflicts, which Kumārila may well have attempted to resolve in himself. Why else would he consider so seriously the Nyāya location about "omniscience," particularly human omniscience, which he then tries to refute? Certainly, he had to counter the Nyāya claims in respect to omniscience of the Creator God. But Kumārila did not stop at that: for omniscience is omniscience, whether its locus is human or divine.

In conclusion, then, several inter-connected motives appear to have been at the core of the Mīmāṃsā skepticism about assertions for the existence of God:

1) Arguments based on inference (anumāna) would tend to elevate the capacity of reason beyond its reach: for the impressions that we have through sense-data do not suggest any such necessary inferential links (vyāpti); if anything, creation-dissolution seems to be a continuous process. (This is a kind of Human skepticism.)

2) A transcendental deduction with respect to dharma-adharma would point to the reality of apārtha (unseen efficient potency), thereby ruling out the necessity of a supreme apportioner or superintendent of human actions; besides, this explains better the ubiquitous problem of "evil" and suffering. (This is moral-theodike skepticism.)

3) To admit creatorship on the assumption of omniscience opens the way for more than one omniscient being and especially for the Buddha's claim to omniscience, and perhaps even his creatorship; or it tells the end to belief in the world

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*See Kaviraj, note 3 above, p. ix; and Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch* (3 vols.) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1921-1923), vol. 2, p. 110, p. 207 (reprinted New Jersey: Baroca and Noble, 1962). Kaviraj reports a tradition recorded in Tibetan works according to which Kumārila lost a debate to Dharmakīrti and thereupon became a Buddhist. Other accounts suggest that Kumārila lost faith in Buddhism as well, defied his teacher, and suffered loss of "one eye" during a wager with Buddhists as he attempted to re-assert his belief in the Veda. In order to expiate his heretical "sin" and to reverse his theomancy, Kumārila is believed to have attempted to immolate himself. Since, however, he had a lot of apārtha (presumably meritorious ones also) stored up, his body smoldered without incinerating; thus he stayed conscious of his state for an immensely long time. Legend has it that no one, not even Śāntara who arrived half-a-century later, could talk the despondent scholar-grown-skeptical out of his miserable self-annihilation (a bit like the suicidal tendencies of some latter-day existentialists).
altogether, more particularly, belief in everlasting souls, "kingdom of ends" (svarga), and the efficacy of rituals; likewise, the end to reliance on evidence of scripture on such matters. Here personal omniscience is rejected. (This is ontologos skepticism.)

4) A supreme personal being independent of the Veda undermines the finality and absoluteness of the Veda, whose authorlessness is in need of urgent defense which would also vindicate the autonomy of the moral law (Dharma). (This is authorial skepticism.)

5) Since the Buddhists did not evolve any such doctrine of apauruseyatva or "authorless revelation" as had the Mīmāṃsā,25 that in itself is sufficient for preserving the orthodox-heterodox (āstika-nāstika) distinction, and, therefore, for upholding the orthodoxy of Mīmāṃsā, if not of Hinduism at large. (The erstwhile orthodox-heterodox difference shifts to "authorlessness" for its authenticating mark.)

This does not prove conclusively that the Mīmāṃsaka, although by any standards a doubter and possibly also an apostate, is an atheist, or really that he is a theist. But it does show that this apologeticist from the most orthodox and presumably dogmatic of Hindu schools is an agnostic. It is, then, not such a heresy or blasphemy, at least within one of the world's major theo-philosophia traditions, to call into doubt the reality of the Transcendent and to be open to theologacy.

Finally, from Hume, an anecdote that Kumārila might have taken a curious delight in (and added his own nuance as to the form of "religion" one returns to):

Don't you remember, said PHILO, the excellent saying of LORD BACON on this head [whether atheist and sceptic are synonymous]? That a little philosophy, replied CLEANTHES, makes a man an Atheist: a great deal converts him to religion."

See note 5 above.

"Dialogues, p. 111.