
UNIT 1 CATEGORIAL NOTION OF BEING (BEING AND CATEGORIES)

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

Being in itself can neither be defined nor objectified clearly. Being escapes human definition and objectification. However, the various manifestations of Being experienced in finite beings can be objectified and classified. Categorisation includes within it, both objectification and classification. The present Unit's object is to understand categories:

- From early Western perspectives
- From early Indian perspectives

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'category' is from the Greek root '*kategoria*' meaning an 'accusation' or 'charge' in a court of law. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) transferred the word from legal use to a logical use in attributing one thing to another as done in predicating a quality of a subject. Just as the courts of law render their judgments on 'accusation' or 'charges' brought before them, so does the human mind make its judgments on ideas that appear before it by way of affirmation or denial. Hence, the primary meaning of category is one of *the supreme classes of predicates* found in our judgments and propositions. The categories in this sense belong to the science of logic. Even Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) recognizes this fact. For Kant, categories are transcendental conditions of knowledge. Transcendental means a condition which must be in the mind for cognition to take place. The first of these transcendental conditions are the a priori forms of sensibility: space and time. They are in the senses making possible the cognition of sense experience. Kant's categories are such transcendental conditions for intellectual knowledge. They are subjective forms or modes into which the data of sense experience are fitted. Our cognition arises from the union of these forms with the phenomena of sense experience. These categories or forms are part of the furniture of the mind. They are applied to the phenomena according to the law of the mind's nature so as to give us the knowledge we have. Such knowledge is not a representation of things but a representation of the mind's own subjective states, and thus it does not reveal anything of the *noumena* (things-in-themselves). Kant lists twelve categories that correspond to twelve classes of judgments. They are pure mental constructs entirely independent of experience, and pre-existing as modes of thought antecedent to all knowledge derived from experience. Their purpose is

to unify the manifold of sense experience and to impose on it the forms of necessity and universality. They do not tell us anything of the reality independent of the mind. Hence, they are different from the Aristotelian categories which are classes of direct universal ideas and modes of real being.

1.2 EARLY WESTERN PERSPECTIVE: ARISTOTLE

For Aristotle, there are ten categories: substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, habit, and position. 1) *Substance*: Aristotle calls the first category *ousia*, which literally means *beingness* or substance, sometimes this term has the formal-abstract meaning of the essence of the subsistent being. It is a reality, bodily or spiritual, suited to exist as itself. The name substance is from the Latin *substans* or ‘standing under;’ for a creatural substance is capable of ‘standing under’ the accidents of which it is the subject. It supports accidents in being. 2) *Quantity* is Being as dispersed in parts outside parts. It is an accident proper to bodies; it is the extension of bodies in space. To say a thing is big or little is not to speak of quantity; for quantity deals with measurements. Big and little indicate qualities. If we say a human is six feet tall we indicate quantity; so also we indicate quantity when we say ‘forty rupees,’ or ‘a nine by twelve rug, or ‘a kilometre walk,’ etc. 3) *Quality* is Being as determined in itself. It is an accident which determines the sort or kind of a thing. Nearly all adjectives indicate qualities. Quality is a very broad and inclusive category. Thus it indicates: (a) *dispositions and habits* such as prudence, industriousness, strength, weakness, gullibility; (b) *abilities or capacities* such as capability, keen-sightedness, quick-mindedness; (c) *passive characteristics* such as colour, the state of being esteemed, age, temperature (age and temperature can also be *quantities* when expressed in definite numbers, that is, they can be quantities by analogy). 4) *Relation* is Being as referring to other things. It is an accident which determines a thing in its standing to or towards another. It is unique among accidents because it involves two realities and does not really exist in either but *between* them. Examples of relation are: equality, similarity, unlikeness, paternity, loyalty, servitude, etc. 5) *Action* is Being as actuating its reference to others. It is an accident which determines a reality as doing something, as producing an effect; for example, talking, writing, speeding, striking, painting, etc. 6) *Passion* is Being as undergoing the action of others in being acted upon. It is an accident which determines a reality as undergoing something, as affected by some action; e.g., being talked to, being written, being struck. As action is expressed by the active voice of verbs, passion is expressed by the passive voice. 7) *Place* is Being as finding itself somewhere. It is an accident which determines a reality as to its position with reference to other realities. It is an accident which, strictly speaking, is proper only to bodily substances. Place finds expression in such terms as, in the room, at the corner of the main street, in this country, on the surface of the earth, on that chair. 8) *Time* is Being as movement. It is an accident which determines a reality in its position with reference to *before* and *after*; e.g., at midday, this evening, at five o’clock, next Tuesday, in 1492, before midnight, after supper, etc. 9) *Habitus or Possession* is Being as the state or condition with reference to external things. It is an accident proper to bodies, which determines its subject with reference to its clothing or external accoutrements or adjuncts; e.g., well-dressed, armoured, moss-covered, ivy-hung, bearded, swaddled. In one aspect, habit is also *quality*. Mental and moral habits are always merely qualities. *Habit* as a predicament or category means some kind of bodily *dress* or

bodily adornment or bodily swathing. 10) *Position or Posture* is Being as referring to attitude, the disposition of the parts of a being. It is an accident to bodies which determines its subject with reference to the arrangement or disposition of its own part; for instance, sprawled, sitting, standing, lying down, huddled up, erect, prone, cross-kneed, outstretched, etc.

1.3 EARLY INDIAN PERSPECTIVE: VAISESHIKA SCHOOL

The Indian term for ‘category’ is *padartha*, which means ‘the object or meaning (*artha*) of a word (*pada*).’ A *padarth* is an object which can be thought (*artha*) and named (*pada*). *Prasastapada* defines *padartha* as a knowable thing (*jneya*), or as a validly cognizable thing (*prameya*), or as a nameable thing (*abhidheya*). The approach of the *Nyaya-vaisheshika* to the universe is purely a realistic one in which one regards all the objects of the universe as real things. Such objects are cognized either through the external sense-organs or through the internal ones. In the former case, the external objects of cognition are the specific attributes of the five *mahabhutas*: *rupa*, *sparsa*, *gandha*, *rasa*, and *sabda*, which are cognized through their respective sense-organs. In the latter case, the objects of the sensible world are cognized through the internal organs, and hence are subtler elements like *paramanus*, *tanmatras*, etc. Kanada divides the whole reality into six categories. The seventh (non-existence) was added afterwards. Of these seven categories, the first three, i.e., substance, quality, and action possess a real objective existence. The next three, i.e., generality, particularity, and inherence are products of intellectual discrimination. These six categories have existence, nameability and knowability, which are not logical notions (as that of Gautama’s classifications) but ontological entities. The seventh category, i.e., non-existence is also an ontological category which is not mere negation of a substance in thought, but real non-existence of a substance. When a jar is destroyed, there is a real negation of the jar. It is to be noted that neither Kanada nor Prasastapada speak of non-existence as a separate category, but Sridhara, Udayana, Vyomasiva, and Sivaditya add the seventh category of non-existence.

Substance (*dravya*): Substance is the substratum where actions and qualities inhere and which is the co-existent material cause of the composite things produced from it. It is the substratum of all things. A substance is destroyed only by the destruction of its substratum. It is not destroyed either by its own effect or by its own cause. It means that the relation of the destroyer and the destroyed does not exist between two substances which have entered into the relation of effect and cause. Thus the *Sutra* states: “Substance is not annihilated either by effect or by cause” (VS I, 12). For Prasastapada, ‘substance is the main category, and all categories depend on it for their existence. So it is first named.’ Being the substratum of qualities, it is different from qualities. For instance, in the case of a white cloth, the white colour is experienced as a property residing in the substratum, cloth. Therefore, white colour and cloth are different in their essence. The word ‘property’ does not mean only qualities, but is used in a wider sense and includes all the five kinds of properties (i.e., substance, quality, movement, the universal, and *visesha*), which subsist in their substrate by inherent relation. A substance does not possess qualities at the first moment of its production. If the qualities arise simultaneously with substances, there cannot be any distinction between them, and if the qualities do not arise, then substances would be free

from qualities. Then the definition of substance, as that which possesses qualities, would be violated. To meet this difficulty, it is said that substance is the substrate of qualities either in the relation of intimate union (*samvaya sambandha*) or antecedent negation (*pragbhava*). Qualities inhere in a substance from the second moment of its production until its destruction. A substance is also the material cause of its composite product. For example, threads are the material cause of cloth made by their combination. Only substance is capable of producing an effect out of its stuff. These substances are nine: earth, fire, air, water, ether, time, space, spirit, and mind. The *Vaisesika* philosophy is pluralistic and realistic but not materialistic since it admits spiritual substances. Out of the nine substances, the first five (i.e., earth, water, fire, air, and ether) are called physical, since each of them possesses a unique quality sensed by the external sense. Smell is the unique property of earth, and other substances have smell only if mixed with some quantity of earth. There is smell in muddy water, but not in pure water. In the same way, taste is the property of water, colour that of light, touch of air, and sound of ether. The substances – of earth, fire, water, and air – are both eternal and non-eternal. The atoms of earth, water, fire, and air are eternal, as an atom is indivisible and can neither be produced nor destroyed. All others are non-eternal as they are produced by the combination of atoms and are subject to destruction. There are four kinds of atoms: earth, water, fire, and air, each having its own special quality. Ether is the fifth physical substance, the substratum of the quality of sound. The sound is perceived, but not ether. It is one and eternal as it is indivisible and does not depend on any other substance for its existence. It is all pervading as it has an unlimited dimension whose effect is perceived everywhere. Time and space are also eternal, all-pervading, imperceptible, infinite, partless, and indivisible. Time causes our cognitions of past, present, and future; and of ‘younger’ and ‘older.’ Space (*dik*) causes our cognitions of east and west, here and there, near and far. There are innumerable souls that are independent, individual, eternal, and all-pervading spiritual substance, the substratum of the quality of consciousness. The souls are divided into two: the individual and the Supreme. The Supreme is only one, the Creator of the world. The individual is internally perceived as possessing some quality when one says, ‘I am happy’, ‘I am sorry’, and so on. The individual is not one but many, being different in different bodies. Mind is an internal sense which is atomic, many, eternal, and imperceptible. Each self has a mind through which the self comes into contact with the objects. Its existence is inferred from the fact that the self must perceive internal states through an internal sense, just as it perceives external objects through external senses. Moreover, the mind is selective in the perception of external objects. We perceive colour, touch, taste, smell, and sound subsequently, even though all the external senses may be in contact with objects simultaneously, coming into contact with one sense only at a time.

Hence, one can distinguish between two points of view from which the concept of *dravya* can be studied: first, as a cosmological and nature-philosophical concept, and second as a functional-categorical concept. From the cosmological and nature-philosophical concept of view, *dravya* is the cause of its qualities; from the functional-categorical concept of view, it is the subject of qualities and other determinations such as relations and universals.

Quality (*guna*): A quality cannot exist independently; it inheres in a substance which is its substrate. “Inhering in Substance, not possessing Attribute, not an independent cause in Conjunctions and Disjunctions, - such is the mark of

Attribute” (VS I, 16). It is the non-material cause of things as it determines only their nature and character, but not their existence. All qualities must belong to substances without qualities themselves having qualities. Kanada lists seventeen qualities: colour (*rupa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), touch (*sparsa*), number (*samkhya*), size (*parimana*), individuality (*prthaktva*), posteriority (*aparatva*), knowledge (*buddhi*), pleasure (*sukha*), desire (*iccha*), aversion (*dvesha*), and effort (*prayatna*). Prasastapada adds seven more: heaviness (*gurutva*), fluidity (*dravatva*), viscosity (*sneha*), merit (*dharma*), demerit (*Adharma*), sound (*sabda*), and faculty (*Samsara*). Some others add lightness (*lagutva*), softness (*mrudutva*), and hardness (*kathinatva*) to the twenty-four qualities. But these are not separate qualities. For lightness is only the absence of heaviness, and softness and hardness represent different degrees of conjunction. The qualities that belong to eternal substances are called eternal and to the transient ones, non-eternal. Those that subsist in two or more substances are known as general, while those in only one substance are called specific. Number, magnitude, distinctness, conjunction, disjunction, remoteness, nearness, derived fluidity, gravity, and velocity are general qualities while colour, taste, smell, touch, viscosity, natural fluidity, knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, hate, effort, merit, demerit, faculty, and sound are special qualities which help to distinguish objects which possess them from others. Qualities are of three kinds: (a) those perceived through one external sense-organ: colour, taste, smell, touch, and sound; and (b) those perceived through two external sense-organs: eyes and the skin, viz., number, magnitude, distinctness, conjunction, disjunction, remoteness, nearness, fluidity, and viscosity; and (c) those perceived through any sense-organ: gravity, merit, demerit, and faculty. The qualities of the self – cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, hate, and volition – are perceived through the mind (*manas*).

Colour, perceived by the visual organ, only resides in earth, water, and light, though in the latter two the colour is permanent. It varies in earth when heat is applied. There are seven colours: white, blue, yellow, red, green, brown, and variegated (*citra*). Taste (*rasa*), possessed by earth and water, is the quality of things apprehended only by the gustatory organ. The tastes are of six kinds: sweet, sour, salty, pungent (*katu*), astringent (*kasaya*), and bitter. Odour (*gandha*), residing in earth, is the quality apprehended only by the olfactory organ. It is of two kinds: fragrant and the non-fragrant, i.e., bad smell. Touch (*sparsa*) – residing in earth, water, light and air – is the special quality apprehended by the tactual organ. Touch is of three kinds: hot, cold, neither cold nor hot. Water is cold, light is hot, and earth and air are neither cold nor hot. Sound (*sabda*) is a quality perceived by the auditory organ. Number (*samkhya*) is a generic quality (*samanyaguna*) of things. Of these numbers, unity (*ekatva*) is eternal in eternal substances and transient in transient substances. Magnitude (*parimana*), the specific cause of measurement, is of four kinds: minuteness, largeness, length, and shortness. Ether has extreme largeness (*paramamahattvam*) and extreme minuteness (*pariman dalya*). The dimension of non-eternal substances is determined by the number, magnitude, and arrangements of the parts. *Dyads* are minute, while the others are of limited magnitude. *Individuality* (*prthaktva*) is the principle of distinction. It is eternal in eternal substances, and transient in transient substances. *Conjunction and disjunction* refer respectively to the union of separate things and separation of things which are in union. *Remoteness and proximity* are the principles of the notions of ‘remote’ and ‘near’. Each of them is of two kinds: spatial and temporal. Knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion

and effort belong to the soul. *Knowledge*, both valid and invalid, is the apprehension of objects, a quality of the self. Valid knowledge is of four kinds: perception, inference, comparison, and testimony; invalid knowledge is of four kinds: doubt, illusion, indefinite knowledge, and dream. *Pleasure* is produced by the interaction of the sense-organs with desirable objects. *Pain* is a feeling of self-abasement. *Desire* is a craving for the attainment of an unattained object. *Aversion* is the feeling of rage which arises from pain and recollection of painful objects. It causes effort, remembrance, merit, and demerit. *Effort* enables one to the attainment of the desirable and to the abandoning of the undesirable. *Gravity* (*gurutva*) causes things to fall to the ground. *Fluidity* (*dravatva*) causes flowing, and it exists in earth, water, and light. *Viscosity* (*sneha*) is the quality of water. It is the cause of cohesion, smoothness, etc. *Merit* (*dharma*) and *demerit* (*adharma*) respectively cause happiness and misery.

Action (*karma*): Action is that which inheres in one substance, devoid of qualities, and is the direct and the immediate cause of conjunction and disjunction. “Residing in one Substance only, not possessing Attribute, an independent cause of Conjunctions and Disjunctions – such is the Mark of Action” (VS I, 17). It resides in a substance, but it is its temporary feature, whereas a quality is its permanent feature. Conjunction resides in many substances which are conjoined with each other, but action is present only in one substance. For example, conjunction of a book with a table resides in two substances, whereas the action of a fan resides only in it. Action, an unconditional cause of conjunction and disjunction, is destroyed by conjunction. For example, the action of a vehicle is the immediate cause of its disjunction from one part of the ground and conjunction with another part of it. The vehicle, which is a substance, is the inherent cause of its disjunction and conjunction. But its action is their cause. All actions subsist in corporeal substances such as earth, water, fire, air, and the mind. The incorporeal substances – such as *akasa*, time, space, and soul – cannot change their position. An action cannot produce another action. If an action produces another action, then every action will go on producing another action of its own type *ad infinitum*. Similarly, an action does not produce any substance since at the time of the production of a substance action does not exist. The actions are classified into five: *utksepana*, *apaksepana*, *akuncana*, *prasarana*, and *gamana*. *Utksepana* is the cause of the contact of a body with some higher region due to weight, effort, and conjunctions, e.g., throwing a ball upward. *Apaksepana* is the cause of the contact of a body with some lower region, e.g., throwing downward. *Akuncana* is that by which the upper parts of an extended substance are disjoined with those parts with which they were connected before and are combined with the parts at the bottom so that the substance becomes curved, e.g., clenching of the fingers. *Prasarana* is that by which the upper parts of a substance become disjoined with the parts of the same substance at the bottom, and become connected with the upper parts with which they were disconnected before so that the object becomes straight, e.g., opening one’s clenched hand. *Gamana* – which embraces different kinds of action as rotatory action (*bhramana*), going up of flames, flowing down of liquids, falling down due to weight, etc. – is any type of action not covered by the varieties mentioned above.

Generality (*samanya*): Generality refers to an abstract characteristic that is singular and eternal and yet pervades many. “And from a commonly observed mark (there is) no (inference of anything in) particular” (VS III, 7). For instance, individual jars are designated by a common name ‘jar.’ Hence, every object has

both general and particular aspects. The same property which is general in relation to one class may be particular in relation to another. Universal is a real entity which corresponds to a general idea or class-essence. There is the class-essence or general idea of human in all individual humans. It is one, though it inheres in many individuals. It is eternal, though the individuals in whom it inheres are subject to birth and death. We know individual humans as belonging to the same class because there is the same class-essence of human in all humans. The generality subsists in substances, qualities and actions. ‘Jarness’ of the jar subsists in individual jars which are substances; ‘colourness’ of colour subsists in individual colours which are qualities; and the class-essence of movement subsists in all individual movements which are actions. However, the universal does not subsist in another universal in order to avoid infinite regress. All particular cows have the same essential qualities, as the same class-essence subsists in them all. The universal exists in each individual wholly and never partially, because it has no parts. When a particular individual comes into existence it is already related to the universal. The universals are distinguished in three classes, i.e., the highest, the lowest, and the intermediate. “Being-ness” is the highest universal as it includes all, and is not included in anything. The lowest kind of generality has the most limited referents, such as Americanness, Indianness, potness, and chairness, present in all Americans, Indians, pots, and chairs. The genus of substance is intermediate between the highest and the lowest since it is wider in relation to substances like earth, water, etc., and narrower in relation to the universal ‘being-ness’ which belongs to substance, quality, and action. A distinction is also made between *jati* and *upadhi*. The *jati* is inborn, natural, and eternal, while *upadhi* is adventitious and transitory. Every general characteristic is not a *jati*. Since some persons are blind, we cannot speak of a *jati* of blindness. If it were so, blind humans and blind brutes would be grouped under the same class. Humanity distinguishes humans from other animals, but blindness does not differentiate blind humans from blind cows. So, the classification of humans as humans is a *jati*, while their grouping according to blindness is an *upadhi*. The following are some of the conditions which exclude generality: *Abheda*: Generality inheres in many individuals. If there is only one individual, it can have no generality. *Tulyatvam*: Potness and pitcherness are not two different classes as they are mutually implicative synonyms. *Sankara*: If there is a cross-classification between two classes, they cannot be true universals. Four kinds of atoms (i.e., earth, water, fire, and air) and ether are physical substances while the four atomic substances and the mind are corporeal substances. Ether is physical but not corporeal; mind is corporeal but not physical. So physicality and corporeality cannot be generalities, because they involve cross-classification. *Anavastha*: No generality can subsist in another generality leading to infinite regress. *Rupahani*: Generality cannot subsist in particularities contradicting their nature. For, generality is inclusive, whereas particularity is exclusive. So particularity refuses to allow the inherence of generality in it. *Asambandha*: Since there is no relation of inherence between generality and inherence, there cannot be generality of inherence.

Particularity (*visesha*): Particularity (*visesha*) distinguishes a thing from all other things, distinguishing the smaller from the larger. “It is smaller, it is larger, - such affirmations, in respect of one and the same object, arise from the existence of the species, or of the peculiarity [particularity], and from the non-existence of the species, or of the peculiarity [particularity]” (VS VII, 11). Everything in this

world is differentiated from another on account of different attributes, qualities, and universals. But two objects (e.g., two jars) – which have not only the same universal but, being quite similar, have the same qualities – are differentiated on account of the difference of their parts. Even two atoms of the same class – say of earth, which have the same universal and the same qualities, and which have no parts – possess an ultimate differentiating characteristic called particularity by means of which it is distinguished from all other atoms. What is true of atoms is also true of other eternal substances (e.g., *akasa*, *kala*, *dik*, *Atman*, and *manas*). Kanada defines *visesha* as the ultimate distinguishing feature of an eternal substance. Prasastapada also defines it as the ultimate distinguishing features of eternal substances. They are the causes of the ultimate distinction of their substrates from one another. They are the final distinctive character of eternal substances. From these definitions we may say that particularity is an aspect of every object which causes the notion of its differentiation from other objects. It inheres in each of them, which distinguishes it from the other eternal substances. Particularities are thought to be eternal because we cannot conceive of any eternal substance remaining undifferentiated from others at any time. Particularity is thus an independent, self-sufficient principle of differentiation, which is the unique feature of a single individual, and so its only function is to differentiate. It is ultimate because it functions even when every other means of differentiation fails. Particularities do not require other particularities to distinguish them from one another since that would lead to infinite regress. They perform, in fact, a double function: firstly, they distinguish the eternal substance from other eternal substances, and secondly, they distinguish themselves from other particularities. *Visesha*, according to *Vaisesika*, is a unique type of real, which cannot be brought under any other category. It is not substance as it is not the substratum of quality. It is not quality or action, for it does not participate in a universal. It is not a relation and so cannot be identified with inherence. Each particularity inheres only in one eternal substance and is, therefore, not a universal which is supposed to be related to many individuals. In the same way, mutual non-existence, which exists in two entities and are dissimilar, cannot serve the purpose of *visesha*. There is a mutual non-existence of a cloth and a jar in each other. But particularities exist in two eternal substances, which have similar qualities, and distinguish themselves from each other. So, mutual non-existence cannot serve the purpose of particularities. Therefore, the existence of particular must be inferred to account for the ultimate distinction of eternal substances.

Inherence (*samavaya*): Inherence plays a very important part in upholding pluralistic realism. That principle which relates two inseparable entities is recognized as inherent relation. It is necessary to relate a substance to its quality, action, generality, and particularity. Kanada defines inherence as that combination which produces, in respect of cause and effect, the notion of this being contained in that or here. “That is Combination by virtue of which (arises the intuition) in the form of ‘This is here,’ with regard to effect and cause” (VS VII, 26). From this definition it seems that the conception of *samavaya* at first originated in connection with the relation of cause and effect. But after Kanada, the scope of inherence was extended to the subsistence of qualities, movements or universals, and later on, when a separate category ‘*visesha*’ was formulated, it was also held to be residing in atoms or other eternal substances. Prasastapada understands inherence as the relation which subsists among inseparable things, which relate to one another as the container and the contained. The two entities necessarily

stand in the relation of the container and the contained. That which cannot exist without the other is always the contained; and the other which can exist independently is always the container. Inherence always subsists in inseparable things such as the whole and the parts, quality and substance, action and substance, generality and the individual, and particularity and an eternal substance. The whole inheres in the parts; quality inheres in substance; action inheres in a substance; generality inheres in an individual; and particularity inheres in an eternal substance. Inherence is one eternal relation; it is one, because it has the same distinguishing feature. One inherence can account for all notions, and so it is useless to assume many inferences. Inherence is also eternal; for all positive produces are produced in their material cause by the relation of inherence, and if inherence is produced, it will require another inherence, and so on ad infinitum. So in order to avoid infinite regress, inherence is regarded as eternal.

Non-existence (*abhava*): “In consequence of the non-application of Action and Attribute (to it), (an effect is) non-existent prior (to its production)” (VS IX, 1). Here, *the Vaseshika Sutra* begins the ninth book with a demonstration of ordinary or popular and extra-ordinary or hyper-popular perception produced from proximity or presentation due to other causes. For the author, the category of non-existence is necessary for a metaphysics of pluralism, which holds that every experience has its counterpart in the external world. When a jar is destroyed, there is the experience of its non-existence. This experience must have its counterpart in the world, i.e., non-existence of the jar should have an objective reality. Since the non-existence of the jar is not unreal, the non-existence of the jar is the reality of a negative kind. If things simply exist without becoming non-existent, then all things should be eternal. Non-existence is mainly divided into two kinds: *samsargabhava* and *anyonyabhava*. *Samsargabhava* means the absence of something in something else. *Anyonyabhava* means the fact that one thing is not another thing. A jar is not a cloth. Here is mutual non-existence of the jar and the cloth. *Samsargabhava* is of three kinds: *pragabhava*, *pradhvamsabhava*, and *atyantabhava*. *Pragabhava* (prior non-existence) is the non-existence of an effect in its material cause before its production, e.g., the non-existence of the cloth in the threads before its production. Thus prior non-existence is not produced but destroyed. If it is not destroyed the effect cannot be produced. This is the basis of the *asatkaryavada*. *Pradhvamsabhava* (posterior non-existence) is produced by the destruction of the thing, e.g., when a jar is destroyed, it has posterior non-existence. *Atyantabhava* (absolute non-existence) is the absence of a connection between two things in the past, the present, and the future. Colour did not exist in the air in the past, does not exist in the present, and will not exist in the future. So there is absolute non-existence of colour in the air.

Check Your Progress

Note: Use the space provided for your Answers.

1) How do you interpret the Aristotelian understanding of categories?

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2) What do the Vaiseshikas say about categories?

1.4 LET US SUM UP

Since there is no science that deals only with the individual as such, classification is a necessary item of any scientific system. The number of particular items of knowledge that can be predicated of an individual is infinite, and they differ from time to time. It would be chaotic and impossible to try to enumerate everything that could be said of a thing during every moment of its existence. The categories reduce this chaotic mass to order and system. They arrange all reality into a few general classes, and thus assist the mind in interpreting the manifold of experience. They are the fundamental concepts which are distinct from one another without being mutually and irreconcilably opposed, but merely juxtaposed, and under which we can classify finite beings in their particular modes of Being. As fundamental concepts, they are as general as possible. However, they are not absolutely general or transcendental since they are distinct fundamental modes of Being, which may be found only in the finite being. They have the notion of Being ‘above’ them as all-inclusive and as applicable to every finite being. They are analogous realization of the notion of Being and the most general diversifications of everything which experience shows us to be possible, real, or necessary.

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