

## THE NOTION OF PURUSHA (SELF) IN SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY: A PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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### ABSTRACT

According to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, Purusa or self is an eternal reality. Purusa is the self, subject and knower. It never is an object because, the existence of objects can be proved in some ways whereas, non-existence can't be proved in any ways. Throughout Indian philosophy, Sāṃkhya philosophy is the most prominent and established orthodox school. Established by the philosopher Kapila, the Sāṃkhya Sutra—also referred to as Sāṃkhya Philosophy—is the script for this school. Due to the school's support of Prakṛti (nature) and Puruṣa (self), the school has been called dualistic realism. Puruṣa and Prakṛti come into contact with one another because of their respective needs, which cause the evolution of matter to occur. It is also known as pluralistic since it promotes the multiplicity of identities. The Sāṃkhya Philosophy holds that Prakṛti cannot evolve on its own since it is unconscious. A person's existence becomes apparent when they reject their Puruṣa (self), which is an unquestionable reality. Beyond the reach of the sensations that Puruṣa is pure awareness that is passive and lonely. It is inactive. It exceeds the senses, the body, the mind, and the intellect. It also cannot change. Furthermore, it lacks a start and an end. We constantly depend on the self in order to effectively clarify the world. The school posits that there are important distinctions between the Puruṣa (self) and Prakṛti (non-self), much like subject and object. This paper aims at examining the Sāṃkhya Philosophy's understanding of the "self."

**Keywords:** Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Nature of Puruṣa, Plurality of selves, Bondage and Liberation, philosophy, notion..

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There is very little question that Sāṃkhya philosophy is the oldest documented school of philosophy in India. Due to its ancient origins that date back to the era of transmission through speech, the Sakhya school has an advantage Sāṃkhya Sutras, Six chapters contained its 526 sutras. Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya, an extraordinary commentary on the Sāṃkhya philosophy, was authored by Vijñānabhikṣu. It was additionally endorsed and disseminated by Āsuri, Kapila's the instructor, and Pañcaśikha, his follower. The sole trustworthy source on Sāṃkhya is Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhyakārikā. It has been the subject of plenty of comments, such as Sāṃkhyakārikābhāṣya by Gauḍapāda (A.D. 700) and Sāṃkhyattvakaumadi by Vācaspati (A.D. 840).<sup>3</sup> Yoga and Sāṃkhya principles have been combined in Sāṃkhya philosophy. Some of the Upanishads, such as the Chhāndogya, Prashna, Katha, and particularly the Shvestāshvatara, Mahābhārata, and Gita, contain reference to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga ideas. It seems extremely probable that the Sakhya was initially based on the Upanishads and accepted the theistic Absolute, though nothing can be said for sure. Later on, nevertheless it rejected theistic monism and was content with spiritualistic pluralism and atheistic realism because of to the influence of the Jain culture and Buddhist thought. The system mainly involves theoretical and intellectual.

Embedded in the word "sāṃkhyā," which symbolises both number as well as proper understanding, is the phrase "Sāṃkhya." Five Skhya Right knowledge, or the comprehension of the division of the Puruṣa from the Prakṛti, is what philosophy is all about. Our comprehending of the philosophical ideas in practical application can be helped by yoga, meaning it's the complete opposite of Sāṃkhya. As a result of defining the amount and composition of the universe's ultimate constituents and providing information about them, this school additionally gets referred to as the philosophy of numbers. Sāṃkhya perception has its roots in the Upanisadic doctrine of Brahman. Brahman is described in two different ways in the Upanishads. As Kūṭastha, or the unchanging and immutable entity, Brahman is described on the one hand. The self, or Brahman, is represented, for instance that in the Gita as over other systems. A single The founder of this school has been identified as Sage Kappila. Two Originally titled

an immortal principle that is impervious to fire, wind, sword, or moisture. But Brahman turns into the world. A graphic representation of a spider is given to help understand this. Spinning its web with its own resources, the spider does it. All things originate from Brahman, which is the only reality. Given that Brahman is both transforming and unchanging, there appears to be a contradiction in this development. Consequently, Sāṃkhya presented Puruṣa and Prakṛti as the two ultimate principles to resolve this logical conundrum. Thus, dualistic realism which encourages two ultimate realities is what Sāṃkhya advocates. Because it views matter and spirit as equally truly real, it is seen as realism. It's the theory that Puruṣa (self) is numerous, not one, furthermore qualifies it as pluralistic.

As per Sāṃkhya, the world undertakes transformation when Prakṛti and the Puruṣa (self) enter into relationship. When Puruṣa (consciousness) and Prakṛti (matter) come into effective touch, samyoga, or the development of the world, starts.

Guna balance in Prakṛti is upset by the entirety of the Puruṣas' karmas, which initiates the evolutionary process. Since Puruṣa is unused, Puruṣa cannot be entirely accountable for the current state of the planet. Additionally, since Prakṛti is unconscious, the world remains unchanged because of Prakṛti alone. The Puruṣa or self's consciousness or intelligence has to control Prakṛti's action in order for the world to grow and develop.

### What Puruṣa (self) is like?

Puruṣa was characterised in the early Vedas as a cosmic organism whose sacrifice to the gods created all existence. Among the several creation stories mentioned in the Vedas was this one. The Puruṣa notion in the Upanishads refers to the timeless, indestructible, formless, and all-pervasive abstract nature of the Self, Spirit, and Universal Principle. There are a total of three kinds of pain in this universe, corresponding to the Sāṃkhya doctrine. The Sāṃkhya distinguishes three types of pain: spiritual, or Ādhyātmika, Ādhidaivika, and Ādyahibhautika, and only all three of them can be abolished via direct knowledge of Vyakta, Āvyakta, and Jñā. Puruṣa, or Jñā, is the self.

Puruṣa (the ego) and Prakṛti (the ultimate reality) are seen as two distinct entities in the Sāṃkhya. It is not Prakṛti which renders up Puruṣa or individual souls. Pure consciousness is known as Puruṣa. These include the subject, the knower, the soul, the self, and the spirit. It isn't the mind, the body, or the senses. The property of consciousness cannot be controlled by the material in question. It is fundamentally consciousness. It transcends mere consciousness and is pure in itself. All knowledge is based on this ultimate knower, or foundation. It might ever become an object of knowledge since it is the pure topic. It is the quiet observer, the liberated one by their own members, the impartial prophet, and the permanently tranquil. It is neither limited by the space or time, nor by activity or change.

It is conspicuous and self-luminous. It is uncaused, perpetual, and pervasive. All scepticism and denials are predicated on the existence of this unquestionably correct postulate of knowledge. Nistraiguṇya, udāsīnā, akartā, kevala, madhyastha, sāksi, draṣṭā, sadāprakāśhasvarūpa, and jñāta are other names for it.

The philosophy of Sāṃkhya contends that the self, or Puruṣa, is not Prakṛti, Pradhāna, Vikṛti, or any distortion of anything; rather, it is everything beyond all of these. It does not determine the cause or consequence of anything. It generates nothing and is not generated by anything else. The opposing view of Prakṛti, Puruṣa, is often referred to as pumān. Puruṣa is not rewarding (Avisēya), non-transferable (Aparinami), indeterminate (Nirguṇa), indifferent (Viveki), and conscious (Chatana).

Enjoyer (Bhoktā) is the self. Three Gunas are not sufficiently. You are the Ahetumat, the uncaused, the self, or Puruṣa. It's both permanent and ubiquitous. Vedānta and Āryakṛta are the counterparts of Puruṣa. The notion of multiple selves is likewise upheld by the Sāṃkhya. Many things exist in the world. These objects, being unconscious, are unable to meet their own wants or those of others since they are self-aware. Things exist in the world to fulfil the expectations of aware individuals and to be appreciated by the Puruṣa, or self. Compared to sattva, rajas, and tamas, puruṣa remains entirely different. It follows that Puruṣa is completely distinct from Prakṛti due to missing any of the three gunas.

In order to escape the three gunas' being enslave jivas across this universe continually strive for emancipation. As a result of this, it is evident that Puruṣa, or the enjoyer, is a conscious being. The seer is called Puruṣa, and she sees everyone that is material in this realm. Although the objects are unconscious, the seer is conscious.

When the Puruṣa is analysed in relation to the Prakṛti, the world is established. While the Puruṣa is born free and with a sense of the declaration of independence, Prakṛti maintains its equilibrium in the unmanifest stage. However, Puruṣa does not identify itself incorrectly with the Prakṛti at this point. The property of Vyakta is (

Acquired by Prakṛti upon the property's activation. An uncertain Prakṛti turns into a determined one. The Avakta turns become the Vakta. A state of inactivity turns into activity. On the other hand, Jñā or Puruṣa (self) is unchangeable and never fluctuates.

The cosmos, as it appears to be increasingly emerging from the primal Prakṛti-Puruṣa, still stays consistent. The only thing that changes is that Prakṛti gets turned instrumental by "manas," which causes Puruṣa to mistakenly identify itself with its material bodies, among various other things. Puruṣa might be described to be the universe's life principle or the root spirit in a circumstance like this.

Puruṣa is also the most fundamental and primal principle. Puruṣa cannot be reduced to any simpler elements though analysis and it will always remain as it is. There is no changing Puruṣa's essence. A different approach wonderful characteristic associated with Puruṣa is that these qualities function as a kind of cosmic mirror, projecting and revealing the entire universe. Puruṣas' characteristics are reflected in themselves. Every change which takes place during the progression of evolution occurs in Prakṛti, and Puruṣa acts as a reference point when these changes occur. Additionally, Puruṣa is one of the fundamental concepts that gives matter life. In the realm of plants, it is hidden, but among more advanced organisms, it is ubiquitous. It's an entity independent from the the great Buddha, pure consciousness.

Puruṣa has been described by one of the following five characteristics such as~

1. Puruṣa has the sense of an observer. It has no desire (Udasina). Receiving non-relational, it does not become involved in anything. Consequently, the three gunas and the bodies do not desire the self. The only individual that acts is the seer.
2. Kaivalyam characterises Puruṣa as having a sense of emancipation. It is desolate and exudes a sense of isolation. Independence from the three gunas' shackles is the state that the self-approaches. Pure and liberated from slavery, Puruṣa stands outside the three gunas.
3. There is a sense of intermediaries (Madhyastham) in it, since Puruṣa arbitrate disagreements without engaging interested.

The world of pleasure and discomfort can't influence Puruṣa given that it is beyond the three gunas.

4. It promises to be clairvoyance. Between a witness and a seer, there is essentially no difference. Puruṣa is the witness and seer since it is the conscious principle. It turns becomes a seer when the unconscious Prakṛti encounters the Puruṣa. Puruṣa is the seer of other sense organs and the witness of Buddhi, according to Vijñānabhikṣu. contrary to popular belief, Puruṣa, as defined by Vāśhaṣpati, is both the witness and the seer.

5. It sounds as though it is not a doer. Puruṣa is a non-doer; it is unable to produce or act in any way. Due to Puruṣa being Avyakta, it is quiescent. As per the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, Avyakta can only be something which is not active. We are not endowed with free will. Man will never be able to fully understand this without having an unambiguous knowledge of who he is, and we ought not think that we have free will. The nature of Prakṛti and Puruṣa are opposites of each other. The seer is Puruṣa, and Prakṛti is seen. The three gunas make up all that is visible, and since Puruṣa is not enclosed by the three gunas, it is non-doer and apathetic.

In the Sāṃkhya Kārika, multiple justifications have been given that demonstrate Puruṣa's existence. The following matters appear in the Samkhya Kārika, No. 17:

#### **A.Sanghat Pratha tivāt-**

Every compound object has been developed for an entirely distinct user. Since the unconscious aspect can never consume any of these substances, they are all for the Puruṣa, or self. Realising the end of Puruṣa can be accomplished using the use of the body, senses, mind, and intellect.<sup>13</sup> The self is provided for by the three gunas, Prakṛti, and subtle body.<sup>14</sup> Teleological evolution is at work, with Prakṛti transforming to further the Puruṣa's ambitions. It is teleological for us to demonstrate this.

#### **B. Trigunadi Viparyāyāt**

It is believed that all substances comprised of three gunas, which logically establishes the existence of the Puruṣa (self). These gunas have been witnessed by Puruṣa, who is additionally beyond them. The gunas, which are Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva, establish the idea of a conscious principle (nistraigunya) that exists independent of them. The decision makes sense to use this proof.

#### **C. Adhithānāt**

The pure consciousness of Puruṣa is able to integrate all of the experiences into a single harmonious whole. Practical knowledge emanates from the self, or the knower, and its existence is an absolute requirement for all knowledge.

Without Puruṣa, experience is impossible as all affirmations and negations are dependent upon his being around. The coordination of all experiences depends on the transcendental synthetic unity of pure consciousness.

#### **D. Bhoktrbhāvāt**

One can never exploit the manufacturing of the unconscious Prakṛti. For them to be useful there must be such an intelligent principle. To enjoy prakṛti, one must be an enjoyer, as it is the enjoyed. Since Puruṣa is the basis of all material items, it is acknowledged that all things in the world are material for his advantage. There must exist a conscious principle in order to fully understand any of the world's things, as they all cause pain, pleasure, or disregard.<sup>19</sup> Thus, a Puruṣa, or self, must be obtained. This disagreement is morally reasonable.

#### **E. Kaivalyārtha Pravṛttiḥ**

Plenty of individuals in our world struggle to be freed from the afflictions of the world. Cultivating purity of self is known as kaivalya. Independence or liberation is what it is. A person must be present in order to have the desire for liberty or emancipation and must make an effort to accomplish mokṣa, or salvation. An aspirant must exist for an aspiration to exist. Understanding Puruṣa's existence thus appeared to be necessary. This proof has a mystical or religious character.

#### **Diversity of Personas**

Sāṃkhya endeavours demonstrate the plurality of selves in Section 18 of Sāṃkhya Kārika. Here are the arguments that have been brought forth:

#### A. Janma maraṇa Karanaṇām Pratīnyamāt

Every individual has a unique birth, death, and sensory experience. The blind man and the one with two eyes would have been exactly the same if there had only been one Puruṣa (self). Additionally, the birth or death of one would have represented the occurrence of the same for everyone. Apart from that, everyone deserves to have shared in the same measure of joy, suffering, or boredom. There must be plurality of selves since differentiating is only possible when there exists multiple selves.

#### B. Ayuṅgpat Pratytescha

Different people have different tendencies, according to the Sāṃkhya system. All individuals demonstrate distinguished tendencies, and each one is unique. A advantageous inclination in one person may exist at one time, whereas a different tendency may exist in another at a different time. The conclusion that there are multiple selves rather than just one develops when inclinations cannot be demonstrated to agree. Every person would have previously shared the same genetic makeup if there had been only one Puruṣa.

#### C. Traigunyahaviparyāt

All things in the world are created from up of three gunas: rajas, tamas, and sattva. These three gunas also have an impact on every individual. One finds numerous combinations of the three gunas in each individual. If this weren't the case, everything that exists in the universe would have contained all three gunas equally. Three different people exhibit distinct influencing factors: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Sattvic people enjoy contentment, light, and peacefulness. While tamasic inhabitants are illiterate and prone to attachment, rajasic individuals encounter pain, rage, and disturbance. Every single individual would have possessed the three gunas equally if the self were one. Thus, there are different identities.

#### Criticism

The Śruti makes acknowledgement of the fundamentalist idea that there is just one self (Ekamevadvītyam). As a result, it could appear that the scriptures undermine the Sāṃkhya thesis of multiplicity of self. However, the Sāṃkhya goes to considerable lengths in demonstrating that its perspective do not conflict with the texts of the Upanishads. Despite supporting the idea of multiple selves, Sāṃkhya maintains that all selves share an identifiable trait. Every individual is an integral part of the same class of "self" (Puruṣa). Scripture verses promoting monism are understood to make reference to the essential components' non-difference.

They do not imply homogeneity; rather, they demonstrate non-difference in kind. The common feature of the selves existing in numerous people is that they observe the activities of the Prakṛti products they are immediately attached to in tranquillity and without expression. The self is one from the vantage point of genus (jati). In accordance to the Sāṃkhya, texts indicate that there is simply a single self in this sense.

Considering the efforts of Sāṃkhya to prove the idea of many selves, the evidence suggests that the Sāṃkhya arguments for plurality of selves have not proved the thesis beyond a reasonable amount of doubt. The body, not the self, is what gives birth, dies, and has senses, among other things. According to statements by the Sāṃkhya themselves, the self is neither the agent nor the enjoyer. The Bahupuruṣavāda's existence is corroborated by arguments from the Sāṃkhya that only illustrate the plurality of the body, not the diversity of the self. The self's manyness is contradicted by the Sāṃkhya understanding of its nature. It is unimaginable for the self to be multiple if it is essentially pure consciousness that is undisturbed by change or doing something.

#### Chained and Freed:

The self-experiences the suffering and sorrow of this world upon account of its ignorance, which causes it to identify itself with the mānas, ahm̐kara, and mahat—the products of Prakṛti. In this world, suffering cannot be eliminated. It's because there are numerous distinct things in the universe, each of which has a guna, a self, and even relationships with other objects. Sāṃkhya maintains that there is pain because there are three gunas in the world.

They subsequently reinforced the belief that these gunas govern humanity in heaven. Paths that lead to salvation, emancipation, or happiness also exist. Jīvanamukti and Videhamukti are the two different kinds of the liberation according to Sāṃkhya. The self discovers truth and achieves emancipation from worldly sorrow while still having a physical body and existing on Earth in Jīvanmukti. However, in the case of Videhamukti, one can only fully achieve deliverance from all forms of emotional pain after passing away. With this in mind, Videhamukti additionally goes by the name kaivalya and signifies freedom from the gross body.

As the puruṣārtha or the summum bonum of life, "apavarga" is a different designation for liberation in Sāṃkhya theory.



## 2. CONCLUSION

Based on the conversation that came before, we might conclude that Sāṃkhya is among the first Indian philosophical traditions that supports dualistic the outside world. The two ultimate realities are Puruṣa and Prakṛti, and evolution can only occur when Puruṣa and Prakṛti have a profound connection. Matter is not at all like Puruṣa, which is spiritual. Pure consciousness is called puruṣa. It is the subject, the knower, the self, the soul, and the spirit. It is an attributeless, infinite and unchangeable, unproduced, perfect, and immortal substance. It is the liberated one by themselves, the silent observer, the dispassionate the prophet Muhammad, and the calm everlasting. It is also self-luminous and self-proving, existing independently of space and time, change, and implementation. Its existence is determined by all doubts and denials, and it is also the unquestionably accurate premise of gaining knowledge. Puruṣa is not involved in Prakṛti's drama; rather, she is merely an observer. It is the a single entity, invisible clairvoyant, and transcendental absolute. Sāṃkhya, nonetheless, abandons its own primacy and lowers the ultimate Puruṣa to the status of the phenomenal ego. Prakṛti appreciated the company of Puruṣa, the giver. This presents the question of how Puruṣa can be delightful if it is a transcendental subject? Additionally, how can it enjoy if it is passive, possessive, or indifferent? That meant that Surabhi has not responded to the complaints directed against Puruṣa. Due to its endorsement of plurality of selves with respect to different bodies or empirical jīvas, Sāṃkhya philosophy is likewise pluralistic. Unfortunately, they failed to present a convincing argument for the fact that many jīvas (self) can be descended from a single, unchanging, continually Puruṣa. The idea that there is a single universal self-abiding in every human being is rejected by Sāṃkhya and the Advaita Vedānta. An individual's self prevents everybody. Therefore, Puruṣa's existence is reinforced by five arguments presented by the Sāṃkhya philosophical thought along with them.

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