

INVESTIGATING PURUṢA IN SĀMĀKHYA PHILOSOPHY AND ITS EPISTEMES

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Abstract

Kapila the great sage is deemed to be the founder of the Sāṃkhya school of thought. He had first expounded the Sāṃkhya theory in a corpus entitled Sāṃkhya sūtra. A later work by the same sage, titled Pravacana sūtra which has more extensive discussion of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. This school of thought is known as dualistic realism because it believes in two ultimate realities: Prakṛti (nature) and Puruṣa (self). According to this view, Puruṣa and Prakṛti interact with each other due to their inherent needs, and this interaction leads to the process of evolution. It also supports the idea that there are many different selves, which is why it is considered pluralistic.

In Sāṃkhya philosophy, Prakṛti is unconscious and cannot evolve on its own. The existence of Puruṣa (the self) is undeniable denying the self would mean denying one's own existence. Puruṣa is described as inactive, pure consciousness that is distant, solitary, and only a passive observer. It is beyond physical experience, beyond the mind, body, intellect, and senses. Puruṣa has no beginning or end. To truly understand the world, we must always acknowledge the self.

This school of thought accentuates that Puruṣa (the self) and Prakṛti (the non-self) are completely different from one another, just as the relationship between a subject and its object. I try to analyse the idea of the 'Puruṣa' in Sāṃkhya Philosophy in this paper.

1. Introduction

It is agreed that Sāṃkhya Philosophy is undoubtedly the oldest orthodox school of Indian Philosophy. However, according to scholars this widely held notion is challenged at times with the help of the Brahma sūtras. "The Brahma sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa, which attempted to systematize the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, termed Sāṃkhya as non- Vedic. " According to Brahma sūtra, the realization of truth cannot be achieved through independent reasoning. The knowledge is already revealed in the Vedas, and therefore can't be reinvented. This goes against the Sāṃkhya Philosophy of Prakṛti being the source of knowledge when it becomes active in contact with the Puruṣa. There are sixty aphorisms in the Brahma sūtra that argue against the premises of Sāṃkhya philosophy. Of these, thirty-seven aphorisms try to prove the anti- Vedic nature of Sāṃkhya.

Sāṃkhya says that it is unconscious Prakṛti when it encounters the conscious Puruṣa that becomes the first cause of the material world. A few Upaniṣads, however, argue that the first cause is the Brahman. The Brahma sūtras try to establish that Sāṃkhya is not supported by Vedas. Not only that, the Sāṃkhya sūtra of Kapila cannot even be accepted as a part of the Smṛitis. Now, without digressing from the focus of the paper, the nature of Puruṣa according to Sāṃkhya Kārika will be discussed.

Nature of Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya Kārika

The Sāṃkhya system teaches that the world is filled with three types of pain. These pains can only be removed through the direct knowledge of three aspects: Vyakta (manifest), Avyakta (unmanifest), and Jñā (knowledge). The three types of pain are identified by Sāṃkhya as Ādhyātmika (spiritual pain), Ādhidaivika (divine or cosmic pain), and Ādhyibhautika (physical or worldly pain). Jñā refers to the self or Puruṣa, which is the true essence. Sāṃkhya advocates a dualistic view, distinguishing between Puruṣa (the self) and Prakṛti (the ultimate reality). Puruṣa, or the individual soul, is not made of Prakṛti. It is pure consciousness, the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject, and the knower. It is not the body, senses, or mind. Puruṣa is not something that possesses consciousness, but rather consciousness itself. It is pure and transcendental, the ultimate knower that forms the foundation of all knowledge. As the pure subject, Puruṣa can never become an object of knowledge. Puruṣa is described as a silent witness, an emancipated being, a neutral observer, and a peaceful, eternal presence. It is beyond time, space, change, and activity. Puruṣa is self-luminous, self-proven, uncaused, eternal, and all-pervading. It is the undeniable reality that all knowledge and doubts rely upon. It is called by many names: nistraiguṇya (beyond the three qualities), udāsīnā (indifferent), akartā (non-doer), kevala (alone), madhyastha (neutral), sāksī (witness), draṣṭā (seer), sadāprakāśhasvarūpa (always shining), and jñāta (the knower). Sāṃkhya philosophy teaches that the self, or Puruṣa, is not the same as Prakṛti (nature) or its primal form, Pradhāna, nor is it the same as the distortions (Vikṛti)

that arise from nature . Puruṣa is beyond all of these; it is not the cause or the effect of anything, nor does it create or get created by anything. Puruṣa, which is the opposite of Prakṛti, is sometimes called pumān. It is described as indeterminate (without qualities), indifferent, not something that can be enjoyed, conscious, and unchanging. The self, or Puruṣa, is the enjoyer of the world, but it is beyond the three qualities or guṇās - sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance). Puruṣa is uncaused, eternal, and all-pervading . It is different from everything in the world, including the physical and mental aspects of reality.

The world is full of many things, but these things are unconscious and do not know themselves. They cannot fulfil their own needs or the needs of others. Everything in the world exists for the enjoyment of Puruṣa, the conscious being, who satisfies its needs through those things . Puruṣa is separate from the three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas), and this is why it is entirely different from Prakṛti (nature). The beings in this world (the jivas) strive for liberation from the influence of the gunas, which trap them in the cycle of life. Puruṣa, the self, is the true seer, and everything in the world is seen by this conscious observer. Puruṣa is conscious, but the material objects it perceives are unconscious.

Prakṛti (nature) brings the world into existence when it interacts with Puruṣa . When in its unmanifested state, Prakṛti is in perfect balance, and Puruṣa remains free, with a sense of freedom . However, at this stage, Puruṣa does not confuse itself with Prakṛti. Once Prakṛti becomes active, it goes from being unmanifest (Avyakta) to manifest (Vyakta), and its state of inactivity turns into activity. But Puruṣa remains unchanged throughout this process. Even though the universe seems to unfold from the interaction of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, Puruṣa itself stays the same. The only change happens when Puruṣa, through the mind (which emerges from Prakṛti), wrongly identifies with its material body and surroundings. Despite this, Puruṣa is considered the root spirit or life force of the universe.

Puruṣa is a fundamental, unchangeable principle. It cannot be broken down into simpler elements and will remain as it is forever. Its essence cannot be altered. Additionally, Puruṣa has a special quality—like a cosmic mirror—through which the entire universe is reflected . All the changes that happen in the world are in Prakṛti, while Puruṣa serves as a guiding force in response to those changes . Puruṣa breathes life into matter. It is subtle in plants but shines brightly in higher forms of life. Ultimately, Puruṣa is pure consciousness, distinct from the intellect (buddhi) and other aspects of the mind.

The Sāṃkhya Kārika presents several arguments to prove the existence of Puruṣa (the self). These arguments are explained in verse 17 of the Sāṃkhya Kārika:

1. Purpose of Objects: All compound objects exist for someone to use . Since unconscious things like the body, senses, mind, and intellect cannot use them, they must exist for the self, Puruṣa. The three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas) and Prakṛti (nature) serve the needs of Puruṣa . Evolution in this system happens with a purpose, aimed at fulfilling the needs of Puruṣa. This is a teleological argument, meaning it is based on purpose or design.
2. Three Guṇas and the Self: Everything in the world is made up of three guṇas . These guṇas, however, imply the existence of a conscious being (Puruṣa) who observes them. Puruṣa is the witness of the guṇas and is beyond them. This is a logical argument showing that the existence of Puruṣa is necessary to explain the gunas.
3. Consciousness and Knowledge: Puruṣa is pure consciousness, which brings harmony to all experiences. Knowledge cannot exist without the self (Puruṣa), who is the foundation of all practical knowledge . All affirmations and denials depend on the existence of Puruṣa, and therefore, there cannot be any experience without it . This argument shows that there must be a unifying principle of consciousness to coordinate all experiences.
4. The Need for an Enjoyer: Prakṛti (the material world) is unconscious and cannot enjoy its own creations . Since all objects in the world lead to experiences of pleasure, pain, or indifference, there must be a conscious being (Puruṣa) to experience them. Therefore, Puruṣa must exist as the enjoyer of the world, making this an ethical argument.

These arguments, from purpose, logic, consciousness, ethics, and spirituality, all support the idea that Puruṣa (the self) must exist. In Sāṃkhya philosophy, the self (Puruṣa) experiences suffering because of ignorance. The self mistakenly identifies with the mind (mānas), ego (ahmīkara), and intellect (mahat), which are products of Prakṛti (nature). As a result, it becomes enmeshed in the pain and suffering of the world. Suffering is inevitable because the universe is made of many different objects, all of which are influenced by the three guṇas (qualities), and these objects and selves are interconnected. The presence of the guṇas in everything leads to suffering, and even life in heaven is said to be governed by these gunas. Sāṃkhya also teaches that there are paths to liberation, or freedom from suffering. There are two types of liberation: Jīvanmukti and Videhamukti. In Jīvanmukti, the self-achieves freedom from worldly suffering and realizes the truth while still living in a physical body. In contrast, Videhamukti is a complete liberation that happens only after death, when the self is freed from the physical body. Videhamukti

is also called Kaivalya, which refers to the ultimate liberation. In Sāṃkhya, liberation is called apavarga, which is considered the highest goal of life, or Puruṣārtha, the ultimate purpose of human existence. Now let us delve deep into whether Sāṃkhya acknowledges the existence of various individual souls or not.

Methodical Analysis

The Samkhya system has its roots in the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upaniṣads, according to a few academic scholars, who claims that it is unnecessary to look outside of the Vedic tradition to understand its origins. The full classical system cannot be found in any of the Upaniṣads because the system was not yet in its final form in earlier centuries. According to Keith, Samkhya's two main topics are as follows: (1) The rejection of the Absolute and the ensuing focus on the unique soul (Puruṣa). (2) Prakṛti's "The theory of the evolutes" emerging cut. The Yājñavalkya philosophy of the Atman is likely where the idea of Puruṣa originated, according to Keith. He makes the argument that the Samkhya Puruṣa and Yājñavalkya's concept of the Atman share certain similarities. For instance, (i) both are passive and devoid of attributes, (ii) both are only abstractions, and (iii) both are completely divorced from the world of reality. According to Keith, the Samkhya concept of nature and "evolutes" may have originated from the ancient creation theory found in the Veda and Upaniṣads, which holds that the absolute creates the world and then enters it as the first born. This is the main source of the second important idea, which is principles or "evolutes. You Keith also identifies Cāndogya (VI.4) and the later "Svetasvatara," as the sources of the Guna hypothesis. Furthermore, it is evident that the Samkhya concepts of ignorance and redemption via knowledge are rooted in Upaniṣadic culture. Keith makes no indication that any Upaniṣad has achieved a Samkhya perspective in any of this. Keith is careful enough to point out that these canonical writings do not provide a clear foundation for the Samkhya. According to Keith, the Upaniṣads do not yet truly reflect a traditional Samkhya because they contain theistic or even atheistic notions. According to Keith, it is hard to pinpoint the precise time and method of the Samkhya system's formulation, but it is quite evident that the Vedic, Upaniṣadic legacy is its source.

Three different types of Pramāṇas

Although Sāṃkhya- Kārikā is closely followed by Vācaspati Miśra, there are at least two significant additions to the Kārikā itself. Vācaspati Miśra first addresses the issue of inference by discussing the three sorts of inferences: positive (vīta) and (avīta), classifying both Pūrvavat and sāmānyatodṛṣṭa under vīta and śeṣavat under avīta. The debate by Vācaspati Miśra demonstrates an understanding of logical problems and technical logical concerns that emerged much later than the Kārikā itself. These questions and problems were starting to gain prominence in the various schools of Vedānta Philosophy following Śrī Śaṅkara. Second, Vācaspati Miśra contends that the sense capacities are only able to perceive (ālocanāmātrā) because they are able to perceive objects without verbal characterization or mental ordering, while the mind is responsible for verbalizing and organizing the impressions of the senses. Vācaspati Miśra was the one who clarified this crucial point, albeit it had maybe been alluded to in the previous writings. According to Vācaspati Miśra, the Sāṃkhya theory incorporates three more cognitive processes proposed by other systems, namely upamāna, arthāpatti, and anupalabdhi, in addition to accepting the three pramāṇas—perception, inference, and valid witness. According to Patañjali, pramāṇa is the function of citta in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga notion. According to him, the buddhi who does yoga acquires knowledge that is truthful and free of any traces of incorrect or distorted information. This knowledge understands the particularity that exists in the subtle components or in the Puruṣa and cannot be known by any of the worldly methods of understanding. Like the Sāṃkhya, Patañjali acknowledges three pramāṇas: witness, inference, and perception. According to Vyāsa, perception is the mental state that, when buddhi travels to an external object through the external sense organs and is transformed into its form, perceives a genuine thing with both generic and special characteristics. It specifically perceives its unique attributes. The definite cognition of specific things received via the contact of the sense organs is called perception, or pratyakṣa pramāṇa. Valid testimony depends on both perception and inference, and inference depends on perception. Furthermore, everyone agrees that perception is a source of accurate information. Therefore, among the three modes of cognition, it can be regarded as the most significant pramāṇa. According to its definition, perception is different from other ways of knowing things, including memory and inference. Because it results from the contact of sense organs with the objects of knowledge, it provides the "genus" and the "differential" because it generates definite or certain knowledge without uncertainty or mistake. Of all the sources of reliable knowledge, perception is the most important and essential. It is the foundation of all other pramāṇas and is consequently the most potent of the ways of legitimate knowing as it provides a direct or instantaneous awareness of an object's actuality.

According to Vācaspati Miśra, perception is a mental alteration that results in definite understanding of objects influenced by the experience of object touch. According to him, the subject perceives the outside world through buddhi, ahaṃkāra, citta, and the senses. When an item stimulates the senses, the mind organizes the impression into a percept, the ego refers to the self, and the intellect creates the idea. Vācaspati Miśra was the first to distinguish between two subclasses of perception in Sāṃkhya's writings: savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka. According to Vācaspati Miśra, alocaṇajñānamas indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa) does not distinguish between the specific and universal components of an item. He claims that the mind's functioning is the cause of definite

perception, or *savikalpa*. The mind removes uncertainty about the object's definiteness. The relationship between an item and the cognizer is then ascertained via *Ahaṁkāra*. The Buddha ultimately makes the decision to accept or reject the thing. *Adhyavasāya*, or determined knowledge, is the ultimate state. Knowledge becomes definite at this point. *Vācaspati Miśra* himself defines *Adhyavasāya* as the form of determined knowledge. Thus, by elucidating the many components of the definition of *pratyakṣa* provided in the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, *Vācaspati Miśra* provides a comprehensive interpretation of the *pratyakṣapramāṇa* according to the *Sāṅkhyas*. Perception, according to *Īśvarakṛṣṇa*, is the definitive knowledge of an item derived from its interaction with a sense organ. *Vācaspati Miśra* goes on to describe the traits of perception. First of all, it needs an actual object—internal or external. This feature sets perception apart from illusion. Second, the interaction of a certain sense organ with a specific type of object results in a specific type of perception. The interaction of color and the visual organ results in visual perception. This feature sets perception apart from memory, inference, and similar processes. Thirdly, the function of *buddhi* is involved in perception. The Buddha's *tamas* is vanquished and its *sattva* manifests when the sense organs are activated by their objects, resulting in definite knowledge. The self-reflected in the Buddha transformed as an object is the source of determinate knowledge. This feature sets perception apart from uncertainty or ambiguous information. According to *Vācaspati Miśra*, “perception occurs in two levels, indeterminate and definite, and both are legitimate. Indeterminate perception, according to him, is the instantaneous, pure, and simple apprehension of an object without any connection between the qualified object and its qualities, similar to the apprehension of a newborn and a dumb person. Determinate perception, according to him, is the clear understanding of an item as defined by its general and particular characteristics as well as other attributes. It is a perceptual judgment that links the qualified objects to one another and makes a distinction between them and their qualities. It entails discrimination, assimilation, and analysis and synthesis”. The purpose of the exterior sense organs of knowledge is indeterminate perception. The mind, an internal organ, is responsible for determined perception. An item is perceived by the exterior senses as simply “this” or “unlike this.” It distinguishes the item from dissimilar things and assimilates it to like objects. The functions of the mind include assimilation and discrimination in ambiguous perception. Indeterminate perception or non-relational apprehension of an item is produced by the exterior senses. The mind produces determinate perception through subject-predicate relations, assimilation and discrimination, and analysis and synthesis. It is an object's relational perception. However, according to *Vijñānabhikṣu*, the exterior sense organs provide both definite and ambiguous experiences. *Vācaspati Miśra* is mistaken when he says that the mind transforms ambiguous perception from the external senses into definite perception. *Vyāsa*, who maintains that an item is seen by the external senses as possessing both general and special characteristics, is cited by *Vijñānabhikṣu*. However, it appears that *Vācaspati Miśra* is correct. Discrimination and assimilation are mental processes that cannot be attributed to the senses. *Vācaspati Miśra* explains how the interior and exterior sense organs work during perception. An ambiguous perception of an external item is produced by stimulating an external sense organ. Then, via analysis, synthesis, absorption, and discrimination, the mind transforms it into definite perception. The impersonal apprehension of the item is then transformed into a personal experience by *ahaṁkāra*, who appropriates and experiences it. The Buddha then transforms it into concrete understanding and responds to it with pragmatism. After then, the self is mirrored in the *buddhi* mode that has been transformed into the object's shape. By taking on the shape of the object, the self incorrectly connects with its mirror in Buddha and gains awareness of it. In low light, a person initially perceives an item as indiscriminate, then carefully considers it and determines that it is a horrible robber with a bow and arrow, then thinks about him in relation to himself (e.g., He is racing towards me), and finally decides, “I must fly from this place.” This example demonstrates the sequential roles of the mind, *ahaṁkāra*, and *buddhi*, an external sensory organ. The exterior and internal organs' activities can occasionally happen so quickly that they appear to happen at the same time. The operations of the visual organs, mind, *ahaṁkāra*, and *buddhi* appear to occur simultaneously when someone sees a tiger in complete darkness that is lighted by a quick flash of lightning and immediately flees from it, even though they really occur successively. While the internal sense organs are capable of seeing internal objects, such as pleasure, pain, and the like, the exterior sense organs are capable of perceiving external objects. Only items in the present can be captured by the former, whereas both past and future objects can be captured by the latter. *Vācaspati Miśra* also highlights the ramifications of the notion of perception in *Yogātattvavaiśārādī*. According to him, perception as legitimate knowledge first captures an actual thing. It doesn't confuse one thing with another. It captures a thing in its true form. Second, the perception immediately captures an outside item. It doesn't understand how cognition works. It doesn't use the cognitive process to indirectly grasp an outside item. Direct or presentative perception is used. It is neither representational nor indirect. Thirdly, because *buddhi* emerges from the external object and transforms into its shape, the form of cognition matches the external object. Fourth, perception understands both generality and particularity that describe an object (*sāmānyaviśeṣātmā*), where the main factor is the apprehension of particularity (*viśeṣādhāraṇapradhānā*). It does not comprehend generality (*sāmānya*) or particularity (*viśeṣa*) alone, nor a substance in which they are inherent. According to the Advaita Vedāntist, indeterminate perception alone comprehends generality or being. According to Buddhism, it only captures certain people (*srlakṣaṇaya*). According to the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika, it captures a material that has both particularity and universality.

Inference

The knowledge obtained from sign and signate is what the Sāṅkhyakārikā refers to as inference, or *alumna pramāṇa*. Vācaspati Miśra provides a detailed explanation of the term. According to him, *liṅga* and *liṅgi* both imply widespread (*vyayapakam*) and permeated (*vyayapyam*), respectively. He claims that *liṅga* and *liṅgi* represent inferential knowledge in the text of Sāṅkhyakārikā. Therefore, the knowledge that *liṅga*, like smoke, is ubiquitous and *liṅgi*, like fire, is pervasive leads to inferential knowledge. Vācaspati Miśra also understands that inferential knowledge cannot be attained by only knowing invariable concomitance. Inferring fire from smoke is not aided by anything such as light on burned ashes that are present on the mountain. Consequently, it necessitates the application of *liṅga* to the topic or location from which *liṅgi* is deduced. According to Miśra, the substance endowed with the inferable attribute (*jijñāsītadharma viśiṣṭo dharmyanumeyaḥ*) is the object of inference in *Yogatattvavaiśārādī Vācaspati*. The universality of fire is already understood when the presence of smoke in a hill is used to infer the existence of fire; the hill is observed, but the presence of fire is inferred. Inference, according to Vyāsa, is definite knowledge that relies on the understanding of invariable concomitance between the mark of inference and the inferred property, the latter of which pervades the former, is present in all homogeneous instances, and is absent from all heterogeneous instances. The main factor in this process is the fear of generality (*sāmānyāvadhāraṇapradhānam*). The Sāṅkhya theory has several categories of inference based on different principles. Vācaspati Miśra incorporates the split of inference into *vīta* and *avīta*, whereas the Sāṅkhyakārikā alludes to the separation of *anumāna* into three kinds: *pūrvavat*, *śeṣavat*, and *sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*. The knowledge of the sign (*liṅgaḥ* [*liṅga*]), the signate (*liṅgin*), the middle term (*vyāpyam* [*vyāpya*]), and the main word (*vyāpakam* [*vyāpaka*]) come before the knowledge of inference, according to Īśvarakṛṣṇa. According to Vācaspati Miśra, it is the knowledge that comes before or is founded on the understanding of the relationships between the major, minor, and middle words. The information obtained from the major and minor premises is known as inference. According to Sāṅkhyakārikā, the *pūrvavat* occurs when an effect is deduced from its cause, such as when it is assumed that rain would fall based on the emergence of a cloud. The *śeṣavat* occurs when the cause is deduced from the result. For example, if the river's water is seen to be different from what it was in the past, it is assumed that it rained because of the river's fullness, or stream, and the speed of the current. The moon is seen at several locations, illustrating how movement causes something to be perceived at a new location (*sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*). Consequently, it is assumed that the moon is moving, albeit hardly perceptibly.

Two categories of inference, *vīta* and *avīta*, are mentioned by Vācaspati Miśra in his "Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī." The foundation of the *vīta* is universal agreement in the present, or positive concomitance. For example, if something is smoky, it's fiery; if the hill is smoky, it's fiery. The foundation of the *avīta* is universal agreement in absence of negative concomitance. For example, something that is not distinct from other elements doesn't smell, but the earth does, hence it is different from other elements. He distinguishes between two types of *vīta*: *sāmānyatodṛṣṭa* and *Pūrvavat*. The observed regularity of concomitance between the main term and the intermediate term serves as the foundation for *Pūrvavat* conclusion. For example, the observed consistency of concomitance of smokiness and fieriness in the kitchen and other locations suggests that the hill is fiery based on its smokiness on the ground. The basis for *Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa* inference is the intermediate term's resemblance to what is always concomitant with the main term, not the observable consistency of concomitance between the two. For instance, because the sense organs are of the type of activities, such as cutting, their presence is inferred from the experience of color, sound, and the like. There has been evidence of the presence of an axe, a tool necessary for cutting. However, as perceptions are acts like cutting, the supersensible sense-organs are inferred as organs or instruments of perceptions. In this case, the observed regularity of concomitance between perceptions and the sense-organs does not imply the presence of sense organs. They are deduced from the notion that perceptions are activities, such as cutting, and that they call for tools that resemble the sense organs. *śeṣavat* or *-pariśeṣa* inference is the *avīta*. It is an inference made by ruling out every other possibility. It's inference through exclusion. Sound, for example, is a particular characteristic of ether rather than of earth, water, fire, air, space, time, the intellect, or the self. Therefore, it may be concluded that sound is the unique property of the remaining material by excluding out the ether possibilities. Here, Miśra departs from the conventional line of Naiyāyikas in the creation of *anumāna Vācaspati*.

śabda pramāṇa

It is often observed that a sentence or word alone is insufficient to indicate any understanding of things; this is known as verbal evidence, or *śabda pramāṇa*. Furthermore, one cannot learn anything about objects only by looking at the words in a phrase. Knowledge of a spoken statement can only be acquired when one observes the words and comprehends their meaning. Therefore, *śabda*, or testimony, as a source of reliable information, entails comprehending the meaning of a reliable person's assertion. However, "śabda" has sparked a lengthy debate in the field of Indian philosophy because it pertains to verbal testimony. In addition to observation and inference, the Sāṅkhya acknowledges verbal testimony as a separate source of knowledge. According to Vācaspati Miśra, the term "āpta" in the definition of "śabda" refers to the belief of trustworthy individuals like theists and, but not of

people whose minds are influenced by illusion, like Buddhists, Jains, etc. It should be mentioned that by using the example of "mlecchas," Vācaspati Miśra is implying that even a "mleccha" might have accurate and trustworthy information. As a result, he insists that being "āpta" does not need one to be entirely flawless. Vedic testimony is considered authoritative. It is an additional reliable source of information. Reliable testimony is a real eye-opener. To inspire Seers, the Vedas reveal supersensible truths that are outside the realm of observation and deduction. No one is responsible for their composition. They don't care about you. Since there is no evidence of God's existence, they were not created by Him. There is no God. Therefore, the Vedas are not divinely inspired. Vedic evidence, according to Vācaspati Miśra, is self-evident. Because it is not human in origin, it is devoid of uncertainty and contradiction. Truth-revealing abilities are inherent in the Vedas. Vedic evidence speaks by itself. It's not illogical. The Buddha's claims are unreasonable and at odds with the Vedas. They are hence unreliable. Testimony is a declaration of authority. It is presented as a sentence. The thing that a statement is meant to show is its meaning. Its attribute that may be used as an inference mark is not the sentence. Additionally, understanding the relationship between an inference mark and the item inferred is not necessary for a phrase to convey meaning. A new poet's sentence might indicate an unfamiliar thing and convey its significance. Thus, testimony is not a conclusion. Vācaspati Miśra demonstrates the unique characteristics of verbal testimony as a source of knowledge by presenting these arguments. A reliable teacher imparts his legitimate information to another individual in order to help them achieve virtue and stay away from evil. As a reliable source of information, perception is more reliable than testimony and inference. Both testimony and inference recognize generality. The spoken knowledge is called testimony. The words are the source of it. Classes, not people, are indicated by words. Therefore, inference or evidence cannot be used to understand all nuanced, concealed, and distant objects. Furthermore, ordinary vision is unable to comprehend them. Since they are not objects of regular perception, it is impossible to claim that they do not exist. The ultimate yogic intuition, which perceives all truths, captures them. Because it captures all supersensible people, it differs from testimony and inference. It is entirely legitimate. It is devoid of any impurity or deception.

2. Conclusion

From the above discussion, we can conclude that Sāṃkhya is one of the oldest schools of Indian philosophy, advocating a dualistic view of reality. According to Sāṃkhya, the two ultimate realities are Puruṣa (the self) and Prakṛti (nature), and evolution happens only when Puruṣa comes into close contact with Prakṛti. Puruṣa is a spiritual entity, separate from matter. It is pure consciousness—unchanging, infinite, undying, and perfect. It is the soul, the spirit, the self, and the knower. Puruṣa is beyond time and space, beyond change and activity, and is self-luminous and self-proven. It is the ultimate reality, known through all knowledge, and it is the silent observer of the world, untouched by the play of Prakṛti. However, Sāṃkhya philosophy seems to contradict itself by reducing Puruṣa, the transcendental self, to the level of the ego, which is part of the world of experience. The question arises: if Puruṣa is transcendental and detached, how can it be an enjoyer of experiences? If it is indifferent, passive, and active at the same time, how can it experience pleasure or pain? Sāṃkhya does not provide clear answers to these questions. Sāṃkhya is also pluralistic, meaning it believes in the existence of many individual selves (jīvas), each inhabiting different bodies. However, it does not explain well how many jīvas can emerge from one eternal, unchanged Puruṣa. Unlike Advaita Vedanta, which believes in a single universal self-present in all beings, Sāṃkhya asserts that each body has its own distinct self.

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