

**PURUṢACAITANYA REVISITED:
A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SĀṂKHYA
CONCEPT OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

SYNOPSIS

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**BY
SWAGATA GHOSH**

**SUPERVISED BY
PROF. RUPA BANDYOPADHYAY**

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA 700032**

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The Sāṃkhya philosophy represents one of the oldest traditions in the Indian philosophical system. Analogous to the other orthodox schools of philosophy, the Sāṃkhya system too considers liberation to be the highest goal of human life. However, the uniqueness of the Sāṃkhya system lies in the nature of liberation as admitted by them, and the means by which it can be attained. The interesting feature lies in the fact that liberation, in Sāṃkhya philosophy, is more of an epistemological concept rather than a metaphysical one. According to the Sāṃkhya philosophers, though liberation is identical with the absolute cessation of sufferings, it can only be attained by acquiring discriminatory knowledge (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. The main objective of the present research work is to study the phenomenon of consciousness and all its related issues from the classical Sāṃkhya perspective with special reference to and analyses of the neo-Sāṃkhya views as and when necessary. The final chapter of the thesis has been dedicated to shed light on the debates between the Advaita Vedānta and Sāṃkhya philosophical systems in the context of the plausibility of the agency of the consciousness or the *prakṛti* in terms of the creation of the world.

In the **Introduction** of the thesis, following the tradition of the Sāṃkhya philosophical school, we have stated and discussed the necessity of studying the Sāṃkhya *śāstra* in order to attain liberation through the discriminatory knowledge (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, or in other words, the absolute cessation of sufferings that poses to be the highest end (*paramapuruṣārtha*) of human life. In that context the views held by the Sāṃkhya philosophers and that of the Karmavādī Mīmāṃsakas have

been put forward and the contrast in their philosophical stances regarding the means of attaining the absolute cessation of sufferings have been explicated.

The Sāṃkhya philosophical system admits two distinct categories - *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, indicative of the consciousness and an insentient agent respectively. *Puruṣa* has been described as pure (*śuddha*), eternal (*nitya*), immutable (*apariṇāmī*), unrelated (*asambaddha*), not-bound (*kūṭastha*) etc. Such unique nature of *puruṣa* as opposed to *prakṛti*, that has been admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy is discussed in detail in the **first chapter** of the thesis, following the eleventh *kārikā* – ‘*triguṇamaviveki viśayaḥ sāmānyamacetanam prasavadharmi/ vyaktaṁ tathā pradhānam, tadviparītastathā ca pumān//*’¹. The above *kārikā* expresses the common properties of *vyakta* and *avyakta* and those in turn represent the features which are absent in *puruṣa*. That is, *puruṣa* can never be attributed with those properties, since it is radically different in essence. Each of the properties and their significance have been discussed in this chapter with an effort to bring out the essence of *puruṣa* as opposed to that of the *vyakta* and *avyakta*, that is, *prakṛti* and hence its unrelated, unbound, unique nature has been posited. Further the nineteenth *kārikā*, – ‘*tasmācca viparyāsāt siddham sākṣitvamasya puruṣasya/ kaivalyam mādhyasthyam draṣṭṛtvamakartṛbhāvaśca//*’, is aimed at providing such knowledge of *puruṣa* which would depict its true essence and would in turn be efficacious in attaining the discriminatory cognition (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, as it would establish the *puruṣa* as radically different from *prakṛti*. The term ‘*tasmāt*’ in the above *kārikā* refers to the properties of *vyaktāvyakta* in the eleventh *kārikā*, and ‘*viparyāsāt*’ states the absence of those properties

in *puruṣa*. The *atriguṇatva* etc., as mentioned earlier, of *puruṣa* helps to establish its *sākṣitva*, *kaivalya*, *mādhyastha*, *draṣṭṛtva* and *akartṛbhāva* or *akartṛtva*.

In the **second chapter** the arguments put forward by the Sāṃkhya philosophers in order to establish the existence of *puruṣa* are being stated very briefly here and have been accordingly discussed in detail in the concerned chapter of the thesis. The existence of *puruṣa* has been established by Īśvarakṛṣṇa in the seventeenth *kārikā* as follows - ‘*saṃghātaparārthatvāt triguṇādiviparyayāt adhiṣṭhānāt/ puruṣo’asti bhoktṛbhāvāt kaivalyārtham pravṛtteśca/*’²

The above *kārikā* puts forward five reasons (*hetu*) in order to establish the existence of *puruṣa*. They are - *saṃghātaparārthatva*, *triguṇādiviparyayatva*, *adhiṣṭhāna*, *bhoktṛbhāva* and *kaivalyārtham pravṛtṭiḥ*. On analysing each of these reasons we find that *puruṣa* is such who is different from the various insentient objects which are referred to as ‘*saṃghāta padārtha*’. The term ‘*saṃghāta*’ means that which when associated with other objects serves the purpose of some sentient entity, referred to as ‘*para*’ in the *kārikā*. Thus, the one who is different from such objects is none but the *puruṣa* and all other objects serve the purpose of the *puruṣa*. The term ‘*saṃghātaparārthatvāt*’ is connotative of this sense. The second probans is *triguṇādiviparyayatva*. *Prakṛti* is constituted of three *guṇa*-s – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and the other principle which is different from *prakṛti* is the conscious principle - *puruṣa*. This is indicated by the term

‘*traiguṇādiviparyayāt*’ in the above *kārikā*. Further the manifestation of the world from *prakṛti* cannot take place methodically without the existence of a sentient entity. Thus, the contiguity of *puruṣa*, though in a detached manner, is required for the creation of the world. This argument is expressed by the reason ‘*adhiṣṭhānāt*’. The fourth *hetu* is presented by the term ‘*bhokṭṛbhāvāt*’ which stands for the experiences of pleasure and pain as enjoyed and suffered respectively by every sentient being. Finally, the propensity to attain liberation from sufferings is only observed in conscious entities. Thus, the condition ‘*kaivalyārtham pravṛtteḥ*’ also establishes the existence of *puruṣa* as the only sentient entity in the Sāṃkhya philosophical system.

Now at this point an important question which comes up is that whether the said consciousness is one or many. In order to address the issue, in the **third chapter** of the thesis, arguments for the multiplicity of *puruṣa* as put forward by the Sāṃkhya philosophers have been discussed in detail. On the phenomenal level consciousness is perceived as many. The arguments in favour of such position are provided by Īśvarakṛṣṇa in the eighteenth *kārikā* as follows – ‘*jananamaraṇakaraṇānām pratiniyamāt ayugapat pravṛtteścaḥ puruṣabahutvaṃ siddhaṃ traiguṇyādiviparyayāt caiva*’²

The said *kārikā* primarily consists of three arguments or reasons on the basis of which the multiplicity of *puruṣa* is being established. These arguments are stated by the following terms - *jananamaraṇakaraṇānām pratiniyamāt*, *ayugapat pravṛtteḥ* and *traiguṇyādiviparyayāt*. The arguments state that the birth, death and the functions of the thirteen principles like, the *antaḥkaraṇa*

etc. are specific to each and every individual. That is, the birth or death of one does not signify that of all. Again, deformities or difficulties in one's sense organs do not signify that of the others. Thus, the specificities in such aspects of every individual assert the fact that multiplicity of *puruṣa* is to be admitted. Further the propensities of one being do not entail that of the other. Hence, various kinds of volitions are observed at the same time in different individuals. Moreover, due to the variations in the quantitative ratio of the three *guṇas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in the different individuals, the inclinations are also found to vary as well as that is responsible for the diverse creation of the life-forms of the world. Thus, the multiplicity of *puruṣa* is established in the phenomenal realm.

Now *puruṣa* being the only sentient principle in the entire Sāṃkhya philosophy, the doctrine of knowledge cannot be addressed without reference to this principle. The natural questions which crop up are how knowledge is produced, how many *pramāṇas* are admitted, how is their veracity generated and ascertained, and most importantly, *puruṣa* being immutable and non-related, how can the concept of the knower be accounted for in the present philosophical system. The fourth and the fifth *Sāṃkhyakārikā* deal with the above mentioned issues and is the main contention of the fourth and the fifth chapters. The fourth *kārikā* states that – ‘*dr̥ṣṭamanumānamāptavacanam ca sarvapramāṇasiddhatvāt/ trividham pramāṇamiṣṭam prameyasiddhiḥ pramāṇaddhi/*’³

In Sāṃkhya philosophy only those *pramāṇas* are admitted which are essential in establishing the principles of the concerned system. The **fourth chapter** thus deals with the issues regarding the admission of *pramāṇas*, their veracity and accordingly the possibility of knowledge in case of the embodied consciousness, as experienced in the empirical realm. The *pramāṇas* admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy are perception (*dr̥ṣṭam*), inference (*anumānam*) and verbal testimony (*āptavacanam*) and according to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, all other *pramāṇas*, as admitted by other schools of philosophy, come under the purview of these three types. This is expressed by the term ‘*sarvapramāṇasiddhatvāt*’ in the *kārikā*. Further it is interesting to note that according to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, knowledge is not a property of the self, rather it is a modification of the internal sense organs (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*). Next the fifth *kārikā* states that – ‘*prativiṣayādhyavasāyo dr̥ṣṭam trividham anumānamākhyātam/ talliṅgaliṅgipūrvakamāpta śrutirāptavacanam tu/*’⁴

According to the Sāṃkhya epistemology, when the sense organ comes in contact with the object, the *antaḥkaraṇa* assumes the form of the object. It is argued that when the sense organ gets transformed into the form of the object, then the *antaḥkaraṇa* also takes up that form. Hence, the *karaṇa* or the instrument towards *cittavṛtti* should be the sense organ itself. The relation (*sannikarṣa*) between the sense organ and the object is the *viṣayākāra pariṇāma*, that is, transformation into the form of the object on the part of the sense organ. Now the cognition that is produced due to the *cittavṛtti* induced by the transformation of the sense organ into the form of the object is termed

as ‘*adhyavasāya*’. The sense organs are specific in terms of their relation to the type of the object to be known by them. Thus, when the transformation of the sense organs (*indriyavṛtti*) occurs in the form of the relation (*sannikarṣa*) with the object, then the suppression (*abhibhava*) of *tama guṇa* occurs in the *citta* which consists of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and consequently, the *sattva guṇa* undergoes transformation (*sāttvika pariṇāma*) which is then termed as *adhyavasāya*, *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* and *jñāna*. The *adhyavasāya* is referred to as *dṛṣṭa* or *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*.

We know that the *puruṣa* being essentially immutable and non-related in nature, how can there be any possibility of its attainment of cognition? This issue and its related concerns have been analysed in detail in the **fifth chapter** of the thesis. According to the commentator Vācaspati Miśra, pure consciousness or *puruṣa* is reflected (*anugṛhīta*) by means of perception. That is, when the conscious *puruṣa* gets reflected on the instrument (*pramāṇa*), namely, the *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*, then the cognition of the form ‘I know’ occurs, which is also known as *abhimāna*. Thus, *abhimāna* is the result of *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti* or *pramāṇa* with consciousness reflected on it. Further Vācaspati Miśra states that *buddhitattva* is unconscious as they are evolutes of the insentient *prakṛti*. Similarly, the *cittavṛtti* and the *adhyavasāya* are unconscious too as they in turn are produced from the insentient *antaḥkaraṇa*. Further the other transformations of *buddhitattva*, like, pleasure, pain etc. are also insentient. The conscious entity is *puruṣa* and that is essentially unrelated to all these transformations. Thus, cognition (*jñāna*), pleasure (*sukha*) etc. are all properties of the *antaḥkaraṇa* and that is their locus. However, *puruṣa* is

reflected in that *citta* itself. Consequently, due to the non-discriminatory cognition between the *puruṣa* and the *citta*, the properties like, cognition, pleasure, pain etc. which are actually there in the *antaḥkaraṇa* appear to be that of the *puruṣa* itself. Hence, usages like, ‘I am the knower’, ‘I am the enjoyer’, ‘I am happy’, ‘I am sad’ etc. occur. Hence, the term ‘*anugraha*’ in ‘*anena yaścetanāśakteranugrahastatphalaṁ pramā bodhaḥ*’ indicates the usage of the properties of the *citta* as the properties of the *puruṣa* itself. The above position may be further clarified with the help of an example, as follows, which would depict the methodology of the production of the cognition of an object, and the corresponding linguistic usages such as ‘I know a pot’ etc.

Let us consider that there is a jar in front of us. As soon as it comes in the proximity of the eyes or any other sense organ, the sense organ (*jñānendriya*) immediately assumes the form of that jar. The *manas* or the internal sense organ helps in acquiring the form of that jar. The entire method of cognition may be stated as that when the perceiver perceives an object with the help of sense organs, the initial cognition consists of only the essence of the object. The qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*), the inter-relation between the qualifier and the qualified (*viśeṣyaviśeṣaṇabhāva*) etc. are not cognised then. Such cognition is referred to as *sammugdha*. *Sammugdhajñāna* does not involve the causal intermediary role (*vyāpāra*) of *manas*. Now when the *sammugdhajñāna* is produced with the help of sense organs, the *manas* determines the cognition (*saṁkalpātmakajñāna*) of the object as ‘this object is such only and not otherwise’. Production of such determinate cognition (*saṁkalpātmakajñāna*) is the specific causal role (*asādhāraṇa vyāpāra*) of *manas*. It is interesting to

note here that in Nyāya philosophy we find similar theories regarding the nature and production of cognition. According to them, the initial cognition produced due to the external sense organs would be termed as *nirvikalpakajñāna* and that produced by the determinate role of *manas* is the *savikalpakajñāna*. However, it is to be kept in mind here that though in the two systems we may equate the *sammugdhajñāna* with the *nirvikalpakajñāna*, and the *saṃkalpātmakajñāna* with the *savikalpakajñāna* yet in the Nyāya system the role of *manas* is admitted in case of production of both the types of cognitions. This is, whatsoever, not admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy, as they do not consider the functionality (*vyāpāra*) of *manas* in the production of *sammugdhajñāna*. However, the sense organs should be assisted by *manas* without which the reception of the external objects by them would not be possible. Thus, the first cognition is always an unqualified one; that is, one which is only the essence of the object and hence, inexpressible in words. In the next step the determinate cognition of the jar in the qualified manner occurs with the help of *manas*. Now on acquiring the qualified form of the jar, the mind then transmits it to the *ahaṃkāra*. The *ahaṃkāra* then provides the form of *aham* to the jar; consequently, the complex obtained is of the form ‘*ghaṭākāra aham*’. This complex then gets associated with the *buddhivṛtti*, and that in turn assumes the form of the jar. Now the property of jar-ness (*ghaṭatva*) in the jar (*ghaṭa*) is initially known as a universal property (*jāti*), and then as specific to the individual jar (*vyakti*). Finally, the *buddhivṛtti* associates the ‘*aham*’ with the intermediary complex thus produced, and the

cognition of the jar is attained. Hence, the complete form of the *buddhivṛtti* is ‘I know that this is a jar’.

Now the above form of the *buddhivṛtti* is essentially unconscious. However, such *buddhivṛtti* partaking the form of the object, due to its origination from *triguṇātmikā prakṛti*, essentially consists of *sattva guṇa* (*sattvaguṇānvitā*), and hence, it is extremely clear (*svaccha*) in nature. According to Vācaspati Miśra, such extremely clear *buddhivṛtti* immediately receives the reflection of *puruṣa*. Now according to Sāṃkhya philosophy, *puruṣa* is non-related (*asambaddha*) and immutable (*apariṇāmī*). As soon as the reflection of *puruṣa* is received, the form of the object is manifested. Such manifested form of the object is called ‘*pramā*’, that is, the perfect manifestation of the object through cognition. The instrument, however, behind this manifestation remains unmanifest. That is called ‘*pramāṇa*’. According to *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī*, the expressed or the illumined form of the object, which is free from all kinds of uncertainty (*asandigdha*), fallacy or illusions (*abādhita*) and that which was not known before (*anadhigata*) is known as ‘*prama*’; and the instrument (*karaṇa*) towards such cognition is called ‘*pramāṇa*’. However, later on Vācaspati Miśra states that the unconscious *buddhivṛtti* is *pramāṇa*, whereas the illumined *vṛtti* of that *buddhi* itself is the *pramā*. There is no causal connection between the *pramā* and *pramāṇa*; however, *pramāṇa* is the logical and necessary condition of *pramā*. It may further be stated that in accordance with the Sāṃkhya philosophical position, the difference between the *pramā* and the *pramāṇa* is only an apparent one, since, the *pramāṇa* requires the help of *puruṣa* or consciousness

for its manifestation. To prove this, they further admit that the cognition, along with its cognates, is generated due to the reflection of consciousness. However, there arises much debate regarding the epistemological possibility and the cognition of I-ness among the Classical and the Neo-Sāṃkhya philosophers, namely, between the views of Vācaspati Miśra, Vijñānabhikṣu, Bālarāma Udāsīna and others. Such debates have been discussed and analysed in great details in the fifth chapter of the thesis and a convincing conclusion has been arrived at.

Next another important issue that comes up is that the *puruṣa* is immutable and can never undergo any transformation, but again no evolution is possible without its contiguity to the *prakṛti*. So the intriguing question is that what is the role of *puruṣa* in the context of evolution and how is it being accounted for. How does the world come into being from the primordial *prakṛti*? And most interestingly, if *puruṣa* is changeless and is essentially unrelated to the *prakṛti* and its evolutes, then in what sense is *puruṣa* at all bound or liberated? In this context we find detailed discussions in the twentieth, twenty-first and in the sixty-second *Sāṃkhyakārikās*, and the issue has been elaborately dealt with in the **sixth chapter** of the thesis.

The twentieth *kārikā* states that - ‘*tasmāttatsamyogādacetanaṃ cetanāvadiva liṅgam/ guṇakartṛtve ca tathā karteḥ bhavatyudāsīnaḥ*’⁵. According to the Sāṃkhya system, the manifested evolutes of *prakṛti* are dependent entities, whereas *prakṛti* itself is subtle and independent. Now the non-agency of the *puruṣa* and the independence of the *prakṛti* clearly depict

that the *prakṛti* acts as the agent. However, we know that for a thing to be an agent there must be consciousness in it. However, to consider unconscious *prakṛti* as an independent agent of an action is contradictory to our cognition.

We know that agency can only be the property of a conscious being and thus, it is said that ‘*cetanaḥ ahaṃ karomi*’. An agent would first acquire the direct knowledge of an object and its material causes; then he would desire that and subsequently, s/he would have the volition to attain it. The statement which expresses the intention of the agent is, ‘*cetanaḥ ahaṃ cikīrṣan karomi*’. Here the term ‘*cikīrṣan*’ means ‘desire to do’. From this it is evident that the co-existence of knowledge, desire and volition in the same locus (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) constitute the agency of that – ‘*upādānagocarāparokṣajñāna-cikīrṣā-kṛtimatvaṃ kartṛtvam*’⁶.

According to Vācaspati Mīśra, the fact that agency is constituted by the co-existence in the same locus (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) of volition and consciousness, is known through experience. However, by the term ‘*cikīrṣan*’, the co-locatedness (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) of the desire to act along with the other conditions is also to be considered. Hence, we can say that clear and distinct knowledge of object, desire to act and volition towards it, together constitute the property called agency.

However, such definition of agency is not accepted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers. It is because of the fact that their basic metaphysical presupposition is that *puruṣa* is conscious, but it is inactive, and hence, it cannot be an agent. *Puruṣa* is devoid of any desire or volition. Again, *prakṛti*

is unconscious matter; though it has desire and volition in the form of the modes of the internal sense organ (*antaḥkaraṇa vṛtti*), yet it is devoid of knowledge. So how can there be co-locatedness among the trio – knowledge, volition and desire? Then either we have to admit volition in *puruṣa* or knowledge in *prakṛti*. Otherwise it would not be possible to determine an agent of the vast creation called world (*jagat*). Now if it is admitted that knowledge (*jñāna*) resides in *prakṛti*, that knowledge would also be present in all the evolutes of *prakṛti*; and so entity of greater dimension (*mahat*), five elements (*pañcabhūta*) etc. would all be considered as conscious (*jñānavān*). This again contradicts our natural cognition of the worldly matter. Moreover if *puruṣa* is regarded as an agent then its essential nature (*svarūpa*) of being inactive would be hampered.

To resolve the issue we find that in the twentieth *kārikā*, it has been claimed that the essence of agency is not constituted by the *sāmānādhikaraṇya* of volition (*kṛti*) and consciousness. Rather they emphasize that agency and knowledge or consciousness never co-exist, they always reside in different loci. Such a claim is endorsed by the term ‘*tasmāt*’ in the *kārikā*. Thus, usages like ‘I, being conscious and desirous to do, am doing’ (‘*cetanaḥ ahaṃ cikīrṣan karomi*’) are erroneous.

The Sāṃkhya philosophers hold that *prakṛti* or the three *guṇas* are unconscious, and yet they are the agent; whereas *puruṣa*, in spite of being conscious, cannot be regarded as the agent. The very idea of *puruṣa* as the agent is incorrect, because if agency of *puruṣa* is admitted, then we would

have to accept transformability (*pariṇāmitva* or *vikāritva*) of *puruṣa*. Hence, it is to be admitted that volition (*kṛti*) is the property of *prakṛti* only.

Here again it might be asked that only the presence of volition does not lead to agency, consciousness is mandatory, then how can unconscious *prakṛti* be the agent? In answer to this the *Sāṃkhya* philosophers hold that ‘*tat saṃyogat acetanaṃ cetanāvat iva*’, that is, the unconscious behaves like the conscious or the unconscious appears to be conscious, due to its relation or its proximity with *puruṣa*. And thus, the agency of the unconscious *prakṛti* is established. Though they admit that knowledge or consciousness is a pre-condition of being an agent, but here, admitting agency of the *puruṣa* becomes paradoxical due to its essential nature (*svarūpa*). Hence, there being no other alternative, agency is to be attributed to the unconscious *prakṛti* or the three *guṇas*. Thus, clearly it is claimed that due to the proximity of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*, the unconscious appears to be conscious.

From the above *kārikā* we further find that due to the contact between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* the evolution of the world is possible. However, due to the non-relatedness of *puruṣa* the relation of contact between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is impossible in the *Sāṃkhya* metaphysics. Then naturally the question arises that what is meant by the term ‘*saṃyoga*’ in the above *kārikā*. Moreover, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* too we find statements like, ‘*asaṅga hi ayam puruṣaḥ*’,⁷ which endorses the claim that there cannot actually be any relation between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. In order to resolve the apparent contradiction, Vācaspati Miśra, in his commentary states that the

term ‘*tat saṁyogaṁ*’ in the above *kārikā* should be interpreted as ‘*tat sannidhānam*’. That is, the relation of contact as stated above is only indicative of the relation of proximity between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. The *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* both being ubiquitous (*vibhu*) are certainly in proximity relation to each other. Now when the reflection of *puruṣa* is received on the *prakṛti*, the latter undergoes transformation, and consequently, evolution starts. The next *kārikā* further explains the interdependence between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* with the help of an analogy as follows – ‘*puruṣasya darśanārtham kaivalyārtham tathā pradhānasya/ paṅgvandhavadubhayorapi saṁyogastatkṛtaḥ sargaḥ*’⁸

The *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* both depend on each other to attain their respective fruitful ends. The *prakṛti* awaits to be perceived by the *puruṣa* in order to be creative and thus, serve the purpose of enjoyment and liberation of *puruṣa*. On the other hand, the *puruṣa* too awaits the helpfulness of *prakṛti* to attain its ultimate end of liberation. Analogically, it has been argued that just like a blind and a lame person can help each other to reach their desired destinations, similarly for *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Their contiguity helps in the creation of the world, which in turn serves the purpose of the *puruṣa*, and the *prakṛti* too realises its end by serving the *puruṣa*.

Now the most intriguing issue which comes up is that how come and why at all the eternally free and unbound *puruṣa* would strive to attain liberation. And whether in such a metaphysical context the question of liberation can at all be meaningful. We find the answer to this in the sixty-

second *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, as follows – ‘*tasmānna badhyate ’addhā na mucyate nā’api saṃsarati kaścit/ saṃsarati badhyate mucyate ca nānāśrayā prakṛtiḥ*’⁹, in the **seventh chapter** of the thesis.

The main contention of the above *kārikā* is that essentially *puruṣa* is neither bound nor the question of its liberation appears. Rather it is the *prakṛti* which undergoes transformation, experiences bondage and is finally liberated. However, owing to the contiguity between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, the evolutes of *prakṛti* like, cognition, pleasure, pain etc. all seem to be there in the *puruṣa* due to their relation with the reflected consciousness and specifically due to the non-discriminatory cognition between the *puruṣa* and the evolutes of *prakṛti*. It is similar to the case where the soldiers of a country fight with the soldiers of the other country, yet the result of the war is attributed to the kings of the respective nations, there being the relation of the server and the served (*sevyā-sevakabhāva*) between them. This is expressed by Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary as follows – ‘*yathā jayaparājayau bhṛtyagatāvapi svāminyupacaryete, tadāśrayeṇa bhṛtyānāstadbhāgitvāt, tatphalasya ca śokalābhādeḥ svāmini sambhavāt/ bhogāpavargayośca prakṛtigatayorapi vivekāgrahāt puruṣasambandha upapādita iti sarvampuṣkalam*’¹⁰.

Thus, the entire concept of liberation in Sāṃkhya philosophy involves the effort to attain the discriminatory cognition between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, and accordingly the liberation of *puruṣa* signifies freedom from the apparent bondages attributed to it. Now the method of acquiring such discriminatory cognition between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* have been

analytically discussed over the subsequent *kārikā*-s of which the sixty-fifth *kārikā* states that – ‘*tena nivṛttaprasavāmarthavaśāt saptarūpavinivṛttām/ prakṛtiṁ paśyati puruṣaḥ prekṣakavadavasthitaḥ svacchaḥ*’¹¹

The above *kārikā* states that when the enjoyment and liberation of *puruṣa* is accomplished, the *prakṛti* ceases to evolve any further. It is then that the *puruṣa* perceives the *prakṛti* devoid of its seven modes of transformation, that is, almost in its primordial state and completely attains the discriminatory cognition between itself and the *prakṛti*. Here the *puruṣa* remains as a mere detached witness to that form of *prakṛti* and realises its distinction even with it. Thus, the final nature of the discriminatory cognition is referred to as *sattvapuruṣānyatākhyāti*, that is, the knowledge of distinction between the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* (*sattvaguṇa*) of *prakṛti*. The non-discrimination of the consciousness with the *buddhi* or the *sattvaguṇa* of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is the last stage of attachment and is persistent for a very transient moment (*manāk*) by virtue of which the self attains the final stage of *vivekakhyāti* between itself and the *prakṛti*. Thus, one attains liberation.

Further another issue that comes up in the context of liberation is that how would the results of actions (*karmaphala*) previously performed or still being performed be accounted for in case of an individual who has attained liberation. We find the response to such issues in the sixty-seventh *kārikā* as follows – ‘*samyagjñānādhigamāt dharmādīnāmakāraṇaprāptau/ tiṣṭhati saṁskāravaśāt cakrabhramivaddhṛtaśarīraḥ*’¹²

The above *kārikā* states that after the attainment of the discriminatory cognition between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* the stored results of the previously performed actions (*sañcitakarmaphala*) are rendered dysfunctional, like a burnt seed, and hence, they cannot fruitify anymore. However, the results of the actions which have already started to fruition (*prārabdha karmaphala*) have to be enjoyed or suffered accordingly, for them to be destroyed. Thus, even after the attainment of liberation the individual has to maintain his body for a certain while, that is, as long as the entire *prārabdha karmaphala* is not waned out. It is important to note here that this is how the theory of *karmavāda* has been accounted for in Sāṃkhya philosophy and that is in consonance with their metaphysical standpoint.

In the context of the above mentioned issues, the present research work focuses mainly on *prācīna sāmkhya*, but occasionally references have been made to the *Sāṃkhyapravacana sūtra* and *bhāṣya* of Vijñānabhikṣu. The differences between the two traditions have been highlighted and discussed as and when necessary.

The final and the **eighth chapter** of the thesis deals with some of the very crucial critiques as advanced by the Advaita Vedāntins who pose to be the severest critics of the Sāṃkhya philosophical tradition. The Advaitins have tried to refute the Sāṃkhya position from quite a few perspectives. Again the Sāṃkhya philosophers too have put forward a number of objections against the Advaita Vedānta thesis, and that is why they are considered as the main opponents (*pradhānamalla*) of the Advaita tradition. This is because many of

the tenets regarding the nature of consciousness as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers are of immense significance. The Yoga philosophical position admits *aṣṭāṅgayoga* as the means of attaining *ātmajñāna*, which is in consonance with the views of the Sāṃkhya tradition. Such view is endorsed by the *Śruti* and the *Gītā* too. Hence, the Advaita Vedāntins cannot completely refute it. Moreover, both the Sāṃkhya philosophers and the Advaita Vedāntins admit *satkāryavāda* as the causal theory. Further both the systems admit the modification of the internal sense organ in the form of the object (*antahkaraṇaviśayākāravṛtti*) in case of cognition. Thus, there being certain overlaps in the views of the two contending schools, the philosophical debate between these two traditions are of prime importance.

The primary refutation by the Advaita Vedāntins is about the nature of *puruṣa* as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers. The Advaitins hold that if the nature of *puruṣa* essentially be eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), enlightened (*buddha*), free or unbound (*mukta*), as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers, then it is not tenable to admit the plurality of consciousness (*puruṣabahutva*). This is because the kinds of distinctive properties that are being advanced to establish the multiplicity of *puruṣa*, are all fundamentally related to *prakṛti* only, and none of them are considerable in relation to consciousness. This is the first objection.

The second argument objects that if the nature of consciousness (*caitanya*) is such that it is completely devoid of any relation to *prakṛti* (*cetanānadhiṣṭhitajaḍa*) and is distinct from it (*svatantrapradhāna*), then such

an essence of *puruṣa*, can never be accountable for any sort of creation. This is because any material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) which is not presided over by a sentient agent is not capable of production. Such arguments have been put forward in ‘*Smṛtipāda*’ and ‘*Tarkapāda*’ of *Brahmasūtra* - ‘*dṛśyate tu*’¹³.

Further, the Advaita Vedāntins argue that if the *puruṣa* is essentially of the nature of *anubhaya*, that is, *na prakṛtiḥ na vikṛtiḥ*, and moreover, if *akhyātivāda* is to be admitted, that is, any sort of illusion (*bhrama*) is fundamentally unreal, and whatever illusion is apprehended is merely in terms of usage, and not real in case of cognition, then actually there cannot be any bondage in case of *puruṣa* at all.

This, however, has been admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers themselves in the sixty second *kārikā* as follows, - ‘*tasmānna badhyate addhā na mucyate nā’api saṃsarati kaścit/ saṃsarati badhyate mucyate ca nānāśrayā prakṛtiḥ//*’. That is, the *puruṣa* being essentially unbound, immutable and devoid of the three *guṇas*, - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the question of its bondage and that of its volition towards liberation does not arise at all. The *puruṣa* being devoid of any relation to birth or death, any question of its migration does not occur at all, and accordingly, the propensity of *puruṣa* to attain liberation becomes meaningless. Thus, all sorts of phenomenal activities like, birth, death, migration and tendency to be liberated are not there in *puruṣa*, rather they all are located in the *prakṛti*. They are only imposed on the consciousness in case of empirical experiences. Hence, here the idea of liberation of *puruṣa* refers to its liberation from the imposed bondages, while

the *prakṛti* attains fulfilment by serving the purpose of the *puruṣa*. The Advaitins, however, hold that the Sāṃkhya philosophers have not been able to resolve the issues satisfactorily related to the above stance on the nature of *puruṣa*.

The Sāṃkhya philosophers, on the contrary, argue against the Advaita Vedāntins' causal theory of the world, namely, *Brahmakāraṇavāda*. According to the Sāṃkhya philosophers, the world (*jagat*) and consciousness (*caitanya*) being intrinsically different or essentially opposed in nature, - *atyantavilakṣaṇasvabhāva*, the admission of the creation of the world from pure consciousness cannot be a tenable position. Hence, *Brahmakāraṇavāda* cannot be an admissible position at all. This has been discussed following the *Brahmasūtra* - '*na vilakṣaṇatvāt*'¹⁴.

All these arguments, the respective responses and the counter-arguments along with many more incisive arguments and analysis into the core of both the Sāṃkhya and the Advaita theses have been meticulously carried out in great detail in the current chapter of the Ph.D. research thesis which led to an exhaustive critical study of consciousness as concerned in the current thesis. The detailed references are provided in the main thesis at the appropriate places.

At the terminal part of the thesis an evaluative and reflective **Conclusion** has been provided which advances an overview of the study as well as provides insights into the issues which could open up horizons for further studies and frontier researches in the concerned area.

The thesis consists of the following chapters –

Introduction: It primarily specifies the objective of the research work along with the clarification of certain basic notions required to delve into the study of the concerned matter.

Part I: It concentrates mainly on the nature of *puruṣa* and examines the arguments for establishing the doctrine of *puruṣa* (*puruṣasiddhi*).

- **Chapter 1** – The first chapter includes discussions on the nature and definition of *puruṣa*.
- **Chapter 2** - In this chapter I have critically analysed the arguments for the existence of *puruṣa* as put forward by the Sāṃkhya philosophers.
- **Chapter 3** – The third chapter elucidates the doctrine of the multiplicity of *puruṣa* and examines the issues related to it.

Part II: This part focuses on the phenomenon of knowledge - how knowledge is produced, issues related to *puruṣābodbodha*, *pramāṇa*, veracity of *pramāṇa* (*prāmāṇya*) etc.

- **Chapter 4** - In the fourth chapter detailed discussion on the number of *pramāṇas*, their definition, veracity etc. has been done.
- **Chapter 5** - Critical examination of the concept of *puruṣābodbodha* in the concerned philosophical system along with the debates

between the classical and neo traditions has been carried out in the fifth chapter.

Part III: We know that the *prakṛti* is conceived of as evolving for the benefit of *puruṣā*, either its enjoyment or its liberation; yet *puruṣā* is not conceived of as the doer or the agent in the present system. This leads to a split between the concepts of the doer and the enjoyer. So it has been analysed that how far and whether at all *puruṣā* can be considered as the enjoyer. Accordingly, the concepts of bondage and liberation too have been re-examined.

- **Chapter 6** - The sixth chapter analyses and explicates the relation between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* based on which the entire creation comes into being.
- **Chapter 7** - The issues of bondage and liberation in the light of the new findings from the previous chapters have been revisited and reviewed in the seventh chapter.

Part IV: We know that the Advaita Vedāntins pose to be the severest critics of the Sāṃkhya philosophical tradition. The Advaitins have tried to refute the Sāṃkhya position from quite a few perspectives. Again the Sāṃkhya philosophers too have put forward a number of objections against the Advaita Vedānta thesis, and that is why they are considered as the main opponents (*pradhānamalla*) of the Advaita tradition.

- **Chapter 8** – The final chapter of the thesis deals with the debate between the Advaita Vedānta and the Sāṃkhya philosophical traditions regarding issues on the nature of consciousness, the possibility of its bondage and liberation and also the theories concerning the creation of the world, that is, *prakṛtikāraṇatāvāda* and *brahmakāraṇatāvāda*.

Conclusion: The entire research findings, their critical evaluation, how far the objective of the work has been achieved and what new avenues have opened up in the course of this study have been comprehensively stated in this concluding chapter.

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- 6 Dharmarājādhvarīndra, 1377 (Bengali era), *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, ed. Srimohan Bhattacharya Tarkavedāntatīrtha, Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, p.135.
- 7 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 4/3/15
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Prof. Rupa Bandyopadhyay

Supervisor

Swagata Ghosh