UNIT: 4 SĀṂKHYA CONCEPTS OF PRAKṚTI AND PURUṢA

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the nature and characteristics of Prakṛti,
- discuss the proofs for the existence of Puruṣa,
- explain the relation between Purusa and Prakṛti,
- describe the concept of Evolution,
- discuss the nature and characteristics of Puruṣa,
- explain the concept of Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya philosophy,
- analyze the proofs for the existence of Puruṣa,
- explain the plurality of Puruṣa,
- discuss the nature of Evolution.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Prakrti in Sāṃkhya philosophy follows from the Sāṃkhya theory of causation. The existence of Prakṛti is assumed with the help of Satkāryavāda or the theory that 'the effect really exists before production in the cause'. The theory of causation in Sāṃkhya advocates that there is a real change in the material cause. This real change in the material cause leads to the concept of Prakṛti in Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Prakṛti is considered as the root cause of the universe and its worldly objects. According to Sāṃkhya, in order to avoid infinite regress it is necessary to consider Prakṛti to be the uncaused cause and therefore 'all worldly effects are latent in the uncaused cause' i.e. Prakṛti. The world has not been created by any supernatural power. The world has evolved out of the uncaused cause i.e. Prakṛti. The term 'Prakṛti' refers to 'that which becomes transformed'. Prakṛti is regarded as the potentiality of nature. It represents as 'the receptacle and nurse of all generation'. Prakṛti is therefore called as the uncaused and root cause of the material cause.

The Sāṃkhya system propounds the ontological dualism of Purusa and Prakṛti. It advocates a distinct dualism between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. In addition to this view, you will find that Sāṃkhya system has also accepted plurality of Puruṣa. Sāṃkhya system vehemently opposes the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theism and on the other hand classical Sāṃkhya advocates atheism. It believes in creation for a limited span of time and finally dissolution of the world is necessary to realize the ends and purpose of Puruṣa. Therefore, dissolution is necessary in Sāṃkhya to liberate Puruṣa from the process of evolution. The process of evolution is unconscious and it tends towards the liberation of each individual Puruṣa. Every subtle organ or body works for the sake of Puruṣa's end. It believes that the whole world arises out of eternal cause Prakṛti and the evolution of the world is necessary to serve the ends of plurality of Puruṣas or the individual selves.

4.3 NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRAKṚTI

The following are the characteristics of Prakṛti, according to Sāṃkhya philosophy:

Prakṛti is characterized as Pradhāna being the first principle of this Universe. It is known as Avyakta as being the un-manifested state of all effects.

Prakṛti can be known through inference because of having very subtle and imperceptible nature and as such is called as Anumāna.

It is called Jāda because of being unintelligent and unconsciousness principle.

Prakṛti is called Shakti as it is believed to be ever-active and unlimited power.

Prakṛti remains always uncaused, independent, absolute one and eternal and therefore beyond production and destruction. On the other hand, the products of Prakṛti are caused, dependent, relative, many and temporary and are always subject to birth and death. It is the Raja guna which inputs motion in Prakṛti.

Prakṛti is always unconsciousness because it is the prime source for all inanimate worldly objects. Therefore, it is rightly said that 'The entire world of objects is implicit in the bosom of Prakṛti.'

According to Sāṃkhya philosophy, evolution is understood as the explicit manifestation of the worldly objects. On the other hand, dissolution is understood as the returning of the worldly objects to Prakṛti. Thus, you must remember that Sāṃkhya propounds that 'unintelligent, uncaused, ever-active, imperceptible, eternal and one Prakṛti' alone is the final source of this world of objects. It is accepted in Sāṃkhya system that the Purusa (self) which is intelligent cannot be the cause of material objects. It is because the self cannot be transformed into inanimate worldly objects. Hence you can remember here that the 'ultimate ground of the empirical universe must be an infinite, unlimited non-soul substances'. The Sāṃkhya rejects here the view of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Buddhist and the Jaina regarding the

concept of non-soul substance. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Buddhist and the Jaina the non-soul substance are the atoms of the material objects but in Sāṃkhya, the non-soul substance cannot be the atoms of material objects. The Sāṃkhya believes that the mind, ahamkāra, senses which are very fine and subtle, cannot be made out of material atoms. It also argues that the atoms are devoid of dimension. So Sāṃkhya thinkers argue that the material objects having dimensions can never come out of the atoms which are devoid of dimension. Therefore, you must understand here that Sāṃkhya philosophy support that it is Prakṛti, the uncaused (aja) cause or the First Cause as the ultimate cause of all worldly objects.

4.4 PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF PRAKṚTI

The Arguments for the existence of Prakṛti are:

(1) All the objects of this world are limited in magnitude, dependent and conditional. The worldly objects are dependent on one another. The objects of this world are limited and finite and as such the objects must depend on that material existence which is more enduring and pervasive than their existence. As the material objects are finite and henceforth cannot be the cause of this universe. Therefore, cause of this world must be limited, infinite and self-dependent substance and it is considered as Prakṛti (bhedanam parimanat).

(2) There are certain common characteristics invariably present in the worldly objects. Consequently the worldly objects are capable of producing pleasure, pain and indifference. The presence of common characteristics in all worldly objects must have a source which is common to all. This common source is thus Prakṛti with its three constituent elements like sattva, rajas and tamas (samanvayat).

(3) All worldly objects which are in nature effect of a cause. The effect proceeds from the activity of some cause which contains their potentiality within it. Evolution means the manifestation of the potent cause in an implicit form and the effect is the explicit form of the same. Therefore, the activity which generates evolution must be in

an implicitly contained in some world-cause. This world-cause is Prakṛti (karyatah pravrttescha).

(4) An effect arises from its cause because it is the potentiality of the cause which makes the effect to be produced and is resolved into the cause at the moment it is dissolved. The effect is the manifestation of the cause and which is re-absorbed at the moment of destruction in the cause itself. As the effect differs from the cause so the effect cannot be regarded as its own cause. The effect is the explicit state whereas the cause is the implicit state of the same form. The empirical universe as such is an effect and therefore point to a world-cause being potentially contained (karanakaryavibhagat).

(5) There is unity in the worldly effects inspite of differences. This unity in diversity itself point to a single cause. This cause is Prakṛti (avibhagat vaishvarupyasya).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How does Sāṃkhya explain Prakṛti to be the root cause of this universe?

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Q 2: What does the term Prakṛti refers to in Sāṃkhya philosophy?

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Q 3: State whether the following statements are true or false:

a. The theory of causation in Sāṃkhya advocates that there is a real change in the material cause. (True/False).

b. Prakṛti is always consciousness because it is the prime source for all inanimate worldly objects. (True/False).

4.5 PRAKṚTI AND THE GUṆAS

It is stated in the Sāṃkhya Pravacana Sutra that Prakṛti is constituted of the three guṇas. The three gunas are sattva, rajas and tamas. It is understood in Sāṃkhya philosophy that Prakṛti is the unity of these three gunas and the guṇas are held in a state of equilibrium (gunanam samyavastha). The gunas i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas are therefore considered as the constituents of Prakṛti. So, Prakṛti with its constituent elements evolves the worldly objects. You must remember that in Sāṃkhya the term 'guṇa' does not refer to any quality. In fact the gunas are the fundamental and therefore the ultimate elements in the constitution of Prakṛti. So it is concluded that Prakṛti is a triad of the three gunas. Prakṛti is therefore not beyond the gunas.

The Sāṃkhya philosophy points out that sattva, rajas and tamas are called as gunas because these guṇas are subordinate to the spirits or Purusas. The gunas actually represents the three strands in a string. It is so believed in Sāṃkhya that the guṇas tie the spirits or Puruṣas in the phenomenal (empirical) life. The gunas are very subtle in nature and thus imperceptible. This shows that you cannot perceive guṇas. The question arises: how you can know the real nature of the guṇas? You can infer the real nature of gunas from their effects namely, pleasure, pain and indifference respectively. Sāṃkhya supports Satkāryavāda and hence you must remember that there is identity between cause and effect in essence. Therefore, the existence of guṇas can be inferred from the nature of their products. As objects of this world are effects of Prakṛti so herein the guṇas are held in a state of equilibrium. The gunas possess qualities on their own like lightness, activity and heaviness. The three gunas are very fine and are always ever changing. While understanding about guṇas you must know that the same object is pleasurable to an individual but painful to another and neutral to the third person. The cause is present in the effect in an implicit manner. Thus you can conclude that the ultimate cause of all objects must be constituted by the three elements of pleasure, pain and indifference and which are called as sattva, rajas and tamas respectively.

You will come to know that the literal meaning of sattva is existent or real. sattva is the nature of pleasure. sattva represents light (laghu) and illuminating (prakasaka). It is also called goodness and therefore, produces pleasure. Sattva being potentially consciousness has the capacity of manifesting pleasure and goodness in the worldly objects. As the essential nature of sattva is light and bright so it produces 'luminosity of light, power of reflection, upward movement, pleasure, happiness, contentment, bliss'. Sattva represents white colour.

The literal meaning of rajas is foulness. Rajas represent the principle of motion (cala) and stimulating (upastambhaka). It has the capacity of producing pain in the worldly objects. The consequences of Rajas are therefore 'Restless activity, feverish effort and wild stimulation'. It is due to rajas the mind become restless. As rajas is bestowed with the nature of motion so it can stimulate the elements of sattva and tamas which are inactive in themselves. It is because of rajas, both sattva and rajas become active to perform their functions. Its colour is red.

Tamas literally means apathy or indifference. Tamas always resists activity and leads to ignorance. Tamas is heavy and is opposed to sattva. Tamas obstruct the manifestation of objects (varanaka). It resists Rajas because it has the capacity to restrain the motion of things. 'Ignorance, sloth, confusion, bewilderment, passivity and negativity are its result'. Its colour is dark.

These three gu̱nas are never separate being the three strands of Prakrti. Though there are differences in their essential nature yet the three gunas co-operate with one another. The gunas are always found intermingled with each other. The analogy that is referred here is the burning lamp. In the burning lamp we find the oil, the wick and the flame of a lamp. These three elements are opposed to each other but co-operate to produce the light of a lamp. Therefores the gu̱nas though distinct in their nature yet co-operate with each other to manifest the effects of the worldly objects. Therefore, the nature of a thing is determined by the predominance of a particular guna. 'Things are called good, bad or indifferent; intelligent, active or slothful; pure, impure or neutral, on account of the predominance of sattva, rajas or tamas respectively'.

Evolution of this worldly object does not take place when the guṇas are in a state of equilibrium. The guṇas are ever-changing. As the guṇas are dynamic so they cannot remain static at any moment. Sāṃkhya holds that change is of two kinds. They are viz. (1) homogeneous or sarupa-parināma and (2) heterogeneous or virupa-parināma. When the state of dissolution (paralaya) of the world starts the guṇas change homogeneously. For e.g. sattva changes into sattva, rajas changes into rajas and tamas changes into tamas. Evolution starts only when there is disturbance into the equilibrium over the guṇas. When there is heterogeneous change into the gunas with the predominance of one guna over the other, there occurs a terrific commotion in the bosom of Prakṛti and this result into evolution of the worldly objects. To quote Ishvarakṛsna: "We bow to Prakṛti, the red-white-dark, the unborn mother and nurse and receptacle of all generation". Prakṛti is understood in this manner in Sāṃkhya philosophy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: How is Prakṛti understood in Sāṃkhya?

……

……

Q 5: Mention the two kinds of changes that Sāṃkhya philosophy advocate.

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Q 6: Fill in the blanks:

(a) The literal meaning of sattva is ……. or ……

(b) The symbolic colour of Tama is ……..

4.6 DIFFERENT PRODUCTS OF PRAKṚTI

The first product of Prakṛti in the process of evolution is Mahat or Buddhi. Viewed from the standpoint of cosmic aspect, the first product is called 'mahat'. Mahat is the germ of this material world. On the other hand, from the psychological standpoint, mahat is called 'buddhi' or intellect. Buddhi is that faculty which allows individual to distinguish objects. It is through the faculty of Buddhi, the individual can perceive the objects as what they are. The two fundamental functions of Buddhi are viz. 'ascertainment' and 'decision'. In Buddhi there is predominance of sattva guṇa. Buddhi manifest itself naturally and other objects also. So, Buddhi is attributed with the qualities like virtue, (dharma), knowledge (jnana), equanimity (vairagya) and excellence (aisvarya). But when buddhi is vitiated by tamas, it possesses the attribute like vices (adharma), ignorance (ajana), attachment (avairagya) and imperfection (anaisvarya). You have to remember here that Buddhi is different from Puruṇa. Buddhi is unconscious but being nearest to Puruṣa, it becomes apparently conscious and intelligent. Though the different sense organs including the mind function for buddhi but buddhi works directly for the Puruṣa (self). This function of buddhi makes the Puruṣa (self) to experience all existence and finally the Puruṣa (self) discriminates itself from Prakṛti.

The second product of Prakṛti that arises after buddhi is ahankāra. Ahankāra is also known as the self-sense or ego or the principle of individual. When viewed from the psychological standpoint, ahankāra functions as abhimāna or the feeling of 'I and mine'. Ahankāra makes the self to identify with the acts of Prakṛti. Sāṃkhya thinkers categorize ahankāra into three kinds according to the predominance of the guṇas. They are as follows :

1. Sāttvika or vaikarika. In this state of ahankāra, sattva guṇa predominates in it.
2. Rājasa or taijasa. In this state of ahankara, rajas predominates in it.
3. Tamasa or bhutādi. In this state of ahankāra, tamas predominates in it.

From the sattva aspects of ahamkāra arises the mind (manas), the five organs of perception (jnanendriya) and five organs of action (karmendriya). The five motor organs or organs of action (karmendriya) are the functions of speech, apprehension, movement, excretion and reproduction. From the tamasa aspects are derived the five subtle elements (tanmatra). The rajasa ahankāra is concerned in the two mentioned ahankāra because rajasa provide the necessary energy for the change of sattva and tamas into their products. Thus, from ahankāra arises mind, ten organs and five subtle elements.

The five organs of action are not the real organs. Actually the imperceptible powers in the external organs make the physical objects to be apprehended or known. Ultimately the imperceptible powers make the five organs real. Henceforth you cannot perceive any organs (indriya). You can know an indriya by inference only. It is the mind or buddhi, which guides both the organs of perception and action. Here Buddhi, ahankāra and manas are considered as the internal organ (antahkarana). On the other hand, the organs of perception and action are considered as external organs (bahyakarana). According to Sāṃkhya, The five sensory organs (jnanendriya) and the five motor organs (karmendriya) are the ten external organs or (bahyakarana). Along with these ten organs, there are Buddhi, Ahankāra and manas, so Sāṃkhya philosophy asserts of thirteen kāranas or organs.

The Tamasa Ahankāra give rise to five subtle essences and these are called Tamasa Ahankāra or 'things-in-themselves'. The five subtle essences are sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. Ordinary human being cannot perceive the above mentioned tanmatras though these tanmatras (viz. touch, colour, taste and smell) are understood as physical principles. You have to depend on inference to conceive these tanmatras. The Yogins can only have a direct perception of these tanmatras. Sāṃkhya philosophy concludes that the five subtle elements give rise to the five gross physical elements or mahābhutas. The five mahābhutas are akasa, air, light or fire, water, and earth.

Therefore, you have to remember that the whole process of evolution that arises from Prakṛti to the gross physical elements is found into two

categories. The two categories are viz., the physical (pratyaya-sarga or buddhi sarga) and physical (tanmatra-sarga or bhautika-sarga). Thus Sāṃkhya philosophy asserts that the series from Prakṛti to the five gross elements numbers along with Puruṣa is the play of twenty five categories.

1: Puruṣa, 2: Prakṛti, 3. Mahat or Buddhi, 4: Ahankāra, 5-9: Organs of perception,

10: Mind, 11-15: Organs of action, 16-20: Subtle elements, 21-25: Gross elements.

4.7 NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PURUSA

In Sāṃkhya system, you will learn that there is clear-cut dualism of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Both Prakṛti and Puruṣa are different from each other in their nature. So accordingly you will learn that Prakṛti has definite characteristics and Puruṣa on the other hand has certain definite characteristics. According to Sāṃkhya system, Puruṣa is eternal (nitya), pure (suddha), conscious (Buddha), and liberated (mukta).

The following are the characteristics of Puruṣa:

1. Puruṣa is pure consciousness. Puruṣa is the principal of pure Consciousness. Puruṣa is the soul. It is the self. Puruṣa is recognized as the spirit, the subject and the knower.
2. Puruṣa is simple, self-luminous and self-proved.
3. Puruṣa is discriminating.
4. Puruṣa being intelligent is subject of knowledge. Consciousness is the essence of Puruṣa. Puruṣa is therefore the postulate of all knowledge.
5. Puruṣa is devoid of any production and is not subject to modification. Puruṣa is always considered as uncaused, eternal and all-pervading.
6. Puruṣa is neither a cause nor an effect and is unchangeable and immutable. It is self-luminous and self- proved.
7. Puruṣa is in-active (akartr). It is understood as the silent witness (saksin). Puruṣa is accepted as the emancipated alone. It is, therefore, the neutral seer (drastr), the peaceful eternal.

8. Puruṣa is beyond all changes (kutasthanitya). Therefore, it is beyond time and space. Puruṣa is free (kevala).
9. Puruṣa is indifferent (madhyastha, udasina) and devoid of movement (niskriya).

"Puruṣa is called nistraigunya, udasina, akarta, kevala, madhyastha, saksi, drasta, sadaprakashasvarupa, and jnata".

4.8 PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF PURUṢA

1. All compound objects exist for the purpose of Puruṣa. This proof for the existence of Puruṣa is teleological in nature. (sanghatapararthatvat). It can be considered that all objects of nature including the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are all means to realize the purpose of Puruṣa. Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahankāra, Manas are all aggregates of sattva, rajas, and tamas, and these are the means to serve the ends of other things like beds, chairs, etc., etc. Beds, chairs etc., etc., are unconscious and all material objects serve the end of conscious spirits or 'Puruṣa'. Puruṣa is not an aggregate of the three guṇas. So, it is different from the body, manas, buddhi, and ahamkāra. Prakṛti evolves itself to serve the Puruṣa's end.
2. All objects are composed of the three guṇas. As the objects are non-intelligent (acetana), non-discriminating (viveka), objects (visaya) of knowledge so they presuppose the intelligent (sacetana) Puruṣa which is discriminating (viveka), subject of knowledge (jnatr), devoid of three guṇas (atriguna). This view logically presupposes the existence of the Puruṣa, (the intelligent subject) because Puruṣa is understood as the silent witness of the three guṇas viz., sattva, rajas and tamas (triguṇa). Moreover, Purusa is beyond these guṇas and therefore all changes. All knowable objects presuppose the existence of the knowing subject or the spiritual self.
3. It is viewed that just like the charioteers guide the non-intelligent chariot so the pure-self co-ordinates all experiences and also co-ordinates all non-intelligent products of Prakṛti. Hence accordingly

all non-intelligent products of Prakṛti must be controlled and directed by the intelligent Puruṣa. Prakṛti is unconscious, so it cannot act by itself on the other hand Puruṣa is the principal of pure Consciousness and consequently all the non-intelligent material objects are in need of guidance from intelligent Puruṣa. Finally, Prakṛti along with its evolutes are supervised and guided by the pure selves. Here we find an analysis of 'transcendental synthetic unity of pure Consciousness to co-ordinate all experiences'. This proof is ontological in nature. (adhisthanat)

4. Non-intelligent Prakṛti being unconsciousness cannot experience its products. This presupposes the existence of Puruṣa. Prakṛti and its material products are 'feeling-substances' because Prakṛti is composed of three guṇas. Moreover, all material objects being 'feeling-substances', response to pleasure, pain and delusion. Pleasure, pain and delusion have meaning only because there is a conscious spiritual principle to experience all the experiences. Therefore experiences of pleasure, pain and delusion are mental modes and that presupposes the existence of the self.

5. There are people who strive for freedom or salvation. According to Sāṃkhya philosophy, liberation means freedom from three kinds of sufferings. Liberation means complete negation of pain. The will to be liberated itself presupposes the pure self, i.e. the emancipated alone, the peaceful eternal. This proof is mystical and spiritual in nature. (kaivalyartham pravrtteh).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Mention any feature of Puruṣa

Ans.:……

Q 8: Why Puruṣa is considered as 'the principle of pure Consciousness'?

Ans.:……

Q 9: State whether the following statements are true or false

a) Sāṃkhya system supports ontological dualism of Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

b) Puruṣa is conditioned to changes and therefore within time and space.

4.9 PLURALITY OF PURUṢA

Samkhya philosophy strives to establish the theory that the Puruṣa is many and therefore supports the theory of plurality of Puruṣa. But this view of Sāṃkhya is not beyond doubt. This view of Sāṃkhya supporting many selves deviates from the Advaita Vedānta. According to Advaita Vedānta, there cannot be plurality of selves. It admits non-duality of Brahman. Every jiva is the manifestation of Brahman itself. Hence there is one universal self and it abides in all physical bodies. According to Sāṃkhya, every physical body is abided by distinct self. This doctrine of the Sāṃkhya is called as the plurality of selves (Bahu-purusa-vāda).

The following are the arguments through which Sāṃkhya supports the theory of plurality of purusa or Bahu-purusa-vāda.

1. You are aware of the fact that there are certain obvious differences in birth and death of every individual. All individuals are given with different sensory and motor endowments and capacities. For e.g. one individual's death does not justify the death of all individuals on the other hand the blindness of an individual does not explain that all people are blind. Sāṃkhya admits here that if there were really one universal self then birth and death of one individual would have justified the birth and death of all individuals. Again if there were one universal

abiding self in all individuals then the blindness of one individual would have justified the blindness of all individuals. As these cited examples are not justifiable so according to Samkhya, there are many selves.

2. You must agree that human beings are different from super-men or gods and definitely from animals and beasts. You will fail to make any distinction between human existence, super-men or gods if there is one universal self. Hence there exit certain distinctions between every existence, so according to Samkhya there must be plurality of selves.

3. The self in its essential nature is not as same as the nature of Prakrti. But you have come to know that Prakṛti as the root cause is common to all material objects. Therefore, according to Sāṃkhya the self which is opposed to Prakṛti cannot be one universal inherited in all bodies. Hence, Bahu-puruṣa-vada is the only justification to explain the opposed nature of self from Prakṛti.

Though many critics opine that this concept of plurality of selves is opposed to the monistic nature of the Upanishads yet Sāṃkhya theory takes great endeavor to establish this theory of Bahu-puruṣa-vada. According to the supporters of this theory of plurality of selves, this theory is not opposed to the Sruti (Scriptures) and Upanishads. According to them, the different selves are in nature have the same generic essential character. The selves actually belong to the one and same class of 'Self'. From the standpoint of genus (jati), the self is one. In Sāṃkhya theory of plurality of selves you must remember that the scriptures imply all selves are non-difference in kind (jati) and therefore do not imply homogeneity. Thus, in this sense, the Sāṃkhya holds that the scriptures have supported that there is one self only.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: Does Sāṃkhya support plurality of Puruṣas?

Ans.:……

Q 11: Name the orthodox system which has criticized plurality of Puruṣas.

Ans.:……

Q 12: Mention one argument to support plurality of Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya philosophy

Ans.:……

Q 13: State whether the following statements are true or false

a. The jivas of the Jainas like the Puruṣas have the nature of qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism.

b. Mimāmsā does not believe in the plurality of Puruṣa.



ACTIVITY: 5.1

- Explain the nature of puruṣa

.....

.....



4.10 LET US SUM UP

- Prakṛti is considered as the root cause of the universe and its worldly objects.
- The term 'Prakṛti' refers to 'that which becomes transformed'. Prakṛti is regarded as the potentiality of nature. It represents as 'the receptacle and nurse of all generation'.

- According to Sāṃkhya, evolution of all worldly objects occurs only with the contact between the Puruṣa (self) and Prakṛti.
- Prakṛti is in need of Puruṣa in order to be known (darsanartham), and Puruṣa requires the help of Prakṛti to discriminate itself from Prakṛti. In this process of discrimination the Prakṛti liberates Puruṣa (kaivalyartham).
- Sāṃkhya supports that the process of evolution is not mechanical. The process of evolution is always teleological.
- Sāṃkhya uses the analogy of lame man and blind man to explain the relation of intelligent Puruṣa and non-intelligent Prakṛti which is active in nature. This analogy is false.
- The Sāṃkhya recognizes the plurality of souls and the spiritual unity of each soul. Purusa is distinct from Prakṛti and its effect.
- According to Sāṃkhya the Puruṣa is essentially conscious.
- It is accounted that transcendental cognition, i.e. cit, constitutes the essence of Puruṣa.
- Puruṣa is the transcendental self and it is characterized by non-empirical cognition.
- Puruṣa is devoid of pain and pleasure, desire and aversion, merits and demerits.
- Puruṣa is eternally pure. Puruṣa has neither virtue nor vice. It does not have any moral qualities. Puruṣa is devoid of qualities. Merit (dharma) and Demerit (adharma) are not modes of Puruṣa. They are the modes of buddhi(egoism) and it is one of the evolutes of Prakṛti.
- The bondage of Puruṣa is only phenomenal. Puruṣa wrongly identifies itself with Prakṛti and with its evolutes like manas, buddhi and ahamkāra because of non-discrimination. Puruṣa never transfers itself into buddhi but wrongly identifies itself with buddhi because of non-discrimination. We do not find actual transference of the self in buddhi but there is the reflection of the self in buddhi or ahamkāra which finally leads to false sense of identity between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Thus, the false sense of identity between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is because of non-identification.



4.11 FURTHER READINGS

1) Sharma, Chandradhar. (1997). A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers

2) Hiriyana, M. (1993). Outlines of Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers

3) Chatterjee, Satischandra & Datta, Dhirendra Mohan, 1964. An Introduction to Indian Philosophy. Calcutta: University Press

4) Sinha, J, Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi



4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: According to Sāṃkhya, in order to avoid infinite regress it is necessary to consider Prakṛti to be the uncaused cause. The world has not been created by any supernatural power. The world has evolved out of the uncaused cause i.e. Prakrti. It is regarded as the potentiality of nature. It represents as 'the receptacle and nurse of all generation'. Prakṛti is, therefore called as the uncaused and root cause of the material cause.

Ans to Q No 2: The term 'Prakṛti' refers to 'that which becomes transformed'. Prakṛti represents as 'the receptacle and nurse of all generation'

Ans to Q No 3: (a) True (b) False

Ans to Q No 4: In Sāṃkhya philosophy Prakṛti is the unity of three guṇas. The gunas are held in a state of equilibrium (gunanam samyavastha). The gunas i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas are therefore considered as the constituents of Prakṛti.

Ans to Q No 5: Sāṃkhya holds that change is of two kinds. They are viz. (1) homogeneous or sarupa-parināma and (2) heterogeneous or virupa-parināma.

Ans to Q No 6: Fill in the blanks

(a) The literal meaning of sattva is existent or real.

(b) The symbolic colour of Tama is dark.

Ans to Q No 7: The Puruṣa is the pure self. It is pure consciousness. Purusa

is the soul. Purusa is recognized as the spirit, the subject and the knower. It is simple and hence immutable.

Ans to Q No 8: Puruṣa is considered as 'the principal of pure Consciousness' because Purusa is simple, self-luminous and self-proved. Purusa is eternal (nitya), pure (suddha), conscious (buddha), and liberated (mukta). Consciousness is the essence of Purusa. Puruṣa is therefore the postulate of all knowledge.

Ans to Q No 9: a) True, b) False

Ans to Q No 10: Yes, Sāṃkhya supports plurality of Puruṣa. Like the jivas of the Jainas, Puruṣas behold the nature of qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism. Regarding the nature of Puruṣas, they are always alike. The differences arise in number only.

Ans to Q No 11: Advaita Vedānta has criticized Sāṃkhya concept of plurality of Puruṣas (selves) as it supports monism or non-duality of Brahman. In Vedanta philosophy the Absolute is considered as Pure Existence, Pure Knowledge and Pure Bliss - all in one. 'That thou art' (tat tvam asi) is the saying of the Upanishads. 'I am Brahman'. 'Atman is Brahman'. 'I am that'. Thus in this reference to accept plurality of selves is next to impossibility.

Ans to Q No 12: It is always found that birth and death are different in different persons. The sensations of sense-organs too are different in different persons. The question is that if there were one self (Puruṣa) only then the birth of one person would be applicable to the birth of all individuals and the death of one person would be applicable to the death of all individuals. Furthermore any experience of pleasure, pain and delusion by one person would have been the same to all individuals. But we find that these particular experiences are not same to all individuals. Hence, there is plurality of selves. There are different Puruṣas in different bodies.

Ans to Q No 13: a) True b) False



4.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Objective questions

Q 1: Mention five proofs for the plurality of Puruṣa.

Q 2: What is known as prdhana in Sāṃkhya system?

Q 3: Why is prakṛti called jada?

Q 4: What are the three gunas out of which prakṛti is constituted?

Q 5: Write the literal meaning of sattva.

Q 6: State the literal meaning of rajas.

Q 7: State the literal meaning of tamas.

Q 8: What is the second product of prakṛti?

Q 9: What is parināmavāda?

Q 10: Give an example of parināmavāda.

Q 11: What is vivartavāda?

Q 12: Give an example of vivartavāda.

Q 13: Mention only one characteristics of puruṣa.

Q 14: What is puruṣa?

Q 15: What is liberation, according to Sāṃkhya philosophy?

B. Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Why is prakṛti known as ultimate cause of all worldly objects? Briefly explain

Q 2: What are the three guṇas of prakṛti? Briefly explain

Q 3: Explain briefly the different products of prakṛti.

Q 4: Why is the process of evolution not mechanical? Briefly explain

Q 5: Explain briefly the Sāṅkhya doctrine of Plurality of Selves.

E. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the nature of Prakṛti in Sāṃkhya system

Q 2: Explain briefly the Sāṃkhya theory of evolution. Is it mechanical?

Q 3: Explain the nature of Puruṣa. How Sāṃkhya philosophy has proved the existence of Puruṣa?

Q 4: Does Sāṃkhya philosophy advocate plurality of Puruṣa? Explain the arguments in support of the plurality of Puruṣa.

Q 5: How Sāṃkhya philosophy has explained the relation between Puruṣa and Prakṛti? Explain

Q 6: Explain the three gunas of Prakrti.

Q 7: How does Puruṣa and Prakṛti come into contact to evolve the world? Explain.

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