

CHAPTER-3

Self : *Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā*

In the previous chapter the concept of self (*ātman*) advocated by the 'nāstika' schools has been discussed. In this chapter the views of the 'āstika' schools regarding the concept of self is elaborated.

The Concept of Self in *Sāṃkhya-Yoga*

The word '*Sāṃkhya*' means 'number'. The school specifies the number and nature of the ultimate constituents of the universe and thereby imparts knowledge of reality. In fact, the term *Sāṃkhya* also means perfect knowledge. Hence it is a system of perfect knowledge. *Sāṃkhya* is one of the orthodox or *āstika* schools of Indian philosophy that recognises the authority of the *Vedic* scriptures. It is regarded as the oldest of the orthodox philosophical systems in Hinduism, predating Buddhism. *Sāṃkhya* is realism as it considers that both matter and spirit are equally real. *Sāṃkhya* is pluralistic also because of its teaching that *puruṣa* is not one but many. Sage *Kapila* is traditionally considered to be the founder of the *Sāṃkhya* School. The definitive text of classical *Sāṃkhya* is the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, written by *Īśvarakṛṣṇa*.

Sage *Patañjali* is the founder of the *Yoga* philosophy. The *Yoga* is closely allied to the *Sāṃkhya*. They jointly form one system of philosophy known as *Sāṃkhya-*

Yoga. The relation between *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* has been a matter of discussion since ancient days. In *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the question has been raised more than once and the established conclusion is that only ignorant (*ajñānī*) people thinks that the *Sāṃkhya* and the *Yoga* are two different systems of philosophy. Wise are those, who do not see any difference between these two. The relation between *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*, roughly speaking, is that of theory and practice. The *Sāṃkhya* deals with the theory of reality, the nature of liberation etc. and *Yoga* shows us the path for attainment of the goal. Thus both jointly form one system known as *Sāṃkhya-Yoga*.

Sāṃkhya-Yoga postulates that the universe consists of two eternal realities: *puruṣa* (soul) and *prakṛti* (matter or nature). It is therefore a strongly dualist philosophy. According to *Sāṃkhya* as to *Yoga*, the *puruṣa* or self is a pure spirit entirely different from *prakṛti* and its evolutes. The self is, thus, beyond the three qualities — *sattva* (steadiness), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (dullness) of *prakṛti*, and is, consequently, pure and free from merits, demerits, pleasure, pain, delusion, attachment, aversion, desire etc. According to *Naiyāyikas*, qualities like pleasure, pain etc. belongs to the self. The *Sāṃkhya*, on the other hand, holds that these are the qualities of *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ), but are falsely ascribed to the self. The self in its real nature is beyond all empirical attributes.

Puruṣa is the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject or the knower. It is neither body, nor senses nor brain nor mind (*manas*) nor ego (*ahamkāra*) and nor

intellect (*buddhi*). It is not a substance which possesses the quality of consciousness. Consciousness is its very essence and not a mere quality of it. It is itself pure and transcendental consciousness. The light of the self's consciousness ever remains the same, although the objects of knowledge may change and succeed one another. It is steady and unfailing consciousness (*sadāprakāśasvarūpa*) in which there is neither change nor any activity. *Puruṣa's* essential nature of consciousness manifests and illumines all other things. *Puruṣa* is self-manifest (*svaparakāśa*) and does not require anything to illumine itself. *Puruṣa* is the light by which we see other things. *Puruṣa* is inactive and without any quality. It is the ultimate knower which is the foundation of all knowledge. It is the pure subject and as such can never become an object of knowledge. It is the silent witness, the emancipated alone, the neutral seer and the eternal. It is beyond time and space, beyond change and activity. *Puruṣa* is uncaused and all-pervading. It is eternal in the sense that it is not affected by the change of time, and that it is an uncaused ultimate principle. It is independent and is not supported by anything else. "It is the indubitable real, the postulate of knowledge, and all doubts and denials pre-suppose its existence. It is called *nistraigunya*, *udāsīnā*, *akartā*, *kevala*, *madhyastha*, *sākṣī*, *draṣṭā*, *sadāprakāśasvarūpa*, and *jñāta*."¹

The *puruṣa* is not *kartā* or agent, because it is entirely passive or devoid of activity, all activities belong to *prakṛti* and its products. Actions or movements

that seem to pertain to the *puruṣa* are only *aupādhika* or conditional. “The self being related to the body, the movement of the latter is ascribed to the former, just as the movement of a pitcher is ascribed to *ghaṭākāśa* or the *ākāśa* confined by a jar.”² Thus, *kartṛtva* or agency is not natural to the self. But, though the self is not *kartā* or agent, it is *bhoktā* or enjoyer. Actually, however, enjoyment is also not natural to the self; it is ascribed to the empirical self because of *abhimāna* or the egoistic sense which, on its part, is born of *aviveka* or non-discrimination. When true knowledge arises, all the qualities like pleasure, pain, agency, enjoyment etc., wither away, while only pure consciousness remains. In its real nature, the self is eternally free and perfect. Bondage and liberation, birth and death, pleasure and pain— all belong to *prakṛti*.

The *Sāṃkhya* view of *puruṣa* is determined by the conception of *ātman* in the *Upaniṣads*. *Puruṣa* is without beginning or end. It is without attributes and without qualities. It is subtle and omniscient. It is beyond mind, intellect and senses. It is beyond time, space and causality. It is perfect and immutable. It is pure consciousness (*Cidrūpa*). But it does not know things in the empirical sense of the term, for empirical cognition is dependent on the limitations of the body.

But, it should be noted that the *Sāṃkhya* draws a distinction between *puruṣa* or pure consciousness and the empirical individual as well as between empirical cognition. “The empirical individual is the self distinguished by the conjunction of the senses and limited by the body.”³ *Vijñānabhikṣu* says that *puruṣa* with

ahamkāra is the *jīva* and not *puruṣa* in itself. The *puruṣa* remains beyond intellect and the reflection of it in intellect appears as the ego. The ego (*jīva*) is an item in the natural world while the *puruṣa* is eternally one with itself. The empirical ego is the mixture of free spirit and mechanism of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Every ego possesses within the gross body, a subtle body consisting of the psychical apparatus and the senses. The subtle body is produced from *prakṛti*. Through the union of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* the subtle body becomes conscious though it is non-conscious itself. It is subject to pleasure, pain, action and its fruits, and rotates in the round of rebirth. The *puruṣa* is indifferent to all these worldly concerns.

The *puruṣa* is not the doer. It is the witness. The *puruṣa* is like a crystal without any colour. It appears to be coloured by the different colours which are placed behind it. It is not material. It is not a result of combination. Hence it is immortal. According to the *Sāṃkhya* the *puruṣas* or souls are infinite in number. There are many *puruṣas*. If the *puruṣas* were one, all should become free if any one attained liberation. The different souls are fundamentally identical in nature.

Sāṃkhya to some extent differs from *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and Jainism. While *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and Jainism contend that the atoms are the ultimate constituents of the physical world, *Sāṃkhya* differs on the issue. According to *Sāṃkhya*, the cause is always subtler than the effect. The *Sāṃkhya* theory argues: how can so gross atoms of matter can be the cause of such subtle and fine objects as mind

and intellect? The *Sāṃkhya* proposes that some finest and subtlest stuff or principle underlies all physical existence. *Sāṃkhya* names it as *prakṛti*.

Prakṛti is the primordial and ultimate cause of all physical existence. Since it is the first principle (*tattva*) of the universe, it is called the *pradhāna*, but as it is the unconscious and unintelligent principle, it is also called *jaḍa*. *Prakṛti* is constituted of three *guṇas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The term *guṇa*, in ordinary sense means quality or nature. But here, it is to be understood in the sense of constituent (component) in *Sāṃkhya*. *Sattva* is concerned with happiness. While *rajas* is concerned with action, and *tamas* is associated with ignorance and inaction. But they are not qualities or attributes in any sense; rather they are three substantial elements which constitute *prakṛti* like three cords making up a rope. The existence of the *guṇas* is inferred from the qualities like pleasure, pain and indifference which we find in all things of the world.

There are two different interpretations of *satkāryavāda* — *pariṇāma-vāda* and *vivarta-vāda*. The *pariṇāma-vāda* suggests that the effect is the real *pariṇāma* (transformation) of the cause. On the other hand, the *vivarta-vāda* suggests that the effect is an apparent or distorted appearance of the cause. The *Sāṃkhya* favours *pariṇāma-vāda*. In accordance with the *satkāryavāda*, the *Sāṃkhya* maintains that the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti* are also associated with all the worldly objects. Naturally the three *guṇas* which constitute *prakṛti* also constitute every object of the physical world. *Prakṛti* is never static. Even before

evolution, the *guṇas* are relentlessly changing and balancing each other. As a result, *prakṛti* and all the physical objects that are affected or produced by *prakṛti* are also in a state of constant change and transformation. This is further confirmed by the scientists today. It is now proved beyond doubt that ultra-minute particles of objects like electrons are in a state of incessant motion and transformation.

According to *Sāṃkhya-Yoga*, the entire world evolves from the interaction of *prakṛti* with *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is the efficient cause and *prakṛti* is the material cause of world. Here, *puruṣa* stands for the ‘supreme spirit’ and *prakṛti* stands for ‘matter’. *Puruṣa* is neither produced nor does it produce. *Prakṛti* is not produced but it produces. *Prakṛti* is uncaused. It is eternal. It itself is not produced but it has inherent potential or tendency to produce.

The activity of *prakṛti* needs to be guided by the intelligence of *puruṣa* for the evolution of the universe. But a question arises — how can two such different and opposing principles cooperate, and what is the interest that inspires them to interact with one another? *Sāṃkhya* replies that just as a blind man and a lame man can cooperate with each other in order to get out of a forest by the lame man’s guiding while the blind man carries him, so do non-intelligent *prakṛti* and inactive *puruṣa* combine with each other and cooperate to serve their purpose. What is their purpose? *Prakṛti* requires the presence of *puruṣa* in order to be known or appreciated, and *puruṣa* requires the help of *prakṛti* in order to

distinguish itself from *prakṛti* and thereby realise liberation. Thus, according to *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, the goal of the manifestation of the universe is to attain liberation. The interaction of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* causes a disturbance in the equilibrium of the *guṇas*. In this process, *rajas*, the active force, first becomes irritated, which activates *sattva* and then the two *guṇas* overpower the inertia of the *tamas*. *Puruṣa* itself does not come into contact with *prakṛti*. But it influences *prakṛti*. Thus, the *prakṛti* is prompted to produce. As the *guṇas* undergo more and more changes, *prakṛti* goes on differentiating into various worldly objects. Thus it becomes more and more determinate. This is what is termed as evolution in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy.

In evolution, *prakṛti* is transformed and differentiated into multiplicity of objects. Evolution is followed by dissolution. In dissolution the physical existence, all the worldly objects mingle back into *prakṛti*, which now remains as the undifferentiated, primordial substance. This is how the cycles of evolution and dissolution follow each other.

According to *Sāṃkhya* the radical interactions among the three *guṇas* disturb the state of equilibrium in *prakṛti*. Then there may be dominance of one or the other *guṇa*. This disequilibrium with certain other influencing factors prompts *prakṛti* to differentiate into various worldly objects.

Yoga accepts the epistemology and the metaphysics of the *Sāṃkhya* with its twenty five principles, but adds one more, viz., God. *Sāṃkhya* is regarded as

atheistic (*nirīśvara*) as it does not admit the existence of God while the *Yoga* system is called the theistic (*seśvara*) *Sāṃkhya* as distinguished from the *Kapila's Sāṃkhya*. The *Sāṃkhyapravacana-sūtra* states that there is no philosophical place for a creationist God in this system. It is also argued in this text that the existence of *Īśvara* cannot be proved and hence cannot be admitted to exist and an unchanging *Īśvara* as the cause cannot be the source of a changing world as the effect. Some *Sāṃkhya* commentators and writers, however, try to show the existence of God as the eternally perfect spirit; He is the witness of the world and whose mere existence (*sannidhimātra*) moves *prakṛti* to act and create, in the same way in which the magnet moves a piece of iron, but God is not the Creator of the world. While in *Yoga*, *Īśvara* or God is regarded as a particular self or *puruṣa-viśeṣa*. He is not inherent in the selves but transcends them. The *puruṣas* are quite distinct from *Īśvara*: they are not identical with Him, nor are they related to Him as His parts. The selves are not governed by *Īśvara* nor are they dependent upon His grace for getting the fruits of their actions. Of course, *Īśvara* in *Yoga* is said to help the devotees indirectly by removing the obstacles standing in the way of their spiritual progress. That means *Īśvara* does not directly grant liberation; he only facilitates its attainment. This means that the significant variation of the *Yoga* from the *Sāṃkhya* is not only the incorporation of the concept of *Īśvara* (God) into its metaphysical

worldview (which the *Sāṃkhya* does not) but also upholding *Īśvara* as the ideal upon which to meditate.

All *jīvas* (sentient beings) are considered as manifestations of the conscious *puruṣa* and all physical phenomena are manifestations of the unconscious *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is one, non-sentient, the root cause of the universe. *Prakṛti* provides the experience needed by *puruṣa* for liberation.

According to *Sāṃkhya*, the life has three kinds of pain. Pain arising out of intra-organic psychophysical causes which includes all mental and bodily suffering is called *ādhyātmika*. Pain due to extra-organic natural causes like men, beasts, birds etc. is *ādhibhautika* and *ādhidaivika* is referred to the pain due to supernatural causes like the planets, ghosts, demons etc. Wherever there are *guṇas*, there are pains. Even life in heaven is subject to *guṇas*. Liberation means complete cessation of all sufferings.

The *puruṣa*, by nature, is neutral and is the inactive, indifferent witness of the performance of the *prakṛti*. He, out of ignorance, identifies himself as the agent and enjoyer of the body and its constituents, such as *manas*, *ahaṅkara* etc. and consequently experiences suffering in the world and that it is said to be bound. When this wrong identification ceases by right knowledge, the soul becomes free and realises his separateness from *prakṛti*. Liberation is thus the natural state of the *puruṣa*. This can be achieved by the discriminative knowledge (*vivekajñāna*).

The *prakṛti* no longer works for a *puruṣa* who acquires the discriminative knowledge. The *prakṛti* finds its role in connection with this particular *puruṣa* entirely fulfilled, and accordingly retires from activity so far as that *puruṣa* is concerned. As is declared, the operations of the *prakṛti* continue only till the attainment of discriminative knowledge. The *puruṣa* who has acquired discriminative knowledge attains liberation while other *puruṣas*, who are ignorant, remain in the bondage of the *prakṛti* and experience transmigration.

Sāṃkhya admits both *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. The former is liberation attained in one's lifetime while the latter is liberation after death. In the former a person continues to live in this world as a liberated being, just as an electric fan continues to revolve for some time after being switched off due to its previously generated speed. When all the *saṃskāras* — the impressions of past actions are finished, then he casts off his body and is said to enter into *videhamukti*. But liberation in *Yoga* slightly differs from that of *Sāṃkhya*. *Yoga* shows the practical path by following which one may attain *vivekajñāna* which alone leads to liberation. It lays down an elaborate plan of psychological preparation which will result in isolating *puruṣa* from its entanglement with material nature through an eightfold path of *Yoga*. While *Sāṃkhya* describes this state of liberation an *apavarga* (escape from pain), *Yoga* calls it *kaivalya* (the self abiding alone in its own nature). There are two kinds of *yoga* or *samādhi*, viz. *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta*. In the first, we have *yoga* in the form of the mind's perfect

concentration on the object of contemplation, and therefore involving a clear apprehension of that object. In the second, there is the complete cessation of all mental modifications and consequently the entire absence of all knowledge including that of the contemplated object. This is the final stage of *samādhi* because when it is attained the whole world of objects ceases to affect and to exist for the *yogin*. In this state, the self abides in its own essence as pure consciousness, enjoying the still vision of isolated self-shining existence.

Sāṃkhya rightly points out that bondage and liberation of *puruṣa* are real only in the empirical level. In a higher or transcendental level, it is only *prakṛti* which is bound, and which has to liberate itself. *Puruṣa* is neither bound nor liberated. If the bondage of the *puruṣa* is real transcendently, it cannot attain *kaivalya*; because no real thing can be destroyed. So, what is required according to *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* for *kaivalya* is not transformation of phenomena, but only the transvaluation of one's own nature.

Sāṃkhya gives the following five proofs for the existence of the *puruṣa*⁴—

All compound objects exist for the sake of the *puruṣa*. The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are all means to realise the end of the *puruṣa*. The three *guṇas*, the *prakṛti*, the subtle body— all are said to serve the purpose of the self. Evolution is teleological or purposive. *Prakṛti* evolves itself in order to serve the *puruṣa*'s end. This proof is teleological (*saṅghātaparārthatvāt*).

All objects are composed of the three *guṇas* and therefore logically presuppose the existence of the *puruṣa* who is the witness of these *guṇas* and is himself beyond them. The three *guṇas* imply the conception of a *nīstraiguṇya*— that which is beyond them. This proof is logical (*triguṇādiviparyayāt*).

There must be a transcendental synthetic unity of pure consciousness to coordinate all experiences. All knowledge necessarily presupposes the existence of the self. The self is the foundation (*adhiṣṭhāna*), the fundamental postulate of all empirical knowledge. All affirmations and all negations equally presuppose it. Without it, experience would not become experience. This proof is ontological (*adhiṣṭhānāt*).

Non-intelligent *prakṛti* cannot experience its products. So there must be an intelligent principle to experience the worldly products of *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is the enjoyed (*bhogyā*) and so there must be an enjoyer (*bhoktā*). All objects of the world have the characteristics of producing pleasure, pain and bewilderment. But pleasure, pain and bewilderment have meaning only when there is a conscious principle to experience them. Hence, *puruṣa* must exist. This argument is ethical (*bhokṛbhāvāt*).

There are persons who try to attain release from the sufferings of the world. The desire for liberation and emancipation implies the existence of a person who can

try for and obtain liberation. Aspiration presupposes the aspirant. This proof is mystical or religious (*kaivalyārtham pravṛtteḥ*).

In contradiction to *Advaita Vedānta* and in agreement with *Jaina* and *Mīmāṃsā*, *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* accepts the plurality of *puruṣa* and puts forward the following arguments —

The souls have different sensory and motor organs and undergo separate births and deaths. Had, there been only one *puruṣa*, the birth or death of one should have meant the birth or death of all and any particular experience of pleasure, pain or indifference by one should have been equally shared by all. Hence, there is not only one soul, but there are many souls.

Again, if the selves were one, the bondage of one would have meant the bondage of all selves and the liberation of one should have meant liberation of all. The activity of one should have made all persons active and the sleep of one should have lulled into sleep all other persons.

Though the liberated souls are alike and differ only in number as they are beyond the three *guṇas*, yet the bound souls differ in qualities according to the predominance of one of the three *guṇas*. If there were only one *puruṣa*, then all would have been *sāttvica*, *rājasica* and *tāmasica*. But such is not the case.

The Concept of Self in *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*

One of the so-called classical schools of Indian Philosophy is the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* school. As the name signifies, *Nyāya* (reasoning) lays emphasis on the method of critical reasoning. *Vaiśeṣika*, on the other hand, is derived from the word *viśeṣa* meaning particularity which is one of its ultimate categories. It conveys a sense of differentiation even between things which cannot be otherwise differentiated. Among the six schools, *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* is the most realistic as it believes in the independent existence of objects in the world.

This school is actually a merger of two schools which were earlier two distinct entities, viz. the *Nyāya* and the *Vaiśeṣika*. Later, they jointly form one system of philosophy known as *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*. *Nyāya* is mainly logical and methodological, and *Vaiśeṣika* is mainly metaphysical. The *Nyāya-sūtra*, the foundational text of the *Nyāya* school deals mainly with knowledge and logic, while the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, the first systematic work of the *Vaiśeṣika* school deals with the metaphysics and physics. Both schools believe in the existence of a sort of Creator i.e. God, of atoms, of plurality of finite and eternal souls. The difference between the two is the difference of emphasis only. *Nyāya* accepts the *Vaiśeṣika* metaphysics, and *Vaiśeṣika* accepts the *Nyāya* epistemology and logic.

According to *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, body is not self. In criticism of the *Cārvāka* materialist, *Vātsyāyana* observes that if the body be regarded as conscious, then

the different parts of the body (hands, feet etc.) or its constituent atoms must be admitted to possess consciousness. And if the different parts of the body be conscious, then every single body should consist of innumerable knowers as each individual part will be a knower. But this cannot be proved. According to *Udayana*, body is changeable. If consciousness is the quality of the body it should also be changeable. In that case, the memories of childhood cannot be retained by a young man. Recollection is not the function of the body because we remember action of a particular part of the body, even when that part is severed from the body.

If consciousness is the essential property of the body, then it can never lose its essence, and it should be impossible for us to find bodies devoid of consciousness, as we do in corpses. So, we cannot identify the body with either consciousness or the self which possesses it. The body is an instrument or aid for the expression of consciousness. Body is defined as the vehicle of actions, sense-organs and objects. The soul exerts itself to gain and get rid of objects by means of the body, which is the seat of the senses, mind and sentiments.

“The self is not the senses but what controls them, and synthesises their contributions.”⁵ It is the soul that confers unity on the various kinds of apprehensions. The fact that an object is perceived by the different senses proves that the self is not the senses. After an object has been perceived by the visual organ first and then by the tactual, the subject recollects in the form thus— I who

saw the thing by the eye now perceive it by the tactual organ. This shows that the visual and the tactual organs are not the agents of those perceptions. Some other entity is the perceiver. That entity is the self. Had the knower been the senses, recognition of a thing by the right eye would not be possible in the case of that which had been perceived by the left eye. The right eye had not seen the thing. So, the agent of the perception is something different from the senses.

That the knower is not the senses is also proved by the fact that the sight or the smell of a sour fruit often makes one's mouth water. What is it that remembers the sour taste? Neither the senses of sight, nor the sense of smell is the cause of remembrance, because the sour taste was not experienced by either. It cannot also be said that the sense of taste remembers it, for the sense of taste could not see or smell the fruit before. The colour or the smell of the fruit is not its proper domain. Thus something (the self) other than the senses remembers the sour taste of the fruit and longs to taste it once more. If the different sense-organs be regarded as the experiencer of colour, taste, smell etc. then the phenomenon of the mouth running with water could not have been explained; since one sense-organ cannot remember what has been experienced by another sense-organ.

As an instrument, the senses imply an agent which uses them. Being only products of matter, they cannot have consciousness as their property. Even when the object seen and the eyes are both destroyed the knowledge that I have seen remains. So this knowledge is neither a quality of the outer objects nor of the

senses. Therefore, the reality of an intelligent being which cognises and remembers the objects of all the senses must be admitted. This intelligent being or the self is the substrate of memory and it is wholly distinct from the senses. In other words, the senses also should not be looked upon as the self, because consciousness, the fundamental attribute of the self, cannot exist in the senses. If consciousness belonged to the senses, an object known by a sense could not be remembered or recognised by a person when that sense does not operate. Thought, imagination etc. which are the special traits of the self, also cannot exist in the senses. Moreover, the senses, being instruments of knowledge, cannot control themselves, nor can they synthesise their experiences. There must, therefore, be some agent i.e. the self to control them and synthesise their experiences.

According to *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* the *prāṇa* also cannot be the self. If the *prāṇa* be the self it should guide the senses. But they are not directed at the time of sleep when the '*prāṇa*' is active to the fullest extent. However, the 'I', while performing its duty conducts the senses. When the *prāṇa* does its duty there is no reason why it should not conduct the senses. Further although in deep sleep the general functions of the *prāṇa* are in full swing there is no response of this *prāṇa* to a call from outside, which would never have been if the *prāṇa* were the self. Hence, the *prāṇa* is not self.

The self also should not be identified with *manas*, which is only the instrument by the aid of which the soul thinks. "To explain the acts of seeing, touching, etc. we admit an agent distinct from the senses which are called its instruments. The sense or instrument by which the act of thinking is performed is called the 'mind'. The agent sees by the eye, hears by the ear, smells by the nose, tastes by the tongue, touches by the skin and thinks by the mind. Hence we must admit the agent (soul) over and above the mind."⁶ Since the mind is atomic in nature it cannot be the agent. "An atomic agent cannot perform the acts of seeing, hearing, knowing, feeling etc."⁷

Buddhi or intellect also cannot be considered as the self, because *buddhi* is non-permanent or ever-changing, while the self is permanent. Further, intellect being a quality and not a substance cannot be the knower or the self.

The *Jaina* view of self is also not accepted by the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* system. The *Jainas* hold that the self is of intermediate dimension, i.e. neither infinitesimal nor infinite. The dimension of the self is invariably associated with the eternity or non eternity of the self. If the self be of *madhyama-parimāṇa*, it is bound to be non-eternal. According to them, consciousness is a quality of the self. It is felt throughout the body. So the self pervades the whole body. That is, the dimension of the self is equal to that of the body. This view of the *Jainas*, however, does not seem to be valid. The self is co-extensive with the body and as such is limited. That which is limited has parts. That which is produced by the union of

parts must be destroyed with the destruction of the union. The self, therefore, would become non-eternal. But the *Jainas* deny the destructibility of the self. The *Naiyāyikas* point out that owing to this contradiction the *Jaina* view cannot be accepted. The *Jaina* assumption that the self is *madhyama-parimāṇa* is thus untenable.

If the soul is of intermediate size, it must be either larger or smaller than the body. Either way, it cannot occupy the body as it does and should do. "If it is of the same size as the body, it will be too small for the body, as it grows from birth onwards."⁸

If the self were a series of momentary cognitions as the Buddhists hold, recollection and recognition would not be possible. An object perceived by a momentary past cognition cannot be remembered by a momentary future cognition. Just as the experience of one person cannot be remembered by another person, the present states of the body or the senses or the mind cannot remember their past states. The phenomenon of memory must depend upon a permanent entity— the soul. The *ālayavijñāna* also cannot account for them, since it is a series of momentary self-cognitions as distinguishable from momentary object-cognitions. If it is supposed to be permanent, then it is identical with the self. But the Buddhist does not believe in the permanent self.

It is also seen that, cognition is the cause of desire and desire results in volitional effort, this causal connection proves that they originate in successive order and again, the agent of cognition is also the agent of desire. Therefore cognition and desire cannot have different substrates. Thus it is proved that cognition, desire, volitional effort, impression and memory have the same locus; and these psychic states having originated in succession cannot belong to a fleeting state. The rule also holds good with regard to the successive *samskāra* (retentum) and memory, for they too are bound by a causal tie. They should also be located in the same substratum; otherwise it might be objected that the revival of a retentum in one person could produce memory in another. Thus the seat of all these psychic phenomena cannot be called momentary. If they do not belong to the same substratum, it is impossible to account for the inclination or activity those results from the perception of an object and the consequent knowledge of it as conducive to one's self-interest.

The *Advaita Vedāntin's* idea of the self as eternal, self-luminous consciousness is also not acceptable to the *Naiyāyikas* than that of the Buddhists. There is no such thing as pure consciousness unrelated to some subject and object. Consciousness cannot subsist without a certain locus. Hence the self is not consciousness as such, but a substance having consciousness as its attributes. The self is not mere consciousness or knowledge, but a knower, an ego or the 'I' (*aḥamkāraśraya*), and also an enjoyer (*bhoktā*).

Thus we see that the self cannot be the body or the senses or the *prāna* or the mind or the *buddhi*. Nor can it be the series of conscious states and feelings. Again, the self cannot be of intermediate size. The soul experiences the external world through the mind and the senses. All the cognition and conscious states arise in the soul when the soul is related to the mind, the mind to the senses and the senses to the external objects. It is because of this sequential contact or relationship that the whole process actuates; otherwise there would be no consciousness in the soul. In its disembodied state, the soul has no knowledge or consciousness. How can then one know whether there is such a thing as an individual soul? The *Nyāya* system answers that the soul is not known by sensory perception but rather by inference or testimony.

There are some alternative ways of inferring supra-sensible entities. One of them is called *sāmānyatodrṣṭa* inference. The activity of the sense-organs requires an agent who uses them in order to know objects, even as an instrument (e.g. an axe) requires an agent to use it. The body, the sense-organs, the *manas* cannot be the agent, since they are unconscious. They themselves are the instruments of experience. They require the finite self (*ātman*) as the agent who uses them as organs of experience. This is called *sāmānyatodrṣṭa* inference.

The existence of the self is inferred from the functions of desire, aversion and volition, from the sensation of pain and pleasure and from memories of them. These memories cannot be explained unless one admits the reality of a

permanent soul that has experienced pain and pleasure in relation to certain objects in the past. The process of knowledge based on memory requires the existence of a permanent self that desires to know something and then desires to attain certain knowledge about it. But, the memory cannot be the function of the body as we remember the experience of an organ even after the destruction of that particular organ. So there must be a permanent entity which is indestructible and remembers the objects experienced by that organ in the past. That entity is the self.

Knowledge, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain and conative effort are qualities which depend on something else to rest upon. That something is a substance. But, the qualities of earth and other elements are perceptible by the external senses, whereas these attributes cannot be sensed by those organs. Evidently space and time cannot be their substratum. Nor can they belong to the *manas* or mind. The mind is accepted as the organ of knowledge, and the 'organ' cannot be the 'substrate' at the same time. So they belong to the soul-substance. This is called *śeṣavat* or *pariśeṣa* inference which is an inference by elimination of alternatives.

If there were no permanent self, no person could recognise something as being perceived by him previously, for in that case, the experience of the earlier point of time would not exist at the time of recognition. Thus the self, though

imperceptible, can be indubitably established and known by inference. There is no unbridgeable gap between knowledge and the supra-sensible entities.

However the later *Naiyāyikas* are of the opinion that the existence of self can also be known by internal perception. This perception arises from the contact of the self with the mind. Due to this contact, knowledge that I exist is gained. This knowledge is the direct perceptual knowledge of the self. In this way, one may have the knowledge of one's own self, but the knowledge of other selves is obtained through inference. There are *Naiyāyikas*, who, however argue that there cannot be any direct perception of the self. What we directly perceive are the various qualities of the self, and it is through these qualities we get the knowledge of the self.

Nyāya postulates the existence of two types of soul (*ātman*): *jīvātman* or the individual self and *Paramātman* or the Supreme Self or God. The *jīvātman* is infinite in number and is different in every individual, while *Paramātman* is only one. According to the *Naiyāyikas*, *ātman* means the locus of *jñāna* or knowledge, and both the self and God share this nature. *Ātman* is also the substrate of *icchā* or will and *prayatna* or volition. As this attributes pertain to both the self and God, both of them are endowed with the term '*ātmavā*'. God is distinguished from souls by His omniscience and omnipotence which qualify Him for governing the universe, while the knowledge, will and action of the *jīvātman* are non-eternal and limited. The individual self or *jīvātman* is subject to

joys and sorrows, while God is endowed with eternal bliss. God is never entangled in the cycle of existence. God is all powerful. He creates, sustains and destroys the world, and causes the cycles of creation and destruction. He does not create the world out of Himself, or out of nothing, but out of the eternal atoms, ether, time, space, and the *ātman* that are not liberated and their minds. These substances do not in any way limit His omnipotence. His existence is accepted on the basis of the supreme authority and infallibility of revealed texts (*śruti*). The *Naiyāyikas* seek to support their theistic doctrine, ultimately based on *śruti*, by means of inference. The self is not identical with God under any circumstances, as propagated by the *Advaita-Vedāntins*, nor does it form a part of Him, as some *Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins* hold; it is distinct from Him under all circumstances. “In liberation also the selves maintain their distinct identity.”⁹

According to *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* system, the self in its empirical state is endowed with a body, sense-organs, vital airs, mind and so on, though it is entirely different from all these elements. Such an empirical self is a real knower, doer and enjoyer, and is thus endowed with the qualities of desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, cognition etc. “The self is the perceiver of all that brings about pain and pleasure (*sarvasya draṣṭā*), the experiencer of all pains and pleasures (*bhoktā*) and the knower of all things (*sarvānubhāvī*).”¹⁰ The self is simple, permanent, ubiquitous, spiritual substance. The self is simple, meaning that it is devoid of parts and consequently it is not extended in space. That which has parts is

destructible. If the self itself is assumed to be destructible, salvation would be impossible. The self is all-pervasive or infinite; it is not located in a particular body and exists in all space. But, though the self is all-pervading, its actions and feelings are perceived only in a particular body, since the actions and feelings of the self can be manifested only through a psycho-physical organism. Again, though existing within and outside the body, the self cannot acquire more than one knowledge at the same time because of the atomicity of the *manas* which is the common instrument for all kinds of knowledge. The self is not atomic. If it were atomic, it could not have consciousness in connection with the whole body. The self is a spiritual substance. Though it is conjoined with the material body, it is not completely 'immersed in the body'. The term spiritual substance means that which can be a substratum of consciousness. Consciousness as a quality inheres only in the self. It cannot belong to anything material.

The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* holds that though consciousness is a property of the soul, it is not an essential property. The self is, as a matter of fact, a *jada* or non-conscious principle. Consciousness cannot exist apart from the self, just as the brilliance of the flame cannot live apart from the flame. But though non-conscious, it has the capability of being endowed with consciousness which can exist only in the self and not in any other substance. The self acquires consciousness when it is associated with a psycho-physical organism. Accordingly, it is only in the empirical or bound state that the self is endowed

with consciousness. In its pure or liberated state, the self is devoid of consciousness, because at that time it is devoid of any organism.

The self has relative freedom of the will. Its freedom is limited by the divine will. Its free actions bear fruit only when they are favoured by God, otherwise their action becomes ineffective. The self cannot command success of its free actions without the aid of God. It earns merits by free righteous actions, and earns demerits by free unrighteous actions. But its freedom is limited by the merits and demerits acquired by free actions in the past births, though it can counteract them by free actions in future. Hence, the freedom of the finite self is subject to the divine will and the law of *karma*.

The system is in agreement with the general theory of the bondage of the *ātman* in the cycle of births and deaths. The reason for this state is lack of true knowledge of the self as distinct from all other things, which is the reason for pain. Both pleasure and pain are the experiencing states of a 'bound' (*baddha*) soul. When right knowledge dawns through the reading and listening to (*śravaṇa*) the scriptural (*Vedic*) intimations of the existence and nature of the self, followed by intellectual comprehension of the truth of these intimations by means of reasoning (*manana*) and existential realisation (*nididhyāsana*) through yogic meditation of the intellectually apprehended truth; there is the destruction of ignorance and the achievement of the goal of liberation. *Vātsyāyana* mentions that after the attainment of right knowledge the attachment (*pravṛtti*) towards the

worldly objects is destroyed. Consequently, he has no inclination to do any action by mind, speech or body, which may bring him another birth. All the results of the previous actions (*prārabdhakarma*) are gradually exhausted, and he does not need to take birth again. By the stoppage of the cycle of rebirth, all his pains are destroyed, and as a consequence, the soul becomes liberated. In this state, the soul realises its real nature and is freed from the fetters of body, sense-organs, mind etc. As a result, the soul is unaffected by attachment, desire, aversion, volition, feelings etc. which are all connected with body and the mind. “The self in liberation is a pure substance divested not only of pains and ignorance but also of pleasure or bliss and cognition or consciousness.”¹¹

The self is unique in each individual and is thus infinite in number. There are an infinite number of souls; if not, then everybody would be conscious of the feelings and thoughts of everybody else. If one soul were present in all bodies, then, when one experiences pleasure or pain, all should possess the same experience, which is not the case. In the same way, birth, death, sense-organ, etc. being different in different individuals, the differences of the selves must be admitted. These differences of the selves are real not only in the empirical state but also in the transcendental level.

Self in *Mīmāṃsā*

The *Mīmāṃsā* conception of self is more or less like that of other realistic and pluralistic schools such as the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*. The chief aim of *Mīmāṃsā* is to help and support *Vedic* ritualism by supplying a philosophical justification of the beliefs on which ritualism depends. The Sanskrit word '*Mīmāṃsā*' means a 'revered thought'. "The word is originated from the root 'man' which refers to 'thinking' or 'investigating'."¹² The word '*Mīmāṃsā*' suggests 'probing and acquiring knowledge' or 'critical review and investigation of the *Vedas*'.

Just as *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*, *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* are also considered as allied systems of thought. Both are based on *Vedas*. *Mīmāṃsā* deals with the earlier portion of the *Vedas* i.e., the *mantra* and the *brāhmaṇa* portion and is therefore called *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*. It is also known as *Karma-Mīmāṃsā* since it deals with the action, with the rituals and the sacrifices. And, *Vedānta* deals with the later portion of the *Vedas* i.e., the *Upaniṣads* and is therefore called *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* and also called *Jñāna-Mīmāṃsā* as it deals with the knowledge of reality. The *Mīmāṃsā* School was founded by *Jaimini*. The earliest work of this system is the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* of *Jaimini* which is the largest of all philosophical *sūtras*.

The *Mīmāṃsā* conception of self depends upon the *Vedic* texts which speak of the sacrifice equipped with the sacrificial implements proceeding to heaven. The

function of proceeding to heaven is not possible for the physical body; so there is some incorporeal entity which ensouls the body and proceeds to heaven. The presence of such an entity is inferred from the phenomena of breathing, winking of eyes and the like; which cannot belong merely to the body, as they are not found in a dead body. Such phenomena as the feelings of pleasure, pain and the like are cognised by the person himself only, while the qualities like colour, height etc. which belong to the physical body are cognised and perceived by others also; who have no direct cognition of the feelings of other persons. These show that there are certain qualities in the person which are directly cognisable by himself only. From the fact of there being certain qualities of the person which differ radically from the qualities that belong to the physical body, we conclude that the entity spoken of as going to heaven is other than the physical body. Moreover the acts of cognising, desiring and the like presuppose an agent, which is the self (*ātman*).

“*Jaimini* regards the self (*puruṣa*) as distinct from the sense-organs and cognitions. *Śavara* regards it as a permanent entity distinct from the body, the vital forces, the sense-organs and cognitions. It is known by itself, but not by others or shown to others.”¹³ “It is in the terms of *Brāhmaṇas* indestructible, not liable to disruption, but it comes into contact with perishable things, like sense-organs, merit (*dharma*), demerit (*adharma*) and so forth.”¹⁴ It is self-illuminated

(*ātmajyotiḥ*) or apprehended by itself. It has cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, recollection and the like. It is an object of 'I'-consciousness (*aḥampratyaya*).

According to *Mīmāṃsā*, the self is a real substance endowed with the attributes of knowledge, action and feeling. *Prabhākara* and *Kumārila* both admit the self as an eternal (*nitya*), omnipresent (*sarvagata*), ubiquitous (*vibhu*), infinite (*vyāpaka*) substance (*dravya*) which is the substratum (*āśraya*) of consciousness and which is a real knower (*jñātā*), enjoyer (*bhoktā*) and agent (*kartā*). The self performs actions and experiences their results either in this world or in the other world. It moves to different worlds in accordance with the results of its actions. Again, the self knows objects through consciousness and experiences pleasure and pain. The *Mīmāṃsā* argues that if there were no self, the *Vedas* ordaining performance of actions for the attainment of heaven and liberation will be meaningless.

The self is *nitya* or eternal; it is devoid of origination and destruction. The self cannot be atomic, since it apprehends changes in different parts of the body. It is *vibhu* or all-pervading. The body may perish but the self does not. It passes from one body to another. The self or soul directs the body, with which it is connected, until release. "An omnipresent soul can act, since action is not merely atomic movement. The energy of the soul causes the movement of the body."¹⁵

The self is also regarded as imperishable. If it be transitory, it will not be able to enjoy the rewards of sacrifices or good deeds in a future life. The self is an

active agent. The activity of the self is proved by the fact that it is the doer of sacrifices. Unlike the *Vaiśeṣika*, the *Mīmāṃsā* does not think that activity always consists in motion (*spanda*). Motion is impossible in an omnipresent being. The soul's activity rather consists in directing the body for the performance of acts. Without its inciting activity bodily motion will not be possible at all.

But though the soul is omnipresent, its qualities like pleasure, pain, knowledge etc. are manifested only in a particular body and are experienced by a particular individual concerned. The events occurring in the body of an individual cannot be experienced by another, since the experience of an individual depends upon the *karmas* or actions connected with the body of that individual.

The soul is the enjoyer, the body is the vehicle of enjoyment, the senses are the instruments of enjoyments and the internal feelings and the external things are the objects of enjoyment. Consciousness is not regarded as the essence of the self. *Prabhākara*, agreeing with the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, holds that the self is essentially unconscious and consciousness is only an accidental quality which may or may not be possessed by the soul-substance. *Kumārila*, differing from *Prabhākara* and *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, regards consciousness as a modal change (*pariṇāma*) in the soul.

The self is different from the body, senses and understanding etc. The self is distinct from the body because the self is endowed with the qualities of

knowledge, feelings etc., but the body is devoid of them. Again, these attributes of knowledge, feelings etc. are not perceived by others, while the qualities of the body are perceived by others. *Kumārila* argues that the qualities like action, will, knowledge, pleasure, pain etc., do not belong to the body, because they are not found in a dead body. These attributes must belong to some entity different from the body. That entity is the self. The self is distinct from the senses also. Since, the self persists even when the senses are destroyed or injured. Even after the loss of the visual organ, there is recognition in the form 'I who saw the object, touch it by the hand.' Moreover the data supplied by the different senses cannot be synthesised by the senses themselves. For the synthesis of these data, some other principle is required, which is the self. Further, the judgements 'this is my eye' or 'my mind is in error' indicate the difference between the self and the senses. The self is different from *buddhi* or understanding, because during deep sleep *buddhi* is absent, but the self persists, as is clear from recollections like 'I slept happily'. The self is also proved to be different from the mind which plays the part of an instrument required for the internal perception of pleasure, pain etc., inherent in the soul. Nor again, can cognition be the self. Cognition is momentary. It cannot explain the phenomena of recollection and recognition. Some permanent entity must be assumed to explain the identity of our mental life and that permanent entity is called the self.

According to *Mīmāṃsā*, the view that the self is merely a series of ideas without any persisting substratum advocated by the Buddhists is untenable. The *Mīmāṃsā* argues that without a persisting self, the law of *karma* and the law of rebirth would be meaningless. The fact of memory also would be unintelligible if the self be impermanent. For the experience of an event occurring at an earlier point of time and the remembrance of the same at a later point of time must point to the same agent. Further, the facts of self-consciousness, desire, pleasure, pain etc. could not be explained if the self were merely a chain of fleeting cognitions. The *Jainas* theory that the self is of the size of the body which contracts and expands according to the body it occupies is also unacceptable; as the soul is eternal it cannot have any particular size to fit a body in it. The *Mīmāṃsā* refutes the *Vedāntic* view that the physical world is sublated or transcended in *mokṣa*. Nor does the *Mīmāṃsakas* admit the relation between the world and the individual self is unreal as the *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* does. According to them, “the world is real and endures in exactly the same form even when a self becomes free; and *mokṣa* means only the realisation that the relation of the self to it though real is not necessary.”¹⁶

The self in its real nature, is devoid of knowledge, action and bliss. That is why in deep sleep the self does not know anything, nor does it act nor feel any pleasure or pain. Expressions like ‘I slept in bliss’ indicate simply the absence of pains, and not the presence of positive bliss. In liberation, when the self realises

its own nature, it exists merely as *sat* or pure existence. Of course, in this state also, the self has the potency of knowledge and feeling, but as it is then divested of the body, the senses etc., it cannot know or feel anything. Thus, the self in its real nature is devoid of knowledge, action, pleasure, pain etc., knowledge and bliss do not constitute the essence of the self; they are qualities generated in it by its energy and also by the operation of the body and the senses. That means the self becomes the substratum of qualities like knowledge, activity, pleasure, pain etc., when it is endowed with the body and the senses in its empirical state. In the case of ordinary acts, the self becomes the doer and agent only indirectly, while in the case of acts like being, existing, knowing and the like, it is the agent and doer directly.

According to *Prabhākara*, the existence of permanent self is known indirectly from the fact of recognition. The fact that we can remember a past cognition implies to the existence of a permanent self as the substrate of earlier perception and present recollection. Thus, *Prabhākara* holds that the permanent self is not the object of recognition, but the substrate thereof. He maintains that the self cannot be an object of perception; it is revealed in every act of cognition as the *kartā* or agent of cognition, and not as the *karma* or object.

Kumārila and *Pārthasārathi*, view the self as an object of consciousness, as there is no contradiction to view the self as both the subject and the object of cognition. *Pārthasārathi* states that the assertion of *Prabhākara* that the self is

manifested in cognition implies that the self is an object of consciousness. However, *Kumārila* and *Pārthasārathi* say that in an act of cognition though the self is involved, it is not manifested in the apprehension of the object. But it is manifested as an object of a separate mental perception or *mānasapratyakṣa*, which is distinct from the knowledge of objects and is represented by the 'I'-consciousness. If the self were not an object of knowledge, the *Upaniṣadic* injunction 'know the self' would be meaningless. Moreover, to remember the existence of the self in the past would be impossible if we do not assume the self as an object of knowledge. As we can remember the existence of the self in the past so the self becomes the object of cognition. An object which is never perceived cannot be the object of recollection or recognition. Hence, the recollection of the self clearly indicates that the self can become an object of cognition. *Kumārila* states that the self is both consciousness and the substrate of cognition. The self as the *dravya* or the substantial element is the object of knowledge, while the self as the elements of *bodha* or consciousness is the subject thereof. "*Śabara* accepts the reality of a permanent cogniser which is known by itself and incapable of being seen or shown by others."¹⁷ This implies that the self, according to him, is one with consciousness and is both the agent of cognition and the object of it.

"In describing the view of *Kumārila*, *Sadānanda* writes that the cognition after deep sleep in the form 'I slept happily and did not know anything' clearly proves

the intelligent aspect and the non-intelligent aspect of the self. In deep sleep the self is closed to itself and there is no manifestation of anything else. But the memory 'I slept happily' is not possible without the awareness of the self."¹⁸ External senses and the mind remain absolutely dormant during that period. So the remembrance here is not due to any cognition resulting from the activity of the senses. Therefore the self should be admitted to be intelligence as such. Again the recollection 'I did not know anything' indicates the absence of knowledge in deep sleep. Hence, we find that there is also a non-intelligent element in the self. The cognition 'I do not know myself' also establishes that the self is the subject and object of the same act. The intelligent aspect is the subject and the non-intelligent aspect is to be understood as the object. Thus the self is a compound of two elements, intelligence and the unconscious substance.

"In the perceptual process, according to *Kumārila*, the self is at first connected with an object through one of the external senses and then it produces revelation of the object. The unconscious element of the self gets transformed into both the knowledge of the object and the agent of the manifestation generated in the object. The knowledge of the object, however, is not directly known; it is inferred from the revelation of the object."¹⁹ Happiness, sorrow, grief etc., and their knowledge are products of the unconscious element and the mind is necessary for their cognition. Likewise in the self-knowledge too, the connection

of the mind with the self is necessary. However, it is not inferred but is directly known in introspection.

“According to *Prabhākara*, the self, being the substratum of consciousness or *samvit* and not consciousness itself, is not self-luminous. He holds that it is knowledge, the attribute of the self, that is self-luminous and not the self as such.”²⁰ At the time of revelation, knowledge illumines both the self and the object along with it. This illumination of the self or knower, the object or known, and knowledge in the same act of knowledge is called *tripuṭī-pratyakṣa* or three-fold perception. In this process, the self is revealed as ‘I’ or the knower, as distinct from the object and knowledge. The self is cognised as the agent only when the knowledge arises. The self is not cognised in deep sleep as there is no knowledge of any object. Thus, we find that the self is not self-revealed, it is revealed by knowledge. However, *Prabhākara* holds that the self is self-luminous in the sense that it is cognisable by every person for himself. And he says that the self is proved by the universally admitted and undeniable notion of ‘I’, which is self-luminous.

As regards the view of *Kumārila* regarding the self-luminosity of the self, scholars differ in their opinions. “*Kumārila* agrees with *Prabhākara* however in holding that soul is not self-illuminating (*svayamprakāśa*), for then even in deep sleep the soul should have manifested itself; but there is no such manifestation then, and the state of deep sleep appears as an unconscious state.”²¹ Yet again

some scholars hold that, “according to *Kumārila*, the self is self-luminous.”²² But the point here is that, according to *Kumārila*, the self is not merely the substratum of consciousness, it is of the nature of consciousness as well. And, consciousness being self-luminous, the self should be regarded as self-luminous. However, for *Kumārila*, the self is self-luminous not in the sense of the *Advaitins*, since he divides the self, as it were, into two, viz. the aspect of *dravya* and the aspect of *bodha*.

The *Mīmāṃsā* puts forward the theory of the plurality of selves to explain the varieties of experiences. Presence of the soul is inferred from the activities of the bodies, which are inexplicable without such a hypothesis. As my actions are due to my soul, other’s activities are traced to other’s soul. If there were no different selves, there would not be differences in experiences of pleasure, pain etc. in different individuals. The differences of *dharmas*, *adharmas*, births, deaths etc. of different individuals also could not be explained without presuming the plurality of the self. If there were only one self in all persons, then all of them would be endowed with the same attributes. Some *Advaitins* say that just as the one sun reflected in different substances becomes endowed with distinct properties, the one soul reflected in different bodies becomes endowed with different qualities, is not tenable, since the qualities that appear different belong to the reflecting medium and not to the sun. If the analogy were true, the diverse qualities appearing in connection with the souls would belong to the bodies and

not the soul. But pleasure, pain etc. are qualities of the soul and not of the body. “As regards the *Upaniṣadic* statement that the self is ‘one’, *Kumārila* holds that the implication of this statement lies not in the oneness of the selves, but in their similarity, because all the selves, being of the nature of consciousness, are similar to one another.”²³

Mīmāṃsā is an atheistic system. It does not believe the God as the Creator and Destroyer of the universe. Though the universe is made up of parts, yet there is no reason to suppose that the universe had ever any beginning in time, or that any God created it. Moreover, God would Himself require a Creator to create Him. “So there is no God, no creator, no creation, no dissolution or *pralaya*. The world has ever been running the same, without any new creation or dissolution, *sr̥ṣṭi* or *pralaya*.”²⁴ According to the *Mīmāṃsakas*, the law of *karma* is a spontaneous moral law that rules the world. The world’s objects are formed out of matter in accordance with the *karmas* of the souls. The *Mīmāṃsā* also admits that when a man performs any ritual, there arises in his soul the potency (*apūrvā*) which produces in the future, the fruit of the action at an opportune moment. On account of this potency generated in the soul by rites performed here, one can enjoy their fruits hereafter.

Mīmāṃsā, in the early stages of its development believed that the ultimate aim of man is *svarga* (heaven). But in the later *Mīmāṃsā*, we find liberation replacing heaven as the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*). It becomes the ultimate aim

of man and so falls in line with the thinking of other systems. They realise that the performance of actions, good and bad, if dictated by any desire for enjoyment of objects, causes repeated birth. When one understands that worldly pleasure is all mingled with pain he becomes disgusted with life in the world. Then he tries to control his passion and desist from forbidden actions as well as actions with motives of future enjoyment. Thus the chance of future birth and bondage becomes gradually diminished. By disinterested performance of obligatory duties and knowledge of the self, the *karmas* accumulated in the past also gradually become worn out. After this life such a person, being free from all *karma*-ties, is never born again. He thus becomes liberated. As bondage is the fettering of the soul to the world through the body including the senses, the motor organs and *manas*, liberation is the total destruction of such bondage through the stoppage of rebirth.

Prabhākara and *Kumārila* hold that knowledge and action both are necessary for the attainment of liberation. Their conception regarding the nature of liberation and the means of attainment resembles the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* conception of bondage and liberation. For both it is purely a negative state where there is no experiences, pleasurable or painful. In this state, the soul remains as a pure substance divested of all its qualities including consciousness and bliss. It is not a blissful state as postulated by the *Vedānta*, because according to them, bliss requires a body for its enjoyment and embodiment amounts to bondage, hence it

is not a blissful state. "In liberation, the soul remains alone, absolutely cut off from the mediating organs, the internal mind or the external senses."²⁵

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