

**THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE NATURES OF THE BINARY IN
SĀM̐KHYA PHILOSOPHY: SOME OBSERVATIONS**

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I

The Sāṁkhya philosophy is one of the most ancient traditions of the Indian philosophical system. Like the other orthodox schools of philosophy in the Indian tradition, the Sāṁkhya system too considers liberation to be the highest goal of human life. According to the Sāṁkhya philosophers, liberation being identical to the absolute cessation of sufferings, can only be attained through the discriminatory knowledge (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. The main objective of the present research paper is to study the contrast between the essential natures of the transcendental consciousness and the insentient matter from the perspective of the classical Sāṁkhya tradition. In establishing the above stance of the Sāṁkhya philosophical system, numerous references from the authentic Sāṁkhya tradition have been referred to, as well as some aspects of contrast and debate with the other philosophical traditions, both orthodox and heterodox systems, have been elucidated in the present article.

We know that the Sāṁkhya philosophical system being a dualistic, realist school, admits the binary, namely, the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, indicative of the consciousness and an insentient material agent respectively. *Puruṣa* has been described as pure (*śuddha*), eternal (*nitya*), immutable (*aparīṇāmī*), unrelated (*asambaddha*), not-bound (*kūṭastha*) etc. Such unique nature of *puruṣa* as opposed to *prakṛti*, that has been admitted in Sāṁkhya philosophy poses to be a matter of intrigue, and demands in-depth discussion in the concern of Indian philosophical academics. In that context, it may be cited that, in the eleventh *Sāṁkhyakārikā*, we find that –

that –

‘*triṅṇamavivekiviṣayaḥsāmānyamacetanaṁprasavadharmi/vyaktaṁtathāpradhānam , tadviparītastathā ca pumān//*’¹. The above *kārikā* expresses the common properties of *vyakta* and *avyakta*, that is, *prakṛti* or insentient matter, and those in turn represent the features which are absent in *puruṣa*, that is, the consciousness. The *puruṣa* can never be attributed with the above properties, since it is radically different in essence. Each of the properties and their significance are going to be discussed in the present article with an effort to bring out the essence of *puruṣa* as opposed to that

of the *vyakta* and *avyakta*, that is, *prakṛti* in order to posit the unrelated, unbound, unique nature of consciousness, as have been admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy.

Further from the nineteenth *Sāṃkhyakārikā* we find the knowledge of *puruṣa* in its transcendental state. This helps in attaining the discriminatory cognition (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, requisite for liberation. This *kārikā* establishes the *puruṣa* as radically different from *prakṛti*. Analysing the terms ‘*tasmāt*’ and ‘*viparyāsāt*’ in the above *kārikā*, we would find out how they refer to the common properties of *vyaktāvyakta* in the eleventh *kārikā*, and at the same time states the absence of those properties in *puruṣa*. The *atriguṇatva* etc. of *puruṣa*, as mentioned earlier, are indicative of its *sākṣitva*, *kaivalya*, *mādhyastha*, *draṣṭṛtva* and *akarṣṇbhāva* or *akarṣṭtva*. It is important to note here that in Sāṃkhya philosophy, the nature and the definition of consciousness have throughout been provided in contrast to that of *prakṛti*. Hence, in order to cognize the essence of the transcendental consciousness, as opposed to that of the material principle, as admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy, it is necessary that we first delve into the nature of *prakṛti*. The following discussion will be carried out in that manner.

II

The third *Sāṃkhyakārikā* states that—
 ‘*mūlaprakṛtiravikṛtirmahadādyāḥprakṛtīvikṛtayāḥsapta/*
ṣoḍaśakastuvikāronaprakṛtirnavikṛtiḥpuruṣaḥ!’². The twenty-five principles (*tattvas*) as admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy are divided into four broad categories based on their characteristic features, and the divisions are such that they themselves are distinguished from the others. In Vācaspati Miśra’s words —‘*samkṣepato hi śāstrārthasyacatasro vidhāḥ*’³. The term ‘*vidhā*’ here indicates that the divisions are characterized by mutually exclusive properties. The four categories are - *prakṛti*, *prakṛti-vikṛti*, *kevalavikṛti* and *anubhaya* (*naprakṛtiḥnavikṛtiḥ*). Now let us discuss each of these categories individually. To ascertain the nature of *prakṛti* it is said that ‘*mūlaprakṛtiḥnavikṛtiḥ*’. Etymologically, *prakṛti* can be defined as ‘*prakaroti yāsā prakṛtiḥ*’⁴ which means that, that which acts or creates in the perfect manner. *Prakṛti* is always the creator or the cause of creation, but it is itself uncaused. It consists of agency (*karṣṭvaviśiṣṭa*) and is not the object (*karmatvāviśiṣṭa*). It is also termed as

the *pradhāna*, meaning the primary or the primordial, original cause. The essential nature of *prakṛti* is ‘*sattvarajastamasām sāmīyāvasthā*’⁵. That is, the state of equilibrium of the three *guṇas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* constitute the *prakṛti*, and it is due to their equilibrium that the state is referred to as *avikṛti* or *mūlaprakṛti*. It is thus called because it acts as the root cause of the world which is an effect (*kārya*) of the heterogeneous transformation (*virūpapariṇāma*) of the three *guṇas* and is such that it serves the purpose of the others (*saṁghātarūpa*). However, the *mūlaprakṛti* is itself uncaused, that is, it does not have any further root cause. It is uncreated (*akṛta*). Rather trying to determine the root of the root-cause itself, would only lead to an infinite regress, and there are no supporting views to such stance either, that might endorse such conceptual infinite regress. Hence, it is sufficient and logical to admit the *avikṛti* or the *mūlaprakṛti* as the uncreated primordial cause.

Moving on to the next category we find that seven principles are attributed with the property called *prakṛti-vikṛti*. These are the *mahattattva*, *ahamkāratattva* and the five *tanmātras*. These principles are such referred to, because they themselves are created and they act as the causes of other principles as well. Thus, they are sometimes regarded as the cause (*prakṛti*) and sometimes as the effect (*vikṛti*). *Mahattattva* is the effect of *prakṛti*. It is its first product in the course of the manifestation (*abhivyakti*) of the world. The *mahattattva* in turn acts as the cause of *ahamkāratattva*. Again *ahamkāra* being the effect of *mahattattva*, in turn acts as the cause of the *pañcatanmātra* and *indriya*. The *pañcatanmātras* again act as the causes of the *pañcabhūta*, themselves being the effect of *ahamkāra*. Thus, the seven principles are referred to as *prakṛti-vikṛti* which means that, that which is the *prakṛti*, is itself the *vikṛti* too.

The third category consists of the *vikṛti* or the *kevalavikṛti* which are sixteen in number. These are the five sense organs, five motor organs, the internal sense organ (*manas*) and the five gross elements (*pañcamahābhūta*). These principles are only the effects of their respective preceding principles and are never the causes of any other principle. Thus, they are referred to as *kevalavikāra*. Here one might argue that how can we say that the gross elements like the earth *etc.* are simply effects, and never the causes, as we find various other objects like the jar *etc.* to be produced from the earthen elements? Hence, these principles should also be considered as *prakṛti*,

that is, causes of the subsequent products. Vācaspati Miśra, in his commentary, provides the answer to the above apprehension. It is true that the gross elements like earth *etc.* undergo transformation in the form of jar *etc.*, then milk into curd, a seed into a tree and the like, yet these transformations cannot be termed as distinct principles or as separate *tattvas*. Those principles which lead to the production of other principles, only such principles could be considered as *prakṛti*. Here the milk from the cow, or the curd from the milk, or a jar from the clay are not separate principles (*natattvāntara*). So their respective causes cannot be regarded as *prakṛti*. Now the natural question which comes up at this point is that, why cannot the above products be held as different principles? In response, Vācaspati Miśra says that – ‘*sarvesāmgoghaṭādīnāmsthūlatendriyagrāhyatā ca samāitina tattvāntaratvam*’⁶. Here we find the core essence of *satkāryavāda*, which states that the cause is necessarily more subtle (*sūkṣma*) and more extended in its existence (*vyāpaka*), as compared to the effect (*vyāpya*). According to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, the term ‘*sūkṣma*’ does not mean small, rather it is used in the sense of extension and subtlety. The subtlety is again determined with respect to sense-perceptibility (*indriyagrāhyatā*). Now it is evident that there is no difference in subtlety and sense-perceptibility in case of the *pañcamahābhūta* and the products like cow, jar, milk, tree *etc.* produced thereafter. Thus, there being no difference in their subtlety (*sūkṣmatva* or *saukṣma*), the above objects cannot be considered as distinct principles from one another. Consequently, their causes like earth *etc.* cannot be considered as *prakṛti*. Thus, the afore-mentioned sixteen principles can only be regarded as effects (*vikṛti*), and in spite of their transformations, leading to the emergence of new substances, they cannot be considered as *prakṛti* owing to their similar subtlety (*saukṣma*) or grossness (*sthūlatva*) with their products.

Finally, we arrive at the fourth category – *anubhaya*. That is, *puruṣa* or that ‘other’ principle which is, ‘*naprakṛtiḥnavikṛtiḥ*’. It means that the *puruṣa* is neither the cause nor the effect. It is not included in the causal chain at all. It is radically different from all the above categories. It is neither the producer nor itself produced. Thus, it is the only entity which stands out of the entire system of causality in Sāṃkhya philosophy and is the only sentient principle admitted there. Hence, in a nutshell we can refer to the specific characteristics of each of the categories as⁷ –

prakṛti: tattvāntaropādānatve sati tattvāntarānupādeyatvam
prakṛti-vikṛti: tattvāntaropādānatve sati tattvāntaropādeyatvam
kevalavikṛti: tattvāntarānupādānatve sati tattvāntaropādeyatvam
naprakṛtiḥnavikṛtiḥor puruṣa: tattvāntarānupādānatve sati
tattvāntarānupādeyatvam

III

From the third *kārikā* we have come to know that the *puruṣa*, and the *prakṛti* along with its evolutes, are characterized by mutually exclusive properties. We have also found out that the *puruṣa* is radically different from *prakṛti*. Thus, it becomes imperative to discuss in detail about the essential features of *puruṣa* and that too in contrast with the characteristics of both *vyakta* and *avyakta*. The above discussion is going to be carried out, referring to the eleventh *kārikā*, as follows – ‘*triguṇamavivekiviṣayaḥsāmānyamacetanaṁprasavadharmi/vyaktaṁtathāpradhānam , tadviparītastathā ca pumān!*’. The above *kārikā* expresses the common properties of *vyakta* and *avyakta* and those in turn represent the features which are absent in *puruṣa*. That is, *puruṣa* can never be attributed with the above properties. It is radically different in essence. Each of the properties and their significance are being discussed as follows:

The term ‘*triguṇam*’ indicates both *vyakta* and *avyakta*. Here VācaspatiMiśra says that the term ‘*triguṇam*’ should be interpreted as that which consists of pleasure, pain and delusion (*sukhaduḥkhamohātmaka*).⁸ The twenty three principles as mentioned before along with the *mūlaprakṛti* are essentially of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion. That is why, the objects produced from them share the similar essence, and accordingly, when the *manas* is related to the various objects, states of pleasure, pain and delusion are experienced in the respective contexts. Here it is important to note that in Sāṁkhya philosophy; ‘*guṇa*’ always refers to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The helper (*upakāraka*) or the one which is responsible for bondage (*bandhanakāraka*) is referred to as *guṇa*. The *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the helpers of *puruṣa* in the sense that they are responsible for the production of the *mahat* etc. which act as the causes of bondage. Thus, the trio are called *guṇas*.⁹ However, such definition of *guṇas* are not applicable to pleasure, pain and delusion. Then the question arises that why Vācaspati Miśra admits pleasure *etc.* by the term ‘*guṇa*’ in this context. The reply is that the above *kārikā* indicates the common features of both

the *vyakta* and the *avyakta*. Now if we interpret *guṇa* in the above verse as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, then it would indicate only the *avyakta* or the *mūlaprakṛti*. That the evolutes of *prakṛti* too consist of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* would not be clearly indicated then. Thus, on account of the fact that the properties of the effect are obtained from those of the cause, following *satkāryavāda*, we can claim that the evolutes (*vyakta*) being of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion, their root cause (*mūlaprakṛti* or *avyakta*) too is of that nature. Further, VācaspatiMīśra states that by interpreting *guṇa* as pleasure *etc.*, the Nyāya position is refuted consequently.

According to the Naiyāyikas, pleasure is a property of the self. VācaspatiMīśra here points out that by mentioning the *vyakta* and the *avyakta* as *triguṇa* in the *kārikā*, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has clearly shown that pleasure, pain and delusion are the common properties of *prakṛti* and its evolutes, and thus, they can never be the property of the self.¹⁰ Moreover the *Vedas* unequivocally establish the thesis that the self or consciousness is unrelated and not bound (*‘asaṅga hi ayampuruṣaḥ’*)¹¹. So pleasure *etc.* cannot essentially be related to the self. Otherwise we would arrive at a contradiction with the above Vedic tenet. Hence, pleasure *etc.* has to be admitted as properties of the *vyakta* and the *avyakta*.

Now the second property is *avivekitva*, that is, both *vyakta* and *avyakta* are *avivekī*. The term ‘*viveka*’ means distinction. So the above term in the *kārikā* means that the *vyakta* and the *avyakta* are devoid of distinctions from each other. The *mūlaprakṛti* retains its essence and its evolutes like the *mahat* *etc.* are also essentially the same with their respective causes. Vācaspati Mīśra, however, clarifies the notion of *avivekitva* in a different manner. He says that –‘*sambhūyakāritātra avivekitā*’¹². Both the *vyakta* and the *avyakta* require the assistance of others for the production of their own effects. For instance, *mahat* requires the assistance of *prakṛti* for the production of *ahamkāra*, *ahamkāra* depends upon *mahat* for the production of *tanmātras* and the like. Thus, none of these principles are efficient enough to produce its own effect independently. All these principles have to depend upon their preceding causes for manifesting their own effects. That is why, the principles are *sambhūyakarī*. The term ‘*sambhūya*’ means to be united, together or dependent upon others. Thus, the category of *vyakta* includes all those principles which always act together, or depend upon the other for their actions. It is interesting to note here that

even the *avyakta* or *mūlaprakṛitī*, is *sambhūyakarī*, as it also requires the assistance of *adr̥ṣṭa* for the production of its first evolute, *mahat*. Such *sambhūyakāritā* is referred to as *avivekitā* by Vācaspati Mīśra.

The third property common to both *vyakta* and *avyakta* is *viśayatva*. Here, *viśayatva* or *jñānaviśayatva* refers to the fact that these constitute the objects of cognition. These are knowable objects. This further indicates that they are different from knowledge itself (*jñānabhinna*). Vācaspati Mīśra here points out that such a position refutes the Yogācāra Buddhist view of *vijñāna*. According to the Yogācāra Buddhists, who are idealists, *vijñāna* is the only existent entity. It is internal, and all the objects are nothing but forms of *vijñāna*. That is, even objects like pot, cloth *etc.* are not different from their respective cognitions (*jñānābhinna*). It can be argued here that if such be the case, then *vijñāna* itself should also be the object of *vijnāna*; but that is an absurd position. Thus, Vācaspati Mīśra states that ‘*vijñānādvahihiti yāvat*’¹³, that is, *vijñānabhinnatva* is *viśayatva*. The distinction from *vijñāna* constitutes object-hood (*karmatva*). Hence, objects like jar, cloth *etc.* are not forms of *vijñāna*; rather they are completely different from *vijñāna* itself, and thus constitute the objects of *vijñāna*.

The next commonality between the *vyakta* and the *avyakta* is *sādhāraṇatva*. Vācaspati Mīśra states that – “*ataeva ‘sāmānyam’ ‘sādhāraṇam’ ghaṭādivadanekaihpuruṣairgr̥hītamityarthaḥ*”¹⁴. That is, *vyakta* and *avyakta* being distinct from *vijñāna* are knowable by many individuals, and hence, they are termed as ‘*sādhāraṇa*’. *Vijñāna* is specific to each and every individual. There is no such one *vijñāna* which is attained by all. Now if the objects like jar, cloth *etc.* would have been identical to *vijñāna*, then the same object could not have been known by many individuals. Again, *vijñāna* is nothing but the reflection of the *antaḥkaraṇa* transformed in the form of the object (*viśayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛtti-pratibimba*). The *antaḥkaraṇa* is specific to each and every individual. Accordingly, their modifications (*vṛtti*) and the subsequent reflections (*tadvṛttipratibimba*) would be different from one another. Such *vijñāna* is known or perceived individually. The individuality of the *vijñāna* of an individual is expressed by Vācaspati Mīśra as ‘*parabuddheḥ apratyakṣatvāt*’¹⁵. So *vijñāna* is always private and/or internal, and

hence not accessible to other individuals as opposed to the public character of the *vyakta* and the *avyakta*.

The final common property between the *vyakta* and the *avyakta* is *prasavadharmitva*. The term '*prasava*' here refers to the transformations undergone by the *vyakta* and the *avyakta*. However, these principles are eternally in the state of transformation. So the above term in the *kārikā* more explicitly claims that it is the very essence or property of these principles to be continually in the state of transformation in some form or the other. Thus, from the above *kārikā*, it is evident that the said properties are the characteristic features of both *vyakta* and *avyakta*. Moreover, they are markers of the fact that the consciousness or *puruṣa* is radically different from all these principles. This is expressed by the latter portion of the verse '*tadviparītaḥ tathā ca pumān*'. However, the term '*ca*' in the *kārikā* gives us another important insight that in spite of certain commonalities between the *puruṣa* and the *vyaktāvyakta*, they are contradictory to each other in terms of the said properties. The interesting commonalities are that both the *puruṣa* and the *pradhāna* are uncaused (*ahetumat*), they both are *nitya* as a result, and the *vyakta* and the *puruṣa* both are many in number. The main features of contradiction between the *puruṣa* and the *vyaktāvyakta* are that the *puruṣa* is *atriguṇa*, *vivekī*, *aviśaya*, *asādhāraṇa*, *cetana* and *aprasavadharmī*.¹⁶ On that note, we would next discuss about the specific essential nature of *puruṣa* or consciousness as admitted in Sāṅkhya philosophy, following the nineteenth *kārikā*.

IV

The nineteenth *kārikā* states that -

*'tasmāccaviparyāsātsiddhāmsākṣitvamasyapurūṣasya/
kaivalyaṁmādhyasthyāmdraṣṭṛtvamakartṛbhāvaśca//'*¹⁷. It provides such knowledge of *puruṣa* that depicts its transcendental essence, and hence in turn is efficacious in helping the individual to attain the much-sought-after discriminatory cognition (*vivekajñāna*) between the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*. The discussions found in the *kārikā*, help to establish the *puruṣa* as radically different from the *prakṛti*. The term '*tasmāt*' in the above *kārikā* refers to the properties of *vyaktāvyakta* in the eleventh *kārikā*, and the term

‘viparyāsāt’ states the absence of those properties in *puruṣa*. The *atriguṇatva* etc. of *puruṣa*, as mentioned in the earlier *kārikā*, helps to establish its *sākṣitva*, *kaivalya*, *mādhyastha*, *draṣṭṛtva* and *akarṭṛbhāva* or *akarṭṛtva*. The *vyakta* and the *avyakta* are insentient (*jaḍa* or *acetana*). The *puruṣa* being opposite in nature is sentient (*cetana* or *caitanya* *svarūpa*). The *vyaktāvyakta*, as we have already found out, are *jñānaviṣaya*, but the *puruṣa* is never the object of cognition (*aviṣaya*). The *cetanatva* and the *aviṣayatva* of *puruṣa* help to establish its *sākṣitva* and *draṣṭṛtva*. Grammatically speaking, *sākṣī* and *draṣṭā* both are synonymous as they each indicate the direct perceiver of an event. We know that only a sentient entity can be a perceiver, and never an insentient one. So the inference which establishes the *puruṣa* as the perceiver is – ‘*puruṣaḥdraṣṭā cetanatvāt*’¹⁸. The above inference is based on the negative concomitance – *yatrayatradraṣṭṛtvābhāvatatratracetanatvābhāva*. However, Vācaspati Miśra points out that here the term ‘*sākṣī*’ should not be considered in the general grammatical sense, that is, as a direct perceiver of an event. Rather a witness (*sākṣī*) is one who is being shown a particular event, or to say that some phenomena is occurring in front of that individual. Here the *prakṛti*, more specifically, the *mahat* or the *buddhi*, exhibits the objects cognized by it (*svagr̥hītaviṣaya*), to the consciousness (*prativimbitapuruṣa*) reflected on it. In this manner, the *prakṛti* serves the *puruṣa*; but in essence the *puruṣa* remains unrelated and is not bound by *prakṛti* or its evolutes. Thus, due to the essential indifference (*udāsīnatva*) of the *puruṣas*, they are considered to be the *sākṣī*.

The term ‘*sākṣī*’ is ordinarily applied to an impartial, immediate seer (*udāsīnaaparokṣadraṣṭā*). In Sanskrit, it is usually said that ‘*sākṣātdraṣṭarisañjñāyām*’. That is, the term ‘*sākṣī*’ stands for the subject who immediately apprehends the objects presented to him/her. In the *Upaniṣads*, the term ‘*sākṣī*’ is frequently used to denote pure consciousness. In this connection, one may cite the statement of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, - ‘*ekodevaḥsarvabhūteṣugudhaḥ/sarvavyāpīsarvabhūtāntarātmā/ karmādhyakṣaḥsarvabhūtādhivāsah/sākṣīcetākevalonirguṇaśca*’¹⁹. When the term ‘*sākṣī*’ is applied to pure

consciousness, it does not actually mean the subject or the knower. On such occasions, it refers to the pure, illuminating principle of consciousness. This consciousness becomes the knower or the subject, when an object is presented before it. In fact, a *sākṣī* is never affected by any change, and is never related to anything. For this reason, the ordinary sense of *sākṣī*, where a *sākṣin* is required to be impartial and entirely unaffected by whatever phenomena is presented before it, is retained in the Upaniṣadic use of this term. The Sāṃkhya system considers *puruṣacaitanyas* as essentially identical with pure consciousness which is eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), pure knowledge (*buddha*) and liberated (*mukta*). Since, the *puruṣas* are essentially changeless, unrelated to anything, they are called *sākṣī*, following the Upaniṣadic tradition.

V

It is evident by now that the *puruṣa* being of the opposite nature of *triguṇa*, the essential nature of the transcendental consciousness, as *kaivalya*, is established. *Kaivalya* refers to the absolute absence of the threefold sufferings. Such absence of sufferings in *puruṣa* is its inherent essence or in other words, its true nature (*sva-svarūpa*). Thus, the *puruṣa* is eternally free, and devoid of any relation to any kind of sufferings. Sufferings are nothing but modes of transformation of the *rajas*. Thus, if *puruṣa* had consisted of the three *guṇas*, sufferings would have been a part of its essential nature. Consequently, liberation would have been impossible. However, *puruṣa* being contradictory in nature to the three *guṇas*, it is essentially devoid of sufferings. The term ‘*atraiguṇya*’ as applied to indicate *puruṣa*, which refers to the absence of pleasure, pain and delusion (*sukhaduḥkhamoharāhitya*) in pure consciousness. Whatever pleasure, pain *etc.* are experienced by the *puruṣa* are due to mere impositions on it. Those are nothing more than mere apprehensions (*ababodha*) of the being. In case of a being, the *antaḥkaraṇa* and the *caitanya* being contiguous to one another, the transformations (*vṛtti*) of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, appear to be that of the *puruṣa* itself. Just like the moon reflected on the wavy waters of a lake, appears to be wavering as well, whereas in reality the moon remains static, similarly for the *puruṣa*. Due to the reflected consciousness in *antaḥkaraṇa*, whatever pleasure *etc.* is there in it, also appear to be there in the consciousness. Thus, the apparent sense of the respective experiences occurs in the individuals. However, this does not hamper the

kaivalya or the eternally free existence (*nityamuktāvasthā*) of *puruṣa*, as the pure consciousness (*bimbacaitanya*), just like the moon in the analogy, remains ever unaltered and unaffected.

Further, the *puruṣa* is referred to as the *mādhyastha*. The term ‘*mādhyastha*’ refers to a mediator who is indifferent (*udāsīna*). This is also due to the *atraiguṇya* of *puruṣa*. The non-attachment of *puruṣa* towards either pleasure or pain is natural, as any relation to such is simply apparent (*ābhimānika*) on the part of the *puruṣa*. Thus, in Sāṃkhya philosophy, *puruṣa* is essentially indifferent. Finally, the *puruṣa* is never the agent (*akartā*). Knowledge, volition and desire are all modes of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. These are the conditions which constitute agency. Then evidently, *puruṣa* can never be the agent of an action. Moreover, the *puruṣa* being *vivekī* and *aprasavadharmī*, it is always devoid of agency. The *puruṣa* is *vivekī* because it is radically different from *prakṛti*, and also, it does not depend upon other principles for its function, as it is devoid of any functionality as such. This is further endorsed by the fact that it is *aprasavadharmī*, which indicates its essential immutability (*apariṇāmitva*). These conditions establish the *puruṣa* as the non-agent (*akartā*).

VI

On reaching upon the terminal point of the discussion in question, it is important to look into some of the objections raised by the opponents, namely the AdvaitaVedānta tradition of philosophy regarding the nature of consciousness, as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers, and also the account of the creation of the world, considering such nature of consciousness. We know that the AdvaitaVedāntins being the stakeholders of a monist and idealist school, pose to be the severest critics of the Sāṃkhya system. They consider the Sāṃkhya philosophical system to be their main opponent (*pradhānamalla*). The Advaitins have tried to refute the Sāṃkhya position on various grounds. The Sāṃkhya philosophers too have put forward a number of objections against the AdvaitaVedānta thesis, and that is why they are considered as the main opponents of the Advaita system. This is evident from the amount of effort employed by Śaṃkara to refute the Sāṃkhya position which is not observed in such proportions in case of refutation of the other philosophical schools.

This is primarily because of the fact that many of the tenets regarding the nature of consciousness as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers are of immense significance. Moreover, both the Sāṃkhya philosophers and the Advaita Vedāntins admit *satkāryavāda* as their causal theory. That is why there are quite a few aspects where the views of the Sāṃkhyatradition are admitted by the AdvaitaVedāntins too. For instance, both the systems admit the modification of the internal sense organ in the form of the object (*antaḥkaraṇaviśayākāravṛtti*). They admit that the sense organ reaches out to the external object and takes up its form, and accordingly, the internal sense organs undergo transformation through subsequent steps which lead to the production of cognition.

Further both the schools admit cognition and emotions like, pleasure, pain *etc.* as transformations (*pariṇāma*) of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. Hence, it is very significant on the part of the AdvaitaVedāntins to pay utmost attention to the Sāṃkhya views and establish their own distinctness from the Sāṃkhyaschool through detailed analysis and its refutations. The primary refutation by the Advaita Vedāntins is about the nature of *puruṣa* as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers. The Advaitins hold that if the nature of *puruṣa* essentially be eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), enlightened (*buddha*), free or unbound (*mukta*), as admitted by the Sāṃkhya philosophers, then it is not tenable to admit the plurality of consciousness (*puruṣabahutva*). This is because the distinctive properties that are advanced by the Sāṃkhya philosophers to establish the multiplicity of *puruṣa*, namely, the experiences of birth, death and individual inclinations *etc.*, are all fundamentally related to *prakṛti* only, and none of them could be considered in relation to consciousness. This is the first objection.

The second argument objects that if the nature of consciousness (*caitanya*) is such that it is completely devoid of any relation to *prakṛti* (*cetanānadhiṣṭhitajada*) and is distinct from it (*svatantrapradhāna*), then such an essence of *puruṣa*, can never be responsible for any sort of creation. This is because; any material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*) which is not presided over by a sentient agent is not capable of production. Such arguments have been put forward in ‘*Smṛtipāda*’ and ‘*Tarkapāda*’ of *Brahmasūtra*, for instance, in the aphorism ‘*dṛśyate tu*’²⁰. Further, the AdvaitaVedāntins argue that if the *puruṣa* is essentially of the nature of *anubhaya*,

that is, *naprakṛtiḥnavikṛtiḥ*, and moreover, if *akhyātivāda* is to be admitted, that is, if any cognition is essentially valid, and whatever illusion is apprehended occurs only in respect of usage, and not in respect of cognitions, as per the Sāṅkhya position, then actually there cannot be any bondage in case of *puruṣa* at all.

The third objection, however, has been raised and clarified by the Sāṅkhya philosophers themselves in the sixty second *kārikā* as follows, - ‘*tasmānnabadhyate’ addhānamucyatenā’ apisaṃsaratikaścit/saṃsaratibadhyatemucyate ca nānāśrayāprakṛtiḥ*’²¹. That is, the *puruṣa* being essentially unbound, immutable and devoid of the three *guṇas*, - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the question of its bondage and that of its volition towards liberation does not arise at all. The *puruṣa* being devoid of any relation to birth or death, any question of its migration does not occur at all, and accordingly, the propensity of *puruṣa* to attain liberation becomes meaningless. Thus, all sorts of phenomenal activities like, birth, death, migration and tendency to be liberated are not there in *puruṣa*, rather they all are located in the *prakṛti*. They are only imposed on the consciousness in case of empirical experiences. Hence, here the idea of liberation of *puruṣa* refers to its liberation from the imposed bondages, while the *prakṛti* attains fulfilment by serving the purpose of the *puruṣa*. The Advaitins, however, hold that the Sāṅkhya philosophers have not been able to resolve the issues satisfactorily related to bondage and liberation. The Sāṅkhya philosophers, on the contrary, argue against the Advaita Vedāntins’ theory regarding the genesis of the world, namely, *brahmakāraṇavāda*. According to the Sāṅkhya philosophers, the world (*jagat*) and consciousness (*caitanya*) being intrinsically different or essentially opposed in nature, - *atyantavilakṣaṇasvabhāva*, admission of the creation of the world from pure consciousness cannot be a tenable position. Hence, *brahmakāraṇavāda* cannot be an admissible position at all. This is expressed in the *sutra* - ‘*navilakṣaṇatvādasyatathātvaṃca śabdāt*’²².

However, the focus of the paper in question, being primarily on the contrast between the natures of the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti*, further discussions on the debate between the Sāṅkhya philosophers and the Advaita Vedāntins regarding the nature of consciousness, and its role in creation, would only lead to digression. Hence, pertaining to the focal point of our concerned paper we refrain from delving further into the above issues in this context. Thus, in conclusion, it could be said that the

Sāṃkhya system emphasizes on the irreducible difference between the material and the conscious principles, and the impossibility of the emergence of one from the other. In response to the objections put forward by the Advaita Vedāntins, the Sāṃkhya philosophers state that life and consciousness, even in its most rudimentary form, cannot arise from insentient matter. Modern science, too, admits that no living being, even ultra-microscopic ones, can come into being in a sterilized environment. Thus, if the fundamental principles of *satkāryavāda* are to be retained, there cannot be any causal interaction between matter and consciousness. Hence, all causal transformations pertain to the domain of the material principle, thereby implying the Sāṃkhya thesis of *pradhānakāraṇavāda*. This further emphasizes the necessity of the admission of the binary in the Sāṃkhya philosophical system, and their contrasting natures could actually be considered to be essential pre-requisites for the account of *being* in the world.

References:

¹Sāṃkhyakārikā 11

²Sāṃkhyakārikā 3

³Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 35

⁴Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 36

⁵Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 36

⁶Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 38

⁷Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 38

⁸Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p.117

⁹Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p.117

¹⁰Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 118

¹¹Bṛhadāraṇyaka4/3/15

¹²Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 119

¹³Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 120

¹⁴Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 121

¹⁵Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, pp. 121-122

¹⁶Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 127

¹⁷Sāṃkhyakārikā- 19

¹⁸Miśra, Vācaspati, 1406 (Bengali year), *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī on Sāṃkhyakārikā*, p. 190-191

¹⁹Śvetāśvatara- 6/11

²⁰Brahmasūtra-2/1/6

²¹Sāṃkhyakārikā -62

²²Brahmasūtra -2/1/4