CHAPTER – II

THE CONCEPTS OF PRAKR̵TI AND PURUŚA
CHAPTER - II

THE CONCEPTS OF PRAKR̄TI AND PURUṢA

1. THE CONCEPT OF PRAKR̄TI IN THE VEDAS

The term Prakṛti is found in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Mahābhārata, Gītā etc. However, it is the Śāṅkhya system which has accepted the Puruṣa and Prakṛti as the two ultimate principles. The Yoga philosophy also conforms to this view.

The derivative meaning of the word Prakṛti is prakaroṭi iti prakṛti.1 Another derivation of Prakṛti is given in Śāṅkhyasāra thus: prakṛṣṭā kṛtāḥ parināmarūpā asi ṣ i vyuṭparṭeh.2 Sakti, Pradhāna, Avyakta, Tamaḥ, Avidyā etc. are the synonyms of the word Prakṛti.3 The Śāṅkhyasāra also states,

brāhmaṇī vidyāvidyeti māyeti ca tathā pare/
prakṛtīśca pārā ceti vadanti paramārṣayah.4

In the Rgveda, the word Prakṛti occurs several times where it generally denotes Nature. “The boneless or unsubstantial is Prakṛti, Nature, the original source of the substantial, that is the material and visible world.”5 The doctrine of Prakṛti is also present in the celebrated Nāsadiya Sukta6 of the Rgveda, though the term Prakṛti does not occur there. This hymn may be said to be the first

1. STK on SK, 3.
3. Cf. prakṛtiḥ saktirājapradhanāmavyaktaṁ tamo māyāvidyātadayah prakṛtēḥ paryāyāh. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Griffith, Ralph. T.H., The Hymns of the Rg Veda, P. 110n
6. Rgveda, 10.129.1-4
germination of the creation theory which is later on developed by the philosophers to evolve a full fledged theory.

Sāyana, in his interpretation of this hymn says that in the state of dissolution, the cause of this world was not a non-entity, it is not a piece of nonsense, a purely chimerical thing, like the horns of a hare for the world cannot emanate out of any such sheer absurdity. On the otherhand, it was also not a reality like the one and only self. Griffith has commented on the term asat as that which “does not yet actually exist, but which has in itself the latent potentiality of existence. Which, from the absence of distinctness, was not an ‘entity’, while from its being the instrument of the world’s production, it was not a ‘non-entity’”.

This may be construed as referring to Prakṛti. Sāyana has also referred to Prakṛti as trigunātmika.

The Upanisads are the earliest Hindu treatises which mainly deal with philosophical subjects. In the Upaniṣads the concept of Prakṛti which is sometimes used as a synonym for Avidyā or Maya is found. The Upaniṣads regard the non-dual Brahman as the ultimate reality. The phenomenal world is described as Avidyā, Maya, Prakṛti etc. in different Upaniṣads in various ways.

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, which belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, the Saṁkhya concept of Prakṛti is developed. It is here described as Pradhāna and māyā. Prakṛti is identified with māyā which is the power of God. This Maya or Prakṛti is hidden by its own guṇas

7. Sayanabhāṣya on Ibid., 10.129.1
8. Griffith, Ralph. T.H., The Hymns of the Rg Vega, P.633 n
9. sattvarajastamo guṇātmikā mūlaprakṛtirevābhimateti. Sayanabhāṣya on Rgvega, 10.129.2
10. SU, 1.10
11. mayaṁ tu prakṛtim vidyāmāyāyinam ca mahēśvaram /
   tasyāyavavabhūtaistu vyaptam sarvamidām jagat // Ibid., 4.10
(sattva, rajas and tamas). It is said that this world is nothing but a play of the three gunas a permutation and combination of these three gunas. The Upaniṣad declares in clear terms that Prakṛti is unborn and is constituted of three red, white and black. It produced many objects like itself for the enjoyment of the unborn self. The Śāṅkhyas interpret the words red, white and black as referring to the three gunas of Prakṛti, viz. rajas, sattva and tamas respectively. Hence, the concept of the uncaused Prakṛti which is the cause of the world, which consists of the three gunas and which acts for the enjoyment of Purusa is clearly indicated here. Moreover it is said in this Upaniṣad that Prakṛti is not independent; it is ruled over by the Lord. The Upaniṣad says “Know then that nature is māyā, and that the great God is the Lord of māyā. The whole world is filled with beings who form His parts”. From this it appears that the Upaniṣad is in favour of a theistic view.

In the Kaṭhopaniṣad also we find the idea of unmanifest Prakṛti. The term Avyakta which is a synonym of Prakṛti is clearly mentioned here. Avyakta the cause of Mahat etc. is subordinated to Purusa. The evolutes of Prakṛti are also indicated in the verse, “Beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect higher than the intellect is Mahat (great). Atman, higher than the Mahat is the unmanifest.”

12. svagunāṁigudhāṁ//Ibid., 1.3
13. ajāmekāṁ lohitasuklakṛsṇāṁ .................//Ibid., 4.5
14. Ibid, 4.10
15. Kaṭh U, 1.3.11
16. indriyebhyāḥ parān mano manasāḥ sattvamuttvamam/
sattvādādhi mahānātma mahato’ vyaktamuttamam//Ibid., 2.3.7
In the *Maitrayani Upanisad* which is sometimes accepted as a principal *Upanisad*, the concept of *Prakṛti* is existent to some extent. In this *Upanisad*, many of the technical terms of Śāṅkhyā philosophy are used.

### 2. THE CONCEPT OF *PRAKṛTI* IN THE PURĀṆAS

In this way the concept of *Prakṛti* is found in a seed form in the vedic literature. But it is the Purāṇas where the concept of *Prakṛti* has been developed to give it the shape of Śāṅkhyā concept. In the Purāṇas, *Prakṛti* is described as the cause of the material world. The *Viśṇu Purāṇa* gives an elaborate description of *Prakṛti*. In this Purāṇa, *Prakṛti* is said to be the original stuff from which all material things evolve. It is called *Pradhāna* or *Avyakta*, the unmanifested cause of the universe. The *Viśṇu Purāṇa* explains this *Prakṛti* as subtle, uniform and *sadasadātma*, i.e. of the nature of both existent and non-existent, it is durable, self-sustained, illimitable, undecaying and stable, it is devoid of sound or touch and possessing neither colour nor-form. The *Prakṛti* is endowed with three *guna*s. *Prakṛti* is the cause of the world and has no beginning and in it all that is produced is resolved. At the time of dissolution everything was permeated by this subtle *Prakṛti* and in the absence of everything there was *Pradhāna* alone. *Prakṛti* is also illustrated in the *Viśṇu Purāṇa* as the equilibrium of the three *guna*s just like the Śāṅkhyā system.

According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Prakṛti* is the ultimate reality and is one, beginningless and self-shining. Here, *Prakṛti* is described as the cause of this variegated universe and this creative principle moved into action through the

---

17. Cf. avyaktam karanam yat tat pradhanampisatmanah / procyate prakrtih sukshma nityam sadasadatmakam // trigunam tajjagadopiranadi prabhavapayam / tenagre sarvavematvyaptam vai pralayadana // *VP*, 1.2.19, 21

influence of time, by the will and thought of Viṣṇu. Prakṛti is not an independent principle. It is the creative power of God. This Purāṇa defined Prakṛti as the reality which consists of the three guṇas, viz. sattva, rajas and tamas, imperceptible, eternal, replete with being and non-being and though indeterminate, it is the source of all the specific objects.¹⁹

Prakṛti has been termed as māyā in the Bhagavata Purāṇa. The process of creation started by Prakṛti is known as māyā. Māyā has been described as the power that creates, maintains and destroys the universe.²⁰

The Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa also gives the meaning of the word Prakṛti and it also explains the origin of this agent in creation. In this Purāṇa, it is said that Prakṛti is triguṇātmikā and almighty. Here, the word Prakṛti means the creator. The prefix pra means most brilliant kṛti means creation. Hence, that goddess who was pre-eminent in creation is termed Prakṛti. Again, pra means best or is equivalent to sattva, the quality of purity; kr implies middle, the quality of passion; i.e. rajas and ti means tamas or worse or that of ignorance.²¹ She, who is invested with all powers is identifiable with the three properties and is the principal in creation, and is therefore termed Prakṛti.

The derivation of Prakṛti is also noticed in the Devibhagavata. Here, the prefix pra denotes prakṛṣṭa (principal) and the root kr denotes sṛṣṭi (creation). Hence, creation, which is prominent is called Prakṛti.²² The Purāṇa also shows that the term Prakṛti includes the three guṇas: pra means sattva, kr means

---

19. yat yat triguṇamavyaktam nityam sadasadātmakam /
pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prahuravisesāṁ viseṣaṁ vat // BP, 3.26.10

20. esa māya bhagavatāh sargasthityantakarini /
trvarṇa varṇitasmābhiḥ kim bhūyaḥ srotumicchasi // Ibid., 11.3.16

21. Br P, Prakṛtiḥkhaṇḍa, 1.5-7

22. prakṛṣṭavācaḥ prasca kṛṣṭa sṛṣṭi vācaḥah /
sṛṣṭau prakṛṣṭa ya devi prakṛtiḥ sā prakṛtiḥ // Devī Bhagavata, 9.1.5.
rajas and ti means tamas. Prakṛti is the main cause of this world which is of the nature of three gunas.\textsuperscript{13}

Among the eighteen Purāṇas only the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa's concept of Prakṛti have been discussed here as they have abiding influence on Sāṁkhya system. In other Purāṇas also similar description of Prakṛti is noticed. However, it must be mentioned here that unlike the Sāṁkhya system, the Purāṇas regard Prakṛti as governed by the lord Viṣṇu.

3. THE CONCEPT OF PRAKṛTI IN THE MAHĀbhĀRATA

The Mahābhārata is one of the two most authoritative great epics of India. It is stated to be a 'whole literature'. It is said that the Mahābhārata is the 'store-house of Indian wisdom.'

The Mahābhārata is the theistic epic where Prakṛti is described as one of the most important categories. Here, Prakṛti is said to be endowed with the dynamic power of evolving and dissolving this whole universe. But Prakṛti does not of her own accord, perform this wonderful function. Prakṛti is completely controlled by one spiritual principle. This spiritual principle is the highest reality that transcends all. Prakṛti is the root cause of the world which is the equilibrium of the three guṇas viz. sattva, rajas and tamas.\textsuperscript{24} Dr. Anima Sengupta observes, "The innumerable ripples and rhythms of worldly life, its rugged rocks and green

\textsuperscript{23} guṇe prakṛstāsattve ca pr śabdo vartate srutau / 
madhyame rajasi kroṣa tiśabhastamasi srṛtāḥ // 
trigupatmasvarūpāṁ yāṁ sarvasaktisamanvītī // 
pradhiṇānāṁ sṛṣṭikarāṇe prakṛṭistena kathyaṁ // 
prathame vartate prasāca kṛtiṣca sṛṣṭiवacakah/ 
sṛṣṭeradyāṁ ca yā devi prakṛtiḥ sa prakṛtipā // Ibid., 9.1.6-8

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. pradhāne prakṛtiṁ yate guṇasāmye vyavasthite / Mahābhārata, 12.205.57
valleys, its pleasures and pains, flowers and thorns, all are due to this moving and palpitation power, often termed as Nature or Prakṛti. Pure individual consciousness that appears as the knower of this worldly existence is not an active principle."

On many occasions, in the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata it has been described that Prakṛti is Aavyakta or unmanifest, the root cause of the whole universe. Prakṛti is also called Mānasa here.

From the teachings of the Mahābhārata it is clear that Prakṛti creates everything. But Prakṛti does this only under the control of the highest spiritual principle. This ultimate Reality is the highest reality, which transcends and includes both Prakṛti and individual Puruṣa. In the Mahābhārata, there is a description of the creation and destruction of Prakṛti. Prakṛti is created from Brahman and is destroyed in Brahman.

4. THE CONCEPT OF PRAKṛTI IN THE GĪTĀ

The concept of Prakṛti is further elaborated in the Gītā where it is said to be trigunātmikā (i.e. consisting of three guṇas). According to the Gītā, the Absolute Reality is the all inclusive God, who comprises within Himself both Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

Prakṛti is the cause of the world. According to the Gītā, Prakṛti is one and beginningless, but Gītā's Prakṛti is dependent on God. In the Gītā, it is said that Prakṛti creates everything with the help of God's own creative powers and

25. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, The Evolution of the Śāṅkhyā School of Thought, P. 71
26. avyaktaṁabhūḥ prakṛṭiṁ paraṁ prakṛtvādīnaḥ /
tatasyaṁjataṁ sa vyaktam sargapralayadharmi vai /
ngunāḥ prakṛtiṁ veda guṇayuktamacetanāṁ /
mānasō nāma vikhyātaḥ śrutapūrvo maharsibhiḥ/ Mahābhārata,
12.306.27; 12.308.11, 12; 12.182.11
27. Ibid., 12.303. 31-34; 12.350. 26-27
28. tasmādavyaktamutpānāṁ trigunāṁ dvijasattam/Ibid., 12.334.31
energy. *Prakṛti* is described as being the part which God charges with its energy for the creation of the universe.²⁹ No doubt, *Prakṛti* creates the universe, but it is only an instrument of God, having no independent existence of its own. Dr. Anima Sengupta opines that in the *Gītā*, the word *Prakṛti* is used in the sense of the inferior principle of the world. Therefore, it is synonymous with *Avyakta*.³⁰ The *Gītā* also describes *Prakṛti* as twofold: *Parā* and *Apara* *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are the *Apara* and the *Para* *Prakṛti* respectively.³¹

The *Apara* *Prakṛti* mainfests itself as the insentient universe and the *Parā* *Prakṛti* as the living soul or the experciencer of the world. The five elements i.e., earth, water, fire, air and earth, mind, *buddhi* and *ahāmkāra* consist of the lower nature or *Aparā* *Prakṛti*. *Parā* *Prakṛti* is the nature of the living souls. This superior nature is the principle, by which this insentient *Prakṛti* is sustained and animated. *Aparā* *Prakṛti* and *Parā* *Prakṛti* are the cause of the whole creation and dissolution.³² The *Gītā* also describes that *Prakṛti* is the *kṣetra* and the soul is the *kṣetrajña*, which exist in the body.³³ The creation of the world has its starting point in contact between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*.³⁴ According to Śāṅkhya, *Prakṛti* creates the world when *Prakṛti* comes into relation with the *Puruṣa*. But the *Gītā* stated that the contact of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are produced by the desire of God or *Īśvara*.

The term *Prakṛti* consists of diverse meanings. The dictionarical³⁵ meaning

---

²⁹. Cf. mama yonirmahadbrahma tasmin garbhānāh dadhāmyaham / Gītā, 14.3
³⁰. The Evolution of the Śāṅkhya School of Thought, Sengupta, Dr. Anima, P. 153
³¹. Gītā, 7. 4-5
³². Ibid.
³³. kṣetrajñāṇaṁapi māṁ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhāratā / Ibid., 13.3
³⁴. yāvat sanjñyate kīṁcit sattvam sthāvarajajñgamam / kṣetra-kṣetrajñasaṁyogat tadviddhi bharatarṣbha // Ibid., 13.27
³⁵. The Students Sanskrit Dictionary, Apte, Vaman Shivram, P. 351
of Prakṛti is the natural condition or state of anything, nature, natural form, it also means that it is the material of which anything is made. Another meaning is the personified will of the supreme spirit in the creation identified with māyā or illusion.

5. THE NATURE OF PRAKṛTI

The Sāṁkhya philosophy regards Prakṛti as the ultimate cause of the material world. Prakṛti is the primordial matter. Prakṛti is the first and the root cause of the whole universe. All the effects depend upon it. The theory of causation known as Satkāryavāda upheld by this system points-out that the effect always remains beforehand in the cause in an unmanifested (Avyakta) state. In proper time, this effect is revealed or manifested (Vyakta) by causal activity. The theory that causation means a real transformation of the material cause leads to the concept of Prakṛti as the root cause of the world of objects. All things have a cause, but Prakṛti is causeless. If an ultimate cause which itself is causeless is not accepted then everything of this world being always proceeded by a cause, this cause again must have another cause and the second cause, a third one and so on. Thus, this chain of causal relations will have no end.36 Hence, there must be an ultimate cause of this world. This ultimate cause which is called Avyakta is causeless. All worldly effects are latent in this uncaused cause, because infinite regress has to be avoided. Thus Avyakta is the state of unmanifestation of all worldly effects. Avyakta is subtle and supersensuous. It is described as material, indeterminate and eternal.37

The Sāṁkhya philosophers also call this ultimate cause as Prakṛti or Pradhāna. As the uncaused root cause, it is called Prakṛti. The term Prakṛti

36. Cf. SKI, Phukan, Radhanath, P. 577
37. Cf. SS, 1.109; SPB on it; SK, 6, 8, 10; GB on it; STK on it.
signifies that which becomes transformed. It transforms itself into the world of our experience. So, it is called Prakṛti. As the first principle of the universe, it is again called Pradhāna. It is called Pradhāna since all effects are contained in it. It is, therefore, called the divine womb of all manifestations. The oldest commentary on the Tattvasamāsasūtra known as Tattvasamāsasūtravṛtti, describe Pradhāna as that which is eternal, superior to Mahat and beyond our sense perception. Gauḍapāda, the renowned commentator of Śāmkhyakārikā, also says that Pradhāna is that of which the things ‘possessed of the three guṇas’ are the effects. He also says that Avyakta is Pradhāna. Vacaspati Misra and other commentators as well as modern exponents regard this Avyakta as the Pradhāna or Prakṛti.

Vacaspati Misra argues that the properties of the effect are due to those of the cause. As all effects starting from Mahat are endowed with pleasure, pain and delusion, it follows that there must be the presence of pleasure, pain and delusion subsisting in their cause. Pleasure, pain and delusion are the characteristics of sattva, rajas and tamas respectively. Hence, Avyakta or Pradhāna which is constituted of three guṇas, viz. sattva, rajas and tamas must be regarded as the cause of Mahat etc. It is thus the existence of this cause in the shape of unmanifest primordial matter is established. Hence, Prakṛti is the ultimate cause

38. pradhiyate'smin hi kāryajātamiti pradhānamucyate. SPB on SS, 1.125.
39. Cf. asabdāmasparsaśamarupamavyayam
   tathā ca nityam rasagandhavārjitm /
   anādīmadhyāṃ mahātaḥ paraṁ dhruvam
   pradhānametat pravadanti sūrayāt // Tattvasamāsa sūtravṛtti on TS, 2.
   Dipikāvyākhyā, P. 529
40. yasyātmahadādī lingam trigunam. yasyedam trigunam kāryam tatpradhānamiti. GB on
   SK, 6
41. Cf. avyaktāṃ pradhānam. Ibid., 2
42. Cf. tathā ca tatkānaṃ sukhaduhkhahatmakam pradhānam vyaktam siddham bhavati. STK on SK, 14

46
of the world. Prakṛti is the motive force behind the world process. The whole world of multiplicity is evolved from Prakṛti. Being extremely subtle Prakṛti is imperceptible. It can be inferred only from its products. That is why Prakṛti is called anumāṇa. Prakṛti is jaḍa or unconscious principle which is the cause of the material world. As the ever-active unlimited power, it is called Śakti.

In the Sāmkhya philosophy, this fundamental or primal cause of the world is called Mula-prakṛti. In Sāmkhya pravacana bhaṣya, Vijnānabhikṣu has said that Pradhāna is the first cause of the twenty three principles, which itself is rootless, because a further root is not possible. According to Vacaspati Misra and Gauḍāpāda also, it is called Mūla-prakṛti because it is the root cause of the universe. Being the ultimate source of this universe it itself cannot have any root. The Mūla-prakṛti is avikṛti (changeless) since it is not the production of anything else. All other material things beginning from Mahat have some cause from which they produced. But Pradhāna has no other cause for its production. Hence it is called avikṛti. Moreover, the effects like Mahat etc. are also the causes (Prakṛti) of some other thing. To distinguish Pradhāna from this type of Prakṛti (cause) it is called Mūla-prakṛti.

In the Sāmkhyakārikā, Īśvarakṛṣṇa explains Prakṛti as trigunam (possessed of three guṇas), aviveki (indiscriminative), viṣaya (object), sāmānyam (general), acetanam (non-intelligent), prasavadharmi (productive), ahetumat (causeless),

43. SK, 8; also samanyatastau drṣṭaḍatindriyanam pratitirananumatan/Ibid., 6
44. mule mūlabhavādāmūlam mūlam. SS, 1-67
45. trayovimśatattvānaṁ mūlamupādānan pradhānām mulaśunyam, ..... tatra mūlānātaraṁabhavat. SPB on Ibid.
46. mūlānātaram prakṛticeti mūlaprakṛtiḥ. visvasyā kāryaṁbhatisya sa mūlam na tvasyā mūlānātaramasti, STK on SK, 3; mūlam ca sa prakṛticca mūlaprakṛti. GB on it.
47. mūlaprakṛtiravikṛtiḥ. SK, 3; kasyacidvikāro na bhavati. GB on it, sa avikṛtiḥ. STK on it.
nityam (eternal), vyāpi (all-pervading), nīśkriyam (inactive), ekam (one), anāśritam (unsupported), alingam (non-mergent), nirayavayam (partless), svaśtantram (independent) and Avyaktaṃ (unmanifest)⁴⁸

Firstly, Prakṛti is the state of equilibrium of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas).⁴⁹ “This state of equipose is absolutely indeterminate, undifferentiated and homogeneous and it exists only as the possible source of energy of the whole world.”⁵₀ These are not the qualities of Prakṛti, but they are its components. So, Prakṛti is trigunātmikā.⁵¹ In the equilibrium state, no guṇa is high, or low. In the view of Vijnānabhaṅkṣu, this state of equilibrium indicates that at that time there is no effective form.⁵² Vijnānabhaṅkṣu also points out that these three guṇas are not qualities in the Nyāya-Vaiṣṇeva sense since sattva, rajas and tamas have their specific characters. These are the constituents of Prakṛti.

Secondly, Prakṛti is avivekī or non-discriminative. According to the Śaṁkhyaśastra, effect are not different from the cause. Just as the root Prakṛti can not be separated from itself, so also it is not different from its effects. Avivekī may stand for the character of being co-operative.⁵³ Nothing can produce anything

---

⁴⁸. trigunamaviveke visayah samnyamacetanam prasavadhami/ vyaktam tatha pradhānam ..............................................................//
hetumadanyamavayapi sakriyamanekeṣāṃritam lingam/
sāvayavam paratāntrāṃ vyaktaṃ viparitamavyaktam// SK, 11, 10
⁴⁹. sattva-rajastamasāṃ samyāvasthā prakṛti. SS, 1.61
⁵₀. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, Classical Śaṁkhya: A Critical Study, P.88
⁵¹. guṇa eva prakṛtiśabdavacayā na tu tadatirikta prakṛtitirastī. YV, 2.18
⁵². tesām sattvādīdravyānām yā samyāvasthā anuśānatairikta vavasthā, nyūṇādhikabhaṅvenāsamhātavastheti yāvavat, akāryāvastheti niśkarṣah, akāryāvasthopalakṣitaṃ guṇasamānyāṃ prakṛturītyarthah. SPB on SS, 1.61
⁵³. avivekī yathā pradhānam na svato vivicayete. .................., tadatmakatvā, athava sambhyākāritatravivekī. STK on SK, 11
without the help of others. Hence *aviveki* means that there is co-operation among the *guna* *Pradhāna*. Gaudapāda opines that it is not distinguished from the *guna*, so it is called *aviveki*. It is not possible to differentiate between the *Prakṛti* and the *guna*.\(^{54}\)

Thirdly, *Prakṛti* is the object of enjoyment for all the *Puruṣas* and as such it is called *visaya*.\(^{55}\) According to Vācaspati Miśra, the term *visaya* refutes *Vijñānavāda*. The *Vijñānavādins* hold that happiness, sorrow and dullness are the transformation of *vijnāna* (knowledge) only; they are not different from *vijnāna*. Against this view it is said that *Pradhāna* is the object of knowledge and it remains outside of *vijnāna*.\(^{56}\)

Fourthly, it is *sāmānya* or common because it is apprehended by many *Puruṣas*.\(^{57}\)

Fifthly, *Prakṛti* is *acetana* or unconscious or non-intelligent. It is not conscious of pleasure, pain and delusion.\(^{58}\)

Sixthly, productivity is the character of *Prakṛti*.\(^{59}\) The *Sāṅkhya* philosophy does not accept any *Īśvara* or God or any other supreme being to which the *Pradhāna* is subordinate. The most important nature of *Prakṛti* is that it is productive and is always undergoing changes into forms and categories. In the words of Dr. Anima Sengupta, "Nature is, no doubt, unconscious and unintelligent, still there is some inherent teleology (unconscious) in the *guna* as a result of which they produce this world."\(^{60}\)

54. pradhānānamapi gunaṁ haraṁ bhidyate. GB on SK, 11.
55. pradhānānamapi sarvapuruśaviśayabhūtataévāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvāvावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावावावāवāवāवāवāवावावावावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावावावāवāवāवāवावावāवावāवāवāवāवावāवावāवāवāवāवावावावावāवāवāवावāवावāवāवावावāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवāवावāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावावāवावāवावāवावāवāवāवावāवāवावāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावावावāवावāवावāवावावāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवावावāवावावāवावāवावāवāवāवावावāवāवावावāवāवāवāवावāवावāवāवāवावāवावावावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवावāवावावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावা঵āवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावावावāवावāवावāवāवāवावāवावावāवāवāवāवावावāवावāवāवāवावāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवावāवावāवāवावāवावāवावāवावāवāवावāवāवāवावāवāवावāवावāवāवावावāवāवावা঵āवā�āवāवāवāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवāवावāवāवāवāवāवावावāवāवāवावা঵āवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवāवावāवावāवāवāवāवāवāवা঵āవāवāवা঵া঵āवāవā蛙া঵āవावā蛙ā蛙åavadhdhāranatvāt. GB on SK, 11.
58. pradhānānamapi sukhaduhkhamohanna cetayati. Ibid.
59. prasavadadharmi ..pradhānam. Ibid.
Seventhly, Prakṛti is also ahetumat (causeless) because there is nothing higher than the Prakṛti. Therefore it is not produced.\textsuperscript{61} It has already been said that if the uncaused Prakṛti is not accepted then everything of this world being always preceded by a cause, this cause again must have another cause and the second cause, a third one and so on and this causal relations will have no end and hence, there will be the fallacy of infinite regress. All effects are latent in this causeless Prakṛti because infinite regress has to be avoided.\textsuperscript{62}

Another character is that Prakṛti is eternal or nitya, because it is neither produced nor destroyed.\textsuperscript{63}

Prakṛti is vyāpi or all pervading because of its omnipresence.\textsuperscript{64} The Śāmkhya karikā also describes Prakṛti as akriya or devoid of action. Explaining this term Gaudapāda says that Prakṛti is akriya because it is all pervasive. But there may be a confusion regarding this attribute of Prakṛti. It has already been said that Prakṛti is out and out productive (prasavadharmi). Then the question naturally arises how a thing which is productive can be without any action. To clearify this point Vācaspāti says that though Prakṛti possesses action in the form of transformation, it does not possess action in the form of movement.\textsuperscript{65}

_Parakṛti_ is one cause of the three worlds. So, it is one.\textsuperscript{66} "Prakṛti is one and is nothing but the unity of the three guṇas in a state of potentiality and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{61} na hi pradhānāt param kīcchidasti, yataḥ pradhānasyanutpattih, tasmadhhetumadavyaktam. GB on SK, 10
  \item \textsuperscript{62} yathā hi mūlādinām bijām prakṛtīstāṣāpyanyattāṣāpyanyadyanavastir, YDi on SK, 3
  \item \textsuperscript{63} nityamavyaktamanutpadyamāṇatvat. GB on SK, 10
  \item \textsuperscript{64} vyāpi pradhānām, sarvagatavāt ............... akriyamavyaktāṁ, sarvagatavāt. Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{65} prasavarūpō dharmaḥ yah, prasavadharmeti vaktaryāvāṃ matvarthiḥyāḥ prasavadharmasya nityayogamākhyātāṃ. svarupavirupaparināmābhāyām na kadacidapi .......... STK on SK, 11
  \item \textsuperscript{66} ekam pradhānam karatvat. trayānām lokānām pradhānānekām kāranāṁ. tasmādekaṁ pradhānam. GB on SK, 10
\end{itemize}
Anāsrīta or unsupported is the nature of Prakṛti. It is unsupported because it is not a product. It supports all, being the cause of all and is not supported by anything else. So, it is not dependent. There is nothing greater than Prakṛti in which it can be located.

Prakṛti is also alingam or non-mergent being eternal. The manifest is mergent. Mahat and the rest, at time of dissolution merge in their causes, but Prakṛti is not so. It is also partless because sound, touch, taste, form and smell do not exist in Prakṛti. In the words of Mukta Biswas, “The products are caused, dependent, relative, many and temporary as they are subject to birth and death or to production and destruction, but Prakṛti is uncaused, independent, absolute, one and eternal, being beyond production and destruction.”

It has already been said that Prakṛti is not perceived, it is beyond the senses. The non-apprehension of Prakṛti is due to its minuteness (suksma) and not because of non-existence. According to Vijnānabhikṣu, the term suksma does not mean ‘minuteness’. rather it means duruhatvam (i.e. abstruseness). In his view Prakṛti cannot be minute, since it is all-pervasive. Actually, it is inferred

67. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, Classical Saṁkhya: A Critical Study, P.89
68. anāsrītāṃ, akāryatvāt. na hi pradhānādasti kincitparam yaśya pradhānām kāryam syāt. GB on SK, 10
69. alingamavaktaṃ, nityatvāt. mahadadilingam pralayakale prasparpratīyate, naivam pradhānam, tasmaḍalingam pradhānam. Ibid.
70. niravayamavaktaṃ, na hi śabdasparsarūpāgandhāḥ pradhāhāṃ santi. Ibid.
71. Biswas, Mukta, Saṁkhya-Yoga-Epistemology, P.21
72. sauksmyāt tadanupalabdhiḥ. SS, 1.109; prakṛtipuruṣayorunupalabdhistu sauksmyādyarthah. suksmatvam ca nanūtvam, viśvāyapanat. SPB on it; also SK,8.
73. duruhatvam sauksmyām na tu anūtvam prakṛteḥ vibhūtvāt iti. SKI, Mainkar, Dr. T. G, P.60
from its effects. However, in the *Śāṁkhyapraśacana-bhāṣya*, it is mentioned that though we cannot perceive the actual form of *Prakṛti*, yet yogis can perceive *Prakṛti* by their meditative power. Hence it is found that *Prakṛti* is beyond creation and destruction, imperceptible and unmanifest, which is the cause of all the objects of this universe. “According to the Śāṁkhyā, *Prakṛti* is not only the source of energy, that is needed for the formation of the world, but also it is an inexhaustive source which is constantly making good the loss sustained by the different evolutes in the act of creating their respective effects and stadia.”

Vijñānabhikṣu’s conception of *Prakṛti* is, however, somewhat different from other Śāṁkhyā exponents. Like other Śāṁkhyists he maintains that *Prakṛti* is the dynamic principle which is non-conscious and the ultimate material cause of the material world. But he also accepts another ultimate principle viz. Brahman which is an independent principle. Brahman is responsible for bringing about the associations of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. He regards *Prakṛti* as the power of Brahman. It is simply a power. *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are real but they are nothing but the parts or powers of Brahman. In the stage of pralaya, *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* remain merged in Brahman as inseparable from it. Vyāsa, in his *Yogabhāṣya* regards *Prakṛti* as neither *sat* nor *asat*. In his view, it is both *sat* and *asat*. It is *Avyakta*.

---

74. kārayatastadupalabdhiḥ. SK, 8
75. yogajadharmasyā cottejakatayā prakṛtipuruṣadināṁ pratyakṣapramāṇa bhavati. SPB on SS, 1.109
76. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, *Classical Śāṁkhyā: A Critical Study*, P.119
77. SaS, Uttarabhāgā, 5.20; SPB on SS, 1.154; Cf. *Indian Theories of Creation: A Synthesis*, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P.16
78. svasaktau prakṛtau. SPB on SS, 2.5; Cf. *Reflections on Indian Philosophy*, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P.154
79. SPB on SS, 2.5; Cf. *Indian Theories of Creation: A Synthesis*, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P.17
80. Ibid., P.16
Prakṛti is non-mergent, it is Pradhāna. Prof. S.N. Dasgupta here observes, "Now, according to the Śāmkhya Pātañjala doctrine the sākti-power, force and the sāktiman the possessor of power or force are not different but identical. So, the Prakṛti and all its emanations and modifications are of the nature of substantive entities as well as power or force." Theos Bernard sums up the concept of Prakṛti in a nutshell thus: "By logical implication, Prakṛti (cosmic substance) is the uncaused cause, therefore, it is eternal, indestructible and all pervasive. It is formless, limitless, immobile and immanent. It has position but no magnitude, ‘its centre is everywhere, and its circumference is no where.’ It is inanimate and unintelligent. It is an ultimate and not a derivative principle; it is the root-principle, the seat of all manifestation, the normal cause of the phenomenal world, the potential power of becoming, the instrumental cause of the world, the substance in which all attributes and action inhere. It is not produced, yet it brings everything else into existence, it is the support of all things, yet it is unsupported; it absorbs all things, yet it is not absorbed by anything else."

Becoming or movement is ingrained in Prakṛti. Anuloma (forward) and pratiloma (backward) are the two movements of Prakṛti. Anuloma movement is that when Prakṛti becomes the originating manager of all sargas and pratiloma movement is that when it retraces the stages from end to end which is developed.

6. PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF PRAKRĪTI

A question naturally arises here if Prakṛti is imperceptible and very subtle what is the proof for the existence of such an ultimate cause of the world. The

81. niḥsatvasattvam niḥsadasad nirasadavyaktamalingam pradhānam. Yogabhāṣya, 2.19
82. Dasgupta, S.N., Yoga As Philosophy And Religion, P.82
83. Bernard, Theos, Hindu Philosophy, Pp.73-74
84. Cf. Classical Śāmkhya : A Critical Study, Sengupta, Dr. Anima, P.89

53
Saṃkhya forwards different arguments for proving the existence of Prakṛti.
Iśvarakṛṣṇa has summerised these arguments in his Saṃkhya-kārikā.

Iśvarakṛṣṇa argues that Prakṛti or Avyakta as the root cause of the universe exists (i) because of the finiteness of the specific objects, (ii) because of the homogeneousness of the objects, (iii) because the effects depend on the potentiality of the cause, (iv) because of the distinction made between the cause and its effects and (v) because of the continuity of the diversity of the universe.85

(i) Bhedaṇāṁ Parimāṇāt

The first argument is that all the material things of the universe are limited and as such dependent and conditional. Whatever is limited is dependent on something more enduring and pervasive than itself. The finites cannot be dependent on any finite cause. Hence, there must be an unlimited, independent, absolute and unending cause for their existence, which is called Prakṛti or Avyakta or Pradhāna. Gaudapāda here argues that the Mahat etc. are mergent (linga) finit and so are the specific effects of this Prakṛti. Prakṛti is not postulated here, then the finite manifest would have been infinite. Thus, on account of the finiteness of the specific objects there is the Prakṛti, from which Vyaktas are produced.

The same argument is also forwarded by Mathara. He also contends that if Prakṛti is not accepted as the cause of the vyaktas, then the vyaktas themselves will be unlimited. The evolved principles show that they have numerical measure and finite nature and leads to the establishment of the need for assuming a source i.e., Prakṛti for these finite evolutes and the indefinite Prakṛti is regarded as cause.86

85. bhedaṇāṁ parimāṇāt samanvayat saktitah pravṛttesca/
kāraṇakāryavibhāgādavibhāgād vaisvarūpasya//
kāreṇamastī avyaktāṁ ........................................ SK, 15,16
86. GB on Ibid., Mathara on it.
"Finite distincts have a cause. It means that such bodies do not contain their own explanation. What contains its own explanation is, therefore, neither finite nor distinct. It is one and infinite."87

(ii) Samanvayāt

The second argument for postulating Avyakta Prakṛti is homogeneity. Homogeneity consists in the similarity of the different objects. All the things of this world have some general qualities. All things are capable of producing pleasure, pain and indifference. So, there should be accepted Prakṛti which is composed of the three guṇas-sattva, rajas and tamas which are the general causes of these things.88

(iii) Śaktītaḥ Pravṛtteśca

The unmanifest is the cause because of evolution being due to the efficiency of the cause. All effects come from the particular cause which includes their potentiality within the cause. No effect can arise from an inefficient cause. Now, according to the Sāṃkhya, who are satkāryavādins, the effect exists in an unmanifest from (Avyakta) in the cause. Vacaspati maintains that here śakti or potency is nothing but the unmanifest state of the effect.89 There is no need to accept any separate energy than this Avyakta state of the effect. For example oil is produced from sesame, since oil remains in Avyakta state in sesame and not in sand. The whole universe remains potentially in the Prakṛti and therefore, we should accept the existence of Prakṛti.

87. Dasgupta, S.P. and Mukerji, J.N., A Study of the Sāṃkhyaśāstra, P.50
88. bhinnanām samānārūpataḥ samanvayaḥ. sukhadudākhamohasamanvitā hi buddhyādayo'dhyavasūyadilaksanāḥ pratiyante. yāni ca yadrūpāsamanutāni tāni tatvabhadvāvyaktakāraṇāni. STK on SK, 15; also vide, GB on it.
89. saktisca kāraṇagatā na kāryasyāvyaktatvādanyā. STK on SK, 15.
(iv-v) Karanakaryavibhagadavibhagadvaisvarupasya

The differences between cause and effects are visible in the world. In the characters of both effect and cause, differences are there. A jar is competent to hold water or honey whereas the clay is incapable of that, though jar and clay are effect and cause respectively. Similarly clay can produce a jar and not the vice-versa. Hence, seeing the effects like Mahat etc. it can be presumed that there is a cause from which these are produced.

Sāmkhya also admits an identity between cause and effect. Every effect is dissolved in its cause. In the state of pralaya, the five gross elements and the eleven organs of some and action resolve themselves into the five subtle elements and have no longer any difference. Further Mahat is reunited with nature and ceases to be differentiated.90

Illustrating this argument of the Sāmkhyas Sir william Hamilton says. "When we are aware of something when begins to be, we are by the necessary of our intelligence, constrained to believe that it has a cause. But what does the expression, that it has a cause, signify? If we analyse our thought, we shall find that it simply means, that as we cannot conceive any new existence to commence, therefore, all that now is seen to arise under a new appearance had previously an existence under a prior form. We are utterly unable to realise in thought the possibility of the complement of existence either increased or diminished. We are unable, on the one hand, to conceive nothing becoming something or on the other something becoming nothing. . . . . . . . There is thus conceived an absolute tautology between the effect and its cause. We think the cause to contain all that is contained in the effect, the effect to contain nothing which was not contained in the cause."91

90. GB on SK, 15.
91. The Tattva-Kaumudi, Jha, Mahamahopadhyāya Gangānath, (Introduction), P.30
Commenting on this kārika Vācaspāti Mīśra explains these two kāraṇakāryavibhāgāt and avibhāgādvaisvarūpasya somewhat differently. He takes the meaning of the word vibhāga as ‘emerging’ from (niḥsāranti) and that of avibhāga as ‘to become unmanifest’ (avvyaktibhavanti). All things of the world, from Mahat to five gross elements, exist in an unmanifested state before their creation. The effect emerges from the cause and again merges into it after its destruction. For example the limbs of a Tortoise emerges from it and is perceived as different from the Tortoise. Again when these limbs are drawn back by the Tortoise they become unmanifest into it. Hence, Prakṛti must be accepted as the cause of Mahat etc.92

7. SIMILARITY AND DISSIMILARITY BETWEEN VYAKTA AND AVYAKTA

Now, let us see what are the similarities and dissimilarities between Vyakta and Avyakta. Vyakta, Avyakta and Jñāh 93 are the three categories accepted by the Sāṁkhya system. Among these three categories Avyakta and Jñāh are the ultimate realities and the Vyakta constitutes the world of experience. Mahat, ahamkāra, the five tanmātras, eleven organs and the five mahābhūtas—these twenty three tattvas are called Vyaṅktatattva. The Avyakta or Pradhāna or Prakṛti is the ultimate cause and Jñāh means Puruṣa.94 In the Sāṁkhyakārikā, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has illustrated some similarities and dissimilarities between Vyakta and Avyakta. It has already been mentioned while discussing the natures of Prakṛti. The first similarity between the Vyaktas and Avyakta is that both are possessed of three guṇas. Sattva, rajas and tamas are the three guṇas of Prakṛti and the Vyaktas. Sattva is of the nature of pleasure, rajas is of the pain and tamas is of the delusion. For example, a flower

92. STK on SK, 15
93. vyaktavyaktajña...../Ibid., 2
94. GB on SK, 2
which is a source of pleasure to all or a pleasurable person, is the cause of pain to a person, who is allergic to the flower and again produces delusion to some other person. Similarly, all the Vyaktas are triguṇātmakā. Prakṛti or Avyakta is also triguṇātmikā.

Secondly, cause and effect are not separated. Prakṛti cannot be separated from itself as also Mahat cannot be distinct from Prakṛti because Mahat etc. are the effects of Pradhāna. So, it is undistinguishable from Prakṛti. Thus, Vyakta and Avyakta are undistinguishable. Vācaspati Miśra gives another meaning of the term aviveki: He says aviveki may stand for the nature of being co-operative. Among the manifest things, there is nothing that is adequate by itself to produce its effect; it can do so only when in co-operation with other things; and hence it is not possible for anything to be produced out of anything taken singly by itself.95

Again, manifest is ‘objective’. ‘Objective’ here stands for ‘that which can be apprehended.’ This means that Vyakta is not vijnāna (idea), it is exterior to the idea. As because it is ‘objective’, therefore it is ‘common’—i.e. apprehended by several persons.96 Vācaspati here argues that if it were of the form of the idea, then in that case manifest would have to belong specially to particular individuals. For ideas being in the form of ‘functions’, belong specially to particular individuals. As a matter of fact, the idea of one person is not apprehended by another, the cognition of another person being always uncognisable. Avyakta is also enjoyed by many Puruṣas and as such is many. Therefore, Avyakta and Vyakta are accepted as bhogyas i.e the objects of enjoyment of many persons.

95. aviveki yathā pradhānāṁ na svato vivicyate, evanān mahadvādayo’pi na pradhānāt vivicyante, tadātmakatvāt. atahāva sambhiyakārītā trāvivekitā. na hi kiṁcidekaṁ paryaptam svakārye, api tu sambhūya. STK on SK, 11
96. ‘viṣaya’ iti. ‘viṣaya’ grahyah, vijnānādabhirīti yāvat. ata eva ‘sāmānyam’ sādhāraṇam anekāṁ puruṣaśārghitā mityarthah. Ibid.
Again, Vyaktas and Avyakta both are unconscious and always productive. Avyakta and Mahat etc. (Vyaktas) are always changeable. During dissolution these change into the homogene. Such transformation is called svarūpaparāṅama. At the beginning of the world's evolution these change into the heterogene. Such transformation is called virūpaparāṅama.

There are again some dissimilarities between these two. Avyakta is the cause of all, but it is without any cause. All Vyaktas are produced and as such have a cause. So these twenty three Vyaktas are produced and destroyed. They are called anitya because they are produced and destroyed. But Prakṛti is not produced and destroyed. So, it is nitya.

The cause pervades the effect but the effect cannot pervade the cause. For example— the material cause clay can exist in the ghata but not the vice-versa. In the same way the world cause Prakṛti can pervade the twenty three tattvas including Mahat which are Vyaktas. But these twenty three tattvas cannot pervade Prakṛti. Hence Vyaktas are avyāpi (not-pervaded), Avyakta is vyāpi (pervaded).

Mahat etc. are sakriya or active. According to Vācaspati Miśra, sakriyatva means mobility. The Vyaktas are found to renounce a body they have hitherto occupied and to occupy another hence they have mobility. Avyakta is niśkriya or immobile. Though Avyakta possesses the action of evolution, yet it can have no mobility.

Vyaktas are many. On the otherhand Avyakta is one. Vyaktas are āśrita because they exist in their cause, viz. Avyakta. But Avyakta is causeless, so it is anāśrita, it does not belong to anything. Vyaktas are liṅga, i.e, the middle term (hetu) of inference (anumāpaka) of Avyakta. But the Avyakta is aliṅga, as it does not serve as the middle term to infer the existence of any other category. Vyaktas
are composed of parts, while *Avyakta* is partless. Vacaspati points out that *sāvayava* means conjunction (*sāmyoga*). Conjunction is seen between two objects like earth and water, *buddhi* and organs, organs and objects etc. But there is no such relation between *buddhi* and *Avyakta*. Because *Avyakta* is the material cause of all substances. There is no conjunction between the *Avyakta* (cause) and the *Vyaktas* (effects). According to Gauḍapāda, *avayava* refers to *sābda* (sound), *sparsā* (touch), *rūpa* (colour), *rasa* (taste) and *gandha* (smell). The *Vyaktas* possess sound etc., whereas sound etc. are not found in *Avyakta*.

Again, *Vyaktas* are dependent (*paratantra*). This means that *buddhi* etc. produce other substances with the help of *Prakṛti* only. But *Avyakta* creates all other substances without the help of any other thing. Hence, *Avyakta* is independent (*svatantra*).

**8. PRAKṛTI IS ONE**

A very important question in respect of the concept of *Prakṛti* relates to the oneness or manyness of *Prakṛti*. According to some, the primal *Prakṛti* is one. Vācaspati Miśra has quoted some verses from *Rājavārttika* where it is mentioned that the Samkhya philosophy has admitted ten fundamental principles. Among these principles, singleness of *Pradhāna* is also one. In the *Tattvasamāsa* also the ten fundamental principles of the Samkhya system are admitted. There also one *Mūla-prakṛti* is accepted.

---

97. ekam pradhanam, karagatvat, trayanam lokanam pradhanamekam karanam, tasmadekam pradhānam. GB on SK, 10
98. pradhanastivaatvamathavamathānyata/ parārthyaṁ ca tathā' naikyam viyoga yoga eva ca // seṣavṛttrākaṁtvam maulīkārthāṁ smṛtā dasā / STK on SK, 72.
99. dasamulikārthā. TS, 16.
But some old Sāmkhyācāryas, regard that Prakṛti is many. In his Saddarsānasamuccaya, Gunaratnasūri has stated that the advocate of the original school of Sāmkhya maintained a separate Prakṛti for each individual Puruṣa. The author of the Yuktidīpikā refers to the view of Paurika, who was an old Sāmkhyācārya. The Yuktidīpikā also states that Paurika was the propounder of the doctrine of plurality of Prakṛti. According to him, a separate Prakṛti which is attached to an individual Puruṣa (pratipuruṣa) produces the physical body and such other objects for the sake of the empirical existence of the latter. However, he also maintains that all these separate units of Prakṛti are dependent on another primary Prakṛti which is called Māhātmyasārīra.100 This term is not found in any other available Sāmkhya text. Its reference is found only in the Yuktidīpikā. In Yuktidīpikā, it is said that the Māhātmyasārīra is the special divine power of God. This God can produce many bodies with the help of his desire. This God is the first, who existed before creation. Gauḍapāda also says that an individual soul refers to the divine, human or sub-human creations.101 Brahma or Hiranyagarbha, Mahēsvarā etc. are the form of Māhātmyasārīradhārī Gods. It is found in the Yuktidīpikā that Mahēsvarā creates many Rudras.102 But any description of Brahman or Hiranyagarbha is not found in the Sāmkhyakārikā.

The author of Yuktidīpikā opposed the Paurika’s view of the multiplicity of Prakṛti and he established his view that ‘Prakṛti is one’. He said that the plurality of Prakṛti cannot be proved by any means of knowledge. Prakṛti is not perceived

100. pratipuruṣamanyatpradhānaṁ śūraṇadyarthaṁ karoti. teṣāṁ ca māhātmyasārīnapradhānaṁ yadā pravartate tadetarāṇyapi. tannivṛtti ca teṣāṁapi nivṛttiitrīti praurikāḥ sāmkhyācāryo manyate. YDi on SK, 56.
101. puruṣaṁ puruṣaṁ prati devamanusatyagbhāvaṁ. GB on SK, 56
102. .....mahēsvarasya rudrakoti śṛṣṭavīti. YDi on SK, 43
since it is beyond the sense organs. Again, as it is possible for one Prakṛti which is unlimited to produce everything, there is no necessity to accept the multiplicity of Prakṛti. Again, argues the author of Yuktidīpikā, if Pradhāna is accepted as limited in order to establish the multiplicity of Pradhāna, then the very concept of Pradhāna will be demolished. In that case there will be the cessation of the world itself. Moreover, there will arise the defect of anavasthā (infinite regress) if Pradhāna is accepted as many.103 Hence, it is not acceptable to admit different Pradhāna in different Puruṣas.

Vijnānabhikṣu also accepted the multiplicity of Prakṛti. According to him, Prakṛtis are many in many individuals. However, through there are many Prakṛtis even then in different creations Prakṛti appears as non-different. So Prakṛti is also called one.104 Vijnānabhikṣu has quoted a few lines from the Viṣṇupurāṇa as a proof to his opinion. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Prakṛti is declared as many.105

Vārṣaganyā criticizes the view of Vijnānabhikṣu. According to him, Prakṛti is one. He does not accept the plurality of Prakṛti. Vārṣaganyā points out that the notion of distinction among several entities arises only when there exists any difference of form, or of intervening space, or of genus. As no such differentiating

103. pramanābhāvāt. na tāvatpratyakṣa eva taccchakyaṁ niścetum. pradhānānaṁmatindriyatvāt......κिंचa ekenāṅharparsamānteh. aparimitavādetadeva pradhānānamalaṁ sarvapurusāsāriotpadanāya. tasmādayaparikalpanānarthakyam. parimitamiti cedathamataṁ, parimitam pradhānāmīti nā......ucchedaprasāṅgat...... samsārocchedaprasāṅgāḥ. κिंचa anavasthāprasāṅgat......pratisārīrāṁ va pradhānaparikalpane pradhānaṁnāvasthā bhavati. parimitasārīrakāraṇāntvābhipagamādanyaparikalpanānarthakyam. tatasāca pradhānaikatveva. tasmādayuktaṁ pragipuruṣāṁ pradhānānātī. Ibid, 56.
104. anekatvam sargabheda'pyabhinnatvam; ataḥ prakṛteranekavyaktikatve'pi naikatvaksatīh. SPB on SS, 1.126.
105. mahāntaṁ ca samāvṛtya pradhānaṁ samavasthitam/ anantasya na tasyāntaṁ saṅkhyaṁ caṁi vidyate//VP, 2.7.25
factors can be found in Prakṛti, so the final cause of one entity is not distinct from that of the other. The oneness of Prakṛti is declared in the Upaniṣad also in such passages—“ajāmekāmlohitasuklaḥkṛṣṇam” (The one unborn red, white and black, who produces manifold offspring similar in form) etc.

9. RADHANATH PHUKAN’S TREATMENT OF AVYAKTA AND PRAKṛTI

Thus we have found that the concept of Prakṛti which is also called Avyakta or Pradhāna has been explained by different Saṃkhya-cāryas and commentators by like Kapila, Pāncasikha, Vācaspati Miśra, Gaudapāda, Vijnānabhiṣṣu and others. In his Saṃkhya-darsāna, Radhanath Phukan has also discussed the concept of Prakṛti. He has accepted the basic concept of Prakṛti as propounded in the Saṃkhya system. However, in some cases his angle of vision differs vastly from other exponents. Let us now see in what respect Phukan’s view differs from others.

Radhanath Phukan does not conform to the view of other commentators that the term Avyakta means Pradhāna or Prakṛti. It has already been said that in the Saṃkhya philosophy, no difference is admitted among Prakṛti, Pradhāna and Avyakta. But Radhanath Phukan said that Avyakta is not the Pradhāna or Prakṛti. According to him, Prakṛti is the primeval energy. He says, “An effect always remains latent in its cause and in proper time it is revealed by the activity of the Cosmic power........ The Cosmic power or the primeval energy with its three modes of action which brings about this separation is called the Prakṛti.” Radhanath Phukan pointed out that Avyakta is not the state of Prakṛti. According to him, Avyakta is the union of both Prakṛti and Puruṣa. This view of Radhanath finds support in

106. mūrttivyavadhitibhedabhāvānattām mūlaprtthkatvameti vārsaganyāḥ. Yogabhāṣya 3.53
107. SU, 4.5
108. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, Pp. 577-578
109. Vide, Ibid.
Carakasamhitā, where Avyakta is regarded as the unified state of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Radhanath Phukan agrees with other scholars that Avyakta is the ultimate cause which itself is causeless. But he differ from other scholars as regards the real signification of this term Avyakta.

Radhanath Phukan points out that according to the Sāmkhya Avyakta is the cause and the Vyakta is the effect. Avyakta is just the opposite of the Vyakta. Radhanath Phukan argues that anything which is caused must have characters opposite to those of the Avyakta and it must be included in and pervaded by the Avyakta. In contradistinction to the Vyakta, Avyakta is held to be inactive. Now, in the Sāmkhya system, it is maintained, Prakṛti is out and out active. Hence, a contradiction arises here if we accept Avyakta as the state of Prakṛti. Vācaspati and Gauḍapāda have tried to repudiate this contradiction by explaining the term ‘inactive’ in a different way. But Radhanath categorically says that there will be no contradiction if Avyakta is held to be different from Prakṛti. In the words of Radhanath Phukan, “Prakṛti cannot be understood as Avyakta, because Avyakta of the Sāmkhya is inactive, unchanging, real and causeless. Though Prakṛti is so before the creation, she is active and always changing from the beginning of the creation up to its end. Prakṛti as such has never been termed Avyakta in the Sāmkhya. In kārikā xi, Sāmkhya has distinctly stated that this Prakṛti or Pradhāna has all the attributes of the Vyakta.”

Again, Phukan points out that as Avyakta is inactive, it is invisible i.e. not an object of perception or sight. It is the seer itself. Phukan argues that all visible things are unconscious and active. But Avyakta being inactive and the seer cannot

110. avyaktastu . . . . . sarīhata rūpam. Commentary by Gangadhara on Caraka-saṁhita, Sarīrasthana, 1.63.
111. GB on SK, 11; STK on it, vide, SKI, Phukan, Radhanath, Pp.581-582.
113. Ibid., P.581.
be unconscious. It must be conscious. Before creation, at the stage of equilibrium of the Gunas, there was no action in this world. There was no unconscious thing also. At the stage only indivisible consciousness existed. So, Phukan holds that Avyakta is beyond time and space, beyond the world. According to him, Avyakta is the state before creation, when there was no difference between the Prakrti and the Purusa; where was no duality. It is actionless conscious and the seer. He said, "The Avyakta must be immanent in everything. Being all-pervading it must be, always be, one, because we cannot conceive of two separate all-pervading entities." In the state of equipoise Prakrti is also actionless and Avyakta. Whenever the activity of the gunas starts Prakrti is separated from Avyakta and creation starts. So. Radhanath concludes that the Avyakta of Samkhya is not different from Brahman of Vedanta. In the view of Phukan, Avyakta, the ultimate cause of the universe is neither the Purusa alone, nor the Prakrti alone. Creation is due to the union of the two. That is why Avyakta must be the identity of the conscious spirit (Pumān) and primordial Prakrti. In other words this Avyakta is all-knowing and all-powerful. He points out that "in the Avyakta stage there may be something inactive but it must be remembered that something will be beyond Space and Time also, and for the reason of that it must be an undivided homogeneous ‘One’ single existence." 

Radhanath Phukan has referred to the view of Vacaspati Misra and the Gita in support of his view. "The matter is made quite clear by the Gita (chapter-14.8). Vacaspati himself states that the union of Prakrti and Purusa is without beginning.

114. Ibid.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., p. 596
117. Ibid., p. 582
118. Ibid., p. 581
and end and that the creation of the Universe is due to this. This state of union is the Avyakta stage in this union it is not possible to point out the Purusa or the Prakṛti as an individual entity. Avyakta evidently refers to the stage before creation.”

In the Gītā, the word Avyakta is used in the sense of Purusa or Soul or Atman which is not perceived by the ordinary sense organs of a human being. The beginning of this world is not knowable and the end, too, is not known by us. According to Vedānta, Avyakta is Brahman and Vyakta is the world which can be compared to the ocean and the waves of ocean respectively. The waves are composed of water only, there is no other substance. Similarly, the world is not different from Brahman where it remains in an unmanifested form. In support of his view Radhanath refers to the view of Gaudapāda also. Gaudapāda has openly said that the meaning of the word Brahman is the same as Avyakta. Vijñānabhikṣu also supports the view of Gaudapāda. Vijñānabhikṣu’s view has been put forward by K.P. Sinha. He said that: Brahman is the ultimate and independent principle which brings about the association of the Purusa and Prakṛti.

The view of Radhanath may be supported by the words of Surendra Nath Dasgupta also. He says, “Avyakta as God is so called because it transcends human knowledge. It is also so called because it is a state of non-duality, where there is no difference between energy and its possessor, and where everything exists in an undifferentiated manner. Avyakta used in the sense of Prakṛti is the basis of change, or change as such, and Purusa denotes the knower.”

119. Ibid, p. 582
120. avyakto’ yamacintyo’ yamavikāryo’ yamucyate /
     tasmādevaṁ viditvaināṁ nānuśoṣcitumārhaṇaḥ // Gītā, 2.25
121. Śrīmadbhagavatadvīta, Phukan, Radhanath, p.2
122. brahma avyaktam, vahudhānakaṁ māyeta paryyāyāḥ. GB on SK, 22
123. Indian Theories of Creation : A Synthesis, sinha, Dr. K.P., p. 16
himself defines that Avyakta as something which can be known not by the sense, but by inference only. Therefore, the term Avyakta must be regarded as denoting both the Purusa and Prakrti, and not a unified category of the two.

Radhanath Phukan refers to the view of Rāmkrṣṇa Paramhaṇa in support of his opinion. Rāmkrṣṇa Paramhaṇa said that when Brahman is immobile or niṣkriya then that is called pure Brahman and when Brahman created, destructed then that is called power. Then he is called saguṇa Brahman (Īśvara) or Ādyāṣākty (Prakṛti).

Thus from the above discussions we find that the opinion of Radhanath Phukan on the concept Prakṛti, Pradhāna and Avyakta of Sāṁkhya philosophy is remarkable for its distinctive nature. It is also obvious from our discussion that even though he deviates from the traditional view point, Radhanath has based his theory on the commentaries and scriptures.

10. THE CONCEPT OF PURUṢA IN THE VEDAS

It has already been stated that in Sāṁkhya dualism, Puruṣa is one of the two ultimate principles, other than Prakṛti. The term Puruṣa is traced first in the Puruṣasūkta of the Rgveda. In this sūkta Purusa is depicted as the ultimate reality. The Puruṣasūkta declares that all beings are only a forth of the Supreme Spirit (Puruṣa) while the three others forths remain immortal in heaven, that the Puruṣa has thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet and that pervading the entire universe, he extends ten digits beyond. Although as the Universal Soul he pervades the universe, as the individual soul he is enclosed in a space of

---

125. ato’nyat puṇaravyakte śiṅgagṛhyatindriyam / Caraka-samhīta (Sarīrasthāna), 1.62.
126. Ibid., 1.61, 65-66
127. SD, Phukan, Radhanath, p.353.
128. Rgveda, 10.90
129. sahasrasīṃśa puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāta / sa bhūmiṁ viśvato vṛttvātyatīsthadṛśāṃgulam // Ibid., 10.90.1
narrow dimensions.130 Franklin Edgerton remarks that the Purusa is characterized in the Rgveda in different ways. All evolves out of it, or is a part of it, but frequently, as in the Purusa hymn, it is ‘more’ than all empire existence, it transcends all things, which form, or derive from, but a part of it.131

11. THE CONCEPT OF PURUSA IN THE UPAonisADS

In the Upanisads, the term Purusa is used mainly in the sense of the Supreme unchangeable reality, absolute, eternal, immortal and unconditional. It is conceived as the ultimate underlying principle of the inner and outer worlds of change and variety. As essence of the external world, the Purusa is called the Brahman and as the essence in person, is known as the Atman. The central principle of the Upanisadic teaching is involved in the equation of Barhman and Atman. Atman and Brahman both are implied. When the term Purusa is used in the Upanisads. In the Kath Upanisad, it is said that the Purusa or Brahman is pure light. It is the knowledge of the fundamental principle. Here it is said that the senses are higher than the objects; the mind is higher than the senses; the intellect is higher than the mind; the Mahat is higher than the intellect or buddhi; the Avyakta is higher than the Mahat and the Purusa is higher than the Avyakta; and there is nothing higher than the Purusa.132 Again, regarding the Atman, Katha Upanisad says, “The atman is something which can never die, nor is it born. He springs from nothing and nothing springs from him. He is unborn, eternal, abiding and primeval. He is not stain when the body is stain.”133
The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad describes Puruṣa as the inner dweller of all beings. “He who dwells in all beings and in other than those beings, whom the beings do not know and whose body the things are and who Controls them from within, he is yourself, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.”

The Mundaka Upanisad describes Puruṣa as partless and pure.

In the Isa Upanisad, the term Puruṣa signifies the God. The Isa Upanisad proclaims the divinity of man and nature. It asserts that God dwells in everything. This Upanisad says, “O Puṣan the sole seer, O Controller, O Sun, offspring Prajāpati, spread forth your rays and gather up your radiant light that I may behold you of loveliest form. Whosoever is that person (yonder) that also am I.”

The Aitareya Upanisad said that nirguna Brahman is pure consciousness and is the basis of everything. Puruṣa is the conscious, all pervasive Reality that dwells in everything.

12. THE CONCEPT OF PURUṢA IN THE PURĀNAS AND EPICS

The Purāṇas also explain the idea of Puruṣa. Generally the Purāṇas admit Puruṣa as a manifestation of Mahēśvara or Vasudeva. It is not, therefore, the ultimate basis of the world. Puruṣa is only one of the three categories (other two categories are kāla and Prakṛti) that create this psycho-physical universe through the will of God. According to the Purāṇas, the ultimate Reality is the one, non-dual consciousness and it is the same supreme spirit that has been variously

134. Br U, 3.7.15
135. divyo hymūrtah puruṣah sabāhyābhya-yantaro hyajah /
    aprāno hyamaniḥ subhro hyakṣarat paratah // MU, 2.1.2
136. puṣannekarse yama suiya prajāpatya vyuha rasmin samīn /
    tejo yatte rupah kalyanatamaṁ tatte pasyami yo’savasau puruṣah so’hamasmi //
    Isa Upanisad, 16, trans by S. Radhakrishnan.
137. Aitareya Upanisad, 1.1.1, 3.1.3
called Paramātman or Brahman.\textsuperscript{138}

The most authoritative and sacred treatise of the Vaisnavas, the Viśnu Purāṇa describes that the first manifestation of Brahman or Viśnu is Puruṣa. Pradhāna, Puruṣa, Vyakta and Kāla are the four forms which have come out of Viśnu out of His playful activity.\textsuperscript{139} Here, Puruṣa is the male principle and Avyakta, the active energy and Viśnu, the ultimate principle. Viśnu assumes the form of Puruṣa and Prakṛti in order to create the universe.

In the Mahābhārata, the word Puruṣa indicates the individual Puruṣa and the highest spiritual reality. The highest spiritual reality is devoid of beginning, middle and end. He is eternal and devoid of all misery and pleasure.\textsuperscript{140} When the jīva or the individual self (Puruṣa) attains the highest spiritual reality, it becomes free of birth and death and thus gets liberation.\textsuperscript{141}

In the Mahābhārata, the Puruṣas are said to be many. However, this plurality of the selves is from the viewpoint of empirical world only. From the transcendental point of view the Puruṣa is one only.\textsuperscript{142} When the soul comes in contact with the three guṇas viz. sattva, rajas and tamas, it is called the kṣetrajña. On the otherhand, when the soul is beyond the three guṇas then this soul is known as Paramātma. “Kṣetrajña is without any support, but that would not be accepted as a justifiable ground for interpreting kṣetrajña as some divine

\textsuperscript{138} BP, 1.3.11
\textsuperscript{139} vyaktāṁ viśnustāthāvyaktāṁ puruṣāh kāla eva ca /
      kriṣṭāṁ bālakasyeva cēṭāṁ tasya niśāmayā // VP, 1.2.8
\textsuperscript{140} anādītvādādhyat vādānāntatvāc ca so vāyāḥ /
      atyetyāt aravādūdhānhām duḥkhaṁ hyantavaducyate // Mahābhārata, 12.206.13
\textsuperscript{141} tad brahma paramāṁ proktāṁ taddhāma paramāṁ padam /
      tadgatvā kālavīśayād vīmukta mokṣamāsritah // Ibid., 12.206.14
\textsuperscript{142} vaḥuṁ puruśāṁ ca yathaikā yonirucyate /
      tathā tāṁ puruśāṁ vīśvāṁ vāyukhyāsyāmi guṇāḥ kim // Ibid., 12.350.3
personality other than so many witnessing selves, possessing different mind-body complexes. Kṣetrajña, being the principle of consciousness, is identical with the pure stainless, supersensible consciousness which has been spoken of as the supreme Puruṣa.”¹⁴³ In the Mahābhārata, it is stated that just as one fire becomes many, one sun is the source of all light and the same air blows in different directions in the same way one supreme-self assumes the forms of so many selves, being focussed through different bodies.¹⁴⁴

The Bhagavadgītā is one of the most important scriptures of Hinduism, where the term Puruṣa is used in different senses. Firstly, the term Puruṣa is used in the sense of God, i.e., the all inclusive personality of Lord Kṛṣṇa.¹⁴⁵

Secondly, the word Puruṣa is used in the sense of ordinary human beings.¹⁴⁶ Puruṣa is again said to be of two types-ksara and aksara. Ksara refers to all living beings while the aksara refers to the unchangeable spiritual principle.¹⁴⁷

According to the Gītā, Puruṣa is the para Prakṛti of Īśvara. Īśvara is beginningless. So, Puruṣa is also beginningless because it is the part of Īśvara.¹⁴⁸ The Gītā also accepts the oneness of Puruṣa, though in empirical world we perceive many Puruṣas. Empirical selves are only the parts of Īśvara.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, The Evolution of the Sāṃkhya School of Thought, Pp. 72-73
¹⁴⁴. Mahābhārata, 12.350. 10-11
¹⁴⁵. tvamaksarāṁ paramāṁ veditavyāṁ tvamasya visvasya param niḥdānam / tvamavyayāṁ sāsvatadhammamagopta sanātanastvāṁ puruṣo mato me // Gītā, 11.18
¹⁴⁶. Cf. yatato hyapi kaunteya puṣṇasya vipāscitaḥ / indriyāṁi pramāṇīṁ haranti prasabham manāḥ //
also Cf. vedāvināśināṁ nityāṁ ya enamajamavyayam / kathāṁ sa puṣṇāṁ pārthakāṁ ghatayati hanti kāṁ // Ibid., 2.60, 21
¹⁴⁷. Ibid., 13.6-7
¹⁴⁸. parkṛtāṁ puṣṇāṁcaiva viddhyanādi ubhāvaṁ // Ibid., 13.20
¹⁴⁹. ahamātmāmādākesa sarvabhūtāsayaśthitāḥ // Ibid., 10.20
13. THE NATURE OF PURUŚA

It has already been said that in Sāṅkhya dualism Puruśa is one of the two ultimate principles. Puruśa is the soul, the universal spirit, the living principle. The definition of Puruśa is given by R.N. Sharma in his work *Indian Philosophy* as pure spirit, different from the body or Prakṛti.150 The Sāṅkhya philosophy depicts Puruśa as absolute and independent entity. It is beyond the perceptual experience.151 Puruśa is the source of consciousness. In Sāṅkhya philosophy Puruśa is also known as Jñāh.152 The feeling of I, my, mine etc. are the proof for the existence of the self or Puruśa. The feeling of one’s own existence is the most natural. Nobody can deny the existence of his own self, since the denial involves the denial of one’s own existence. Non-existence of Puruśa cannot be proved in any way. Therefore, Sāṅkhya system postulated the reality of Puruśa.

The existence of Puruśa is accepted by all the different systems of Indian philosophy, although there is some different of opinion about the nature of Puruśa among the philosophers. The Carvāka maintains that the self is identical with the conscious body.153 The Buddhists regard that the Puruśa as identical with the stream of consciousness.154 The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and the Prābhakara Mīmāṃsākas say that the Puruśa is an unconscious substance155 which is acquired the quality of consciousness under certain conditions. On the other hand, the Bhatta Mīmāṃsakas maintain that the Puruśa is a conscious entity which is partailly

---

150. *Indian Philosophy*, Sharma, R.N., P. 163
151. *The Sāṅkhya System*, Nair, P.K. Sasidharan, P.83
152. Jñāh puruṣah. G.B. on SK, 2
153. taccaityanav shoppers evātma. Sa S, P.4
154. tatastādayanavijñānam yadbhavedahamāśpadam/Ibid., P. 71
155. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Chatterjee, Satischandra and Datta, Dhirendramohan, P. 264

72
hidden by ignorance. It appears from the imperfect and partial knowledge that men have of their own selves.\textsuperscript{156} The Advaita Vedānta also identify the Puruṣa with the pure and eternal consciousness which is also a blissful existence. The Puruṣa is one in all bodies. The Puruṣa is eternally free and self-shining intelligence.\textsuperscript{157}

The Śāṇkhya philosophy describes Puruṣa as the ultimate reality which is pure consciousness. "The term Puruṣa though in original meaning 'man' or 'person' and used synonymously in pre-philosophical contexts with the old Upaniṣadic notion of Ātman or self, came to have a peculiar technical meaning in philosophical Śāṅkhya."\textsuperscript{158} Puruṣa is self, subject and the knower. It is changeless, eternal and all pervading.\textsuperscript{159} According to the Śāṅkhya philosophy, it is free from body, senses mind, brain, buddhi or intellect, ahaṁkāra (ego) etc.\textsuperscript{160} It is also different from Prakṛti. Puruṣa is infinite. It is the transcendental principle. So, the nature of Puruṣa is non-apprehensible by experience. It is the supreme knower which is the basis of all knowledge. Logically, Puruṣa is the pre-supposition of all knowledge. Puruṣa is indestructible. It regulates, guides and directs the process of cosmic evolution. It is a steady and unfailling consciousness which has neither change nor any activity. Puruṣa is neither a product nor productive.\textsuperscript{161} It is neither a material cause nor effect. Puruṣa is self-shining, self proved and causeless.\textsuperscript{162}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{158} Larson, Gerald James & Bhattacharya, Ram Shankar, \textit{Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies}, Vol. IV, P. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{159} tathā ca vyāpi pumān. sarvagatātvaṁ, GB on SK, 11; nityāḥ pumān, Ibid; nīṣkriyasya tadasambhavāt, SS, 1.49; gatisṛutirāpyupādhiyogat, ākāśavit. Ibid., 1.51
\item \textsuperscript{160} Vide, \textit{A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy}, Sharma, Dr. Chandradhar, Pp. 155-156.
\item \textsuperscript{161} na prakṛtimavikṛtih puruṣah SK, 3
\item \textsuperscript{162} tathā ca pumānahetumānanupādyatvat. GB on Ibid, 11
\end{itemize}
It is devoid of three gunas (atrigunas). Puruṣa is the silent witness (sāksī), the neutral seer. It is not the doer of any activity. Puruṣa is beyond time and space, change and activity. It is unproduced and unproducing. Puruṣa is also called viveki or discriminative because Puruṣa is distinguished from the gunas.

It is possible to differentiate between the Puruṣa and the guṇas. It is aviṣayah or not an object. It is not being an object of enjoyment for others. Puruṣa is not common to all (āsāmānyah). Puruṣa is conscious or cetana. Gaudāpāda says that Puruṣa is conscious because it is the knower of pleasure, pain and delusion. It is non-productive or aprasavadharma because nothing is produced from it. Theos Bernard also illustrated the nature of Puruṣa. He observed that "By logical implication, Puruṣa is postulated to account for the subjective aspect of nature. It is the universal spirit, eternal, indestructible and all-pervasive, it is pure spirit, without activity and attribute, without parts and from, uncaused, unqualified and changeless. It is the ultimate principle of intelligence that regulates, guides and directs the process of cosmic evolution, it accounts for the intelligent order of things, why the universe operates with such precision, why there is cosmos and not chaos."
In the *Saṁkhyasara*, Vijñānabhikṣu has stated that the soul is not perceived, is not destructible. It does not get attached. It is also not destroyed.\textsuperscript{172} Purusa is eternal which is beyond the three kālas (kālatrayāvādhitā). It is pure eternal (nityaśuddha) which is always devoid of vice and virtue, eternal buddha (nityabuddha) which is not dissolve blissful power and eternal free (nityamukta) which is absolutely free from misery.\textsuperscript{173}

In the *Saṁkhyakārikā*, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has enumerated the similarities and dissimilarities between *Vyakta* and *Purusa* as also *Avyakta* and *Purusa*. The similarities between *Avyakta* and *Purusa* both are causeless, eternal, all-pervading, inactive, non-mergent, independent, partless etc.\textsuperscript{174}

*Avyakta* and *Purusa* both are causeless because there is nothing higher than these. Both are not produced from anything else.\textsuperscript{175} *Avyakta* and *Purusa* both are eternal. These are not produced and destroyed.\textsuperscript{176} Again the unmanifest (*Avayakta*) and *Purusa* both are all-pervading and inactive because of their omnipresence\textsuperscript{177} and also both are non-mergent being eternal.\textsuperscript{178}

Again, in the *Saṁkhyakārikā*, Īśvarakṛṣṇa has illustrated the similarities between *Vyakta* and *Purusa*. *Vyakta* and *Purusa* both are many.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{172} sa esa neti netyātmā grhyo na hi grhyate śiryo na hi śiryate saṁgo na hi sajyate sīto na vyathate na riṣyatīvādi. SaS, P.5

\textsuperscript{173} na nitya-suddha-buddha muktasvabhāvasya tadyogah, tadyogādte. SS, 1.19

\textsuperscript{174} hetumadanityamavyāpi sakriyamanekamāsritām lingam/ śavayavrē paratantram vyaktaṁ viparitamavayaktam// SK, 10

also, ahetumātvaṇīyatvadā pradhanasadharmanamāsvasti prusasya. STK on Ibld.

\textsuperscript{175} .......... ahetumat pradhānāṁ, tathā ca pumānāhetutumāṁ anutpādyatvāt. GB on SK, 10

\textsuperscript{176} nityam pradhānāṁ, tathā ca nityaḥ pumān. Ibid., 11

\textsuperscript{177} vyāpi pradhānaṁ, tathā ca vyāpi pumān, sarvagatavāt. .......... akriyāṁ pradhānaṁ, tathā ca pumānakriyāḥ, sarvagatavādeva. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{178} alīṅgaṁ pradhānaṁ tathā ca pumānpyaliṅgāḥ-nakvacilliyaḥ. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{179} SK, 11, 18
There are again some dissimilarities among Vyaktas, Avyakta and Puruṣa. It is mentioned in the Sāmkhyakārikā as:

\[
\text{trigunamaviveki visayah sāmānyamacetaṇam prasavadharmi} / \\
vyaktain tathā pradhānam tadviparītastathā ca pumān //^{180}
\]

The first dissimilarity is that, Prakṛti or Pradhāna or Avyakta and Vyaktas both are possessed of the three guṇas, but the Puruṣa is aguṇah because it is devoid of three guṇas.\(^{181}\) So Avyakta and Vyaktas are trigunātmikā and Puruṣa is aguṇātmaka or aguṇah.

Secondly, the world cause i.e., Avyakta cannot be separated from itself as also Mahat cannot be distinct from Prakṛti or Avyakta because Mahat etc. are the effects of Avyakta. So, these are undistinguishable from Avyakta. Thus, Vyakta and Avyakta are undistinguishable. But Puruṣa is distinguishable because it can be separated from others.

Again, Avyakta and Vyaktas both are objective. These are accepted as bhogya i.e. the object of enjoyment of many persons. But Puruṣa is not objective because Puruṣa is the enjoyer (bhoktā) and not bhogya i.e., the object of enjoyment.\(^{182}\)

Again, Puruṣa is conscious and not always productive. But Avyakta and Vyakta both are unconscious and always productive. These are always changeable. But Puruṣa is not changeable. Puruṣa is not common i.e., non-apprehendable. But Avyakta and Vyaktas both are common i.e., apprehended by several persons.\(^{183}\)

\(^{180}\) Ibid, 11
\(^{181}\) GB on Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Ibid.
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
A chart of the dissimilarities among *Vyaktas*, *Avyakta* and *Puruṣa* is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vyaktas, Avyakta</th>
<th>Puruṣa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) <em>Trigunānā</em></td>
<td><em>Aguṇāḥ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) <em>Aviveki</em></td>
<td><em>Viveki</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) <em>Viśayaḥ</em></td>
<td><em>Avisayaḥ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) <em>Sāṁanyaṁ</em></td>
<td><em>Asāṁanyaḥ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) <em>Acetanaṁ</em></td>
<td><em>Cetanaḥ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) <em>Prasavadharmi</em></td>
<td><em>Aprasavadharmi</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the *Sāṁkhyaśūtra*, the views of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika regarding the self are refuted. According to the Naiyāyikas, the *Puruṣa* or self is an immaterial substance. Cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and volition are the qualities of the self.\textsuperscript{184} These qualities are not material, and cannot, therefore, exist in a material substance. There is an immaterial substance as the substratum of these qualities. This immaterial substance is the *Puruṣa* or self. But Śaṅkhya system does not accept that pleasure, pain etc. are the qualities of *Puruṣa*. Except the *Puruṣa*, all other objects are trigunatmaka, i.e., the objects have pleasure, pain etc. But the *Puruṣa* is qualityless. Pleasure, pain etc. do not belong to *Puruṣa*. So, it is *nirguṇa* and these are not perceived in *Puruṣa*.\textsuperscript{185}

According to the Vaiśeṣikas, knowledge is not the nature of soul, but it is the substratum of knowledge.\textsuperscript{186} Hence, it can be presumed that in the view of the Vaiśeṣikas, the soul is not conscious but unconscious or material. It is also not

\textsuperscript{184} sukhaduhkhe hyātmanī vartete, dharmaḥdharmau tathāvete. *Nyāyamāṇjari*, Vol. II, P.75

\textsuperscript{185} antātkaṇḍhādharmatvaṁ dharmaṁdinaṁ. SS, 5.25; anyatra-nirguṇatvāṁ tadasambhavadahamkaradharma hyete. Ibid., 6.62

\textsuperscript{186} jñānadhikāraṇamāṁtāṁ. *TSa*, P.48
self-shining \((apra\ka{\text{\textk{\textl{s}}}a}svar\upsilon\rho\upmu\alpha)\). When it is related with the mind then this materiality of the soul is destroyed and the self becomes luminous. Vaiśeṣika’s view is not refuted in the \textit{Śaṁkhyaśūtra} on the basis that a material substance cannot be luminous.\(^{187}\) The soul is self luminous like the Sun, according to the \textit{Śaṁkhya}.\(^{188}\) Lumination and knowledge are not the qualities of \textit{Puruṣa} because it is qualityless. Lumination and knowledge constitute the nature of \textit{Puruṣa}.\(^{189}\)

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan opines that the \textit{Śaṁkhya} view of \textit{Puruṣa} is determined by the conception of \textit{Ātman} in the Upaniṣads. “It is without beginning or end, without any qualities, subtle and omnipresent, an eternal seer, beyond the senses beyond the mind, beyond the sweep of intellect, beyond the range of time, space and causality, which form the warp and woof of the mosaic of the empirical world. It is unproduced and unproducing.”\(^{190}\) \textit{Puruṣa} is unrelated to \textit{Prakṛti}. It is mere witness, a solitary, indifferent, passive spectator. The characteristics of \textit{Prakṛti} and \textit{Puruṣa} are opposed in nature.

**14. PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF \textit{PURUṢA}**

It has already been said that \textit{Puruṣa} is not perceived. So, the question arises as to how can it be possible to established the existence of \textit{Puruṣa}? The \textit{Śaṁkhya} forwards different arguments for proving the existence of \textit{Puruṣa}. The \textit{Puruṣa}’s existence is established by Isvarakṛṣṇa in his \textit{Śaṁkhya-karīkā} on the following grounds. “Spirit as distinct from matter exists, since and assemblage of sensible objects is for another’s use, since this other must be the reverse of

\(^{187}\) \textit{jādaprabhāṣayogat prakāsah}, \textit{SS}, 1.145

\(^{188}\) \textit{vaiśeṣika ahun, prāga-prakāsarūṣasya jādayatmano manahsānyogat jnanakhyah prakāso jāyate iti; tānna, loke jādayaprakāsasya loṣṭadeh prakāsotpattyadarsanena tadayogat; atah sūryādīvāt prakāsasvarūpa eva puruṣā. SPB on Ibid.

\(^{189}\) \textit{nirguṇatvānna ciddhrma}. Ibid., 1.146

\(^{190}\) Radhakrishnan, S., \textit{Indian Philosophy}, Vol. II, P.282

78
everything composed of the three constituents, since there must be superintendence and control, since there must be some one to enjoy and since there is the activity for the purpose of liberation.”

\[
\text{samghātāparārthatvāt trigunādīviparyāyādhiṣṭhānāt} / \\
puruṣo'sti bhoktrbhāvāt kaivalyārtham pravṛttesā /\]

(i) \text{Samghātāparārthatvāt}

The first argument is teleological. It is said that any assemblage of material objects which are created is on account of the use of some objects other than itself, e.g., a table is for another not itself. Hence, there must be an entity in order to enjoy the creations of Prakṛti. The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are all means to realize the end of the soul. The three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) 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.\(^1\)

Gaudapāda points out that even as a bed, which is a assemblage of different parts, is for the use of a man who sleeps upon it, so this world, which is an assemblage of the five elements, is for another’s use. The being whose purpose is served by these things must be different and distinct from them and cannot be an unconscious thing made up of parts like physical objects.\(^2\) Therefore, it is proved that all the objects including the body consisting of intellect are for the enjoyment of the Puruṣa. Prakṛti and the rest are all composites, being composed

---

191. SK, 17
192. \textit{A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy}, Sharma, Dr. Chandradhar, P. 156
of pleasure, pain and delusion.194

(ii) **Trigunādīvīpariyāyāt**

Now from the first argument it is evident that all composite objects like bed etc. serve the purpose of some other objects like body etc. which are also composed of parts. Hence, it may be presumed that the being whose purpose is served by *Pārkrti* and its evolutes is another composite thing and not the *Puruṣa* or ātman which is composed of parts. In order to refute this presumption, Vācaspati Misra points out that if the enjoyer is also another composite object, then there must be another enjoyer for the first composite enjoyer, for that another ad infinitum. Hence, the enjoyer of the objects composed of three *guṇas* must be different from these *guṇas*. This is the *Puruṣa* which is *atiguna*.195

(iii) **Adhiṣṭhānāt**

The third argument also establishes that as all substances are composed of three constituents (*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*), so, there must exist one principle that controls them. For example a chariot needs a charioteer. The controller of *buddhi* etc. is the *Puruṣa* which is devoid of three *guṇas*.196

(iv) **Bhokṭryāvāt**

There must be an intelligent principle to account for the enjoyment or experience of the objects of experience in the shape of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are felt by everyone as agreeable and disagreeable respectively. That is to say there must be something other than the feelings themselves to which they

194. sukhaduhkhamohatmakataya'vyaktādayah sarve saṁghātaḥ. STK on SK, 17
195. tasmādanavasthābhīyāsyāsāṁghātvaṁcitātriguṇatvāṁ .......... sa cātmeti siddham. Ibid.
196. sukhaduhkhamohatmakāṁ tatasvāṁ parenādiḥśīlavaṁnaṁ dhṛṣṭaṁ, yathā rathādīvyāntrādiḥbhīḥ, sukhaduhkhamohatmakāṁ cedāṁ buddhyādi, tasmādetadāpi parenādiḥśīlaṁbhīḥ. sa ca parastraigunyādanyā ātmeti. Ibid.
(feelings) can be agreeable or otherwise. Feelings cannot be agreeable or disagreeable to the mahat or buddhi and other products, as that would involve the anomaly of things operating upon themselves, as the buddhi etc. are composed of pleasure, pain and delusion. Thus, then, something else, which does not consist of pleasure etc., must be the one to whom things are argeeable or disagreeable, and this something else must be the Spirit.197

(v) Kaivalyārtham Pravṛtteḥ

The last argument for the existence of Purusa is ontological and scriptural. All scriptures prescribe release from misery which is called kaivalya. Now release from three kinds of misery can never belong to the mahat and other products, because by their very nature, pain is one of the integral components of mahat etc. Therefore, they can never be absolved from pain since a substance cannot be absolved of something that forms its constituting element. Hence, strive for release or kaivalya presupposes a being which is devoid of pleasure, pain and delusion. This is the Purusa.198

15. PLURALITY OF PURUSA

The Śāṅkhya philosophers, like all other realistic philosophers, accept the plurality of the Purusa. Except the Advaita Vedānta, all other darsanas believe in the plurality of selves. According to Advaita Vedānta, there is one universal soul abiding in all bodies. But the Śāṅkhya philosophy does not accept this. Physically, morally and intellectually men are different. According to Śāṅkhya philosophy, the

198. sastranāmaḥ maharsināṁ...................Ibid.
Puruṣas are different in each body, having their different organs and actions and separate birth and death.

Iśvarakṛṣṇa has endeavoured to establish the plurality of Puruṣa on realistic grounds. He says: The incidence of birth and death and the action of the indriyas being different for different individuals; all men not having the same inclinations at the same time; the thoughts arising out of the action of the three guṇas being different for men-it follows that souls (Puruṣas) are many.199

The Samkhyaśas accept the plurality of the selves on the ground of the different in the births and deaths of different persons.200 There is an obvious difference in births and deaths of different individuals. If plurality of selves is not admitted then birth and death should be one for the whole universe, which is not admissible. The birth or death of one Puruṣa or self does not mean the birth or death for all other individuals. Vacaspati Miśra also supports that the birth of Puruṣa consists in its connection with a new set of body, sense organs, mind etc., formed of a composit particular nature. It does not mean modification, since it is essentially unchangeable. In the same way death also consists in the giving up of the body and the rest. It cannot mean destruction as Puruṣa is unchangeably eternal. The sense organs are thirteen, beginning with the Great Principle. The definite adjustment of these-body etc. are connected with only one Puruṣa. This cannot be explained on the hypothesis of there being only one Puruṣa. From, if the Puruṣas were one and the same in all body, then on the birth of one all would be born and on the death of one, all would die.201 Different Puruṣas have different sensory and motor organs. Blindness or

199. jananamarakaranaṇāṁ pratiniyamanādayugapatpravṛttesca /
puruṣavahutvāṁ siddham traiguṇyaviparyāyāccaiva // SK, 18, trans by Radhanath Phukan.

200. janāṇadivyavasthātah puruṣavahutvam. SS, 1.149.

201. tesāṁ janamamarakaranaṇāṁ pratiniyamo vyavasthā ................… mriyamāne ca mriyeyan. STK on SK, 18
lameness in a man does not signify the same for all persons. If there is only one self then when one person is blind or deaf, all others should be blind and deaf. But this does not happen in this world. If there is a distinct spirit belonging to each set of body etc., only then adjustment becomes secured. The adjustment cannot be explained by attributing it to the single spirit. Moreover, if we do not accept the plurality of *Purusas* then we must say that there is no difference between a child and an aged person. 202

The next argument in support of the plurality of the selves is related to the activity of the selves. Though activity is a function of the internal organs, yet it is here attributed to the spirit. Hence, it is argued that if the self were one, the activity of one man would lead to the same activity in all other men. 203 But this is not so. Therefore, plurality of the spirit is to be admitted.

Further, the Sāmkhyas argue that the self must be many as there is diversity in the action of the three *gunas*. Some persons have the abundance of *sattva* e.g., the Gods. Others again abound in the *rajas*, e.g., human beings and some others again have *tamas* in abundance, e.g., animals. This diversity due to the distribution of the *gunas* in various entities could not be explained if the spirit were one and the same in all. 204 Hence, the *Purusa* is not one, but many.

In this way we find that the Sāmkhyas uphold the plurality of the *Purusas* with the help of different arguments. However, it must be admitted that in spite of

202. Vide, SD, Bhattacharya, Bhupendranath, P.161
203. tathā ca tasminnekatra sārīre prayatamāne, ......................... sarīrāṇi yugapaccālayet. STK on SK, 18
204. kecitkhalu sattvanikāyāḥ sattvaḥvahulāḥ, yathordhvasrotasah, kecidrajovalhulāḥ, yathā manusyaḥ; kecitamovahulāḥ, yathā tiryoggonayah. so 'yamidrasstraigunyaaviparyayo' nyathābhavastesu sattvanikāyesu na bhavet yadyekeḥ puruṣah syāt, purusabhede tvayamadosa iti. Ibid.

83
the efforts of the Śāṅkhyas to establish the theory of many selves, it appears that
the Śāṅkhya arguments for the plurality of selves have not established the theory
beyond doubt. Birth, death, sense etc. are the characteristics of the body, and not of
the self. According to Śāṅkhya's own admission, the self is neither the agent nor
the enjoyer. The arguments of the Śāṅkhyas for the existence of many selves prove
only the manyness of the body and not the manyness of the self. The Śāṅkhya
description of the nature of the self goes against its manyness. If the self is, in
nature, pure consciousness beyond change and activity, it can never be many.

16. RADHANATH PHUKAN'S VIEW ON PURUṢA

The concept of Puruṣa has been explained by different Śāṅkhyācāryas
and commentators. Now let us see what is the view of Radhanath Phukan in this
regard. It is seen that Radhanath's views are sometimes different in this respect
also. Radhanath Phukan does not totally conform to the view of the Śāṅkhyākarīka.
Radhanath Phukan maintains that just like the Vedānta, the Śāṅkha's Puruṣa cannot
be many, but one. It is clear from those verses of the Śāṅkhyākarīka where the
differences between the Vyākta, Avyākta and Puruṣa are described. Īśvarakṛṣṇa
says that a causeless thing is Avyākta and is of the opposite nature of the Vyākta. It
is also said that the Puruṣa has the same characteristics as of Avyākta and opposite
of Vyākta. We have already discussed the similarities and dissimilarities of Vyākta,
Avyākta and Puruṣa. The Avyākta is described there as devoid of guṇas, all-
pervading, eternal, independent etc. Moreover, Avyākta is said to be one, as distinct
from the plurality of the Vyāktas. Now, if the Puruṣa has the same characteristics of
Avyākta, then we must accept that the Puruṣa is also one. This is the view of
Radhanath.
Radhanath also maintains that Prakṛti and Pumān both are Avyakta. Gauḍapaḍā also accedes to this view. He says Avyakta is one as well as Pumān is also one. But then the question arises as to why the Śāṅkhyas declare the multiplicity of the selves? To this question Radhanath Phukan replies that in transcendental level the Purusa is one. It is only in the empirical level that there are many selves. One supreme or transcendental Pumān or Purusa becomes many Purusas empirically. This view seems the same as the monism of Vedānta. But the Śāṅkhyas being realists starts from the plurality of the empirical selves. And in the empirical level, which is accepted as real by the Śāṅkhyas, they did not deem it necessary to go beyond the empirical selves. Hence, Radhanath concludes, “Accordingally he said that for the purpose of his enquiry it was not necessary at that stage to know what the Soul really is - that being a matter which is under enquiry; that, in the meantime, we could take things as they are, and accept the known & act that men behave different, they all do not die at the same time, they have different sorts of cognition and so forth.”

We find the echo of Radhanath's view in Sri Aurobindo's words: “But the infinite difference of view and outlook and attitude, action and experience a difference not of the natural operations which are the same but of the witnessing consciousness are utterly inexplicable except on the supposition that there is a multiplicity of witnesses, many Purushas.” That the many Purusas are the empirical selves is made clear by Dr. K.P. Sinha also. He pointed out that the real

---

205. Cf. SK, 11-12; SD Phukan, Radhanath. P. 350
206. ekamavyaktam tathā ca pumanapyekah. GB on Sk, 11
207. VSi, Phukan, Radhanath, p. 468.
208. Phukan, Radhanath. SKI, P. 589
209. Ibid., Pp. 589-590.
self in Śāṅkhyā philosophy is devoid of birth, and death, is free from mind, body, sense-organs etc. and is untouched by qualities. Dr. Sinha concludes, "From the arguments put forward by the Śāṅkhists it is clear that the plurality of the self they advocate refers not to the real self but to the empirical self." Radhanath Phukan also holds that enjoyments and imaginations are distinct in every Puruṣa. So, from the standpoint of the reality of the world the Puruṣas who are enjoyers are many. Actually the Śāṅkhyā philosophy is concerned with the empirical world which they accept as real. Radhanath Phukan explains the idea of Puruṣa with the help of Gītā.

The Bhagavadgītā, for instance, declares that in the world there are these two Puruṣas only, the Ksara (mutable) and the Aksara (immutable). Of these all the beings are called Ksara Puruṣa, Aksara is the immutable Puruṣa. It is also said that the Supreme Puruṣottama (Supreme Puruṣa) is a different one, who is called the Paramātman, the Supreme self, and who presiding over the three worlds, preserves them, as the undecaying, omniscient, omnipotent Isvāra.

It has already been said that Radhanath Phukan maintains that just like the Vedānta, the Śāṅkhyā's Puruṣa cannot be many, but one. It seems that Radhanath Phukan has been influenced by the view of Vijnānabhikṣu regarding the number of the self. Radhanath had a high esteem for Bhikṣu and Gauḍāpāda. Vijnānabhikṣu does not conform to the view of his predecessors regarding in plurality of the Puruṣa. He clearly says that the Puruṣa is one. Mathara and Gauḍāpāda also are of the same

210. Sinha, Dr. K.P., Reflexions on Indian Philosophy, P. 170
211. Cf. SD, P. 370
212. dvāvimau puruṣau loke ksaraścaksara eva ca / kṣcraḥ sarvāṁi bhūtanī kūtastho'ksara ucyate// Gītā, 15.16
213. uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyah paramātmyudahṛtyāḥ / yo lokatrayamāviśya vibhartyavvaya śavaraḥ// Ibid., 15.17
Mathara and Gaudapada say that the Purusa has the same characteristics as of Avyakta and opposite of Vyakta. Hence, Purusa is one like Avyakta.

However, the word Puman in this karika has given rise to some confusion amongst the commentators. Gaudapada said that the Puman of this karika is always one and cannot be many. Other commentators think that Gaudapada has probably made a mistake because, according to the Sankhya philosophy, Purusas are many, and Puman is the same thing as Purusa. Actually, the term Puman always means Purusa, there is no different of meaning here. But Radhanath Phukan supports Gaudapada and thinks that his explanation is the correct one. Other commentators could not understand the real significance of this karika. Hence, he remarks, "It is unnecessary to point out how Gaudapada has very rightly interpreted the karika. He has made it clear that the same Puman, from above space-time, manifested himself as many Purusas below." Hence, we find that Radhanath Phukan makes a difference between Puman and Purusa accepting these terms as referring to the transcendent self and empirical self respectively.

But one cannot totally go against the universally accepted view of the Sankhyas that the Purusas are many. The question will invariably arise that if the transcendent Purusa is one, why Vacaspati or other commentators did not mention it. Moreover, in karika 18 of the Sankhyakarika, Isvarakrsna categorically says—purusavahutvam siddham (plurality of the Purusas is established). Thus, the view of Radhanath appears as contrary to Sankhya view. Radhanath himself was aware of it. Hence, he says, "This is quite a Vedantic conception of creation." Thus, in his

---

214. Cf. yatha vyaktadvisadrsam pradhanaṁ tathā pradhanaśadharmaṁ purusaḥ, tathāhi abetumāṁ nityo vyāpi niskriya eko 'nāśitāḥ alīṅgo niravavah svatantra iti mātharaṁ, as quoted from SD, Bhattacharya, Bhupendranath, P. 162

215. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 597

216. Ibid.
view from transcendental point of view there is nothing to differentiate Sāṃkhya from Vedānta. However, in the meantime, it is to be accepted that as the Sāṃkhya begins its enquiry from the lowest level of reality, from the level of material world. By logical deductions it finds Prakṛti as the ultimate material cause. In this level of worldly reality, the Puruṣas are many, different Puruṣas for different bodies. In this level the arguments of ‘the incidence of birth and death’ etc. have their meaning. This is the stage where the idea of space-time is active. But beyond space and time there is only one Puruṣa, which is Avyakta, the ultimate cause of the world accepted in Vedānta. To make it clear, Radhanath remarks, “This idea of individuality is at the root of the concepts of Space and Time. ‘I am an individual (Puruṣa)’ implies two concepts, namely, (1) first, that ‘I am,’ i.e., ‘I always exist’—this leads to the concept of time; and (2) secondly, ‘I am different from other’—which leads to the concept of Space.”

Dr. Satkari Mookherjee's opinion also coincides with Radhanath: “The Sāṃkhya posits and infinite plurality of Puruṣa. .......... The argument advanced are logically weak and unconvincing. They relate to the empirical self and have no relevance to the pure spirit in which Sāṃkhya believes. ..................... Birth and death, possession of organs and the varying distribution of intellectual moral powers do belong to Prakṛti and its different evolutes. The pure spirit is absolutely unaffected by them. So, these phenomena cannot be made the ground of the inference of numerical difference of the Puruṣas with whom they have no concern.”

The same view is upheld by Prof. Max Muller who refused the Sāṃkhya view of the plurality of Puruṣa. He says, “If the Puruṣa was meant as absolute, as

217. Ibid, P. 579
218. Mookherjee, Dr. Satkari, *History of Indian Philosophy - Eastern and Western*, P. 253.
eternal, immortal and unconditioned, it ought to have been clear to Kapila that the plurality of such a Puruṣa would involve its being limited, determined or conditioned, and would render the character of itself contradictory.  

Many Puruṣas, from a metaphysical point of view, necessitate the admission of one Puruṣa. Because, if the Puruṣas were supposed to be many, they would not be Puruṣa, and being Puruṣa they would by necessity cease to be many.  

Some other modern philosophers also reject plurality of Puruṣa upheld by Śāṅkhyas. In this context Radhakrishnan's opinion is noteworthy. He point out that, “If each Puruṣa has the same features of conscious, all-pervadingness, if there is not the slightest difference between one Puruṣa and another, since, they are free from all variety, then there is nothing to lead us to assume a plurality of Puruṣa. Multiplicity without distinction is impossible.” He, however, adds, “we can only infer that the embodied souls are many and different, since they do not rise or die together. There dose not to be any need to pass from the manyness of empirical souls, which all philosophers admit; to the manyness of eternal selves which the Śāṅkhya upholds. The different arguments prove the plurality of actual souls in relation to Prakṛti and not of the Puruṣa we reach by way of abstraction.”  

In this way we find that Radhanath Phukan's interpretation of Śāṅkhya concepts of Prakṛti and Puruṣa are somewhat different from the traditional views. His view against the plurality of Puruṣas is also the view of the modern scholars.

219 Muller, Max, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Vol. III, Pp. 71-72  
220 Radhakrishnan, S., Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, P. 322  
221 Ibid., Pp. 321-322