

T.D.C. 1st Yr, 2nd Semester  
Sub: PHILOSOPHY

### SANKHYA PURUSA OR THE SELF

The second type of ultimate reality admitted by the Sankhya is the Self or Purusa. According to Sankhya, the self is different from the body and the senses, the manas and the intellect (buddhi). The self is a conscious spirit which is always the subject of knowledge and can never become the object of any knowledge. It is not a substance with the attribute of consciousness, but it is pure consciousness as such. Consciousness is its very essence and not a mere quality of it. The self is the transcendent subject whose essence is pure consciousness. The self is above all change and activity. It is an uncaused, eternal and all pervading reality which is free from all attachment and unaffected by all objects. All change and activity, all pleasures and pains belong really no matter and its products like the body, mind and intellect.

The existence of the self or Purusha as the transcendent subject of experience is proved by the Sankhya by several arguments :-

① Objects of the world like tables, chairs etc. which are composed of parts are means, to the ends of other ~~things~~ beings. They cannot be said to be unconscious things, made up of parts like physical objects, for that would make them means to the ends of others and not ends in themselves. They must be conscious selves, to whose ends all physical objects are means.

② All knowable objects are non-intelligent, non-discriminating objects of knowledge and composed of sattva, rajas and tamas. Therefore they presuppose an intelligent, discriminating subject of knowledge, devoid of sattva, rajas and tamas. All knowable objects presuppose the ~~knower~~ knowing self.



③ All objects of the world of the nature of pleasure, pain and indifference. But pleasure and pain have meaning only as they are experienced by some conscious subjects or selves who enjoy and suffer pleasure and pain respectively.

④ Some spiritual aspirants strive and struggle to achieve liberation. Liberation consists in absolute ~~cess~~ cessation of three kinds of pain. Mind can never be relieved from pain. It is only the self, which is distinct from the mind and the like, which can be relieved from pain and achieve liberation.

The Sāṅkhya recognizes the existence of many souls and puts forward arguments for their existence:—

① Birth, death and the sense-organs ~~are~~ are different in different persons. If there were one soul only, the birth of

one person would lead to the birth of all, the death of one would ~~lead~~ lead to the death of all and the defects in the sense organs in one would lead to the same defects in the sense organs in all. So there are many ~~souls~~ souls. There are different souls in different bodies. The soul is immutable and incapable of birth and death. Different souls are connected or disconnected with different mind-body complexes.

(2) If there were one soul for all living beings, then the activity of any one would ~~make~~ make all other active. But in fact, different persons are engaged in different kinds of activity.

(3) Men and women are different from the God, on the one hand, and birds and beasts, on the otherhand. But there could ~~be~~ not ~~be~~ have been these distinctions, if gods and human beings, birds and beasts possessed



the same self .

Thus we see that there must be a plurality of ~~self~~ selves, which are external and intelligent subjects of knowledge, as distinguished from prakṛti which is the one, eternal and non-intelligent ground of the objects of knowledge, including manas, intellect and ego .

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