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# The Doctrine of Purusa in Samkhya

Ludwig F. Stiller  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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THE DOCTRINE OF PURUṢA IN SĀṂKHYA

by

Ludwig Francis Stiller, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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1956

## LIFE

Ludwig Francis Stiller was born in Salem, Ohio, August 24, 1928.

He was graduated from Connersville High School, Connersville, Indiana, May, 1946, and from Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, June, 1953, with the degree of Bachelor of Letters.

The author began his graduate studies at Loyola University in September, 1953. The summer of 1954 he attended Fordham University's Institute of Mission Studies, putting special emphasis on the India Area courses. It was at this time that he came under the direction of the Reverend Giachino Patti, S.J., of the Pontifical Institute of Biblical Studies, Rome, who was then lecturing at Fordham on the subject of Oriental Philosophies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By way of acknowledgement I would like to thank the Reverend Paul Dent, S.J., for his constant encouragement and assistance in the preparation of this thesis, the Reverend Robert Harvenak, S.J., for his enthusiastic interest, the Reverend Michael Ledrus, S.J., and the Reverend Robert De Smet, S.J., for their very valuable notes on the Sāṃkhya Kārikā, and finally the Reverend Giochino Patti, S.J., of the Pontifical Institute of Biblical Studies in Rome, whose patient direction of my original research led me to this topic. Whatever is worthwhile in this work I owe to them. Its failings are my own.

## PHONETICS

Scheme adopted in the transliteration of Sanskrit words from the Devangari letters of Sanskrit into the Roman letters of English.

### VOWELS

|                       |                                     |                  |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| a, as in a book       | u, as in <u>cum</u>                 | e, as in they    |
| ā, as in army         | ū, as in too                        | ai, as in aisle  |
| i, as in <u>navis</u> | ṛ, as <u>ri</u> in <u>periturus</u> | o, as in so      |
| ī, as in machine      | Ṛ, as ree in reed                   | au, as in out    |
|                       | ḷ, as <u>li</u> in <u>liber</u>     | ṁ, as ng in sing |
|                       |                                     | h, as in oh      |

### CONSONANTS

|           | Non-aspirate | Aspirate | Non-aspirate | Aspirate | Nasal |
|-----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|-------|
| Gutturals | k            | kh       | g            | gh       | ṅ     |
| Palatals  | c            | ch       | j            | jh       | ñ     |
| Linguals  | ṭ            | ṭh       | ḍ            | ḍh       | ṇ     |
| Dentals   | t            | th       | d            | dh       | n     |
| Labials   | p            | ph       | b            | bh       | m     |

## SEMI-VOWELS

palatal - y

dental - l

lingual - r

dental-labial - v

## SIBILANTS

palatal - ś, as in hiss

lingual - ṣ, as in show

dental - ṣ, as in saint

## ASPIRATE

h, as in hand

N.B. The palatal e is like ch in church. The English t, d, and n almost correspond to the Sanskrit cerebro-lingual ṭ, ḍ, and ṇ; but the Sanskrit t, th, d, dh, and n are pure dentals. The ñ is similar to the French gn, and h is the guttural ng in gong. The avagraha (separator) (᳚) is used to mark the elision of initial a after final e or o and is generally rendered by an apostrophe in transliteration (').

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

No one seems to know in this age of universal achievement just where or when the myth of white-man supremacy began. It began. That is all anyone can say. It began, and for centuries it ruled the East, until it ended abruptly when the Rising Sun burst across the Pacific in December of 1941. The East has finally asserted itself. It has not denied the West's science or wisdom or philosophy, but it has insisted with a growing vehemence on its own ways and wisdom and culture. The East has shaken off the slumber of the last few centuries and pointed with pride to its own art and philosophy. And its determination will not be denied.

His Excellency Bishop Fulton Sheen has often adverted to this awakening of the East, and in doing so has underlined with care the importance of the East to the Catholic philosopher. In Worldmission for the summer of 1953 he writes:

Our education for centuries has been Western, with its roots principally fixed in the Grecian and Roman world. Practically no attention was given to the thought of the Eastern world, such as the philosophy of Confucius or the Hindus or Buddhism. Education and culture have revolved about three cities: Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem--the city of the beautiful, the city of the

law and the city of the good. . . . In our day, however, the axis for civilization is moving to three other cities: Peiping, Moscow, and Delhi. . . . If then, the shift of the world is from the West to the East, if the East is like a great giant aroused from slumber, if Communism has chosen the East as the vestibule to its conquest of the West and the world, it follows that the universities should give more attention to the philosophy and to the culture of the East, and to recognize that the scepter of future political power will one day shift to the lands of the Rising Sun.<sup>1</sup>

And Bishop Sheen is not alone in his opinion. That the East has finally asserted itself politically is beyond question, and, if one may judge from the presence in this country alone of a dozen Hindu Vedānta Centers, the same is true spiritually and philosophically as well.<sup>2</sup> The East stands forth on the horizon as never before, and the thought of the East has become a challenge to the West.

Unfortunately, however, Oriental thought is extremely difficult for the Western mind. Its array of profoundly meaningful notions, for the most part dimly defined and obscurely presented, and antecedents buried in vedic hymns that outdate history itself, forms an unbelievably

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<sup>1</sup>Fulton J. Sheen, D.D., "Universities and the Foreign Missions," Worldmission, IV (Summer 1953), 133-134.

<sup>2</sup>G.L. Mehta, "Vivekananda--His Influence in the Awakening of Modern India," The Modern Review, Calcutta, LXXXVII (June 1955), 447-451.

difficult challenge for the Western mind, reared as it has been on accurate definitions, systematic presentation and clearly marked antecedents. Consequently, the average Westerner comes to Oriental thought with some difficulty and perseveres in the study only with the greatest determination. As one author puts it: "Let the reader be aware . . . that to understand the full significance of this Indian philosophy is sometimes a difficult task for the Western mind. There is much that seems strange to those of us whose acquaintance with philosophy is limited to the teaching of the Western schools."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, if the West is to meet the East on its own grounds intellectually, the difficulty must be met, and the gap spreading between East and West must be bridged. Somehow or other entry must be made into the realm of Oriental thought, and it is for just such a purpose that this thesis is offered. Standing on the very familiar ground of the Aristotelian doctrine of form, this thesis intends to look carefully at the nearest equivalent to such a doctrine among the Oriental, or more exactly, among the Hindu systems, to analyze it, and then to offer a criticism of that doctrine in terms of the West's own Aristotelian form. The system selected for this study is that called Sāṃkhya, the

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<sup>3</sup>William D. Gould, George B. Arbaugh, and R. F. Moore, Oriental Philosophies (New York, 1950), p. 6.

first dualistic system in Oriental philosophy, and the doctrine examined will be that of puruṣa (form?). From the outset, however, let it be said that the similarity between form and puruṣa, though remarkable in itself, is very superficial, and that the only hope in presenting it is to open, if possible, an avenue into Oriental, i.e., Hindu thought. That there are other such avenues, and many of them cannot be doubted. This approach through Sāṅkhya, however, seems the easiest to place within the grasp of anyone versed in Western thought.

Sāṅkhya itself is an ancient system; unbelievably so, as Professor Mookerjee points out in his chapter on the Sāṅkhya in the history of philosophy sponsored by the Indian government.

The Sāṅkhya philosophy seems to have been the oldest philosophical system in India. In the Upaniṣads<sup>4</sup> also we have germs of Sāṅkhya speculation. The occurrence of the Sāṅkhya concepts in the Upaniṣads--the Katha, the Śvetāśvatara and the Maitrayaṇi--cannot be explained unless Sāṅkhya speculations had assumed some definite shape before then. The mention of Kapila, the reputed founder of the school, in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is significant, though Sāṅkara denies its historical value.<sup>5</sup> It is true that atheistic doctrines characteristic of prevalent

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<sup>4</sup>The Upaniṣads are mystical texts dating from well before the time of Christ, often in verse, highly integrated, and employing images of every kind "to express the inexpressible."

<sup>5</sup>Sāṅkara, a celebrated teacher whose name is almost synonymous with Vedānta, the most popular Hindu system.

Sāṃkhya are not supported in these works.<sup>6</sup>

However, it seems much safer to say merely that Sāṃkhya is the first and the oldest of the Indian philosophic systems. There seems to be no possible contention that there is any real basis in the Upaniṣads for a systematic treatment of Sāṃkhya, as Keith points out:

. . . it is impossible to find in the Upaniṣads any real basis for the Sāṃkhya system. The Upaniṣads are essentially devoted to the discovery of an absolute, and diverse as are the forms which the absolute may take they do not abandon the search, nor do they allow that no such absolute exists.<sup>7</sup> There are, however, elements here and there which mark the growth of ideas which later were thrown into systematic form in the Sāṃkhya, but it is impossible to see in these fragmentary lines any indication that the Sāṃkhya philosophy was then in process of formation.<sup>8</sup>

If, then, Dasgupta's<sup>9</sup> date for the earlier Upaniṣads as 700-600 B.C. is accepted, there is no difficulty in seeing that elements of Sāṃkhya date back to the earliest days of philosophy, Eastern or Western. Unfortunately, there is no

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<sup>6</sup>Satkāri Mookerjee, "The Sāṃkhya-Yoga," History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western (London, 1952), p. 242.

<sup>7</sup>It is important to note in this context that Sāṃkhya, while not exactly atheistic, avoids all mention of God and/or an absolute. The Upaniṣads, however, are decidedly pantheistic.

<sup>8</sup>A. Berriedale Keith, Sāṃkhya System (Calcutta, 1949), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Surendranāth Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy (Cambridge, 1932), I, 28.

way of knowing the exact date of the formation of the system, because, as Mookerjee says: "Of all systems of philosophic thought Sāṃkhya has suffered the worst disaster. The works of Kapila, of Āsuri, the direct disciple of the former, and of Pañcasīkha are all lost. The only work which has escaped extinction is the Sāṃkhya-kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, who cannot be earlier than the Christian era. Though opinions differ on the date, the general chronological status of the work is not indeterminable. At any rate we cannot place the work later than the fourth century A.D."<sup>10</sup>

Despite Sāṃkhya's antiquity, however, there are some who would perhaps wonder at its choice for such a study, on the grounds that, though ancient, Sāṃkhya is far from the central philosophy in Oriental or even Hindu thought. Here a distinction seems to be in order. It is true that Sāṃkhya has long since ceased to grip the mind of the Orient. In fact, as a system in itself it is little more than a museum piece. But for the purpose of delving into the full meaning of the thought of the day there is no more convenient tool. Father Ledrus, S.J., puts it neatly:

The main reason for a close study of the Sāṃkhya, in spite of its antiquity, of its present unpopularity, and of the scarcity of satisfactory documents, is that this theory is the root of almost all branches

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<sup>10</sup>Mookerjee, The Sāṃkhya-Yoga, p. 242.

of Hindu thought, the common theme in their variations: each school and sect assuming the main theorems and methods presented in the Sāṃkhya, to give a rational support to its particular purpose. Sāṃkhya, therefore, represents, so to say, the bare essence of India's rational thought, the philosophia perennis of Hinduism, and as such it survived the death of the historical Sāṃkhya school.<sup>11</sup>

And Theos Bernard adds: "The Sāṃkhya is said to be the philosophical foundation of all Oriental culture, the measuring rod of the entire mass of Hindu literature, the basis for all knowledge of the ancient sages, and the key to all Oriental symbolism."<sup>12</sup>

But over and above Sāṃkhya's value as a foundation for further studies in Oriental thought and culture, it has a further advantage to offer the Westerner. In outlining the difficulties encountered in undertaking a study of Oriental thought, three major problems were mentioned: terminology, pantheism, and the overlapping of philosophy and religion. Of these three perhaps the most difficult is that of terminology. Many of the terms met in Oriental philosophy are completely, or almost completely, untranslatable. This, of course, has been encountered before in connection with the Latin of Scholasticism, but never in quite the same circumstances as found here. For

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<sup>11</sup>Michael Ledrus, S.J., "An Introduction to Sāṃkhya," The New Review, I (March 1935), 277-278. Emphasis added.

<sup>12</sup>Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy (New York, 1947), p. 69.



the Latin context was at least understandable, and often by dint of an appreciation of the passage, the meaning of the notion became somewhat clear. Not so Hindu thought. The lion's share of Hindu philosophy is intimately bound up with the cryptic Upaniṣads. What this means may not be immediately evident to the uninitiated, but will be readily apparent from an analysis of this brief passage quoted at random from the Katha Upaniṣad: "There is a city with eleven gates belonging to the unborn Ātman of undistorted consciousness. He who meditates on Him grieves no more; liberated, he becomes free. This verily, is that."<sup>13</sup> Of course, there is no wish to imply that such a passage is beyond understanding, but rather to point out the fact that to the difficulty of the notion of Ātman in this passage is added the extreme difficulty of the context. This difficulty is avoided to a considerable extent by approaching Oriental thought, especially Hindu thought, through a study of Sāṅkhya, since as a system Sāṅkhya was developed outside the Upaniṣads.

The second problem is the fact that pantheism overshadows almost all the thought of the East, confusing issues and causing untold difficulty to the Western mind. This pantheistic overshadowing gives rise to the third and most fundamental of all the difficulties, the overlapping of philosophy and

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<sup>13</sup>Swāmī Nikhilānanda, trans., The Upaniṣads (New York, 1949), I, 169.

religion. That which is accepted as the basis of belief is accepted unquestioningly as the basis of philosophy, thus creating a very profound problem for one trained to philosophize only on those things which can be known to the intellect without the aid of revelation. However, Sāṃkhya prescind entirely from the notion of God in its development, consequently avoiding the problem of pantheism. That leaves only the difficulty of the notions themselves and the overlapping of religion and philosophy to contend with; real difficulties, to be sure, but not insurmountable. So it is that Sāṃkhya seems not only the most fundamental in the realm of Oriental thought, but is also most approachable for the Western mind. Hence this study.

Finally, this thesis has been described as an approach to Oriental thought through Sāṃkhya. More specifically the approach will be through one phase of Sāṃkhya, purusa, the Sāṃkhya equivalent, generally speaking, to the Aristotelian notion of form. To facilitate such a study, this thesis will consider Sāṃkhya first in its antecedents, and then discuss it as a system in itself. Once the broad outlines of the system are traced, the essential doctrine of Sāṃkhya, purusa, together with its counterpart, prakṛti (matter), can be studied in detail. This analysis will be followed by a critique of the system in terms of Aristotelian form, thus completing the task

originally set, the construction of a "bridge" between the thought of the East and that of the West.

## CHAPTER II

### SĀMKHYA IN ITS PHILOSOPHIC

#### ANTECEDENTS

Since this thesis will deal with the term sāmkhya extensively throughout the next ninety pages, it would perhaps be helpful to devote a little time to a study of the derivation of the word in the very beginning. In itself sāmkhya means "relating to number."<sup>1</sup> From this primitive meaning it came to signify in time "that which is enumerating," then "that which is discriminative" and ultimately, "that which is reasoning." The step from reasoning to philosophy is an obvious one, and from the time of the later Upaniṣads through the several centuries following, sāmkhya was used to distinguish rational philosophy from theological science.<sup>2</sup>

Since the time of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (pronounced ĪŚVARAKRISHṆA),<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Cappeller, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Strassburg, 1891), p. 611.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Ledrus, S.J., "Unpublished Notes," p. 4. Thus the term sāmkhya in the Bhagavad Gītā means only philosophy, and not the Sāmkhya system. On this cf. Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, II, 455, 466-467; Franklin Edgerton, The Bhagavad Gītā, (Cambridge, 1955), II, 65.

<sup>3</sup>c. 200 A.D., Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, I, 212.

however, the term sāṁkhya has more properly applied to a definite philosophic system. The Sāṁkhya-Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa is the "earliest available as well as the most popular textbook of the school,"<sup>4</sup> and it is with the text given in the Kārikā that almost all the extant literature on Sāṁkhya deals. The Sāṁkhya-Kārikā is related to the root meaning of sāṁkhya in two ways: first, since its seventy-two kārikās or verses contain an enumeration of the elements of the universe, and secondly, because it is the first attempt in Hindu thought to explain the universe rationally.

The Sāṁkhya system, however, cannot be quite so easily dismissed. The primary object of Sāṁkhya is, as is that of all Indian philosophy, the liberation of man's soul from the great wheel of existence. This is the first contact in this thesis with one of the three major difficulties mentioned earlier, that of the overlapping of philosophy and religion. The Sāṁkhya assumes as self-evident that the world is a place of misery, that the soul is subject to transmigration, and that there is at least some truth in Vedic tradition,<sup>5</sup> and thus enables one

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<sup>4</sup>S. Rādhākṛṣṇan, Indian Philosophy (London, 1948), II, 254.

<sup>5</sup>Keith, Sāṁkhya System, p. 87. On the significance of the Vedas, see below, 18-19.

to attain to liberation through knowledge. This attainment has been described by Father Ledrus as a transcendental analysis of human experience,<sup>6</sup> and will be discussed more in detail later. Stated simply it is an intuitive knowledge of reality, a discriminating knowledge which enables the knower to distinguish himself perfectly from all other beings. This perfect knowledge of the self brings about the soul's true release and delivers it from the pain of existence. In this Sāṃkhya is alined with all the great Indian systems. Thus the true importance of Sāṃkhya in Oriental thought, and especially Hindu thought, should now be apparent. Since the basic suppositions of Sāṃkhya are those common to all Indian systems, and since the desire for liberation is their common aim, it seems quite natural that wherever possible these systems should have adopted the rational basis supplied in Sāṃkhya. And they did.

Pragmatism and asceticism, gnosticism and pietism, all became Sāṃkhya-like. Jains and Buddhists, Bhagavatas, Śāktas and Vedāntists, all deal in their own way, positively or negatively, with those very tenets which find their natural place only in Sāṃkhya. Other schools develop this or that chapter of the Sāṃkhya into a self-centered system: the Nyāya works out the Sāṃkhya methodology, the Yoga its Psychotherapy, whilst the Buddhism of the Buddha simply evolves into a self-contained whole the very introduction to the Sāṃkhya, viz., the dissatisfaction at a 'diseased' worldly existence. Such a dependence may be historically

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<sup>6</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 4.

contested, as well as almost any definite assumption regarding the history of Hinduism; it has, anyhow, sufficient critical probability to corroborate its psychological evidence.<sup>7</sup>

How far into modern times this influence of Sāṃkhya extends it is difficult to say. Certainly nothing definite can be said on the degree of the influence it has. However, this much can and should be said, that there is sufficient similarity between Buddhism and Sāṃkhya to warrant the assumption that either Buddhism actually stemmed from a Sāṃkhya system that has not come down to us in the literature, or that the classic Sāṃkhya and Buddhism sprang from the same common stock, a growth of that rich intellectual activity following upon the Upaniṣads.<sup>8</sup>

The influence on Yoga is far more apparent. In fact, Yoga and Sāṃkhya are so closely allied that they are often paired together, the one complementing the other. Since the Sāṃkhya system is older than the Yoga system it seems valid to conclude that Yoga developed from the parent Sāṃkhya stock. "The Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies are related, but different in their separate precepts. One complements the other. In their respective present forms, the Sāṃkhya philosophy is older than Yoga. It is likely that these two schools developed originally as different interpretations of a single doctrine."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "An Introduction to Sāṃkhya," p. 278.

<sup>8</sup>Keith, Sāṃkhya System, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup>Gould, Oriental Philosophies, p. 41.

However, even if it is impossible to delineate adequately the influence of Sāṃkhya on two of the major systems of the Orient, it seems quite evident that there has been considerable influence, and that this influence has perdured.

Much of the mystery could, of course, be solved, if the original literature of the system were extant. The history of Sāṃkhya is, as has been seen, shrouded in the mists of casual references to commentaries no longer to be found. Tradition unanimously ascribes the authorship of the system to Kapila, but just who Kapila was or when he lived no one can say. "Some say that he is the son of Brahma,<sup>10</sup> others that he is an avatar of Viṣṇu,<sup>11</sup> still others identify him with an incarnation of Agni.<sup>12</sup> While these accounts are mythical, it may be accepted that an historical individual of the name of Kapila was responsible for the Sāṃkhya tendency of thought.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Īśvarakṛṣṇa's commentary on the Sāṃkhya, which follows the actual composition of the Sāṃkhya perhaps by as much as nine hundred years, must suffice. The Sāṃkhya, then, as it exists today is the system expounded in the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā

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<sup>10</sup>Brahma, the god of the Hindus, or, later, one of the Hindu Trinity, the Creator.

<sup>11</sup>Viṣṇu, another of the gods of the Hindu Trinity.

<sup>12</sup>Agni, god of fire.

<sup>13</sup>Rādhākṛṣṇan, Indian Philosophy, pp. 253-254.



of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, seventy-two verses of tightly interwoven philosophy, treating of causation, the evolution of the world, the evolution of the individual, cognition, transmigration, liberation, and dissolution. So brief that the whole of the system could be put on half a score of typed sheets without much difficulty, yet so compressed that each of the seventy-two verses is completed in the space of a few lines. Perhaps the closest Western equivalent is the scholastic thesis.

Putting this system into its proper perspective, Sāṃkhya, as all Indian philosophies, arises not so much from a purely inquisitive spirit, as from a real spiritual exigency.<sup>14</sup> In the West various reasons are offered for the rise of philosophy. Aristotle suggests that it is a product of scientific curiosity and leisure,<sup>15</sup> while Augustine thought it was man's personal destiny that brought him to the study of philosophy.<sup>16</sup> Moderns offer reasons as varied as the genius of the Greek language, Greek mythology, or the impact of revelation and tradition in the broad sense on the Greek mind. In any event, no one suggests as a possible reason for the growth of philosophy in the West the same need for philosophy experienced in the

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<sup>14</sup>Papali, Hinduism, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup>Met., A, 1, 980a, 23-28.

<sup>16</sup>Augustine, De Trinitate, I, 1.

East. The East has always linked its philosophizing with the struggle to escape the pain and miseries of this life.

Orta est philosophia in India non ex mero spiritu inquisitionis vel desiderio sciendi, sed principaliter ex quadam exigentia spirituali. Est conatus animae ad problemata fundamentalia vitae solvenda, ad finem ultimum hominis consequendum. Unde evenit quod omnia systemata, etiam atheistica, speciem quamdam religionis induunt et insistunt in moralitatem et leges ethicas. Quaestio illis est principaliter de anima salvanda, quidquid de existentia Dei sentiant. Ad rectam intellectionem philosophiae Indianae necesse est hoc curiosum phaenomenon comprehendere.<sup>17</sup>

Such universal accord on the point of departure may seem rather unusual, considering the variety of systems in the East, but there is a basis for it that is really quite reasonable, given the basic supposition of Hinduism, the doctrine of rebirth. As Dasgupta points out, there has never been either before or after Buddha any serious attempt to prove or disprove the doctrine of rebirth.<sup>18</sup> The foundation for that doctrine will be considered later; for the time the important point is the influence such a doctrine must have on all Indian philosophy and consequently on all those philosophies that have taken their rise from Hinduism. Given the doctrine of rebirth, or metempsychosis as it is known in the West, the whole purpose

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<sup>17</sup>Papali, Hinduismus, p. 74.

<sup>18</sup>The doctrine of rebirth is the doctrine according to which the soul continues through a cycle of existences, being born into the world again after a period of punishment or reward for the wrongs or merits of the previous life.

of a good life is frustrated, unless some means of release is found. If a man is doomed to live again and again, and life is at best pain intermingled with brief flashes of happiness, even the most strictly upright life cannot bring relief. The wheel of existence goes round and round, and man is forever chained to it, unless he can somehow contrive a means to slip those chains and find release. To attain such release is the primary aim of Indian philosophy and the great reason for its development.

The history of this development is long and involved, but a brief summary of it here might shed some light on the peculiarities of the system under consideration. History's first meeting with Hinduism is in the hoary pages of the Rg Veda, the oldest known piece of literature.<sup>19</sup> At about the time when Moses was leading the chosen people across the deserts of Egypt, Aryan scholars, holy men, put into writing the sacred hymns that had long since joined their people in the worship of the great god, Brahma. And with the passing of the ages and the fusing of the peoples this simple teaching grew amoeba-like into the philosophy of Hinduism. But all this took place only with the passage of time.

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<sup>19</sup>"The oldest religious text in the world's still looked on as sacred, and which was probably composed between 1500 and 900 B.C." Arthur Basham, India (London, 1954), p. 234.

Originally there was only the Rg Veda, a samhita, or collection of over a thousand hymns to various gods and deities. To this was added in time the Sāma samhita, a purely liturgical collection of hymns, repeating much that was already contained in the Rg Veda. The Yajur samhita, which followed, was of a slightly different composition, comprised of utterances, formulas, blessings, and explanations pertaining to the sacrificial offering. Lastly there was the Atharva Veda, an historical collection of varied contents showing definite signs of the meeting of Aryan and Dravidic peoples<sup>20</sup> following upon the migrations of the Aryans across the north central plains. Incidentally, since the Arharva Veda does not blend with the first three vedas, many refuse to consider it as being of the same infallible stamp as the others.<sup>21</sup> These four vedas form the so called vedic literature which is the ultimate criterion in all Indian thought. They represent that part of Hindu literature classified as Śruti, the inspired writings, as contrasted with Smṛiti, or the commentary on Śruti, and consequently are the touchstone for all orthodox Hindu philosophy.

In the Brahmanic period that followed this vedic age, Brahmanas<sup>22</sup> or ritualistic commentaries were written for each

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<sup>20</sup>Papali, Hinduismus, pp. 6-7.

<sup>21</sup>Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, I, 10.

<sup>22</sup>This is the precept portion of the veda, including ritualistic rules and explanations. Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 164.

of the vedas. Sacrifice was considered of the highest possible importance, and the doctrine of Karma,<sup>23</sup> so important in all the Hindu philosophic systems, was introduced. The Brahmanic rituals prescribed in detail the kind of animals to be used, the manner of the sacrifice and its efficacy, all of which was of supreme importance, for under the law of Karma every good act was a step toward freedom from the tyranny of rebirth. Karma was really the law of action, demanding a quid pro quo reward or punishment for every act or deed. Certainly this was a significant contribution. Here lay an explanation of the world's misery, and at the same time an effectual explanation of the great social inequality existing in society. Herein, too, lay the foundation of the caste system. A man's lot in life was no more than a fitting punishment for his works in a previous existence or a reward, if his present position should be one of dignity.

Of course, with this great emphasis on sacrifice the

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<sup>23</sup>Karma, from karman, means "action, deed, work, especially a holy work, sacrifice, rite; result, effect; organ of the sense; the direct object; fate, destiny." Cappeller, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 112. Karma as a principle of conduct is based on the law of cause and effect, stating that a person's conduct is the basis for a point for point punishment for evil done or reward for good. The importance of this doctrine in a system that postulates continued rebirth cannot be overestimated, since it is only through some such principle that a man could ascend in the scale of being and eventually attain release.

priestly caste rose to the heights of influence. The intricate sacrificial rites and the heavy sanction placed on sacrifices improperly performed gave the skilled Brahman an enviable position and served to invite even greater obscurantism. As Papali puts it:

Principalis effectus, forte etiam intentus, huius ritualismi exaggerati fuit exaltatio sacerdotalis castae. Vitus tam innumeri tamque intricati evaserunt quod nonnisi specialistae iis addiscendis unice dediti eos perficere potuerunt. Si quis in iis ponendis error irrepserit, non solum sacrificium nullum evaderet sed et multa mala ex eo provenire possent. Omnes ergo quaerebant peritos ad sacrificia perdicienda. Ea via parata ad praeeminentiam Brahminium. Hi vero opportunitatem hanc elabi non sunt passi. Multiplicarunt sacrificia et ritus. Occasiones extraordinariae uti sunt coronatio regis, celebratio victoriae, inauguratio imperii, certe exegerunt condignos; et praesto erant Brahmines cum Raja-suya, Acva-medha et aliis eius generis quae splendore suo ipsos reges stupefacerent. Concertarunt inter se reges in solemnitatibus agendis. Creverunt ergo sacrificia splendore et Brahmines auctoritate.<sup>24</sup>

This in time imposed a burden that could not be borne by either the common people or the intelligentsia. The common people revolted against the cruelty of the Brahmanic sacrifices, while the intelligentsia rebelled against the excessive obscurantism of the cult. The revolt that ensued was an intellectual one that gave rise to the age of the Upanishads and the Upanishads themselves.

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<sup>24</sup>Papali, Hinduismus, p. 36.

The Upaniṣads were actually a series of attempts to discover through reason a more suitable means of release from the pattern of transmigration than that offered by the bloody sacrifices prescribed by the Brahmans. The Upaniṣads are not systematic treatises on philosophy, nor are they the works of a single author. In fact, the teachers whose intuitions are recorded in the Upaniṣads are more like "mystic seers than metaphysical investigators," according to Mahādevan, who adds:

There is a directness about their teachings and an authenticity born of first-hand experience of the highest reality. They pour forth their findings in the form of stories and parables, informal discussions and intimate dialogues. The method they adopt is more poetic than philosophic. Even where the language used is prose, the poetic quality is only too evident . . . The Brāhmanas lay down rules and directions concerning the performance of rituals. The Upaniṣads contain the teachings about the ultimate reality.<sup>25</sup>

However, it is important to note that though this movement was of the nature of an intellectual rebellion, it never developed into an irreligious rationalism, since the various schools of philosophy that grew out of the Upaniṣads were based on a definite religious necessity, and not a mere quest for scientific knowledge.

In general, the Upaniṣads hold that the world is a dream

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<sup>25</sup>T.M.P. Mahādevan, "The Upaniṣads," History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western, pp. 55-56.

which Brahma himself dreams. All is incomprehensible, and the moment Brahma awakens from his dream, the world will disappear. Who is Brahma? Brahma is the incomprehensible, the ineffable, complete, perfect, indefectible, the supreme lord and ultimate end of all things. Brahma is the absolute, the Hindu god.

But the worship of this one god of the Hindus soon lapsed into a very definite monism, since the Upaniṣads held an exacting interpretation of the maxim, "ex nihilo nihil fit." If nothing could be created from nothing, they argued, then all must come forth from god. Therefore god is all things, and the apparent multiplicity around about is simply incomprehensible, māyā.

The Upaniṣadic concept of the soul was, of course, very different from any known in Christianity. To the sages of the Upaniṣads the soul was the subjective principle of unity which in reality was not at all different from Brahma. True deliverance, then, was fundamentally nothing more than an interior realization that the soul was one with Brahma; that the soul is Brahma. All liberation of the soul through sacrifices was considered as a mere temporary freedom spent in the mansions of merit, a brief respite before the further trial of another life on this earth. Thus from the sacrifices of the Brahmans the Upaniṣadists brought Hindu thought to the point



where it could accept a reasoned release from the wheel of existence, and in so doing they laid the foundations of later philosophic thought.

But the question arises, does Sāṅkhya fit into the pattern of the Upaniṣads? Certainly many of the elements of Sāṅkhya can be found in the Upaniṣads, as has already been pointed out, but actually there is a vast difference between them. The major tenets of the Upaniṣads can be summarized briefly as a belief in Brahma, a belief in Ātman, the soul, a belief in the identity of Ātman and Brahma, the need for liberation, and the doctrine of Karma-samsāra (action-world), the doctrine of moral cause and effect leading to transmigration. Sāṅkhya accepts three of these tenets as its own, the belief in Ātman, the need for liberation, and the doctrine of Karma-samsāra, but it is chiefly characterized in its complete unconcern for the existence of Brahma. Thus Sāṅkhya represents a new development in Hindu thought. Accepting the basic doctrine of Karma-samsāra, it attaches to it a new and rational interpretation, completely ignoring the means of liberation offered in the Upaniṣads. That this should be true is natural, of course, given the Sāṅkhya unconcern for Brahma. The new solution to the problem of liberation will revolve not so much around a realization that the interior principle of unity, the soul or Ātman, is in reality the very god himself, but in a realization that puruṣa, the

form or soul of man, which in itself is unaffected by material doubts and trials, is not and never was involved in the world of pain presented to it by prakṛti, the material part of the union.

By way of summary, then, Sāṅkhya draws its name from the Sanskrit word for number, enumeration, or reason, and this on two points. First, it presents an enumeration of the elements in the universe, and secondly, it is the first attempt in Hindu thought to explain the universe rationally. This second point further explains why the Sāṅkhya system has had such influence on Hindu thought. Holding in general the same fundamental beliefs as the other systems, Sāṅkhya provides a rational support for those beliefs that would otherwise be wanting. This, of course, is true, because the point of departure of all Indian philosophies is the problem of release. Accepting the doctrine of rebirth unquestioningly from the inspired vedas, Indian philosophies naturally develop into ethical systems aiming at the release of the soul from the pain of rebirth. Such a beginning on the ethical plane could never become a true philosophy, nor build a supporting philosophy as long as life was believed to be completely immersed in the absolute, Brahma. Sāṅkhya, in prescinding completely from the whole question of the existence of Brahma made possible a rational explanation not only of the pain in the world, but also of the means of release. In doing so, however, a whole new philosophy was developed, and this philosophy was the first systematic philosophy in India.

## CHAPTER III

### SĀṂKHYA AS A SYSTEM

After considering the antecedents of Sāṁkhya and its aim, the next logical consideration is that of Sāṁkhya as a system. Such a consideration at the present stage will serve at once as an introduction to the explanation of the doctrine of purusa and a frame of reference for the critique that will follow.

Any explanation of Sāṁkhya falls naturally into the discussion of the evolved, the unevolved, and the knower, the pivotal points of Sāṁkhya. Added to these are the related topics of the Sāṁkhya theory of causation, the means of proof accepted in Sāṁkhya, and evolution. Insofar as the scope of this thesis will permit, all of these will be developed into a comprehensive view of Sāṁkhya as a system.

The first verse of the Kārikā after the statement of the end of Sāṁkhya is the statement of the three pivotal points of Sāṁkhya. Colebrooke's translation of this verse reads as follows: "Nature, the root (of all), is no production. Seven principles, the Great or intellectual one, etc., are productions and productive. Sixteen are productions (unproductive). Soul

is neither a production nor productive."<sup>1</sup> Although four categories are mentioned here,<sup>2</sup> there are actually only three points of consideration: first, the unevolved, secondly, the evolved, and thirdly, the knower. The first, the unevolved, is commonly styled prakṛti, and is, as the Kārikā mentions here, a datum. No explanation is given of its origin, nor is any origin assigned to it. It is. From prakṛti evolve seven principles that are productive and sixteen that are not productive. Among the productive evolutes are intellect, egotism, and the five rudimentary or gross elements: earth, water, air, fire, and ether. These seven in turn produce the sixteen unproductive evolutes, i.e., the five subtle elements, the internal sense, the five senses of action, and the five senses of perception. The five subtle elements: sound, touch, form, flavor, and odor play a very important role in sensation, as anyone aware of the necessity of connaturality in sensation will realise at once. As Father Ledrus points out: ". . . it is not enough to posit the eleven senses as perceptive of or acting on the five gross elements. This indeed is possible

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<sup>1</sup>Īśwara Krishna, The Sāṅkhya Kārikā, trans. Henry Thomas Colebrooke (Oxford, 1837), p. 16, verse three.

<sup>2</sup>Compare this with Erigena's fourfold division of nature into natura quae creat et non creatur; natura quae creatur et creat; natura quae creatur et non creat; and natura quae nec creatur nec creat. De Divisione Naturae, Liber I.

only if there is a connaturality between the senses and the elements; in other terms, if the formal object of the sense agrees with the elements."<sup>3</sup> To appreciate the position of the subtle elements, the following table from Theos Bernard's book will prove helpful:

|       |     |       |     |       |     |      |     |         |     |                    |
|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|---------|-----|--------------------|
| Ether | has | sound |     |       |     |      |     |         |     |                    |
| Air   | "   | sound | and | touch |     |      |     |         |     |                    |
| Fire  | "   | sound | "   | touch | and | form |     |         |     |                    |
| Water | "   | sound | "   | touch | "   | form | and | flavour |     |                    |
| Earth | "   | sound | "   | touch | "   | form | "   | flavour | and | odour <sup>4</sup> |

Thus each of the gross elements has a subtle element that, either singly or in combination with the other subtle elements, makes sensation of that gross element possible. Just why this particular allotment of subtle elements was made is not immediately evident, but after brief psychological reflection there does seem to be some grounds for the division.

The eleven senses, the final productions in this scheme of evolution, are the internal sense, the five senses of action, and the five senses of perception, as has been already observed. Manas, the internal sense, is the great unifier, and performs functions roughly equivalent to the functions of the internal senses in scholastic psychology. It serves in the capacity of memory and imagination, carries out the decisions of the will

<sup>3</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 80.

by conveying them to the organs of action, and also serves to illumine the intellect (showing here a striking resemblance to the agent intellect, except for the fact that manas is a faculty of matter in the Sāṅkhya system). The five senses of action are the faculties of speech, generation, and evacuation, plus the hands and feet, grasping and walking. The senses of perception are those commonly known as the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

The third of the pivotal points mentioned in this third verse of the Kārikā is the soul. Soul, more commonly known as puruṣa, will be considered in detail in a later chapter, so there is little need to dwell on it here. However, it is important to note from the very beginning that puruṣa is neither produced nor producing. This factor will influence the whole character of puruṣa, as will be seen later, as well as the Sāṅkhya doctrine of release. Consequently, the importance of this single statement in the third verse of the Kārikā cannot be overemphasized.

After thus introducing the points on which the system pivots, the Kārikā next opens the question of the means of proof, an essential point in the elaboration of the system. These, plus the Sāṅkhya theory of causation, will make it possible to deduce the existence of both prakṛti and puruṣa, so the Kārikā devotes verses four to eight to a discussion of the

various means of proof.

The three means of proof accepted by Sāṅkhya are perception, inference, and right-affirmation.<sup>5</sup> Perception is defined as the ascertainment of particular objects<sup>6</sup> and is considered the most fundamental of the pramānas.<sup>7</sup> This for the most part is due to three reasons: first, it is the first and basic source of knowledge, secondly, the other pramānas are based on it, and lastly, almost everyone accepts it, with the single exception of the Buddhist Idealists.<sup>8</sup> In more technical terminology, perception is a judgment. As Father Ledrus puts it: "It (perception) is . . . an exercise of reason with regard to a thing which has become sensible (in actu) through its contact with the sense. Hence it is not mere sensation but perception, it is an intellectual act. It therefore knows the thing sub ratione entis, not only qua sensibile."<sup>9</sup>

Since perception is in the order of activity, it has, as such, nothing to do with the knower and remains entirely in the realm of prakṛti. Intellect, too, since it is active, belongs

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<sup>5</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, pp. 18-33, verses four to eight.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 21, verse five.

<sup>7</sup>Pramāna is the means of acquiring right knowledge.

<sup>8</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

to prakṛti and not to the knower, puruṣa. Both of these points play an important role in the Sāṅkhya doctrine of release.

Inference, or reasoning, the second of the three means of proof, corresponds roughly to the arguments a priori, a posteriori, and the argument from analogy. There is, however, some slight variation in each that demands explanation. The first argument, which has been called a priori for the sake of convenience, is one in which the reality inferred is inferred from the sensible presence of some sign which in repeated observations has been linked to that reality. Seeing the sign, then, it is inferred that the signified reality is also present. (Compare: "Where there is smoke there is fire.") The second inference, that called the a posteriori argument, is that in which the conclusion is obtained as a residue, i.e., as the only position acceptable after the exclusion of all other possible positions. To make this clearer, the following example of such an argument is offered: "Clay and jar are not distinct tattvas,<sup>10</sup> because they cannot be added or divided. But distinct tattvas can be added or divided, as for instance basket and fruit. Now clay and jar cannot. Hence they are not distinct tattvas."<sup>11</sup> The conclusion to such an argument is always

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<sup>10</sup>"Tattva, 'thatness,' essence, truth, reality, principle, category." Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 198.

<sup>11</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 20.



negative, but its use and importance in the development of Sāṃkhya is readily noted, especially since it enables one to argue to the suprasensible, and Sāṃkhya deals for the most part with just such objects. The third inference is no less helpful, since it, too, enables the knower to go beyond the purely sensible. In this third form of reasoning the term to be inferred is not perceived at all, but is the term of a relation which is generally observed. Unlike the second inference, the conclusion is positive and direct, thus broadening the scope of the reasoning power.

For the sake of clarity all three arguments are given here in Aristotelian form, after the example of Father Ledrus.

1) Purvavat:<sup>12</sup>

Wherever there is smoke, there is fire (as in Kitchens);  
There is smoke on the hill;  
Hence there is fire on the hill.

2) Śeṣavat:<sup>13</sup>

All things distinct can be added or divided  
(as basket and fruit);  
Jar and clay cannot be added or divided;  
Hence jar and clay are not distinct.

3) Sāmānyato dṛṣṭam:<sup>14</sup>

Every operation requires an appropriate instrument  
(for instance an axe)  
Perception is an operation;  
Hence perception requires an appropriate instrument.

N.B. The mention of an observed example, which has been

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<sup>12</sup>The a priori argument.

<sup>13</sup>The a posteriori argument.

<sup>14</sup>The argument from analogy.

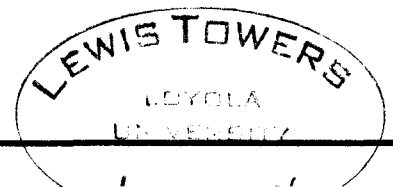
put in brackets, is essential to the conclusive power of the inference.<sup>15</sup>

The third means of proof accepted by Sāṅkhya is that of right-affirmation, the acceptance as valid knowledge of whatever is contained in the vedas, as well as the doctrine passed on to the disciple by a trustworthy teacher. This method is particularly interesting, since Sāṅkhya does not believe in the existence of a supreme being, who would be the author of its revealed doctrines. However, the sayings and the tradition of the school, transmitted from age to age by trustworthy teachers (hence right-affirmation), become a "mirror" for the disciples of the system, leading them to the intuition that will ultimately attain for them that transcendental intuition necessary for release. Thus, in apparent contradiction to the reasoned progress of Sāṅkhya in its development, the notions fundamental to all Indian philosophy, rebirth, etc., are accepted with no rational justification. Nor can this apparent contradiction be explained away, unless such an acceptance of a religious substrate be considered a manifestation of the peculiar genius of Indian philosophy.

These, then, are the three methods of proof accepted by Sāṅkhya: perception, inference, and right-affirmation. Their actual use is best seen in the Kārikā itself as the various

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<sup>15</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 21.



aspects of the three pivotal points of the Sāṅkhya are developed. Before that application, however, the Sāṅkhya meets and answers the objection that what cannot be perceived cannot exist; an important objection, since Sāṅkhya is based on two such imperceptibles. The argument is given as follows: "From various causes things may be imperceptible (or unperceived); excessive distance, (extreme) nearness, defect of the organs, inattention, minuteness, interposition of objects, predominance of other matters, and intermixture with the like."<sup>16</sup> In more evident terminology, things may not be perceived because of defective location, being placed too far from or too near the eye; through some defect in the sense act, whether it be a defect in the sense itself or mere lack of attention; or through some defect in the object itself; the object may be too subtle to be perceived; or lastly, the defect may be of the nature of an impediment arising from surrounding objects, such as a wall impeding vision, or the distraction resulting from the predominance of another object of the same kind, or the intermixture with other objects of the same kind, e.g., a grain of wheat in a bushel of wheat.

Failure to perceive cannot always be offered as a valid proof for the non-existence of the object in question. If

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<sup>16</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 33, verse seven.

certain definite effects are observed, then, according to the theory of causation advanced in the Sāṃkhya, the cause of those effects must exist whether such a cause be observed or not. This point is important to the further development of the train of thought begun in the third verse of the Kārikā, the existence of prakṛti and its derivative principles, and the existence of purusa.

The Sāṃkhya theory of causation developed in the ninth verse of the Kārikā represents another departure from traditional thought, and approaches very close to Aristotle's own thesis on causation. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school<sup>17</sup> taught that the effect was altogether non-existent before that effect was produced, and that the cause is always something existent at the time of the production. The theory proposed by the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism might be more clearly presented in the words of Father Ledrus: "The theory of the Mahāyāna Buddhists teaches that, everything being momentary, there cannot exist an entity which would be existent during two moments, hence a cause is no longer existent when the effect comes to exist."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Nyāya--the logical school which centers about the logical and analytical means by which conclusions are to be drawn. Relying upon the five senses for the raw material of perception it regards the external world as substantial reality. Vaiśeṣika--supplements the Nyāya school. It regards the transient world as real and composed of differentiable aggregates of eternal particles or atoms." Gould, Oriental Philosophies, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 28.

A third theory of causation was advanced by the Vedāntists. According to the followers of Śaṅkara, what one grasps as a cause is actually a part of one universal reality, and any notion of causality is, consequently, illusory. Effects, as effects, are non-existent.

Against these opinions on causation, Sāṅkhya advanced the thesis contained in the ninth verse of the Kārikā: "Effect subsists (antecedently to the operation of cause); for what exists not, can by no operation of cause be brought into existence. Materials, too, are selected which are fit for the purpose: every thing is not by every means possible: what is capable, does that to which it is competent; and like is produced from like."<sup>19</sup> From this it is evident that causation in Sāṅkhya is not the production of a completely new reality. Rather it is the evolution of being from its "involved and undifferentiated state to its manifest and differentiated state."<sup>20</sup> The effect is the cause as manifested under a new name and a new form. Further explanation of the theory, offered in the Bhāṣya,<sup>21</sup> makes clear the precise interpretation of

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<sup>19</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 33, verse nine.

<sup>20</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 28.

<sup>21</sup>The Bhāṣya of Gaudapada, the oldest and perhaps the best commentary on the Kārikā. Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. vi.

this verse followed by the Sāṅkhya school. According to the Bhāshya, materials are selected in accordance with the desires of the producer. Hence he who would make curds begins with milk, not water. Again, every thing is not by every means possible, meaning that there is no universal possibility in any one thing. Further, what is capable does that to which it is competent: the potter working with the lump of clay, the wheel, rag, rope, water, etc., makes a jar capable of being so made. And lastly, like is produced from like. Otherwise rice might flow from pease. Thus the Bhāshya amply illustrates both the notion of causation as intended by the Kārika and the weakness of that notion. The notion is evidently very close to causation as outlined by Aristotle. The agent acts according to its nature, and the effect produced depends in large part on the material used in its production. The weakness in the theory, however, is this, that the theory as expressed here is drawn from a generalisation of physical examples, without sufficiently explaining <sup>the</sup> possibility of the transfer of causation from the physical order to puruṣa or from puruṣa to the physical order. This point is extremely important, since it indicates one of the basic weaknesses of the system, and will accordingly be given more detailed treatment in the critique of the system. Yet, as far as it goes, this theory of causation is a remarkable improvement on the older Indian theories, and it does provide

the principle necessary for the Sāṁkhya theory of evolution.

However, before entering into the process of evolution, the nature of prakṛti must be determined, and this is done in Sāṁkhya through an application of the a posteriori argument and the argument from analogy. Now since prakṛti is known from the existence of its effects, it is important to ascertain those notes which are characteristic of the twenty-three evolutes. Stated in summary fashion, the evolutes are caused, impermanent, non-omnipresent, subject to action and consequently to transmigration, composed, dependent immediately on their preceding evolutes, mediately on the other precedent evolutes, and ultimately on prakṛti; they are many, based on something, and perishable. None of these characteristics could be true of the unevolved datum, prakṛti, whose existence has already been proven as necessary. Therefore in these respects prakṛti differs from its evolutes. Yet there are some similarities that exist between the evolutes and prakṛti that help in the understanding of the nature of prakṛti. First, both prakṛti and the evolutes partake of the three gunas or qualities.<sup>22</sup> Yet neither is endowed with awareness, the power to become aware of the radical distinction which exists between the twenty-five essences, and especially between puruṣa and prakṛti. This power is reserved for puruṣa alone. Further, both prakṛti

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<sup>22</sup>guna is one of the three constituents of prakṛti; a quality, property, or attribute.

and the evolutes are shared in common by the puruṣas, are unaware of self, and are characterized by their tendency to generate successive evolutes. Such, then, is the nature of prakṛti as it is known from the evolutes by means of the a posteriori and analogical arguments. The following table<sup>23</sup> might clarify the points of comparison.

| <u>EVOLUTES</u>            | <u>PRAKṚTI</u>   | <u>PURUṢA</u>                           |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <u>made of three gunas</u> | <u>made of three gunas</u>                                   | <u>simple</u>                           |
| <u>undiscriminative</u>    | <u>undiscriminative</u>                                      | <u>discriminative</u>                   |
| <u>object</u>              | <u>object</u>  | <u>subject</u>                          |
| <u>common</u>              | <u>common</u>  | <u>singular</u>                         |
| <u>unconscious</u>         | <u>unconscious</u>   | <u>conscious</u>                        |
| <u>prolific</u>            | <u>prolific</u>  | <u>sterile</u>                          |
| <u>caused</u>              | <u>uncaused</u>  | <u>uncaused</u>                         |
| <u>impermanent</u>         | <u>permanent</u>   | <u>permanent</u>                        |
| <u>non-omnipresent</u>     | <u>omnipresent</u>   | <u>omnipresent</u>                      |
| <u>migrating</u>           | <u>non-migrating</u>   | <u>non-migrating</u><br>(apparently so) |
| <u>many</u>                | <u>one</u>   | <u>one</u> (though many in<br>number)   |
| <u>rooted</u>              | <u>non-rooted</u>  | <u>non-rooted</u>                       |
| <u>resorbable</u>          | <u>non-resorbable</u>  | <u>non-resorbable</u>                   |
| <u>compound</u>            | <u>not composed of parts</u>                                 | <u>not composed of parts</u>            |
| <u>dependent</u>           | <u>independent</u><br>(except in the line<br>of final cause) | <u>independent</u>                      |

<sup>23</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 34.



The development of prakṛti arises by means of its three constituent qualities, the gunas, whose existence, as that of prakṛti itself, is postulated by the qualities of the effects of prakṛti. Intellect, which is an effect, has the properties of pleasure, pain, and bewilderment, and consequently its cause must have answering properties. According to Sāṅkhya, prakṛti does have these qualities. Their nature is defined rather briefly in the twelfth verse of the Kārikā: "The qualities respectively consist in pleasure, pain, and dulness; are adapted to manifestation, activity, and restraint; mutually domineer; rest on each other; produce each other; consort together; and are reciprocally present."<sup>24</sup> The doctrine of the gunas, though difficult, is essential to an understanding of prakṛti and the process of evolution that begins with prakṛti. Hence the summary treatment of the matter in this section of the Kārikā will demand some explanation. The three gunas are called sattva guna, rajas guna, and tamas guna respectively, and each has its characteristic function. Sattva is best understood from the term itself, which means "being, true, good, or beautiful."<sup>25</sup> It is commonly understood, then, to designate the natural basis of happiness. Rajas designates activity and is the source of hatred, malignity, envy, blame, abuse, injury,

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<sup>24</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 36.

desire, and all those acts by which a man seeks his own selfish ends. Lastly, tamas is used to signify all darkness or sluggishness of intellect or the senses. As each guna has its own character, so each has its own formal object, sattva being directed to illumination or manifestation, rajas to activity, and tamas to restraint. It is the activity of these three gunas that begins and carries through all evolution. They exercise an active influence on one another, and any one of them can attain its own end only by subjugating the other two. Further the three gunas support one another. Sattva is agitated to activity by rajas and restrained in that activity by tamas. Consequently the concrete exercise of any of the gunas is never pure, always containing some elements of the other two. Lastly, the gunas generate one another, not in the sense that there is any new essence involved, but that they so interweave that the absence of one necessitates the presence of the others in a greater degree. This, of course, means that they are always united in a being, and it is their presence in varying degrees of balance that determines the nature of that being.

As has been noted, it is the gunas that make both cosmic and individual evolution possible.<sup>26</sup> When the balance of

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<sup>26</sup>Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 75.

nature is first disturbed<sup>27</sup> rajas is activated and tries to render sattva manifest. This activation of sattva, however, is restricted by tamas, thus producing in this first series of manifestations the various stages of the evolution, depending on the degree of restraint. Intellect is the first produced, followed at various levels of balance by the different senses, beginning with the internal sense, manas, until the ultimate level of balance is reached when tamas is in complete control, thus producing the gross elements.<sup>28</sup>

Sāṃkhya, then, tries to explain the existing world through this evolutionary process, both cosmic and individual, beginning with the interaction of a primary datum, prakṛti, and puruṣa. Since puruṣa and prakṛti are suprasensible, their existence is demonstrated through the application of one of the three means of proof accepted in Sāṃkhya, inference. Special use is made of the a posteriori argument and the analogical argument. The

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<sup>27</sup>This initial disturbance of the balance of the three gunas remains unexplained within the system of Sāṃkhya, and the problems it poses form the most formidable objection to the system. If puruṣa must remain both unproduced and unproducing, leaving all activity to prakṛti and its evolutes, there seems to be no way of explaining this first movement without recourse to some higher being, a recourse which Sāṃkhya never makes formally.

<sup>28</sup>For a detailed presentation of the whole process of evolution in Sāṃkhya cf. Rādhākṛiṣṇan, Indian Philosophy, II, 269-277.

process of evolution is brought about by the interplay of the three qualities, the gunas, which constitute prakrti and all its evolutes. Exactly how this process is initiated and its purpose are points that pertain to the discussion of purusa: the proofs for its existence, and the description of its functions and qualities, all of which will serve as the matter of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### PURUṢA, THE HEART OF SĀMKHYA

"Soul (puruṣa) is neither a production nor productive."<sup>1</sup>

Of the three pivotal points of Sāmkhya, the unevolved, the evolved, and the knower, which were discussed in some detail in the last chapter, the third, the knower, is perhaps the most important in the present consideration. Sāmkhya, as a philosophic system, aims at release of the soul from the wheel of existence, as do all Indian philosophies. It proposes to attain that end through a transcendental intuition of the distinction between essences, especially that between prakṛti and puruṣa. Since, however, Sāmkhya completely ignores the whole question of an absolute, commonly accepted in other systems, the question of the existence of the soul, puruṣa, rises as an essential point of proof in the system. If there is no God to put meaning in the universe, can the universe be meaningful? To solve that difficulty Sāmkhya posits puruṣa in parallel to prakṛti, which stands as a datum, and in the

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<sup>1</sup>Colebrooke, Sāmkhya Kārikā, p. 16, verse three.

elaboration of this doctrine on puruṣa Sāṃkhya attempts to handle the difficulties of subjectivity in the world and to explain the activity of prakṛit. Puruṣa, then, in a very real sense, is the heart of Sāṃkhya. The question of its existence, the proofs for plurality in the doctrine, the qualities of puruṣa, and puruṣa's interaction with prakṛti all pertain to that doctrine, and will be considered in turn as this chapter is developed.

The first question that must be answered in the course of such a discussion is that of the very existence of puruṣa. The Kārikā lines up the proofs as follows: "Since the assemblage of sensible objects is for another's use; since the converse of that which has the three qualities, with other properties (before mentioned), must exist; since there must be superintendence; since there must be one to enjoy; since there is a tendency to abstraction; therefore, soul is."<sup>2</sup>

Such are the proofs, five of them, by which Sāṃkhya demonstrates the existence of puruṣa, the soul. All are based on inference, especially the inference of analogy, and, after an initial period of difficulty, they present a very logical argument for the existence of puruṣa. However, before entering into an examination of the proofs, a brief review of what has already been asserted about the nature of puruṣa is in order.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65, verse seventeen.

From earlier verses of the Kārikā,<sup>3</sup> those especially that treat of the nature of the evolutes and of prakṛti, it can be readily ascertained that puruṣa is directly opposed to those qualities manifested by the evolutes, resembling prakṛti in whatever prakṛti itself differs from the evolutes, and differing from prakṛti wherever it resembles the evolutes. The reasons for such a difference, however, never appeared in these verses, but had to be inferred from the presentation of the proofs for the existence of puruṣa. From the proofs themselves it is immediately evident that puruṣa, if it exists, cannot partake in any of the qualities of the evolutes. And the burden of the proofs is that puruṣa does exist. Hence these proofs under consideration at this point not only establish the fact of puruṣa's existence but reassert what was already affirmed of its nature.

The first of the five proofs argues that whatever is compounded is destined for the use of another. The example given in the Bhāṣya<sup>4</sup> is that of a bed being prepared for the use of another. The assemblage of bedding, props, cords, cotton, etc., are for another's use, not for the well-being of the bed itself. If there is a bed, the assumption is valid that there

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. above, p. 39, note 23.

<sup>4</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 66.

is a man who sleeps on the bed.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, by the third mode of inference, i.e., the argument from analogy, if a bed presupposes one who uses it, then this visible world presupposes one who is not of the world, but who uses it, purusa.

The second argument is perhaps the most difficult to interpret, since an adequate understanding of it depends on an understanding of the doctrine of the three gunas, which was given so summarily in the preceding chapter. Recall for the moment that prakṛti along with all its evolutes is composed of the three gunas in various combinations and that in every being the gunas exist in a union in which they mutually support each other. A single step forward in this line of thought, then, gives meaning to this second argument. Prakṛti and all its evolutes necessarily include in their composition a proportion of rajas and tamas, the principles of activity and darkness, and hence they cannot participate freely in the reality known as consciousness. That consciousness, then, must

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<sup>5</sup>the finality in the prakṛti, her evolution and involution for the experience and release of the puruṣas, reminds one of Aristotle's conception of the unmoved Mover. There is, however, an enormous difference between the Sāṅkhya-Yoga final causality of the puruṣa and that found in the Aristotelian texts; for there is a multitude of puruṣas in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophy, whereas the Aristotelian Prime Mover is one who moves the world by attraction rather than as an efficient cause of a creator." Theotonius Amal Ganguly, "Puruṣa and Prakṛti," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Notre Dame University, 1951), pp. 87-88.



be outside the realm of prakṛti and its evolutes. Puruṣa must exist.

The third argument, the argument from superintendence, is based on the first argument, and states simply that wherever there is found such teleology as exists in the direction of a composite to the use of a simple substance there must of necessity be found one to govern or superintend the elements directed to that specified end.

The fourth argument adds that there must necessarily be one to enjoy the world that experience teaches actually does exist. In the physical order, wherever there is a subject matter of experience there is observed one to experience it. Now, by inference, all the physical world, composed of the evolutes and prakṛti, presents a subject matter of experience, which is, according to the nature of the gunas, pleasant, painful, or dull. Since prakṛti, too, partakes of these qualities, it must be part of the subject matter of experience. Therefore, the one who experiences this world must be one apart from prakṛti, i.e., puruṣa.

The final argument is based on the fact that learned men throughout the history of thought have insisted on the necessity for release from the wheel of existence. This tendency to abstraction, as it is called here, is offered as a suasive argument, maintaining that if such has been the common belief,

then there must exist some foundation for the belief, a soul capable of existence apart from the trials and evils of the world. Hence, purusa exists.

Since this matter is particularly difficult, the development of the arguments as offered by Theos Bernard is presented here by way of summary. This rephrasing of the matter, though it offers no new explanation, may aid in the understanding of the five arguments merely through a repetition in a new format of key ideas already stressed.

1. Since everything that is produced is for the use of something other than itself (e.g., a chair is for another not itself), there must be a universal spirit to use the products of the Cosmic Substance (prakṛti).
2. Since all manifestations of the Cosmic Substance (prakṛti) are objects composed of the constituents (gunas), there must be, by definition, a knower of these objects, devoid of the constituents (gunas).
3. Since everything of the objective world is composed of the three constituents (gunas), there must be something that controls them for the same reason that a car needs a driver.
4. Since the Cosmic Substance (prakṛti) is incapable of experience, there must be something else to account for universal experience.
5. Since all scriptures promise release, there must be something that transcends the Cosmic Substance (prakṛti) out of which all things come.<sup>6</sup>

Such are the proofs for the existence of purusa. One might legitimately expect to find them followed by the further discussion of the nature of purusa, but not so in Sāṅkhya. In

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<sup>6</sup>Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 71.

Oriental philosophy, whenever a being is posited that in any way resembles the absolute, the question immediately arises, "How will this meet the challenge of the one and the many?" This is necessarily so. Generally speaking, in any system that posits an emanation rather than a creation as such, the individual is lost in the absolute, and for the most part, Oriental philosophies do conceive of creation in terms of emanation. Hence for them a plurality of puruṣas is almost beyond question. Sāṅkhya, however, teaches that there is a plurality of puruṣas.

The argument for the plurality of puruṣas is really nothing more than a common sense argument, stated in the Kārikā thus: "Since birth, death, and the instruments of life are allotted severally; since occupations are not at once universal; and since qualities affect variously; multitude of souls is demonstrated."<sup>7</sup> As has been mentioned, this is a distinct departure from traditional Hindu thought, which has always tended to think of puruṣas as one, in spite of the fact that the manifestations of prakṛti are many. As an analysis of the proofs given in the argument will readily indicate, however, Sāṅkhya argues rather strongly for a plurality of puruṣas.

The proofs advanced here could be classified under three

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<sup>7</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 68, verse eighteen.

major heads: proofs from the various states of life, proofs from the various activities of life, proofs from the various reactions to environmental conditions. It is to be noted, however, that though the arguments can be divided in this way, the same fundamental principle runs through them all. The question is not merely one of variety in states, activities, or reactions, but of simultaneous variety.<sup>8</sup> Because the same subject cannot be engaged in one activity and its contradictory at one and the same time, and because de facto contradictory activities are carried on at the same time, the conclusion is that not one, but many subjects are responsible for these activities. The argument, in other words, is an application of the principle of contradiction to these various states, activities, and reactions that are the "stuff" of everyday.

However, it might be objected that it is possible for one being to undertake this variety of tasks at the same time. The example is offered of the king who is at the same time a householder.<sup>9</sup> It is possible, is it not, for him to lose his kingdom, without losing his household? The same could be said for the other activities in question. But the point of the argument is evidently missed in such an objection. What is objected is

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<sup>8</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 50.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

true up to a certain point. In fact, only when there is question of two completely contradictory states, activities, or reactions is the validity of the objection challenged. But the point to be made here is that the argument for a plurality of puruṣas is precisely from contradictory states, and consequently remains untouched by such an objection.

One might perhaps formulate a more fundamental objection something like this: "The argument advanced is based on states, activities, and reactions. But all three of these modes of being are peculiar to prakṛti, not to puruṣa. Therefore there can be no conclusion to a plurality of puruṣas, at least as far as this argument is concerned." This is an objection that gets at the root of the doctrine and definitely challenges the position. However, it is by no means a telling argument against Sāṅkhya. The objection is based on two texts from the Kārikā, verses nineteen and sixty-two, which point out that puruṣa is essentially passive and never actually enters into composition with prakṛti. The contention is that the very composition of prakṛti (rajas, sattva, and tamas) is sufficient to explain the variety of activities, states, and reactions. Since these various modes of being are actually the property of prakṛti, and since the very composition of prakṛti can account for the existence of variety in one subject, there is no need, no reason, to look to puruṣa to explain the presence of that variety. The

answer to the objection is simply that though prakṛti does provide an explanation of a sort for variety, it cannot begin to explain the simultaneous presence of contradictory activities, states, and reactions. It is true that the guṇas account for variety by their combination in various proportions, but they cannot form a contradictory proportion. The explanation for these varying combinations must come from some outside influence on prakṛti, puruṣa. And since a contradiction would be involved if the appeal were to one puruṣa only, the appeal is to many. Once again the conclusion must be that there is a plurality of puruṣas to account for the simultaneous variety of states, activities, and reactions. Thus the existence of puruṣa is proved from the nature of prakṛti, and the plurality of puruṣas from the simultaneous variety found in the various states, etc., of prakṛti, with appeal logically to the principle of contradiction.

Having thus proved the existence of puruṣa and the added fact of plurality, Sāṅkhya goes on to discuss the nature of puruṣa. In connection with the explanation of prakṛti that was given above<sup>10</sup> some slight indication of the nature of puruṣa was added. For the most part, however, that was a purely negative appraisal, delineating puruṣa only in what it was not.

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<sup>10</sup>Cf. above, chapter three, p. 39.

It is important, then, that the Kārikā enter more precisely into the nature of puruṣa after its argument for plurality; hence the nineteenth verse of the Kārikā: "And from that contrast (before set forth) it follows, that soul is witness, solitary, bystander, spectator, and passive."<sup>11</sup>

The argument here, of course, is the second form of inference<sup>12</sup> based on the preceding proofs for the nature of prakṛti and its evolutes and the proof for the existence of puruṣa. Puruṣa is here said to be witness, that is sākṣin: one "with eyes,"<sup>13</sup> or a mere knower, a pure principle of awareness, a contemplator of buddhi and its properties.<sup>14</sup> "It contemplates them without intervening in any way in their operation, just as a mendicant monk contemplates the working farmers without himself touching a spade."<sup>15</sup> The inference of this quality is based on the fact that puruṣa has already been established as superintendent and the enjoyer of experience, yet deprived of all share in the guṇas and their activity. Hence puruṣa must merely witness the activity of prakṛti. Further, since puruṣa

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<sup>11</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 72, verse nineteen.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. above, pp. 31-32.

<sup>13</sup>Cappeller, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 611.

<sup>14</sup>Buddhi means reason.

<sup>15</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 51.

alone does not partake of the gunas, which constitute prakṛti and all its evolutes, it must be considered solitary or isolated, and herein lies matter of far greater moment than is readily appreciated.

Hence it [puruṣa] is alone or isolated, i.e., perfectly separated from prakṛti which consists entirely of the three gunas. This we are bound to affirm, in spite of all contrary evidence, on the force of the reasoning itself. It is precisely in this contrary evidence that ignorance consists which Sāṅkhya proposes to remove. We identify ourselves with our faculties and body, but truth consists in realizing that such an identification is wrong and the principle of awareness which we simply are is ever separated from all such natural aggregates, hence, that we do not really migrate from existence to existence, and are not really affected by either pain, delusion or pleasure.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the nature of puruṣa is summed up in the fact that it is a bystander, a spectator, and passive. It is completely independent of the three gunas and unconcerned with their activities. Of course, being pure awareness, puruṣa observes all that goes on concerning the senses and their operations. Yet it remains itself entirely passive, since it in no way embodies the principle of activity, rajas.

Perhaps here Father De Smet, S.J., in his commentary on this section of the Kārikā, is worth quoting, especially since the point he breaches will also figure in the discussion of puruṣa in connection with individuation, which is given in an appendix to this chapter.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp 51-52.



We similarly state that, in spite of the fact that all our actions, even though free, are transcendently related to God on Whom they ultimately depend for whatever is ontological in them ('in Ipso enim vivimus, movemur et sumus'), God is in no way a principle or part or aspect of them: non componit cum eis, but He remains entirely transcendent, while being perfectly immanent, to them. The error of the Sāṅkhyas is to identify this supreme transcendent Subject with the principle of awareness which we are and which we can observe. The Vedāntins will try to correct this error but will succeed only imperfectly.<sup>17</sup>

The final stage in this exposition of the Sāṅkhya doctrine on puruṣa involves the interaction of puruṣa and prakṛti, which must be considered in two phases, the nature of the interaction and its purpose. First, the nature of this interaction must be considered. Before the process of evolution begins, prakṛti is considered to be in a state of equilibrium, in which the three guṇas are in perfect balance. This balance maintains until the state of quiescence is disturbed under the influence of the puruṣas. The exact nature of this influence cannot be determined from the Kārikā. It is. All, indeed, that can be said of it is contained in the twenty-first verse of the Kārikā: "For the soul's contemplation of nature, and for its abstraction, the union of both takes place, as of the halt and blind. By that union a creation is framed."<sup>18</sup>

The Bhāṣhya's comment here is simply: "As the birth of a

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<sup>17</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 52.

<sup>18</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 77, verse twenty-one. Emphasis added.

child proceeds from the union of male and female, so the production of creation results from the connection of nature and soul."<sup>19</sup> The fact is that the nature of this influence is not described, and any attempt to arrive at an explanation of it is at best a gloss on the text of the Kārikā as it exists today. However, given that influence, undefined as it is, the equilibrium of prakṛti is upset, and there follows a movement that passes from inactivity to activity through the evolution of the cosmos and the individual, and then from activity to rest in the phase called pralaya.<sup>20</sup> In the movement from inactivity to activity the evolutionary process described in great detail throughout the last half of the Kārikā unfolds. The decay of this world, thus evolved, is the necessary consequence of the completion of the cycle begun when the wheel of existence first began to revolve in the initial disturbance of the gunas. However, the equilibrium attained in the state of pralaya is not a mere passive state.<sup>21</sup> Rather it is a state of utmost tension. There is great activity at this time, too, but the activity does not lead to the generation of new things and qualities. Thus the state of pralaya does not interrupt the teleology inherent in prakṛti and the gunas, but fulfills the demands of

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Pralaya is the quiescent state of prakṛti.

<sup>21</sup>Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, I, 247.

the karmas of the various puruṣas. As the discussion of the purpose in the interaction of puruṣa and prakṛti will illustrate, every activity of prakṛti is for the benefit of the puruṣas, and that must necessarily extend to this period of seeming rest. At the time of the first pralaya many of the puruṣas will have attained their complete release from the world of pain, and the others will have reached a stage when their conduct will merit for them either a higher or a lower form of existence.<sup>22</sup> Thus this momentary return to the equilibrium of the gunas is demanded by the puruṣas themselves, and completely in accord with the teleology of prakṛti.

But what is the teleology of prakṛti? Actually the foundation of the explanation of this teleology was laid in the twenty-first verse of the Kārikā, quoted above. "For the soul's contemplation of nature, and for its abstraction, the union of both takes place, as of the halt and the blind." In other words, the conjunction of prakṛti and puruṣa is for the sake of puruṣa's contemplation of prakṛti in her evolution and manifestation, much as a spectator contemplates the convolutions of

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. the forty-fourth verse of the Kārikā: "By virtue is ascent to a region above; by vice, descent to a region below; by knowledge is deliverance; by the reverse, bondage." Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 142.

of a dancing girl.<sup>23</sup> Prakṛti alone is active; puruṣa is merely watching.

More fundamentally, the union of prakṛti to puruṣa is for the isolation and liberation of this puruṣa, just as the dancing girl moves onto the stage, not for her own sake, but for the sake of the spectators. Exactly how this is brought about entails some repetition, but for the sake of completeness it is added here. Puruṣa in its initial stage is, as it were, sleeping, unaware of its true nature. By its presence, however, and in some mysterious way (as mentioned above) puruṣa incites prakṛti to activity. The evolution begins under the influence of the changing balance of the three gunas, and the various evolutes are formed, beginning with intellect and egotism. Now, as has been mentioned earlier, the purpose of intellect is "to mirror" for puruṣa all the data brought to it through the workings of the ten external senses and the one internal sense. It has already been pointed out<sup>24</sup> that intellect does not possess the quality of awareness, nor is it conscious of itself. It is at best an intellectual mirror, presenting thought perfectly, but completely oblivious of its meaning.

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<sup>23</sup>"As a dancer, having exhibited herself to the spectator, desists from the dance, so does nature desist, having manifested herself to soul." Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 170, verse fifty-nine.

<sup>24</sup>cf above, p. 38.

Puruṣa, on the other hand, is pure consciousness. It understands all things presented to it, even though of itself it does not partake of them. At the time of union, however, puruṣa so associates itself with prakṛti that the sensations and thoughts presented by the various evolutes seem to be one with puruṣa. It is the great error of puruṣa that it accepts these reports from the material world as its own, when in reality it has no part of them. From this state of confusion arises that sense of frustration and pain which accompanies the puruṣa through existence after existence, from pralaya to pralaya, until by the rational process of the Sāṃkhya the puruṣa realizes that though there are trials and sufferings in this world, it of itself has no part in them. The puruṣa thus arrives at a true understanding of its own nature, and the purpose of prakṛti is fulfilled.

By way of summary, then, prakṛti, by bringing a puruṣa and the gunas together, allows this puruṣa to contemplate all the phases of the gunas' evolution, and to experience them as if they were really happening to that puruṣa. Puruṣa thus

experiences not only the relative pleasure of sattva but also the restlessness of rajas and the pain which it causes and the dullness and confusion of tamas. Hence he becomes afflicted by the threefold pain,<sup>25</sup> pradhāna<sup>26</sup> becomes deprived of

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<sup>25</sup>I.e., pain arising from intrinsic causes, pain arising from extrinsic causes, and pain arising from supernatural causes.

<sup>26</sup>Pradhāna is another name for prakṛti.

all attraction and he becomes completely disaffected towards it. Hence he is then ready to differentiate himself completely from pradhana and to retire into perfect isolation. This aim of their conjunction being thus attained by means of this very conjunction, prakṛti in a parallel way ceases to operate 'just as a dancing-girl, having exhibited herself to the spectators of the stage, ceases to dance,'<sup>27</sup> for 'nothing is more modest than prakṛti, . . . once aware of having been seen, she does not again expose herself to the view of puruṣa.'<sup>28</sup>

The conjunction of puruṣa and prakṛti, then, is necessary insofar as it is through that conjunction that their common goal is attained, and temporary, since the attainment of that goal terminates the need for the union. It is, as the Kārikā points out,<sup>29</sup> very much like the association of a lame man and a blind man, who by their mutual help and support work to their common goal. With this the doctrine of puruṣa is complete, with only a critique and a comparison of puruṣa and Aristotelian form remaining.

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<sup>27</sup>The fifty-ninth verse of the Kārikā quoted above.

<sup>28</sup>"Nothing in my opinion, is more gentle than nature; once aware of having been seen, she does not again expose herself to the gaze of soul." Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 172, verse sixty-one; Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 55.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 76, verse twenty-one.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

Related to the question of the existence of the plurality of puruṣas, which was developed briefly in chapter four, is the further question of the explanation of that plurality in relation to other systems. Such a discussion is, of course, not essential to the purpose of this thesis, hence its relegation to an appendix. However, though it involved a good deal of speculation over and above the actual explanation of the text, it is a question that should be considered in connection with any discussion of the nature of puruṣa. Further, the very nature of the question seems to urge its inclusion in some way for a more adequate appreciation of the nature of puruṣa both in Sāṃkhya and in the related philosophies. What is here added on the implications of verse eighteen of the Kārikā will not be an extensive treatment of the points in question, but it should prove both interesting and profitable to the Western reader who hopes to use these pages as a bridge into Oriental thought.

The question to be treated here is twofold: (1) do the arguments listed by Sāṃkhya actually prove the existence of a plurality of puruṣas? and (2) is that plurality, if the answer

to the first point is in the affirmative, best explained by some principle of individuation or do the various puruṣas exist as specifically different individuals? Thus three points will be discussed: (1) the attacks on the arguments offered by Sāṃkhya for the plurality of puruṣas, (2) puruṣas as individuals, and (3) puruṣas as individuated.

The first point to be considered is that of the validity of Sāṃkhya's argument for the plurality of puruṣas. Taking Hiriyanna as spokesman for the group, although it includes Mookerjee and Radhakrishnan as well, the following objection is raised against the existence of a plurality of puruṣas:

The plurality of puruṣas is sought to be deduced from the observed distinctions in men's temperaments. The mental or moral disposition of no two persons is identical; nor is their reaction to their social or physical environment the same. But it may be pointed out that this argument only shows that the puruṣas are different in their empirical condition and not in themselves. In their liberated state, as we shall see, there is absolutely no difference; and to postulate numerical difference between entities when there is no distinction whatever in their intrinsic nature seems unwarranted. There is not here even an attempt made to justify this pluralistic view. . . . Granting that the existence of prakṛti implies the existence of puruṣa, the logical conclusion to be drawn from it is that puruṣa also is one and single--cosmic nature enshrining a cosmic self.<sup>1</sup>

The objection itself is not too complex, nor is it the only objection brought against this argument. However, for the

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<sup>1</sup>Hiriyanna, Essentials of Indian Philosophy (London, 1949), p. 115.



sake of clarity and simplicity it seems preferable to answer this one, point by point, rather than to list a series of statements and opinions on this question. The objection seems to offer three main contentions: (1) that the argument of the Kārikā only shows that the puruṣas are different in their empirical condition and not in themselves,<sup>2</sup> (2) that there is no attempt made to justify this pluralistic view, and (3) that the logical conclusion to be drawn from the argument is not that there are many puruṣas, but that puruṣa is one and single, a cosmic self enshrined in a cosmic nature.

The first point of the objection is perhaps the most difficult to answer satisfactorily, since it reflects the views of those who would read a monism into Sāṃkhya. Such a position does offer some relief to the problem in question, and hence has an element of plausibility. However, Sāṃkhya, without this monistic interpretation, definitely does speak of plurality of puruṣas, and nowhere introduces the notion of the jīva, the experiential puruṣa, which is so necessary for the distinction made here by Hiriyanna. Thus the text offers no foundation for the first point of Hiriyanna's objection. It must also be observed in this connection that the jīva is introduced in Vedānta, not to explain the individual, but to explain it

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rādhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, II, 322-323.

away. As Dāsgupta points out: ". . . according to Vedānta the individual souls (jīva) are but illusory manifestations of one soul or pure consciousness, the Brahman . . ."3 The jīva, then, immediately connotes monism, and is in itself at cross purposes with Sāṅkhya's dualism.

The second point of the objection, as is immediately evident, is also based on this monistic bias. Hiriyanna says there is no attempt made to justify this pluralistic view taken in Sāṅkhya. Such an objection hardly requires formal answer. That Sāṅkhya, arguing from sensibles to the supra-sensible and concluding that there exists a plurality of puruṣas, should have to justify that conclusion by anything more than the weight of its own arguments seems an unwarranted demand. There is, then, no need of an answer.

There seems to be food for thought, however, in the third point. Hiriyanna argues that since the proof for the existence of puruṣa is based on the proof for the existence of prakṛti, and since prakṛti is one, the logical conclusion is, or at least should be, that puruṣa is one. He argues, then, from the existence of a cosmic nature, prakṛti, to a cosmic self, puruṣa. This he says is the logical conclusion, the ultimate refutation of Sāṅkhya's position on the plurality of puruṣas. But two

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<sup>3</sup>Dāsgupta, History of Indian Philosophy, I, 238-239.

things must be noted in this connection: (1) prakṛti is not cosmic nature, and (2) the conclusion from the oneness of prakṛti to the oneness of puruṣa does not seem quite so obvious to anyone outside the monistic tradition. To enlarge on these points briefly, it is merely necessary to notice under the first that the cosmos is evolved from prakṛti under the influence of puruṣa. It cannot be said simply that the cosmos is prakṛti. Rather the Aristotelian notion of prime matter would come far closer to prakṛti in its unevolved state. Secondly, as will be immediately evident to the reader, the conclusion from the oneness of prakṛti to the oneness of puruṣa is an outcropping of monism. Such a conclusion equivalently denies change, and neither Sāṅkhya nor Aristotle saw fit to take that step in the face of evident reality. Evidently, then, puruṣas are many.

The further question now arises: are these puruṣas individuals or individuated? There is, of course, a vast and important difference between the two. An angel is an individual though not individuated. It exists as a distinct species, and resembles its fellows only generically.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, it has been suggested, puruṣas are such. Perhaps each is an individual specifically different from the others, and without any need

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<sup>4</sup>S.T., I, 50, 4.

of an elaborate theory on individuation. This opinion is by no means without foundation, as even a cursory glance at the all-important verse eighteen of the Kārikā will indicate:

"Since birth, death, and the instruments of life are allotted severally; since occupations are not at once universal; and since qualities affect variously; multitude of souls is demonstrated."<sup>5</sup>

The argument here is, of course, from common sense. The very facts of life prove conclusively that men are not one, but many. It is concluded, then, that puruṣas must be many, since they are the influences that give rise to the evolution of man. Why would it not be safe to conclude further that puruṣas, since they are unproduced and unproductive, exist as individuals with no need of a principle of individuation?

The question offered here is not quite so naive or pointless as it may seem. Since one of the major criticisms leveled against Sāṅkhya strikes at the inadequacy of Sāṅkhya's treatment of individuation, it would seem desirable to remove the ground for such an objection by removing the problem. Besides, the opinion given above has the added merits of simplicity and plausibility plus a ready foundation in the lone text the Kārikā offers on this point. It would seem, then, that

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<sup>5</sup>Colebrooke, Sāṅkhya Kārikā, p. 68, verse eighteen.

puruṣas exist as individuals, with no recourse to individuation.

There is, however, a serious objection to such a simple solution to the problem posed by a plurality of puruṣas. If the problem of the many is solved in this manner, how is the problem of the one to be solved in the context of Sāṃkhya? To clarify the problem here, it might be well for the reader to recall the discussion of the third verse of the Kārikā as it was presented earlier.<sup>6</sup> It is evident there that Sāṃkhya embraces not only the philosophy of the individual, but the philosophy of the world as well, even though the greater part of the Kārikā deals with the individual. Further, though it is quite natural to equate puruṣa (translated consistently by Colebrooke as "soul") with the notion of the independent form Aristotle calls soul, that equivalence cannot be justified. According to the law of karma, as has been discussed, and the mode of release from the wheel of existence, it is evident: (1) that the evolution of nature in all its forms is due to the influence of puruṣa, (2) that puruṣa never actually enters into composition with prakṛti, and (3) that there is a subtle intermingling of two distinct concepts in the treatment of puruṣa, which must inevitably obscure this question of the individual. Those two concepts are the evolution of the cosmos and the

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. above, pp. 26-27.

evolution of the individual.<sup>7</sup> This last point is the basis for Doctor Max Mueller's theory that the Karika is really a confusion of two texts, and that a true reading of Sāmkhya will demand their separation.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of the Doctor's theory, the fact is that the texts do seem to overlap, with no clearly marked line of demarcation between them.

In the light of these prenotes, the basic problem that this question of the individual puruṣas seems to face is the explanation of the one cosmos. There seems to be no denying Sāmkhya's intention of explaining the cosmos as well as the individual in terms of puruṣa and prakṛti. And, if the many are postulated, then the one must be explained. If the position given above is held, that puruṣas are not individuated, but exist as individuals, then the inevitable conclusion is that just as the body of man must evolve under the influence of some puruṣa, so the cosmos must evolve under the influence of another. This is undoubtedly a difficult doctrine to accept.

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<sup>7</sup>cf. appendix I, verses three, sixty-two, and sixty-four.

<sup>8</sup>"A fundamental problem that occurs again and again in the study of Sāmkhya is the confusion of individual and cosmic evolution. . . . We have in fact to read the Sāmkhya philosophy in two texts, one, as it were, in the old uncial writing that shows forth here and there, giving the cosmic process, the other in miniscule letters of a much later age, interpreted in a psychological or epistemological sense." F. Max Mueller, Six Systems of Indian Philosophy (London, 1899), p. 326.

It is further complicated by the notions of karma and transmigration, accepted by Sāṃkhya from the vedic tradition. If one puruṣa is to influence the evolution of one thing, and a second is to influence the evolution of something else, according to the specific difference intrinsic to the puruṣa, how is one to account for the change involved in transmigration? Taking the puruṣas as individuals and not as individuated, then, seems to lead to more problems than one can readily answer.

Accordingly it seems wiser to admit the plurality of puruṣas as being based on some principle of individuation. Yet this solution, too, is faced with difficulties. Once a principle of individuation is admitted into Sāṃkhya some detailed explanation of it must be offered, an explanation that will ultimately be based on God. Now since Sāṃkhya prescinds entirely from any discussion of God, it seems apparent that there can be no final answer to the questions the following pages will raise under the heading of individuation. However, for the sake of completeness these questions must be considered, even though briefly, especially since that consideration will facilitate the answering of objections raised against Sāṃkhya's argumentation here.

Traditional Hindu thought, beginning as early as Yoga, interpreted individuation in terms of monism. The absolute puruṣa became god, and the individuated puruṣa became the jīva,

the empirical soul.<sup>9</sup> It is a neat solution, one that fits nicely into the context of Hinduism. Yet there are two points that must be made against it textually: a plurality of purusas is explicitly called for in the Kārikā, and there is no mention of the jīva. Thus there is no foundation in the Kārikā itself for this monistic interpretation of individuation. In a Christian context, however, a creation ex nihilo sui et subjecti might solve the difficulty, placing God above the notion of purusa. This would allow for the development of the doctrine of individuation much the same as that of St. Thomas, and solve the problem of the many purusas easily. But this, too, is faced with a difficulty. There is no room in a Christian context for the doctrine of transmigration, which is a fundamental tenet of Sāṅkhya. It is a tenet, to be sure, that is accepted not on the evidence of reason, but solely on the weight of authority, yet it is accepted, and cannot be written off merely to provide a facile solution to a problem. Neither of these two solutions, then, can answer the problem of individuation posed in the plurality of purusas with any degree of satisfaction. And as long as no more complete statement is available than that given in the eighteenth verse of the Ārikā, the problem will undoubtedly remain.

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<sup>9</sup>Rādhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, II, 327.



The conclusion, then, to this discussion of the plurality of puruṣas is actually little more than a restatement of the original proof given in the Kārikā. However it should be added that the plurality of puruṣas seems to be best explained through some sort of principle of individuation, though no exact conclusion can be reached as to the manner of that individuation. Both the monistic and the creationistic solutions meet some difficulty in the text itself which precludes a final judgment in favor of either. The most that could be said, then, is that puruṣas are many and individuated.

## CHAPTER V

### CRITICISM AND REAPPRAISAL

Some seventy pages ago the aim of this thesis was stated as twofold; primarily, as the analysis of puruṣa in the Sāṃkhya system, and ultimately, the construction of a "bridge" between Oriental and Western thought. After the detailed discussion of puruṣa in the preceding chapter, that primary aim is almost accomplished. Only a criticism of the system and reappraisal are wanting. The problem to be discussed at the moment, then, seems to be that comparison of puruṣa and Aristotelian form, which was promised in the introduction. It is hoped that such a comparison, based on the fundamental similarities and differences between form and puruṣa, will lead to a more intimate understanding of the Sāṃkhya system, and through that understanding of Sāṃkhya, unfold a little of the "cloak of mystery" that enshrouds Oriental thought for the average Westerner. Hence this chapter will concentrate first on that analysis, the "bridge" between the East and the West. Following the discussion of puruṣa and form, a brief discussion of some problems intrinsic to Sāṃkhya will be offered, along with a reappraisal of Sāṃkhya's position in the current of Oriental thought.

First on the program, then, is a comparison of purusa and Aristotelian form. Preliminary to the discussion, a brief review of Aristotle's doctrine on form seems to be in order. For this purpose there seems to be no more convenient nor more precise statement of Aristotle's doctrine than that given by Father Joseph Owens in his doctoral dissertation on the Metaphysics of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it would seem rash to go elsewhere in an effort to correlate texts, when Father Owen's findings can be put to immediate use.<sup>2</sup> The following summary has been excerpted from his work.

The Aristotelian form is reached by an analysis of sensible change. It is not a 'one-over-many', which originates in the realm of logic and definitions. . . . It is the act or the 'energy' found physically in sensible things. . . . The Aristotelian form is something knowable (eidos), determined, necessary, unchangeable, and is the basis of universality . . . something that acts, and consequently is able to be known and impart knowability to the composite sensible thing . . . .

Yet form and knowledge, despite the priority of form from the viewpoint of human science, turn out in their highest instances to be absolutely identical. The Aristotelian form, when found separate from matter, is actual in the highest degree. It is a 'knowing'--for to know is to have a form without matter; and what it knows is itself--for it has and is itself without matter. It is a 'knowing' of a 'knowing'. There is nothing in any way whatsoever passive in it from either the viewpoint of Being or of knowledge. It is all act.

The Aristotelian form, moreover, of its very

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Owens, C.Ss. R., The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics, (Toronto, 1951).

<sup>2</sup>Fundamental as the doctrine of form is in Aristotle, it is surprising that so little attention has been given it formally.

nature denotes difference, and therefore intelligible content.<sup>3</sup> The Form of anything is most properly expressed by its ultimate difference.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the form does not require anything else to differentiate it. Difference of forms, either in the material or the immaterial order, nowhere appears as a problem in Aristotle. The Stagirite points out that the respective what-IS-Being are different in the case of a man, of a god, of a wall, of a trireme. But he does not seem aware of any need to show how or why they are different. The things themselves are specifically different simply because they have a different formal cause. That is the final why. Similarly Aristotle never feels called upon to offer any explanation of how or why the separate Entities are different from one another. Each is a what-IS-Being, each must be different. The Stagirite's one problem in this regard is to explain singulars of the same species. This requires the presence of matter which is something essentially unknowable. It adds nothing to the what-IS-Being and so accounts for numerical plurality and indefiniteness. Such are the limits of the Aristotelian problem.<sup>5</sup>

Analysis indicates four major points of emphasis in this summary: the origin of the doctrine of form as Aristotle uses it, the nature of form, the relationship of form with knowledge, and the problem of individuation in conjunction with the doctrine on form. These four points, then, will serve admirably as points of comparison between form and Samkhya's doctrine on purusa. To facilitate that discussion the following table

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<sup>3</sup>Owens, Metaphysics, p. 291; note 23, p. 419.

<sup>4</sup>Met., Z, 12, 1038a, 26.

<sup>5</sup>Owens, Metaphysics, pp. 291-292.

has been drawn up.

TABLE I

| Form   | <u>Puruṣa</u>   |
|--|---|
| doctrine derived from analysis of experience in regard to sensibles.   | doctrine derived from inference through analysis of qualities of external world. <sup>6</sup>   |
| the nature: something knowable, determined, necessary, unchangeable, the basis of universality; something that acts, and therefore something that can be known and impart knowability to the composite sensible thing. | the nature: simple, discriminative, subject, singular, conscious, sterile, uncaused, permanent, omnipresent, non-migrating (though apparently so), one (though many in number), not rooted, not resorbable, not composed of parts, independent <sup>7</sup> |
| relation to knowledge: when form is subsistent, form and knowledge are absolutely identical.   | relation to knowledge: pure consciousness   |
| individuation: individuated within a species by matter   | individuation: individuated of very nature (argument from experience)   |

Thus, from table I it is immediately evident that the similarity between the two concepts is striking. However, two observations preliminary to any further discussion of the similarities must be made. First, it must be borne in mind that underlying the whole doctrine of puruṣa are the basic

<sup>6</sup>Note, however, that the nature of the external world in Hindu eyes is greatly influenced by the presuppositions of all Hindu philosophy.

<sup>7</sup>Ledrus, S.J., "Notes," p. 34.

tenets of Hinduism; the assumptions that life in the world is a condition of misery, that the soul is subject to transmigration, and there is at least some truth in vedic tradition.<sup>8</sup> This means, of course, that though there is a great deal of similarity in the statement of the two doctrines, their full meaning may in many instances be poles apart. Secondly, the very statement of the doctrine of puruṣa labors under some confusion precisely on the point of cosmic evolution and the evolution of the individual. Hence, though it is evident that form can pertain to all being, and actually does so, puruṣa may or may not, since its exact relationship with the cosmic evolution is not stated in the Kārikā.<sup>9</sup> In other words, there is no way of determining whether or not puruṣa, like form, is intrinsic to all being. After mentioning these necessary cautions, the discussion can safely move on to the consideration of the first point of comparison, the derivation of the two doctrines.

As Father Owens so clearly points out, the origin of Aristotle's doctrine is the analysis of sensible being, especially in the moment of mutation. Copleston puts it thus:

Change or motion (i.e., motion in the general sense

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. above, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. above, p. 69, note 8.

of the term, which includes every passage from a terminus a quo to a terminus ad quem, such as the change of the colour of a leaf from green to brown) is a fact in the world, in spite of the dismissal of change as illusory by Parmenides, and Aristotle considered this fact of change. He saw that several factors are involved, to each of which justice must be done. There must, for example, be a substratum of change, for in every case of change which we observe there is something that changes. The oak comes from the acorn and the bed from the wood: there is something which is changed, which receives a new determination.<sup>10</sup>

And, of course, if there is something that receives a new determination, there is a "new determination" which is received. Thus being is made up of the substrate and the determination, matter and form.

Sāṃkhya, too, arrives at the existence of puruṣa through an analysis of sensible being, and to this extent Sāṃkhya's puruṣa resembles form. There is some slight difference, however, in the immediacy of the conclusion to puruṣa on the one hand and form on the other. Aristotle's argument is based immediately on the observation of the phenomenon of change, while the argument for the existence of puruṣa presupposes (1) the correctness of the Sāṃkhya analysis of experience and (2) the validity of its concept of prakṛti, on which the argument for puruṣa is based. For all practical purposes, however, there is a decided similarity between puruṣa and

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<sup>10</sup>Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy (Westminster, Maryland, 1946), I, 306.

form as far as this first point of the comparison is concerned.

On the point of their relationship to knowledge both purusa and form resemble each other exactly. The only difference that can be pointed out here at all is the fact that form enjoys this self-clarity only when it is subsistent apart from matter. Union with matter necessitates abstraction as the first step in the cognitional process, since matter of itself is unknowable. Insofar, then, as Aristotle's doctrine demands a process of abstraction in some instances, and purusa is of itself subsistent consciousness, there is a slight difference between the two in the matter of their relationship to knowledge.

The similarity continues on the third point of comparison, the problem of individuation; not that the doctrines themselves are similar on this point, but from the fact that both explanations encounter very real difficulties on the problem of individuation. Aristotle's forms are of their very nature distinct, as Father Owens points out.<sup>11</sup> However, since it is possible for a number of beings to possess the same form (e.g. all men participate in the form of man), the problem of individuation within the species necessarily arises. For Aristotle the solution lies in the postulating of matter as

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<sup>11</sup>cf. excerpt from Father Owens' Metaphysics quoted above.



the "principle of individuation." But, if matter itself is unknowable, having no intelligibility whatsoever, then it logically follows that the sensible world round about, from which Aristotle derived his doctrine of form, cannot be fully known--a proposition difficult to accept.

Every substance in the universe is individual; the universal is always for Aristotle something which though perfectly real and objective has no separate existence. The pure substances as well as the substances of concretes of matter and form are individual. But difficulties arise here. (1) In concrete substances Aristotle finds the 'principle of individuation' in matter. Usually, at least, he represents the form of each infima species as being identical in every member of the species, so that it cannot serve to mark off one individual from another, and it is matter that is said to do so.<sup>12</sup>

(2) . . .there is something unsatisfactory in making the principle of individuality of concrete substances to lie in their matter, in that which is 'in itself unknowable.'<sup>13</sup> This leads to the paradoxical conclusion that the most real things in the world (apart from the pure substances) are not fully knowable.<sup>14</sup>

The difficulties purusa meets on this point have already been discussed in some detail.<sup>15</sup> Here it will be sufficient

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<sup>12</sup>Met., 6, 1016b, 32; 2, 8, 1034a, 5-8; 2, 9, 1035b, 27-31; 1, 2, 1054a, 34; 3, 1014a, 31-34; De Caelo, A, 1, 278a, 6-278b, 3.

<sup>13</sup>Met., 2, 10, 1036a, 8.

<sup>14</sup>W.D. Ross, Aristotle (London, 1937), pp. 169-170.

<sup>15</sup>cf. above, appendix to chapter four.

to point out how the doctrine of purusa differs from that of form on this point. Unlike Aristotle's form, which is naturally differentiated on the level of the species and individuated by matter on the level of the individual members of the species, Samkhya argues to a plurality of purusas, evidently individuated, yet without any adequate grounds for that individuation.

Purusa is not a form in which a number of individual beings can participate. Rather it is an eternally existing being that participates vicariously in the sensible world. That differences exist between purusas is very clear from the text, but the exact nature of the differences is impossible to determine. The norm usually employed in arriving at essences is that of operations, but as the reader will recall purusa is passive. One cannot discuss operations where there are no operations. Consequently little more can be said on this point than was said in the appendix to chapter four, but it should be added here that it is in this matter of individuation that the first appreciable difference is found between purusa and Aristotelian form.

That difference becomes even more apparent in the fourth and final point of comparison, the nature of form and of purusa. However, though these differences are very real, they are not such that they destroy the very obvious similarities

that exist between purusa and form. But before going on with the discussion a restatement of the summary might prove helpful

TABLE II

| Form   | <u>Purusa</u>   |
|--|---|
| nature: something knowable, determined, necessary, unchangeable, the basis of universality; something that acts, and therefore something that can be known and impart knowability to the composite sensible thing. | nature: simple, discriminative, subject, singular, conscious, sterile, uncaused, permanent, omnipresent, non-migrating (though apparently so), one (though many in number), not rooted, not resorbable, not composed of parts, independent. |

For the purposes of the comparison Table II can be further broken down into a simple table that shows at a glance where in their very nature purusa and form are similar and how they differ from one another.

TABLE III

| Form                                 | <u>Purusa</u>  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <u>knowable</u>                      | <u>knowable</u> (with some reservation, however) <sup>16</sup> |
| <u>determined</u>                    | (determined)   |
| <u>necessary</u>                     | <u>not rooted, uncaused, simple</u>                            |
| <u>unchangeable</u>                  | <u>simple, permanent, not composed</u>                         |
| <u>the basis of universality</u>     | -----  |
| <u>active (dat esse simpliciter)</u> | <u>inactive</u>  |
| <u>Imparts knowability</u>           | -----  |
|                                      | discriminative   |
|                                      | non-migrating  |
|                                      | independent  |
|                                      | omnipresent  |
|                                      | <u>one (?)</u>   |

<sup>16</sup>purusa, it must be remembered, is always subject, hence never the object of cognition. As pure awareness it does know itself.

From Table III, then, it is apparent that form and purusa parallel each other perfectly insofar as each is knowable, determined, necessary and unchangeable. On this, a further similarity might be superimposed in that neither form nor purusa is restricted to finite things. It is this point that has made Aristotle a suitable vehicle for the thought of St. Thomas and Sāṅkhya apt for the various Hindu philosophies that followed it. However, besides showing obvious similarities, the table likewise points out a considerable number of divergencies. The last five qualities, in which purusa is described as discriminative, non-migrating, independent, omnipresent, and one, can be omitted from the comparison, since they spring directly from the presuppositions of Hindu thought, and consequently are beyond the pale of comparison. They will therefore be put aside for later discussion. Of primary concern here are three points of divergence, the fact that (1) form supplies the basis of universality, (2) imparts knowability to a being, and, most important, (3) is active, in the sense that form constitutes a being in esse. Purusa, however, (1) is not concerned in any way with the doctrine of universals, (2) in no way imparts knowability, and (3) is essentially inactive. There seems to be no reason for discussing the first point, the attitudes toward the doctrine of universals. The actual statement of the respective position

suffices, since there is no "meeting of minds" here. Sāṃkhya simply does not enter into this question. However, the second and third points mentioned provide ample evidence of the intrinsic difference in form and puruṣa, despite similarities already mentioned.

In Aristotle's doctrine, it is form that gives a being whatever determination it has, including its act of existence. Form is not identified with existence,<sup>17</sup> yet through the union of form with matter Being exists. In attempting to express the dynamism of form scholastics later defined it as id quod dat esse simpliciter, and throughout Father Owens' summary of the doctrine of form, this stands out above all other notions-- form is dynamic, active, and responsible in every way for the activity of the being of which it is a composite.

Puruṣa, on the contrary, is in no way active. As pointed out in the preceding chapter,<sup>18</sup> the activity that goes on in the sensible world is in no way actually related to puruṣa, and puruṣa experiences it only vicariously. To use a homely comparison, puruṣa might be conceived as a spectator at a moving picture show. In the progress of the "movie" the spectator, through his response to the action going on before him, so associates himself with the action, that he identifies

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<sup>17</sup>Except, of course, in the case of God.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. above, p. 56.

himself with it, perhaps even to the point of shedding tears of sympathy at the sight of some misfortune, or cheering the success of a hero. As far as the facts are concerned, however, the spectator is doing nothing. He merely watches the actions of the characters on the screen. The rest is only the result of a subjective projection of the spectator's own personality into the dramatic situation presented to him.<sup>19</sup> This example, too, underlines the real difference between form and puruṣa. Form, taken in composite with matter, is never conceived as being in itself. It is what is commonly referred to as an ens quo, a principle of being. Puruṣa, however, must be conceived strictly as a being in itself. While it is true that puruṣa and prakṛti "collaborate" in some way in the process of evolution, yet puruṣa never enters into the composition of the being, and has its association with it only because it mistakes the experiences of buddhi for its own. This difference is, perhaps, the most significant of all, and leads the most directly to a true appreciation of the role of puruṣa in Sāṅkhya.

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<sup>19</sup>This simile is also of great help in understanding the confusion that results in the bondage of puruṣa. Just as it is possible for the spectator at the "movies" to become completely engrossed in the scene before him, so the puruṣa confuses its own subjective state with the phenomena about and come to consider as its own what in reality has no connection with it.

The last point of actual comparison is that form imparts knowability to a being, while the same quality is denied of purusa. Why? Looking back at the description of the three qualities of prakṛti and its evolutes, it becomes immediately evident from an examination of the quality and nature of sattva that it is from the presence of sattva in a being in any proportion whatsoever that renders that being intelligible. Likewise, it is the great preponderance of sattva in the intellect (which, the reader recalls, is a faculty arrived at in the first stage of the evolution of prakṛti--matter) that makes knowledge possible. Thus while Aristotle considers knowledge the exclusive prerogative of form, Sāṃkhya distinguishes between knowledge and awareness, or consciousness. The actual processes of knowledge are attributed to matter under the evolute known as the intellect, and these processes are completed through the connaturality of the preponderant sattva quality of intellect and the intermixture of sattva in all other material beings. Intellect provides purusa with all the data its connaturality presents it, as a mirror presents a perfect reflection of all the objects in the room. Purusa, as subsistent consciousness, is aware of this reflection and makes it its own. Thus for Aristotle intellection is immaterial, while for Sāṃkhya it is very definitely material.

Finally, since Sāṃkhya is built around the presuppositions

of rebirth and the law of karma, the five qualities of discrimination, non-migration, independence, omnipresence, and oneness are found in purusa, with absolutely no counterpart in Aristotelian form. Discrimination is the ability to distinguish between the evolutes and prakrti and to know them as different from purusa itself. It is this knowledge that is the ultimate achievement of purusa in its union with prakrti and constitutes the release of purusa from the wheel of existence. The quality of non-migration emphasizes the fact that the whole world of pain experienced by purusa is not really part of purusa at all, but merely the result of a delusion.<sup>20</sup> This delusion leads to the apparent migration of purusa, and consequently the moment purusa realizes that there is no true migration it is freed from the pain of existence in this sensible world. Independence further emphasizes the fact that purusa is a being outside the sphere of evolution. While the evolutes depend in turn first from prakrti, and then from each evolute in the chain, purusa itself stands apart and remains independent. However, purusa is also described as omnipresent, since all that exists in the sensible world is an evolute of prakrti, and prakrti itself evolves only under the influence and for the benefit of purusa. Lastly, purusa is one.

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. the simile of the spectator at the movies.



The full significance of this quality cannot be determined by the text given in the Kārika. From the discussion of this point appended to the preceding chapter, this quality of oneness would seem to argue that puruṣa is in reality some sort of unity, or at least reducible to a unity. Taking the Kārika as it stands, it is extremely difficult to find a reconciliation between this quality and the plurality of puruṣas, unless some recourse to individuation is made. However, since this point has been discussed at some length and various possible solutions offered in the appendix mentioned, there is no need of further discussion at this time.

By way of summary, then, the following table should prove helpful.

TABLE IV

| Form                                   | <u>Puruṣa</u>                      |
|--|------------------------------------|
| the basis of universality              | -----                              |
| active ( <u>dat esse simpliciter</u> ) | <u>inactive</u>                    |
| imparts knowability                    | does <u>not</u> impart knowability |
|  | discriminative                     |
|  | non-migrating                      |
|  | independent                        |
|  | omnipresent                        |
|  | one (?)                            |

It will be noted, then, that there is very definite opposition on two points, contrast due to different points of departure

on five points, and no meeting of minds at all on one point.

After so much discussion, then, and a comparison of the four tables given, the reader cannot but notice how each point of the comparison is carried out in the two doctrines, and realize how completely the basic point of departure in the two systems influences the interpretation of the doctrine. Were it not for the basic presuppositions of Sāṃkhya, it seems this same doctrine of puruṣa would parallel Aristotelian form almost completely. That point is emphasized here, because it is through just such a realization that a "bridge" can be constructed between Western and Oriental thought, between Aristotle and the Sāṃkhya system. It is true that such a bridge will leave much wanting in the understanding of Sāṃkhya, but it is a beginning, and it can lead to a genuine appreciation of the meaning and purpose of Oriental thought, at least as that thought is prefigured in the Sāṃkhya system.

Of course, there are intrinsic difficulties in Sāṃkhya, many of which should be obvious by this time. The first and most fundamental is simply the complete failure to explain the origin of the teleology that directs the "blind" prakṛti in its evolution. Throughout the Kārikā the activity of prakṛti is referred to as performed entirely for the benefit of puruṣa, but never is this highly integrated teleology explained. It is, along with the whole of prakṛti, a datum. True, this could

be offered as an explanation of reality, but one cannot but wonder if the explanation might not be more difficult to understand than the phenomenon itself. A second difficulty lies in the fact that the interaction between puruṣa and prakṛti seems to contradict that quality by which each of them is said to be independent. One wonders, if prakṛti is independent, how it is influenced by puruṣa at all. And this difficulty is highlighted by the fact that the nature of this influence is not even hinted at in the Kārikā. A third difficulty is this: the simile of the blind man and the cripple, so often used to illustrate the interactivity of puruṣa and prakṛti is misleading for both the blind man and the lame man are intelligent and active agents who can devise plans to realize their common purpose. A further difficulty stems from the initial delusion of puruṣa, pure consciousness! Is it possible? As Rādhākṛṣṇan sums it up: "Prakṛti and puruṣa have no common purpose. Unconscious-prakṛti cannot suffer; inactive-puruṣa cannot experience suffering. How can the two co-operate for the redemption of the world? The question cannot be answered so long as the Sāṃkhya declines to admit a higher unity."<sup>21</sup> And, of course, the list of difficulties apparent in the system could be multiplied considerably. All of them, however, seem

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<sup>21</sup>Rādhākṛṣṇan, Indian Philosophy, II, 327.

to hinge on these three; the ultimate explanation of the interaction of puruṣa and prakṛti, the teleology inherent in prakṛti, and the problem of the individual puruṣas. Nor can any of these difficulties be answered, since the extant literature is too brief on these precise points. Of course, these difficulties may explain why it was that Sāṃkhya as a system went out of vogue some time ago, and why it has not come down to the modern day richer in commentaries and more perfectly understood.

However, the fact remains that these difficulties do not in any way cloud over the significance of Sāṃkhya. It is in many respects remarkable that such a system should have appeared at all in the stream of Hindu thought when it represents such a departure from traditional views. Even more remarkable is the influence it has had on Oriental thought since that time. It is the first and, with the single exception of the dvaita school of Vedānta,<sup>22</sup> the only dualism in Indian thought; and, though it is hard put to explain the weaknesses in its own development, it does present an attempt to explain reality rationally, without recourse to mythology or legend. And, more important, that explanation does not differ so completely from the explanation offered by Aristotle that it

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<sup>22</sup>The dvaita school of Vedānta dates from about the twelfth century A.D.

cannot be recognized, understood, and put to use. True, Sāṃkhya will offer very few insights to an Aristotelian and even fewer to a modern scholastic. Metaphysically speaking, it does not go deeply enough into the question of being. But it can lead to the beginning of an understanding of Oriental thought and the Oriental mind, to which the world may one day find itself more deeply indebted than it can imagine at the present moment. Is it not possible that the philosophy of mysticism will be the East's contribution to the body of Catholic thought, and that the doctrine of the Mystical Body will find its fullest development from those whose native bent is toward the mystical?

More immediately, however, Sāṃkhya can help the Western mind, now conscious of the East, to appreciate the contribution the East has made in trying to solve the problems presented by this world of sense and experience--to understand how the answers the East has formulated to those problems have contributed to the molding of the Oriental mind and distinguished it so sharply from its Western counterpart. It is to this end that this thesis is offered, and its author entertains the hope that it will in some way prove successful.

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## APPENDIX I

### THE SANKHYA KARIKA<sup>1</sup>

1. The inquiry is into the means of precluding the three sorts of pain; for pain is embarrassment; nor is the inquiry superfluous because obvious means of alleviation exist, for absolute and final relief is not thereby accomplished.
2. The revealed mode is like the temporal one, ineffectual, for it is impure; and it is defective in some respects, as well as excessive in others. A method different from both is preferable, consisting in a discriminative knowledge of perceptible principles, and of the imperceptible one, and of the thinking soul.
3. Nature, the root (of all), is no production. Seven principles, the Great or intellectual one, etc., are productions and productive. Sixteen are productions (unproduction). Soul is neither a production nor productive.
4. Perception, inference, and right affirmation, are admitted to be threefold proof; for they (are by all acknowledged, and) comprise every mode of demonstration. It is from proof that belief of that which is to be proven results.
5. Perception is ascertainment of particular objects. Inference, which is of three sorts, premises an argument, and (deduces) that which is argued by it. Right affirmation is true revelation.
6. Sensible objects become known by perception; but it is by inference (or reasoning) that acquaintance with things transcending the senses is obtained; and a truth which is neither to be directly perceived, nor to be inferred from reasoning, is deduced from revelation.

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<sup>1</sup>From the translation of Henry T. Colebrooke, Esq.

7. From various causes things may be imperceptible (or unperceived); excessive distance, (extreme) nearness, defect of the organs, inattention, minuteness, interposition of objects, predominance of other matters, and intermixture with the like.
8. It is owing to the subtilty (of nature), not to the non-existence of this original principle, that it is not apprehended by the senses, but inferred from its effects. Intellect and the rest of the derivative principles are effects; (whence it is concluded as their cause) in some respects analogous, but in others dissimilar.
9. Effect subsists (antecedently to the operation of cause); for what exists not, can by no operation of cause be brought into existence. Materials, too, are selected which are fit for the purpose; every thing is not by every means possible; what is capable, does that to which it is competent; and like is produced from like.
10. A discrete principle is causable, it is inconstant, unpervading, mutable, multitudinous, supporting, mergent, conjunct, governed. The undiscete one is the reverse.
11. A discrete principle, as well as the chief (or indiscrete) one, has the three qualities; it is indiscriminative, objective, common, irrational, prolific. Soul is in these respects, as in those, the reverse.
12. The qualities resepectively consist in pleasure, pain, and dulness; are adapted to manifestation, activity, and restraint; mutually domineer; rest on each other; produce each other; consort together; and are reciprocally present.
13. Goodness is considered to be alleviating and enlightening; foulness, urgent and versatile; darkness, heavy and enveloping. Like a lamp, they cooperate for a purpose (by union of contraries).
14. Indiscriminateness and the rest (of the properties of a discrete principle) are proved by the influence of the three qualities, and the absence thereof in the reverse. The undiscete principle, moreover, (as well as the influence of the three qualities,) is demonstrated by effect possessing the properties of its cause (and by the absence of contrariety).
15. Since specific objects are finite; since there is homogeneity; since effects exist through energy; since

there is a parting (or issue) of effects from cause, and a reunion of the universe,--

16. There is a general cause, which is undiscrete. It operates by means of the three qualities, and by mixture, by modification, as water; for different objects are diversified by influence of the several qualities respectively.

17. Since the assemblage of sensible objects is for another's use; since the converse of that which has the three qualities, with other properties (before mentioned), must exist; since there must be superintendence; since there must be one to enjoy; since there is a tendency to abstraction; therefore, soul is.

18. Since birth, death, and the instruments of life are allotted severally; since occupations are not at once universal; and since qualities affect variously; multitude of souls is demonstrated.

19. And from that contrast (before set forth) it follows, that soul is witness, solitary, bystander, spectator, and passive.

20. Therefore, by reason of union with it, insensible body seems sensible; and though the qualities be active, the stranger (soul) appears as the agent.

21. For the soul's contemplation of nature, and for its abstraction, the union of both takes place, as of the halt and blind. By that union a creation is framed.

22. From nature issues the great one; thence egotism; and from this the sixteenfold set; from five among the sixteen proceed the five elements.

23. Ascertainment is intellect. Virtue, knowledge, dispassion, and power are its faculties, partaking of goodness. Those partaking of darkness are the reverse.

24. Consciousness is egotism. Thence proceeds a twofold creation. The elevenfold set is one; the five elemental rudiments are the other.

25. From consciousness, affected by goodness, proceeds the good elevenfold set; from it, as a dark origin of being, come elementary particles; both issue from that principle affected by foulness.

26. Intellectual organs are, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the skin; those of action are, the voice, hands, feet, the excretory organ, and that of generation.
27. (In this set is) mind, which is both (an organ of sensation and of action). It ponders, and it is an organ as being cognate with the rest. They are numerous by specific modification of qualities, and so are external diversities.
28. The function of five, in respect to colour and the rest, is observation only. Speech, handling, treading, excretion, and generation are the functions of five (other organs).
29. Of the three (internal instruments) the functions are their respective characteristics: these are peculiar to each. The common function of the three instruments is breath and the rest of the five vital airs.
30. Of all four the functions are instantaneous, as well as gradual, in regard to sensible objects. The function of the three (interior) is, in respect of an unseen one, preceded by that of the fourth.
31. The instruments perform their respective functions, incited by mutual invitation. The soul's purpose is the motive: an instrument is wrought by none.
32. Instrument is of thirteen sorts. It compasses, maintains, and manifests: what is to be done by it is tenfold, to be compassed, to be maintained, to be manifested.
33. Internal instruments are three; external ten, to make known objects to those three. The external organs minister at time present; the internal do so at any time.
34. Among these organs the five intellectual concern objects specific and unspecific. Speech concerns sound. The rest regard all five objects.
35. Since intellect, with the (other two) internal instruments, adverts to every object, therefore those three instruments are warders, and the rest are gates.
36. These characteristically differing from each other, and variously affected by qualities, present to the intellect the soul's whole purpose, enlightening it as a lamp.

37. Since it is intellect which accomplishes soul's fruition of all which is to be enjoyed, it is that, again, which discriminates the subtle difference between the chief principle (pradhana) and soul.
38. The elementary particles are unspecific; from these five proceed the five elements, which are termed specific; for they are soothing, terrific, or stupifying.
39. Subtile (bodies), and such as spring from father and mother, together with the great elements, are three sorts of specific objects. Among these, the subtile bodies are lasting; such as issue from father and mother are perishable.
40. (Subtile body), primaeval, unconfined, material, composed of intellect and with other subtile principles, migrates, else unenjoying; invested with dispositions, mergent.
41. As a painting stands not without a ground, nor a shadow without a stake, etc., so neither does subtile person subsist supportless, without specific (or unspecific) particles.
42. For the sake of soul's wish, that subtile person exhibits (before it), and like a dramatic actor, through relation of means and consequence, with the aid of nature's influence.
43. Essential dispositions are innate. Incidental, as virtue and the rest, are considered appurtenant to the instrument. The uterine germ (flesh and blood) and the rest belong to the effect (that is, to the body).
44. By virtue is ascent to a region above; by vice descent to a region below; by knowledge is deliverance; by the reverse, bondage.
45. By dispassion is absorption into nature; by foul passion, migration; by power, unimpediment; by the reverse, the contrary.
46. This is an intellectual creation, termed obstruction, disability, acquiescence, and perfectness. By disparity of influence of qualities the sorts of it are fifty.
47. There are five distinctions of obstruction; and, from defect of instruments, twenty-eight of disability; acquiescence is ninefold; perfectness eightfold.
48. The distinctions of obscurity are eightfold, as also those of illusion; extreme illusion is tenfold; gloom is eighteenfold, and so is utter darkness.

49. Depravity of the eleven organs, together with injuries of the intellect, are pronounced to be disability. The injuries of intellect are seventeen, by inversion of acquiescence and perfectness.
50. Nine sorts of acquiescence are propounded; for internal, relating to nature, to means, to time, and to luck; five external, relative to abstinence from (enjoyment of) objects.
51. Reasoning, hearing, study, prevention of pain of three sorts, intercourse of friends, and purity (or gift) are perfections (or means thereof). The fore-mentioned three are curbs of perfectness.
52. Without dispositions there would be no subtle person; without person there would be no cause of dispositions; wherefore a twofold creation is presented, one termed personal, the other intellectual.
53. The divine kind is of eight sorts; the grovelling is five-fold; mankind is single in its class. This, briefly, is the world of living beings.
54. Above, there is prevalence of goodness; below, the creation is full of darkness; in the midst, is the predominance of foulness, from Brahma to a stock.
55. There does sentient soul experience pain, arising from decay and death, until it be released from its person; wherefore pain is of the essence (of bodily existence).
56. This evolution of nature, from intellect to the special elements, is performed for the deliverance of each soul respectively; done for another's sake as for self.
57. As it is a function of milk, an unintelligent (substance), to nourish the calf, so it is the office of the chief (principle) to liberate the soul.
58. As people engage in acts to relieve desires, so does the undiscere (principle) to liberate the soul.
59. As a dancer, having exhibited herself to the spectator, desists from the dance, so does nature desist, having manifested herself to the soul.
60. Generous nature, endued with qualities, does by manifold means accomplish, without benefit (to herself) the wish of ungrateful soul, devoid as he is of qualities.

61. Nothing, in my opinion, is more gentle than nature; once aware of having been seen, she does not again expose herself to the gaze of soul.
62. Verily not any soul is bound, nor is released, nor migrates; but nature alone, in relation to various beings is bound, is released, and migrates.
63. By seven modes nature binds herself by herself: by one, she releases (herself), for the soul's wish.
64. So, through study of principles, the conclusive, incontrovertible, one only knowledge is attained, that neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist.
65. Possessed of this (self-knowledge), soul contemplates at leisure and at ease nature, (thereby) debarred from prolific change, and consequently precluded from those seven forms.
66. He desists, because he has seen her; she does so, because she has been seen. In their mere union there is no motive for creation.
67. By attainment of perfect knowledge, virtue and the rest become causeless; yet soul remains a while invested with body, as the potter's wheel continues whirling from the effect of the impulse previously given to it.
68. When separation of the informed soul from its corporeal frame at length takes place, and nature in respect of it ceases, then is absolute and final deliverance accomplished.
69. This abstruse knowledge, adapted to the liberation of soul, wherein the origin, duration, and termination of beings are considered, has been thoroughly expounded by the mighty saint.
70. This great purifying (doctrine) the sake compassionately imparted to Āsuri, Āsuri taught it to Panchasikha, by whom it was extensively propagated.
71. Received by tradition of pupils, it has been compendiously written in Arya metre by the piously disposed Iswara Krishna, having thoroughly investigated demonstrated truth.
72. The subjects which are treated in seventy couplets are those of the whole science, comprising sixty topics, exclusive of illustrative tales, and omitting controversial questions.

## APPENDIX II

### GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND THE SĀMĀKHYA<sup>1</sup>

For the age of the Sāmkhya important information might be obtained if it were possible to trace definite borrowings of Sāmkhya ideas from the side of Greek philosophy. The ἀπειρον of Anaximander has been compared with the nature of the Sāmkhya, and the doctrines of the constant flow of things and of the innumerable destructions and renewals of the world found in Heraclitus are no doubt similar to tenets of the Indian system. Empedocles, like the Sāmkhya, asserts the doctrine of the pre-existence of the product in the cause. Anaxagoras is a dualist, Democritus agrees with Empedocles in his doctrine of causality and believes in the purely temporary existence and mortality of the gods. Epicurus uses in support of his atheism the argument of the Sāmkhya, that otherwise the divine nature must be accorded attributes which are inconsistent with its supposed character, and often emphasizes the doctrine of infinite possibilities of production.

Garbe adds to these parallels, which he admits not to be

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Berriedale Keith, The Sāmkhya System, Calcutta, 1949), Chapter Six.



conclusive evidence of borrowing, the fact that Persia was a perfectly possible place in which Greek thinkers, of whom travels are often recorded, should acquire knowledge of the Indian views, and supports his opinion that borrowing is probable by the case of Pythagoras, who is supposed to have borrowed from India his theory of transmigration, his conception of a religious community, his distinction of a fine and gross body of the soul, his distinction of a sensitive organ, θυμός, and of the imperishable soul, φρόνη, his doctrine of an intermediate world between earth and sky filled by demons, the doctrine of five elements including ether, the Pythagorean problem, the irrational and other things. Into this question of the relation of Pythagoras to Greek thought and to India it is unnecessary to go, as the Sāṃkhya elements--as contrasted with the elements which are not specifically Sāṃkhya in his teachings--are negligible. Now Schroeder,<sup>2</sup> indeed, invents an older form of Sāṃkhya, which he understands as denoting reckoning, in which number played a much greater part than in the classical Sāṃkhya; Garbe thinks that Pythagoras may have invented his doctrine of number as the result of his misinterpreting the fact that the Sāṃkhya owed its name to its enumeration of principle, into the view that the Sāṃkhya made

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<sup>2</sup>Pythagoras und die Inder, pp. 72-76.

number the basis of nature. Both theories are based on a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the views of Pythagoras,<sup>3</sup> and the only possible conclusion is that we have no early Greek evidence for the existence of the Sāṃkhya school.

It is further not necessary seriously to consider the possibilities of borrowing on the part of Plato or of Aristotle, though the influence of the Sāṃkhya has been seen in the case of both. More plausible is the effort to find proof of Sāṃkhya doctrine in Gnosticism, an attempt to which there is not a priori any reason to take exception. The actual proofs of such influences adduced are not important; the comparison of soul or spirit to light, which does not occur in the oldest Sāṃkhya authorities, is anticipated by Aristotle, and is Platonic in essence; the contrast of spirit and matter is Platonic. Perhaps more value attaches to such minor points as the Gnostic division of men into three classes, which may be compared with the classification of men according to the predominance in them of the three guṇas of the Sāṃkhya, and the assigning of personal existence to such functions as intellect and will. But such parallels, whatever they are worth, do not help definitely as to the date of a real Sāṃkhya.

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<sup>3</sup>See Keith, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1909, pp. 569-606.

On the other hand, the further effort to find Sāṃkhya influences in New-Platonism must be held to be completely mistaken. Plotinus (209-269) held that his object was to free men from misery through his philosophy, that spirit and matter are essentially different, that spirit is really unaffected by misery, which is truly the lot of matter; he compares the soul to light and even to a mirror in which objects are reflected; he admits that in sleep, as the soul remains awake, man can enjoy happiness; he insists on the realization of God in a condition of ecstasy brought about by profound mental concentration. Porphyry (232-304) teaches the leadership of spirit over matter, the omnipresence of the soul when freed from matter, and the doctrine that the world has no beginning. He also forbids the slaying of animals and rejects sacrifice. Abammon, a later contemporary, mentions the wonderful powers obtained by the exercise of contemplative ecstasy. But there is nothing here that can possibly be considered as necessarily derived from India. The opposition of matter and spirit, the removal of spirit from the world of reality, and the view that the only power to approach to it is through ecstasy are the outcome of the Greek endeavour to grasp the problem brought into prominence by Plato of the contrast of spirit and matter, and the views of Plotinus are the logical, and indeed inevitable,

outcome of the development.<sup>4</sup> The protest against sacrifice is as old as Greek philosophy, the winning of supernatural powers by ecstasy is a popular conception which appears in Pythagoras and beyond all others in the Bacchic religion. On the other hand, the real extent of knowledge of Indian philosophy available to Plotinus and Porphyry alike seems to have been most severely limited.

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<sup>4</sup>See E. Caird, Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers (1904), who develops in detail the deduction of Plotinus' view from Platonism. The same view is taken by P. Daussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, I, iii, 616.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Ludwig F. Stiller, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 1st, 1956  
Date

Paul Dent, S.J.  
Signature of Adviser