

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Lecture 51: Samkhya Philosophy

Namaskar to all. Today, I am going to discuss Sāṁkhya Philosophy and in Sāṁkhya Philosophy, I will be discussing the concept of Puruṣa. In the last class, as we have discussed the concept of Prakṛti, we have argued that from Sāṁkhya perspective, there are two things which are ontologically real. This is called ontological dualism. Sāṁkhya philosophy argued for prakṛti and puruṣa, the two things which are ultimately real. Now, in last class, I discussed that the notion of prakṛti, and also argued that how is Ísvarkṛṣṇa, a philosopher, a thinker from the Sāṁkhya system argued for the existence of prakṛti. Today, I am going to talk about the concept of puruṣa in Sāṁkhya philosophy. Now, if you see this idea of puruṣa, in Indian philosophy, you will find there is a concept of Atman. So, it is a Vedic system. So, Ved and Upanishad talk about something which is an eternal self. Now, the nature of self depends on school to school. So, Shankaracharya's philosophy will argue that the self is a Nirguna brahman. So, it only means that when you realize yourself, you have achieved a state because you, and you mean an Atman and nirguna brahman is not different, it is same. Ramanuja philosophy will argue differently. He will say the self is a mode of God, is an attribute of God. It is a different idea of self from Shankaracharya's aspect. Buddhism has a different way because he rejects anything which is an eternal, much we have discussed in this class. Sāṁkhya philosophy has a concept of puruṣa, but again this Puruṣa, the concept of puruṣa is different from the other school of thought. Now, Puruṣa is a very unique concept in the Sāṁkhya philosophy and that is the reason that when I was starting this school of thought, I argued that the Sāṁkhya philosophy is a very unique philosophy. I also have discussed that how Sāṁkhya philosophy solely depends on this Ved and Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, the text which we have discussed and very basically with when we started this Indian philosophy or introduced the Indian philosophy in this course. So, today I will be discussing the notion of Puruṣa. What is puruṣa in Sāṁkhya philosophy? I would like to remind you from the previous class one thing about this dualism or two things as in a substance. So, if there is in two things it means that they are not common. There is no nothing is common in the both substance and logically then only it is not possible to accept two substances. So, two substances or possibility of two substances is only possible when there are no common attributes in these two substances. So, two is two, because they are independent and there are two. There is no common attributes in this both substances or let us say that Prakṛti is in a different from Puruṣa. So, suppose you accept in a two substance X and Y so, X is in a completely different from Y. Then only we can talk about the two substances as we have discussed in the last class.

Similarly, in Sāṃkhya philosophy when they argued that there is two things in an ultimately real Prakṛti and Puruṣa. So, it means that Prakṛti is entirely different or completely different from Puruṣa or the concept of Puruṣa is completely different from Prakṛti, the concept of Prakṛti. And that is what the logical we can argue that there is in two substances. So, for example, Puruṣa is not composed of this Gunas. So, when we have discussed in the last class about the Prakṛti, I argued that in Sāṃkhya philosophy Prakṛti is the equilibrium position of three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. And Puruṣa is something which is different from Prakṛti. It means that Puruṣa is not composed of this Gunas. So, there is nothing to do with this Puruṣa. So, Gunas is nothing to do with Puruṣa. Again, Puruṣa is the subject of knowledge, opposite which is to the Prakṛti. Prakṛti is the object of the knowledge. For example, there are any kind of knowledge, two things are important. Subject and object. So, like I am a subject and there is an object, for example, a table, then a chair, mobile, pencil, pen. Now, so I am there, therefore I can say, this is mobile, this is table and so on. So subject and then object. Puruṣa is subject in this process, and Prakṛti is an object in this process, in this system. And this concept, we are going to talk many things about Sāṃkhya philosophy. It will be based on this theory. If you understand this idea that in the subject and object or in the sense of knowledge, Prakṛti is matter, Prakṛti is object or in knowledge, and Puruṣa is the subject. So, Prakṛti is common to many persons. Again, we are talking about how they are different. But Puruṣa is different in different bodies. Again, the Sāṃkhya philosophy argues that Puruṣa is not one and therefore there is not one Puruṣa in all the bodies. So, we all humans, so we cannot argue that there is one Puruṣa in all of us. So, just to understand that what does it mean, what we have discussed in other philosophy that how the Brahman is a common. So, all of us is one. Everything is one. That is Brahman. So, Brahman is the only real everything. The appearance of everything is unreal. Sāṃkhya philosophy believes that first is accepting the existence of Prakṛti, matter, and it is common to all. I mean because this is Sattva Rajas, Tamas, and everything, all the objects in the universe is made of the three Gunas. As we have discussed in the last class, we are experiencing or we can experience an object because of this intelligibility, and that is because of sattva, that is because of the Rajas and Tamas, modification, change and the stability, and which is common in all objects. In opposite to the Prakṛti, Puruṣa is different in different bodies. So, for me is a different Puruṣa, in you in a different Puruṣa, in him in a different Puruṣa. So, they have said Puruṣa is not one, it is many. Now, Prakṛti is non-intelligent. So, Prakṛti is not intelligent and unconscious. But, Puruṣa is intelligent and conscious. Again, it is not subject to modification. So, Puruṣa is not subject to modification. So, Prakṛti when we are talking about this world, this universe is an effect or is this universe is a product of Prakṛti, modification of Prakṛti. But Puruṣa, it is not the case with the Puruṣa. Puruṣa is not subject to modification. Again, Puruṣa is not cause of anything. But at the same time, Puruṣa also is not cause of anything. So, neither it is cause nor its effect. Puruṣa is independent in Sāṃkhya philosophy. Puruṣa is not cause of anything. But at the same time, Puruṣa also is not cause of anything. Ontologically real. Beyond the change. There is

no cause of this cause. But again, in Sāṃkhya philosophy, this cause is not cause of anything. So, Puruṣa is not cause of anything. Puruṣa is beyond the change. It is unchangeable and immutable, which is again opposite to the notion of Prakṛti. And, it is the reason that I have been argued that how these two substances, if you are arguing that there are two substances, existence of two substances, it means that both are opposite or completely different from each other. Puruṣa is constant in midst of mutation. Prakṛti is active, but Puruṣa is inactive. So, this is how they have, Sāṃkhya philosophy argued about the two substances and argued that how the concept of Puruṣa and Puruṣa is a different from Prakṛti.

Now, Sāṃkhya philosophy, characterized Puruṣa as a being, as a witness, first. He is the witness of everything. We say that in a witness means that everything is like going through, all the activity. So, Puruṣa is witness. Second, he possesses an isolation of freedom. He is instantly free, intrinsically he is free. So, Puruṣa is free means he liberated. Third, is he is indifferent. So, there is a Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas and in feeling sense we have said pleasure, pain and delusion. Puruṣa is, the indifferent of anything. So, this is everything. Again, Puruṣa is a spectator, I mean one who sees everything. So, there is a activities going on, so, what Puruṣa is doing, Puruṣa is witnessing first and seeing everything. But again, Puruṣa is completely inactive in Sāṃkhya philosophy. So, this is how the Sāṃkhya philosophy has defined the Puruṣa. Again, Iśvarkṛṣṇa in his Karika, he has presented an argument for the existence of Puruṣa. So, he is presenting an argument to prove that there is a Puruṣa. First argument is aggregation or combination exist for another. So, for example, we are talking about this prakṛti and prakṛti is pure potentiality or such a pure potentiality, and such a pure potentiality devoid of any actual character. So, we are talking about this potentiality on all. But there is no advantage to anyone. And therefore, prakṛti is looks upward to puruṣa and finds in it its true meaning. So, this aggregation is what is an exist for another. So, this prakṛti is aggregation of this one, we will talk about in the next class about theory of creation where we have, Sāṃkhya philosophy has argued that how creation takes place, and all the products of the prakṛti. So, all these aggregates are for something for another, for some another use. So that, now if you are going to remove this idea that there is no one, then you will not find any meaning to this idea of prakṛti. So, prakṛti is pure potentiality, isn't it? But, devoid of any actual character. Therefore, prakṛti for its meaning, true meaning, it finding its true meaning, it is only possible that one there is a puruṣa. Therefore, there is a puruṣa. Second argument is, since the other must be the reverse what is composed of the three constituents. So, it is only as such puruṣa that Viveka, in the sense of intellectual understanding of the distinction between spirit and matter, can arise. So, what prakṛti is and the constituent of prakṛti, there should be something which is different from or reverse from these three constituents. So, in puruṣa, what they are saying is in a Viveka, and it, Viveka arises where in the puruṣa, the sense of intellectual understanding of distinction between spirit and matter. So, puruṣa is indifferent from the three Gunas and which form the stuff of all the objects of the enjoyment. So, puruṣa is

different from the three Gunas which form the stuff of all objects of enjoyment. So puruṣa is reverse what is an argument is something different from the prakṛti. The third argument, there must be superintending power or control. So, as we have discussed that prakṛti is non-intelligent. So therefore, it needs someone who is controlling this non-intelligent thing. For example, non-intelligent chariots move when they are controlled and guided by chariot. So, for example, there is a driver who is driving this car. So, chariot, the chariot is what is non-intelligent. It is not intelligent and it does not know how to move. So, about all this activity, it needs something which is powerful who can control. For example, the charioteer and the chariot. For the chariot, for the movement of the chariot, we need someone who can control this chariot. Matter is inert and cannot act by itself and it can only when it is controlled by a spirit. So, there is a controller who can control this matter. So, these are three, it means that there is something, someone who is as a controller, who is controlling things. So, prakṛti is protecting things. There is an object in the world. So, it means there is something which is controlling. We need this matter to be controlled. All material objects of the world require guidance by intelligent being that is puruṣa. So, all there is in a matter, so we need there is a guidance who can guide not the matter itself. It means there is something which is not matter. It means there is something which is different from matter that is puruṣa. The fourth argument is there must be an enjoyer. So, we have talked about the sattva, rajas and tamas. We have discussed in last class as well that how prakṛti is composed of these three Gunas and these three gunas is basically produces a different kind of things. For example, in feelings there is a pleasure, pain and delusion. So, these are there but we need someone who can enjoy this pleasure, pain and delusion. This idea of pleasure is only possible when there is a person to experience this thing. For example, there is an object. There is no subject. Can we argue that it is pleasurable, or it is in a painful? It is not possible. So, they are objects of experience and modes of the intellect or mental modes. For example, when you say that I will be discussing in this next class about the products of prakṛti where we have argued that how prakṛti produces that Buddhi, Mahat and Ahankar and manas and so on. So, these all things cannot be an experiencer because they are themselves in a mode, itself is in a prakṛti. So, we need someone as an experiencer. All knowable objects presuppose the existence of knower. There can be no known or knowable object without the knowing subject. So, the subject is not important for any knowable object. So, we are talking about the sattva, rajas, and tamas, the different kind of feelings, substance. It is only possible when there is an enjoyer. So, therefore it is an argument that there can be no known or knowable object without knowing subject. It means there is a puruṣa. And the fifth argument for the existence of puruṣa is there is a functioning or activity for the sake of freedom or isolation. Freedom means isolation is what we have discussed in terms of liberation. So, Sāṃkhya philosophy argues that liberation consists in absolute cessation of three kinds of suffering which we have discussed in the last class. So, liberation is what when you are going to remove all kind of suffering. And liberation is what is a complete negation of pain. So, there is a complete absence of pain. There is a no

pain, and no pain means you have to be supposed to remove a complete negation of these three kinds of suffering. That is liberation.

Now, if you take the other example of buddhi, we are talking about ahankara, manas, it itself is in nature of suffering. Therefore one cannot argue that buddhi can be relieved from suffering because buddhi itself is in a nature of suffering. So, all this evaluates or all these products of prakṛti, ahankar, manas, mahāt, which we will be discussing in the next class. And I will be coming back again to these points where we are talking how the idea of liberation is there in the Sāṃkhya philosophy where he believed that this buddhi itself is in a nature of suffering. Therefore, we cannot say that buddhi is there which is relieved from suffering. I mean we are talking about the puruṣa, the existence of puruṣa, where we are saying that this activity, all this activity is sake for the liberation. Now, liberation is not possible for the buddhi. So, buddhi cannot attend this liberation because buddhi itself is in a nature of suffering and therefore buddhi can never be relieved from suffering. So, it is the only self can be relieved from the suffering and achieve liberation. So, it means there is a self. Then only we can talk about this freedom, this isolation, this liberation. So, it means that there is no puruṣa. So, this is how Sāṃkhya philosophy has presented an argument for the existence of puruṣa.

Now, Sāṃkhya philosophy believes that there is not one puruṣa. So, he argues the existence of many puruṣas and he argued that there are not only one puruṣa, there are many. So, each as we have discussed in this class as well that how the different bodies have a different puruṣa. So, there is not one puruṣa. Now, he presents an argument as mentioned in the even Jadunath Sinha book, the Indian philosophy. He argues that the birth, death and the sense organs are different in the different person and if there were one self then the birth of one person would lead to birth of all, the death of one person would lead to death of all. So, there is one problem in the one person it will lead to the problem in the all, all, everyone. It means that there is not one puruṣa. It means that there are many puruṣa. It means that all body has an own puruṣa. So therefore, there is not one puruṣa. There are many puruṣas. There are many purus. First, second if there were one self in a different body the activity of one person would lead to an activity of all. But that is not possible. Every individual has an own different activity. Someone looking for a wisdom, someone looking for something else and so on. So, therefore all the person, all these bodies have a different puruṣa. It is not one puruṣa. And third one, the different self is equipped with a different moral endowment. And this is another in an example and an argument that how we are different. And when we are saying that we are different it means that all of us has a different puruṣa. Let me remind you again that in Sāṃkhya philosophy they do not believe and argue for the concept of God. So, the God is that in a perfect being is not here in the classical Sāṃkhya philosophy. Now, here they are talking about something which is a puruṣa and this puruṣa is not one puruṣa. This puruṣa is many. The self is not one self as other philosophy of thought. But here the self is many. So, each one has an own self. The reason, they have

given an argument why we are arguing that natural philosophy, Sāṃkhya philosophy that there are many puruṣa. And this puruṣa is what is a witness, is a person who sees everything, and it is in all bodies. So, this is the concept puruṣa in the Sāṃkhya philosophy and he argues for many puruṣa. So, this is what in conclusion Sāṃkhya philosophy has talked about the concept of puruṣa and then concept of prakṛti. Concept is an entirely different form of concept of prakṛti. Puruṣa is which is liberated and is free, inherently. Prakṛti is a matter, equilibrium position of three gunas and produces all this world. So, the main cause, material cause of this world is prakṛti. So, we have discussed this concept of puruṣa and concept of prakṛti. In the next class, we will discuss the creation theory of creation from the Sāṃkhya perspective. So, thank you. This lecture was based on these books, the Indian philosophy by Jadunath Sinha, Amit Sen Gupta, the classical Sāṃkhya, a critical study. And then Larson, Gerald James, the classical Sāṃkhya, An interpretation of its history and meaning. Specially the Indian philosophy of Jadunath Sinha and classical Sāṃkhya, a critical study by Amit Sen Gupta is an important book and very basic level. So, this is very useful for this course. So, if you want to read a basic level and then understand, these books are useful. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.