

# Kundakunda on Sāmkhya-Puruṣa

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Kundakunda occupies a unique position in Jaina tradition. His early date, the authoritative character of his works, the utility of his writings equally for all spiritual minded persons monks or laymen, Jaina or Non-jaina, are some of the important features which raise him to the place of honour in the arena of Indian philosophy. His writings carry still more importance for history of Indian philosophy specially the Sāmkhya system. At his age the philosophical doctrines of the Sāmkhya were crystalised. However, the early works of Sāmkhya are in oblivion and we know very little of the Sāmkhya theories before Īśvarakṛṣṇa. Kundakunda's exposition of Sāmkhya presents a picture of pre-Īśvarakṛṣṇa Sāmkhya. His exposition is significant for the reconstruction of pre-Īśvarakṛṣṇa Sāmkhya. The points of criticism raised by the early authors like Kundakunda surely help in the further clarification of the Sāmkhya thought. The present paper purposes to study Kundakunda's comments on the Sāmkhya concept of *Puruṣa* with the above view point.

Kundakunda finds following faults in the Sāmkhya-explanation of the nature of *Puruṣa*.

The Sāmkhyas do not hold that the molecules of *karmans* change into various modes of *karmans*. Therefore, Sāmkhya theory implies the non-existence of worldly state and transmigration of soul.<sup>1</sup> The same defect will further result if it is again supposed that the soul does not undergo emotional modifications like anger, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Kundakunda further finds fault with the theory that agency of all kinds belongs to *Prakṛti* and the *Puruṣa* is ever free, eternal, non-agent, not liable to any change and contamination. According to this theory *Puruṣa* is bound by *karmans* and the *karmans* are done and belong to *Prakṛti*, though the experiencing entity is the *Puruṣa*.<sup>3</sup> It implies that the acting entity and the entity experiencing the fruits of the *karmans* are different and, hence, the acting agent will not enjoy or suffer for the acts. Consequently, it will leave no utility for the prescription of ethical discipline. No one will suffer for the sin of co-habiting with other's wife because the soul, the experiencing entity, is not involved in such an act. The karmic material in man creating or longing for woman belongs to *Prakṛti* and the karmic material in woman longing for man also belongs to *Prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is not an experiencing entity.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, no one will experience the fruit of killing

1. 'कर्मवर्गणासु चापरिणममानासु कर्मभावेन ।  
संसारस्याभावः प्रसजति सांख्यसमयो वा ॥,' *Samayasāra*, Kashi, 1950, 117
2. 'अपरिणममाने हि स्वयं जीवे क्रोधादिभिः भावैः ।  
संसारस्याभावः प्रसजति सांख्यसमयो वा ॥,' *Samayasāra*, 122
3. 'एवं सांख्योपदेशे ये तु प्ररूपयन्तीदृशं श्रमणाः ।  
तेषां प्रकृतिः करोत्यात्मानश्चाकारकाः सर्वे ॥,' *Samayasāra*, 340
4. *Samayasāra*, 335-37

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others. The act of killing someone is the karmic material belonging to *Prakṛti* and the act of being killed also is the karmic material belonging to *Prakṛti*.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the experiencing entity, viz., the *Puruṣa* is not affected at all.

Kundakunda's record of *Sāṃkhya* presents the pre-*Īśvarakṛṣṇa* stage of *Sāṃkhya*. On account of the non-availability of some work of that period we have no evidence to test the veracity of the account. The fundamental position of *Sāṃkhya* recorded by Kundakunda that *Puruṣa* is not an agent; the agency belongs to *Prakṛti* is in accordance with the *Sāṃkhya* position.<sup>2</sup> The *Sāṃkhyas* emphatically maintain that *Puruṣa* is inactive, though an experiencing entity.<sup>3</sup> The *Sāṃkhyas* further emphasize as expressed by Kundakunda, that agency belongs to *Prakṛti*. Kundakunda, in accordance with the Jaina doctrine, assigns independent status of a category to *karman* and thinks that the karma-molecules should be regarded as causing some mode of *karmans* while the self undergoes emotional modifications. When Kundakunda states that the *Sāṃkhyas* do not believe in it; it implies that it is the presupposition of the Jainas while the *Sāṃkhyas* do not accept it. According to the *Sāṃkhyas*, *karmans* are not an independent category. It can be reduced by them to the substratum of activity through the maxim of non-difference between act and the agent. In case of an embodied being, according to the *Sāṃkhyasūtra*,<sup>4</sup> agency belongs to *Ahaṃkāra* which, according to *Vijñānabhikṣu*, represents the internal organs.<sup>5</sup> It is again right to say from *Sāṃkhya* point of view that the soul does not undergo any psychic change.

No post-Kundakunda *Sāṃkhya* author has tried to alleviate these objections. It will worthwhile, therefore, to evaluate them from *Sāṃkhya* point of view. The *Sāṃkhyas* do not consider acts as molecules or having substantial existence. The acts cast their impressions on *Buddhi* and these impressions determine *Puruṣa*'s future state of birth. In worldly existence *karmans* are erroneously ascribed to *Puruṣa*. Even though *Puruṣa* may appear active, yet he is not really so.<sup>6</sup> Activity is falsely attributed to him due to his association with *Buddhi* just as a brahmin being taken up along with the thieves is falsely considered to be a thief.<sup>7</sup> He can only be metaphorically considered to be active just as the lord of warriors is metaphorically called a warrior.<sup>8</sup> The *Yuktidīpikā* remarks that activity may be of seven kinds and *Puruṣa* does not have any of them. (i) It does not ascertain the objects through its contact with the external and the internal organs. (ii) It does not attain the state of subordination or principal through the qualities in the form of consciousness, etc., to the three *Guṇas*. Thus, *Puruṣa* does not act with the *Guṇas* as woman and a boy. (iii) It does not employ anyone to activity while situated at one place just as the one who sets a charriot, a cart or a machine in motion. (iv) It does not produce anything from itself like a lump of clay. (v) It does not act upon something like a potter. (vi) It does not get something done through mere order just as juggler. (vii) It does not produce something jointly like mother and father.<sup>9</sup> The *Yuktidīpikā* further observes that *Puruṣa* cannot be active because it is conscious

1. 'तस्मान्न कोऽपि जीव उपधातकोऽस्ति युष्माकमुपदेशे ।  
यस्मात्कर्म चैव हि कर्म हन्तीति भणितम् ॥,' *Samayasāra*, 339
2. *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (with *Tattvakaumudī*), Delhi, 1967, 19.
3. *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, 11
4. 'अहङ्कारः कर्ता न पुरुषः', *Sāṃkhyasūtra* (with *Pravacanabhāṣya*), Delhi, 1977, 6154
5. 'अहङ्कारः, स एव कृतिमान्;.....तदेकस्यैवान्तःकरणस्य वृत्तिमात्रभेदाशयेन ।', *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, 6154
6. *Sāṃkhyasūtra*, 11164
7. *Māṭharavṛtti* (with *Jayamaṅgalā*), Varanasi, 1920, 20
8. 'यथा स्वामी स्वयमयोद्धाति योद्धृत्त्यसंयोगाद् योद्धेति व्यपदिश्यते, तथा पुरुषोऽप्युपचारेण कर्तेति ।', *Jayamaṅgalā*, 20
9. *Yuktidīpikā*, Delhi, 1971, 19

in nature while activity is observed in unconscious objects only. Moreover, *Puruṣa* is pure and unmixed in nature and, hence, the activity is not possible in him. Activity is observed only in the objects which are mixable in nature as is the case with milk.<sup>1</sup> It suggests that the Sāṃkhya admit contrast or opposition between conscious and unconscious and when the unconscious element is supposed to be active on account of its very constituents, the conscious principle is supposed to be inactive. The Sāṃkhya hold that *Puruṣa* is above all kinds of agency to retain its immutability and eternality. Agency involves some change and the change ultimately amounts to non-eternity. Though the *Prakṛti* is accepted by the Sāṃkhya as eternal even though liable to change also, but such a case is not possible with *Puruṣa*. Change is possible in case of an object having form and shape but *Puruṣa* is not so. Moreover, agency may be understood as producing something from itself or inducing others to activity. The former is not possible because *Puruṣa* is formless and unproductive, and the acceptance of second will lead to the further absurdities of admitting in *Puruṣa* the desire, aversion, effort, volition, etc., as also the power of inducing others to activity. Since no activity is possible in case of *Puruṣa*, the doership is also negated in him. In this way logically speaking from Sāṃkhya point of view the acts cannot bring any change in *Puruṣa*. Therefore, all types of reactions to *karmans* are negated in case of *Puruṣa*.

The crux of the problem lies in the supposition of the Sāṃkhya that inspite of its non-agency *Puruṣa* is the experiencer of results of the acts done by *Prakṛti*. This, according to Kundakunda involves various absurdities. The major defect is that there remains no cause to bring *Puruṣa* to worldly state. Further, it leaves no scope for the prohibition of transgression of ethical conduct. If *Puruṣa* is not an agent, there remains nothing to make him *bhoktā*. It is unreasonable to suppose that one experiences the result of the acts done by the other. The absolute uncompromising dualism of Sāṃkhya allowing no scope for any change in soul in empirical stage exposes Sāṃkhya for such a criticism. The Sāṃkhya justify their theory on the basis of common experience. *Puruṣa* experiences the result of the acts though not doing the acts thinking itself identical with or owner of *Buddhi* which is the real agent just as the result of victory or defeat of the soldiers is experienced by the king when the king considers himself identical with or owner of the soldiers.<sup>2</sup> The case is further exemplified as *Puruṣa* though inactive experiences the result done by other entity just as the king enjoys the grains grown by others.<sup>3</sup> The *Jayamaṅgalā* states that *Puruṣa*, though inactive, is the enjoyer as a child, fire or a tree are enjoyer though doing nothing for themselves.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, *bhoga* in real sense is not possible in *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is devoid of all physical and mental faculties required for it. Hence, he is considered to be an *experiencer* only as inactive spectator. Therefore, earlier authors of Sāṃkhya-Yoga like Īśvara-kṛṣṇa<sup>5</sup> and Vyāsa<sup>6</sup> explain experience through *Puruṣa's* proximity or contact with *Buddhi*, through which the *Puruṣa* develops in himself a sense of pleasure or pain arising of the real experience by *Buddhi*. Due to its contact with *Buddhi* which is real enjoyer *Puruṣa* considers itself an owner of *Buddhi's* activities and experiences pleasure or pain really situated in *Buddhi*. Here, process of *Puruṣa's* experience remains unexplained.

1. 'कथमस्य निष्क्रियत्वमिति चेत् ? चैतन्यात् । ..... किञ्च अनामिश्ररूपत्वात् ।,' *Yuktidīpikā*, 19

2. 'ते च मनसि वर्तमानाः पुरुषे व्यपदिश्यन्ते । स हि तत्फलस्य भोक्तेति । यथा जयः पराजयो वा योद्धृषु वर्तमानः स्वामिनि व्यपदिश्यते ।,'

*Yogabhāṣya*, Varanasi, 1970, 1214

also : *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī*, 62

3. 'अकर्तुरपि फलोपभोगोऽन्नाद्यवत्', *Sāṃkhyasūtra*, 1:105

4. 'बालद्वुताशतरवः स्वयमकृतानां यथा हि भोक्तारः ।

पुरुषोऽपि विषयफलानां स्वयमकृतानां तथापि भोक्ता ।,' *Jayamaṅgalā*, 19

5. *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, 20

6. 'चित्तमयस्कान्तमणिकल्पं संनिधिमालोपकारि दृश्यत्वेन स्वयं भवति पुरुषस्य स्वामिनः ।,' *Yogabhāṣya*, 114

Vācaspatimiśra<sup>1</sup> introduces his theory of *single reflection* and Vijñānabhikṣu<sup>2</sup> of *double reflection* to explain it. According to the former *Puruṣa* is reflected into *Buddhi* and according to the latter the *Buddhi* having *Puruṣa's* reflection is again reflected back into *Puruṣa*. It implies that the *bhoga* of *Puruṣa* is different from that of *Buddhi*. The *bhoga* understood in common parlance can be divided into two stages in Sāṃkhya. In the case of experience of taste, for example, the physiological organ of taste conveys its impression to *Buddhi* which assumes a state abounding in *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in accordance with the nature of the object. This is real *bhoga*. *Puruṣa* situated in contact with *Buddhi* as a witness feels himself the owner of the feeling. This is the *bhoga* of *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* develops this feeling as long as his sense of ownership is not dispelled by true knowledge of his unrelated nature.

Here also a question naturally arises if experience of *Puruṣa* is not real why *Puruṣa* is considered to be an enjoyer and not an apparent enjoyer as is the case with its being active. The real position of Sāṃkhya remains that the characteristics not demanding some change are supposed to really belong to *Puruṣa* while the others requiring some deviation from the real nature are negated in him. It clarifies why *Puruṣa* is not an agent, but is an experimenter. The sufferings due to committing sin are actually experienced by *Buddhi* which accompanies *Puruṣa* as long as he is bound. The impressions of past acts—good or bad are stored in *Buddhi* while *Puruṣa* enjoys or suffers only through its association with *Buddhi*. The Sāṃkhyas can thus alleviate the objection raised by Kundakunda that the experience of suffering through transgressing the moral conduct cannot be satisfactorily explained in Sāṃkhya. As a matter of fact all experiences are unreal from *Puruṣa's* side but seem to be real due to ignorance. This is precisely bondage. When this notion is dispelled, *Puruṣa* gets liberation.

The above discussion is concluded with the following remarks. Sāṃkhya is very close to Jainism in metaphysical position but some presuppositions of the two systems introduce such differences. The Jains consider *karmans* as molecules affecting the soul while the Sāṃkhyas consider *karmans* to be the functioning of *Buddhi*. According to Jaina metaphysics soul reacts to the *karmans* and becomes the object of *vyavahāranaya*, while according to the Sāṃkhyas there is no fundamental difference in *Puruṣa* in its *vyāvahārika* state from the *pārmārthika* state. Even in body *Puruṣa* remains uncontaminated and without change. The above defects may apply to Sāṃkhya if the whole situation is viewed in light of Jaina metaphysics, but the Sāṃkhyas may alleviate them in their own way, which may not be acceptable to the Jaina position. At the present state of our knowledge we cannot rise above certain presuppositions to explain the metaphysical problems, and hence the objections. Kundakunda has suggested the drawbacks in uncompromising absolute dualism of Sāṃkhya, which serves as a guideline for later authors. No Sāṃkhya text tries to alleviate these objections from Sāṃkhya point of view. It adds to the credit of Kundakunda that his discussion of the nature of *Puruṣa* presents picture more vivid than that presented by Sāṃkhya authors themselves.

1. *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī*, 5

2. *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, 1187