Reconceptualizing *puruṣa* within the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*

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For Helen Dee Hokom and Robert A. Simeone.

Abstract

The present thesis aims to help clarify the ontological principle of *puruṣa* within the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* by conceptualizing this principle in terms of its 'to-be-liberated' and 'liberated' status. I will elaborate upon the meaning of the to-be-liberated and liberated conditions, and how classical Sāṃkhya's soteriology relates to these different conditions, respectively. Applying different lines of reasoning — which include taking into account ideas about the soul and the liberated condition that predated but possibly influenced classical Sāṃkhya; seeking a high level of textual coherency; and viewing the text as empirically, teleologically and pedagogically driven — I contend that the Sanskrit term *bahutvaṃ* ('manyness') of *kārikā* 18 should only be applied to the conception of a to-be-liberated *puruṣa* (*puruṣa* from the perspective of *saṃyoga*, as the subject of experience) while the liberated condition of *puruṣa* would be better conceived as transcendental absoluteness, or as simply not relative to *prakṛti*.

Contents

Abbreviations

Āydī	Āyurvedadīpikā.
Bc	Buddhacarita.
BhG	Bhagavad Gītā.
BU	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.
CS	Caraka Saṃhitā.
Gp	Gauḍapādabhaṣya.
Mbh	Mahābhārata.
Mkṣd	Mokṣadharma.
PYŚ	Pātañjala Yogaśāstra.
RV	Ṛg Veda.
Śār	Śārīrasthāna.
Sk	Sāṃkhya kārikā.
Yd	Yuktidīpikā.

I. Introduction

Motivation, Objectives and Conceptual Features of this Study

Sāṃkhya, in its multifarious connotations and deployments, has significantly marked the broad spectrum of religion, yoga and philosophy in South Asia, as well as India's myriad of cultural arenas, including mythology, law, art and medicine.[1] Yet, within Sāṃkhya's earliest surviving authoritative text, the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* (earlier than ca. 500 CE)[2] there remains a long-standing sense of unresolve when considering the subject that stands at the center of the text's ontology, this being *puruṣa*, the 'soul,'[3] and ideas revolving around the way in which a liberated (*kevala*) all-pervading (*vyāpin*) principle likened to consciousness (*cetanā*) can, within the same doctrine, be in need of liberation, or come to be bound to the perspectival and spatiotemporal conditions of experience in the first place. The textual discord appears further augmented by *kārikā*s such as 62, 63 and 66, wherein not only are perspectival characteristics attributed to *puruṣa*, but characterizations previously associated with *puruṣa* are attributed to the alternative figure in classical Sāṃkhya's ontological dyad, *prakṛti.*

Rather than viewing these tensions as conceptual oversights or absurdities made on the part of the text's author or the Sāṃkhyan lineage to which the author assigns credit, such tensions are, in my view, more likely a product of the philosophical and spiritual depth of understanding that these thinkers/seers strived to articulate while taking into account pre-classical Sāṃkhyan positions, as well as their preferred soteriological pedagogy and terse, metered, literary style.[4] The present thesis intends to better our theoretical understanding of classical Sāṃkhya's vision of the unliberated and liberated conditions, and how these conditions relate to what I will refer to as the 'to-be-liberated' and 'liberated' *puruṣa*, respectively. Interpreting *puruṣa* in terms of its to-be-liberated and liberated status is in congruence with the system's soteriology and pedagogical approach and effectively generates a higher level of internal textual consistency than has previously been assumed. The concept of a to-be-liberated *puruṣa* is made in respect to the doctrine's basis in the human experience, its theory of transmigration, and soteriological praxis. This conception consists of *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga* (conjunction) relative to its ontological counterpart, *prakṛti* (or to the contents/capacities of consciousness) and therefore effectively perspectival

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[1] Larson & Bhattacharya (eds.) 1987: xi.
[2] Frauwallner, E. 1973: 225.
[3] As an attempt to minimize the conflation of terms, I have chosen to use the English term "soul" when intending to capture what one *really* is, either embodied and enminded, or free from body-mind limitations.
[4] *Kārikā*s are verses written in the strict "Ārya" meter, consisting of pithy formulations of some important idea. *Kārikā*s, alongside *sūtra*s, comprise a genre of aphoristic, philosophical Sanskrit literature.

and plural, the subject of an impermanent, individually empirical situation.[5] The second conception consists of the liberated *puruṣa*, whose liberated condition is invariable and permanent in the absence of *saṃyoga*.[6] In other words, I maintain that *puruṣa* of the Sk is used to denote one's essence, conceived of as 1. The conscious subject, distinct from, but forming a compresence (*saṃyoga*) with *prakṛti*, which acts as the witness and controller of a particular set of conditions, and 2. Liberated consciousness, free of conditions, which could alternatively be conceived of as absoluteness[7] or simply as not relative to *prakṛti*. While the *kārikā*s are primarily concerned with the former conception, the latter conception better represents the description of *puruṣa* come *kārikā* 68 — the "liberated *puruṣa*" — or that which persists, outside of the objective-subjective amalgam in which one invariably finds oneself.[8] It is important to distinguish and to keep clear these divergent conceptions of *puruṣa* embedded within the text. Doing so leads to some understandings of *puruṣa* that differ from the interpretational status quo, most significantly, from the interpretation of *puruṣa* as multiple not only in *saṃyoga*, but also upon liberation from conjunction with *prakṛti.* More precisely, distinguishing between the to-be-liberated and liberated state of *puruṣa* leads one away from the received view that liberation, according to classical Sāṃkhaya, consists of a multiplicity of liberated-disembodied-diseminded-consciousness-monads. Thus, in connection with my primary contention that two conceptions of *puruṣa* are embedded within the Sk, I assert an innovative interpretation of how the Sanskrit term *bahutvaṃ* (manyness) is being used to describe *puruṣa* in *kārikā* 18. Here, I argue that the "manyness" or plurality of *puruṣa*s is being directed towards only one of the conceptions, namely, to the conception of *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga* (i.e., relative to the conditions of *prakṛti*, or as the to-be-liberated subject of experience).

Before outlining the primary research methods that will be guiding the direction and conclusions formed by the present study, I will introduce some important conceptual features of classical Sāṃkhya, and Sāṃkhya in general. These features will effectively orient the reader, especially within the upcoming chapter, which positions classical Sāṃkhya within the greater pre-*kārika,*'Sāṃkhyistic' philosophical milieu. P. Chakravarti provides the following definition of Sāṃkhya:

> ...we intend to maintain that 'Sāṃkhya' which passes for a philosophical system is derived from
> *saṃkhyā*, that means knowledge, contemplation, examination, discussion, investigation,

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[5] See *kārikā*s 20-21.
[6] See *kārikā* 68.
[7] Bengali Baba in his 1949 translation and commentary on the PYŚ also translates the liberated condition, *kaivalya*, as 'absoluteness.'
[8] The term *puruṣa* does not actually appear in *kārikā* 68, i.e, '*puruṣa*' is not applied to the liberated condition. This may be, at least in part, to emphasizes the primary if not purely empirical nature that the Sk ascribes to the conscious entity, *puruṣa*, which no longer exists as such upon the inactivity of *pradhāna.*

discrimination, etc. The system of Kapila is called *sāṃkhya* as it is more or less endowed with all these attributes.[9]

Knowledge, contemplation, examination, discussion, investigation and discrimination are all important characteristics to keep in mind when understanding the modes of inquiry and self-realization valued by the "system of Kapila" (Kapila, being the acclaimed teacher, or highest sage (*paramarṣi*) of the Sk) and when understanding how Sāṃkhya has tended to be used in general. Philosophically speaking, the most common applications of the term Sāṃkhya have been made in reference to a method of liberative knowledge; *the* liberating knowledge; and, a philosophical position or system, which may or may not be explicitly self-identified as propounding "Sāṃkhya," but is called so anyway due to its upholding certain recurrent norms or characteristics that coincide enough with doctrines that *are* explicitly self-identified as Sāṃkhya. These recurrent norms or characteristics that appear within different doctrines of liberative insight — that either incorporate the term Sāṃkhya to describe the state of liberation, the liberative method, or to identify the doctrine itself — may be summarized as follows:

> *First Principle*: The ontology is comprised of two irreducible categories, broadly construed as the subject and the object, including the object's potential. Within the Sk, these categories are usually expressed as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti,* respectively. In other texts, especially those arriving to us from the period around the *Mahābhārata* epic (such as the *Carkasaṃithā* and *Buddhacarita*), the subject or soul-principle is often defined as 'the field knower' (*kṣetrajña*) or may alternatively be named *puruṣa, ātman, bhūtātman, jīva* etc., depending (apparently) upon the context and the conditions comprising 'the field' (*kṣetra*) of the subject.
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> *Second Principle*: The subject is conscious and distinct from the other elements of the conglomeration of constituents comprising the individual. The object is unconscious and consists of everything experienceable, this being, on the one hand, the faculties that enable phenomena to be experienced, and on the other hand, experiential content itself.[10]

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[9] Chakravarti, 1975: 3.

[10] *Kārikā*s 21-39 provide an analysis of the different constituents comprising the different levels of one's psycho-physical experience, which emerge from the conjunction of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti.* From *prakṛti*, *buddhi* (discernment) comes, from which egoity (*ahaṃkāra*), the individual sense of self, is inherent. From that, the group of eleven (*manas*, plus five action and five sensory capacities) and the group of five *tanmātras*, or subtle elements, arise. From these subtle elements come the five sense objects: earth, water, fire, air and ether. This scheme changes somewhat depending on the particular school of thought.

Third Principle: Identification at any level of consciousness with the content of consciousness is the fundamental cause of suffering. This principle goes hand in hand with the idea of *karma,*(mental and physical action), which generates *saṃskāras* (impressions, accumulated in one's present and previous lives) and leads to cycles of transmigration, rebirth and the perpetuation of suffering.

Fourth Principle: Liberation is sought from one's motivation to end suffering and is attained through the subject's awareness of its own nature as absolute — not relative to, or in any way the same as, the object.

Fifth Principle: The subject's self-recognition is dependent upon the conditions of the experiential contents being permissive of such realization, which requires the psycho-physical practices of cultivating *dharma* and yoga.

The sighting of more than one of the above characteristics within a given doctrine signals to its reader that the doctrine in question most likely holds a place within the robust and far spanning philosophical current that may be called, or is at least related to, Sāṃkhya.

Methodological Considerations

Although the Sk along with most of the other texts I will be drawing from for comparative purposes are originally written in Sanskrit, my facility with this language unfortunately does not suffice to enable me to engage directly with the original texts and commentaries.[11] Still, given that a selection of English translations exists, I believe this impediment to be of lesser consequence than others impeding the interpreter of ancient Indian texts: the deeper issue may lie in the Sanskrit versions themselves. Frauwallner remarks that, compared to other lands, the manuscripts in India fall disproportionately to destruction due to climatic conditions. "A manuscript, which would be older than the twelfth century A.D., is in India a rarity."[12] The natural selection of manuscripts written and passed down by scribes resulted not only from climatic conditions, but from decisions made on the part of the scribes themselves, and the sheer happenstance of a manuscript's being obtained in an area where the printing industry was strong, or not.[13] Most printed editions available today therefore descended from a small number of written manuscripts that weathered the strain presented by unfavorable climatic conditions, and that were in general obtained from areas where the printing industry was strong. The source text that the Sk claims to

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[11] I have worked with the following English translations of the Sk: Larson (1979), Burley (2007) and Maas (2021).
[12] Frauwallner & Bedekar, 2008: 21.
[13] This issue as it relates to āyurvedic texts is addressed in Wujastyk, 2003: xxxii-xxxiii.

summarize — the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* — has been lost completely.[14] Although translation is obviously crucial to the non-Sanskrit reader's comprehension of a Sanskrit text, one must also employ creative means of engaging with the information available and question previous assumptions if one is wishing to arrive as close as one can to something representing a clear picture of the text's original intent. This is especially true regarding areas that have been left particularly ambiguous, such as the conception of *puruṣa* and liberation within classical Sāṃkhya.

I have worked to align my topic with research methods that are both accessible to me, and of special value to the topic itself. My primary research questions may be phrased as:
(1) What evidence is there to support the claim that both a to-be-liberated and liberated conception of *puruṣa* exists in the Sk? And **(2)** if such evidence is sufficiently forthcoming for this claim to be accepted, how does the inclusion of a to-be-liberated conception of *puruṣa* impact our interpretation of the *kārikā*s themselves, especially *kārikā* 18, and why might Īśvarakṛṣṇa have included both conceptions of *puruṣa*, in the first place? I will explain my methods in terms of four different, though related, lines of reasoning that I use to address these questions. The first line of reasoning relates to the intellectual and religious environment that preceded and almost certainly impacted the set of ideas presented by the Sk; the second concerns textual coherency, or treating the text as an integral whole; the third concerns the doctrine's prescribed soteriological methods, which are centered around notions of transmigration, rebirth and freedom from experience; and the fourth relates to the Sk's doctrine, its metaphysics and pedagogy being underlyingly rational, empirically and teleologically based. I will speak to each of these lines of reasoning in turn.

1. Positioning *puruṣa* of the Sk within its historical environment: Johnston remarks that, upon one's inquiry into Sāṃkhya, the hardest task involves understanding the nature and growth of ideas regarding both life and the soul. "The difficulty arises not only from the ambiguity of the texts, but still more from the vague and often contradictory ideas that have clustered round beliefs about the soul in all ages...It is not surprising then that Sāṃkhya at no stage gives a really intelligible account of the soul, and, if the following discussion fails to arrive at clarity or to do more than pick up and follow some of the more important strands, the blame does not lie entirely at my door."[15] In my own process of reviewing soul conceptions of classical Sāṃkhya's precursors, I find that the most pragmatic and useful starting point to approach what Johnston refers to as ambiguity, contradictory ideas or unintelligible accounts of the soul, is by breaking down

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[14] In stanza 72, the author of the Sk, Īśvarakṛṣṇa, claims to be summarizing key aspects of the more extensive *Ṣaṣṭitantra*, which is considered the first systematic work of Sāṃkhya. For more on the *Ṣaṣṭitantra,* see Chakravati, 1975: 4.

[15] Johnston, 1937: 41.

descriptions in terms of their "relative" versus "absolute" nature. Relative-to-the-person and absolute-unconditioned conceptions of the soul find expression within many pre-*kārikā* sources that bear resemblances with classical Sāṃkhya. The materials I have selected, which include soul and liberation theories kindred to those of the Sk, represent only a very small portion of materials that could have been selected for this same purpose. Within the context and limitations set by the present study, I have opted both for sources and passages that represent the antiquity of ideas that we can call "Sāṃkhystic," and for those whose soteriology and characterization of the soul or *puruṣa* can serve to broaden our understanding of the soteriology and *puruṣa* conceptions contained within the Sk. I will underscore the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, some Jain soteriological notions, the *Mahābhārata*, specifically the *Mokṣadharma* section, and the *Buddhacarita.* Finally, I will examine in greater detail the soteriology and conceptions of the soul/*puruṣa* in the *Śārīrasthāna* (section on the body) of āyurveda's *Carakāsaṃhitā* (compendium of Caraka) which provides an early form of Sāṃkhya, and a remarkably eclectic variation of the views presented thus far, thereby serving as a valuable resource with which to compare the conception of the soul and liberation advocated by the Sk. It is natural to look at the development of ideas revolving around healing and spirituality side by side, as the two so frequently are, within a given culture or experience, addressed together, if not taken as two sides of the same coin.[16] *Śārīrasthāna* (henceforth, Śār) offers an especially intriguing exposition into the nature of oneself, due to its variety of approaches to understanding the person for both medical and liberative purposes, including an extensive discourse on transmigration; prescribed soteriological practices; and an abundance of terminological variation in reference to selfhood, which, inadvertently, contributes to our better understanding of *puruṣa* in the Sk. The Śār, Bc and Mbh may also allow one to infer some of the contents of the no longer extant *Ṣaṣṭitantra*.[17]

2. Assuming a high level of textual coherency: That *puruṣa* may be bound to or liberated from suffering in itself implies two perspectives from which to view the same principle. Explaining *how* or *why puruṣa* is considered both bound and liberated within the same system is central to this study and demands that one deploys more than historicist or philological methodologies alone. Trying to understand ancient treatises strictly from an historical-evolutionary perspective requires conceiving of any given text as a sort of patch-work quilt assembled by various hands, and therefore most likely inconsistent, forced, or disassociated from something impregnated by genuine insight. Granting that a given text may contain consistency within itself allows one to take its philosophy seriously. "A reasonable interpretive starting-point — indeed, probably the

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[16] Zysk, 1991: 38, et passim.
[17] Motegi, 2013: 1.

only genuinely workable starting-point — is to assume a high level of integrity on the parts of the systems concerned, and, from that basis, to piece them together in a way that utilizes the light from various elements to illuminate one another."[18] Classical Sāṃkhya is often distinguished from pre-classical forms of Sāṃkhya, largely, for having achieved greater internal coherency and systematization.[19] Treating the Sk thus as an "integral whole," and in so doing, accepting a reading of the text that presents a high degree of internal coherency, provides further interpretive grounds for understanding the term *puruṣa* to encapsulate two different conceptions of selfhood. My interpretation of *puruṣa* and the need to call attention to why the received view of *puruṣa* as plural in the liberated condition is unsubstantiated, therefore, also stems from the endeavor to reconcile divergent descriptions of *puruṣa* within the Sk itself.

3. Soteriological Methods: Soteriological methods support the liberative goal of the respective doctrine to which they are prescribed. Due to the intimacy of the relation between a soteriological method and its goal, the methods themselves can tell us a great deal about the fundamental values underlying their respective system, as well as help to explain why a particular system is presented in the way that it is. I look towards what come across as the three primary soteriological methods in the Sk, namely: *kārikā*s 44-45, where we are informed about the necessity of *dharma*, or virtuousness, which is permissive of "knowledge," and thus liberation; *kārikā*s 63-64 where we learn that the doctrine supports the assiduous practice of that-ness/truth (Skt., *tattva*) through which one develops the knowledge 'I am not,' 'not mine,' 'not I,' a soteriological method highly reminiscent of what we will see is advised by the *Bṛhadāraṇyka Upaniṣad*, along with many Buddhist scriptures; and, in *kārikā* 66, where classical Sāṃkhya's emphasis on the indispensability of experience, or of witnessing and of being witnessed, is brought to a climax. Taken together, these three methods can help to explain the conception of *puruṣa* of the Sk.

4. An empirical, rational, teleological and pedagogical soteriology: My reflections throughout the present thesis are shaped heavily by understanding the Sk in soteriologically heuristic and pragmatic terms.[20] It makes sense, considering the empirically centred intellectual environment in which the Sk was written, and the text's altruistic resolve to end suffering through the impartment of a special knowledge, that the nature of the doctrine itself would reflect these features. By calling the Sk a "rational" system of philosophy, I am acknowledging that the

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[18] Burley, 2007: 133-134.

[19] See Frauwallner, 1973: 7. This is not to say that classical Sāṃkhya's logical improvements did not arise at the expense of some common-sense interpretive failings. See Edgerton, 1924: 34-35.

[20] Edgerton (1924: 1) makes the point that philosophy in India has always been practically rooted, namely, in teaching a method of salvation.

various features of its soteriology and ontology (including the many-ness of *puruṣa*s in *kārikā* 18) are rationally based. In other words, the system strives to present information that is provable through the framework of one's life experience.[21] By "soteriological pedagogy," I mean the process of delivering liberative insight in a way that has been intentionally devised to support the initiate's comprehension and practical success. If we consider the doctrine provided by the Sk to be undergirded by heuristic intent, we can understand that the specific roles afforded to *puruṣa* throughout the text were likely devised as a means of supporting this pedagogical enterprise, instead of for their logical soundness alone. Regularly attributing qualities of *prakṛti* to *puruṣa,* and speaking of *puruṣa* as both in need of liberation and as liberated exemplify this practice. Given that being 'the experienc*er*' is the condition in which one finds oneself — our sense of awareness being entirely bound up with and to this extent enslaved by the senses — regarding *puruṣa* in a way that is compatible with what we find empirically is the necessary starting point from which appropriate liberative guidance can follow. A central aspect of the Sk's liberative guidance relates to its overt teleology, which affirms the purposefulness of experience in addition to liberation from experience. In other words, purpose is achieved, not only through the non-identification of the consciousness constituent with the non-conscious ones, but, as acknowledged by *kārikā* 21 etc., through the very experience from which consciousness must eventually be removed:

> Like [the conjunction] of a lame and a blind man, also the conjunction of these two exists the purpose of seeing of the Subject, and likewise for the purpose of autonomy of Matter. Creation results from it.[22]

Most of the texts that will be employed throughout the historical-evolutionary portion of this study bridge the gap between one description of the soul that is relative to the person and in some sense bound, with another description that is trans-empirical and liberated, by viewing the two as a microcosmic-macrocosmic homologous pair. It is, therefore, worth explaining a bit more about how I will be using the term 'homology' and its relevance to this study in particular.

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[21] Radhakrishnan, 1927: 253.

[22] Sk 21. Maas trans., 2021, my square brackets. For more teleological references in the Sk, see stanzas 1, 17, 42, 56, 57, 58, 60, 63, 65, 66, 68, and 69. In a similar vein, Gauḍapāda´s commentary on stanza 12 remarks: "Like a lamp generates illuminations of objects from the combination of the mutually opposing [entities] oil, wick and fire, in the same way Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which oppose each other, accomplish a purpose."

A Note on Homologies

Homologizing the individual with the universe has occurred cross-culturally over the course of millennia, and in some cases presupposes a whole system of micro-macro correspondences.[23] I use the term homology to denote two or more phenomena that possess an inherent sameness or shared identity. In Śār, the word used is "*sāmānya*," which is derived from the adjective *samāna*, meaning "same, equal, similar like, equivalent, like to or identical or homogenous with".[24] Mircea Eliade explains micro-macro homologies by first instructing one to reorient his or her perspective towards the view that the world's very existence is sacred, purposeful, and alive. He contends that this was the perspective that caused man of antiquity to become self-conceived as a microcosm, an embodiment of the same sanctity recognizable in the cosmos. With one's life conceived of as a divine work, the cosmos becomes the "paradigmatic image of human existence" and thus one's life a homologue of cosmic life:

> Indian religious thought made ample use of this traditional homology, house-cosmos-human body...the body, like the cosmos, is a "situation," a system of conditioning influences that the individual assumes.[25]

I suggest that the homological paradigm innate to many pre-classical Sāṃkhya, Sāṃkhyistic texts — such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Mokṣadharma* and Śār V, which describe the soul in terms of its empirical and trans-empirical, individual-universe, microcosmic-macrocosmic dimensions — may have also been assumed in classical Sāṃkhya's understanding of *puruṣa*.

Classical Commentaries

In conjunction with each of the above research methods, my reading of the Sk is supplemented by English translations of three of the most important commentaries pertaining to the Sk: The *Yuktidīpikā* (ca. 500-600 CE); the *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* (ca. 700-800 CE); and to a lesser extent, the *Suvaraṇasaptativyākhyā* (earlier than ca. 550 CE).[26] The *Suvaraṇasaptativyākhyā*'s author is unknown, and the original Sanskrit

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[23] Eliade, 1968: 169.
[24] Monier-Williams: 1899, 1152.
[25] Eliade, 1968: 173. For more on homologies, see Eliade, 166-180.
[26] The dating provided is from Soloman, 1974:179-180, who suggests the following dates (CE) for the Sk's various commentaries: *Suvarṇasaptativyākhyā* (preserved in Chinese translation only) earlier than ca. 550; *Sāṅkhyavṛtti* (an early anonymous commentary) ca. 400; *Sāṅkhyasaptativṛtti* (anonymous) ca. 450–500; *Yuktidīpikā* (anonymous) 5th-6th century; *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* (by Gauḍapāda) 7th-8th century; *Jayamaṅgala* (by a certain Śaṅkara) ca. 800; *Tattvakaumudī* (by Vācaspatimiśra) 9th century; *Māṭharavṛtti* (by Māṭhara) ca. 1000.

version has been lost. What is available today has been made so through a Chinese translation by the 6th century Buddhist philosopher, Paramartha. "The lamp of reasoning," (*Yuktidīpikā*) is possibly the most important and certainly the most comprehensive commentary written on the Sk. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* intends to show that the Sk forms a fully-fledged philosophical system, and within the text, defends the perspectives of the Sk against other contemporaneous points of views. The *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* is a short literary work that provides the *kārikā*'s essential meaning. Read together, the three commentaries exhibit a significant degree of stylistic contrast that provide an ample spectrum of informative perspectives and historical context. One major challenge that the philosopher of classical Sāṃkhya faces in answering questions about the nature of *puruṣa* and how a multiplicity of non-spatial or all pervasive (*vyāpin*) consciousnesses can exist at the same time is, in part, due to the fact that the question is not satisfactorily addressed by the Sk itself and goes unaddressed by the text's classical commentators.[27] The three commentaries I have selected at least provide us with some clues on the matter, which will be addressed contextually throughout the present thesis, but are necessarily supplemented by the research methods addressed above.

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[27] Maas, "The Sāṅkhyakārikā: Stanzas on All-Embracing Insight," Yogic Studies, Session 9, (Q&A) 13 April 2021.

Project Synopsis

In chapter two, I situate Sāṃkhya within its historical cultural and religious context. Chapter three approaches the derivation of the Sk's conception of *puruṣa* from an evolutionary perspective, underscoring a small selection of spiritual traditions and texts that provide words or concepts regarding soteriological ideals and the nature of the soul that may have influenced (and certainly contain strong affinities with) those occurring within the Sk. Greater attention will be devoted to the soul conceptions and soteriology of the Śār portion of āyurveda's *Carakāsaṃhitā* within chapter four. Having provided some different soul-theories within texts that are precursors to the Sk, chapter five provides the reader with an introduction to the Sk itself, focusing on the subject of *puruṣa*. Using the remaining lines of reasoning, I substantiate my original claim that a to-be-liberated/empirical and liberated/transcendental conception of *puruṣa* is held by the Sk, and provide some examples of textual passages whose interpretation would benefit from our making this distinction, especially *kārikā*s 18 and 68.

II. Positioning Sāṃkhya in South Asia's Religious and Intellectual History

The Rise of Vedic Brahmanism

Archeological findings have uncovered much about at least one group of people from northern India's ancient past. These people, the Harrapans, are the earliest known inhabitants to have resided in the northern Indian subcontinent.[28] So called for one of their foremost cities set alongside a tributary of the Indus River ("Harappa") the Harrapans grew an urban civilization along the Indus Valley River, located in present day Pakistān and western India, which reached a state of maturation around 2300 BCE.[29] Kenneth G. Zysk suggests that this culture's religious beliefs and practices were animistic and inextricably connected with their healing system, both revolving around magic, plants, and ritualism that involved the manipulation of spirits, purification rites, fire rituals, and worship to the Mother Goddess.[30] From ca.1900 BCE onward, the Indus Valley Civilization declined. Around this same period, the first waves of semi-nomadic groups of people, who identified themselves as Āryans, arrived in the region of the Indus Valley.[31] The extent to which what remained of the indigenous Harrapan culture influenced the Āryans is unclear. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that from the very beginning of traceable history, the religiosity of Northern India grew out of at least two developed cultures, namely, that which remained of the indigenous Indus Valley Civilization, and that of the dominant, though foreign, Āryans.[32]

 The Āryan tribes were united by the Vedic Sanskrit language and a similar set of cultural values, including a set of orally transmitted polytheistic religious beliefs, revolving around deities that represented transcendent aspects of nature or ethical values, and a tradition of incantation and sacrifice through which reverence and offerings to these deities could be made. What remains of an expansive tradition of oral transmission has been preserved by Brahmanical Vedic Schools, within the collection of writings that are together known as the *Veda.*[33] Upon completion, this canon of sacred language consisted

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[28] Allchin, 1982: 218.

[29] Zysk, 1991: 13.

[30] Zysk, 1991: 14; Allchin, 1982: 213-217.

[31] Allchin, 1982: 300.

[32] Allchin, 1982: 299. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, for one, traces the roots of classical Sāṃkhya to an older version of Sāṃkhya that he argues derived from the pre-Vedic agricultural-matriarchal mother-right, ancient Indian materialism (Lokāyata) and tantrism. See Larson's summary of Chattopadhyaya's views in Larson 1979: 63-66.

[33] The estimated date for the compilation of the RV is c. 1500-1300 BCE. See Allchin, 1982: 298.

of four Vedas — the Ṛg, the Yajur, the Sāma and the Atharva — each comprised of four segments: Saṃhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, and Upaniṣad.[34] The four traditionally recognized Vedas are believed to be possessed of divine knowledge, or *Śruti*, that is, "something (revealed to and) heard," by primordial sages, and esteemed as the scriptural (or *śabda*, oral) authority *par excellence* in Hinduism.[35] The collections of *Upaniṣads*, characterized by their interest in the innermost spiritual aspect of man and man's correspondence with the universe, came to be the main scriptural authority for later Indian theological traditions.[36]

 The aim of a vedic ritual was to secure the well-being or betterment of one's life, be this in relation to crop production, riches and offspring, or immortality in heaven. Within the earliest sections of the *Veda*, little attention is devoted to philosophical discourse, the emphasis being instead on the world of the gods, vedic hymns or information relating the intricate rituals to be recited or performed by priest specialists.[37] It is curious, given this, to find within the RV — the oldest document descending from the Āryan Indian community — certain passages and speculations that could be viewed as precursors of Sāṃkhyistic thought.[38] Consider the following:

> Two well-feathered (birds), yokemates and companions, embrace the same tree.
> Of those two the one eats the sweet fig; the other, not eating, keeps watch.[39]

In relation to classical Sāṃkhya, one might see how the two kindred birds could symbolize the divergent conceptions of *puruṣa*: the former is in contact with materiality, the "enjoyer" of experience, while the latter has no contact.[40] Another well-known Ṛg Vedic hymn, 10.129, 1-7, has most likely become so due to its being atypical when set against the rest of the content in the predominantly liturgical Ṛg Veda as a whole. Nevertheless, it is representative of the beginnings of a general mood of ambiguity and inquiry relating to the person, life, death Veda.[41]

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[34] Lipner, 1994: 24. The earliest material in the Ṛg Veda was composed during the "Early Vedic" period, which lasted until around 1500 BCE. This was followed by the "Mature Vedic" stage, during which the compilation of hymns into *Saṃhitas* took place. 1300- 600 BCE is considered the "Late Vedic" stage. See Allchin, 1982: 301, 306.
[35] Lipner, 1994: 24-25.
[36] Olivelle, 1996: xxxiii.
[37] Frauwallner, 1973: 27.
[38] Chakravarti, 1975: 9.
[39] **I**.164. 20. *The Rigveda, The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, trans., Jamison and Brereton, 2014: 356.
[40] Norelius determines such interpretation to be anachronistic, or in other words, not in keeping with the original meaning of the passage (2016: 6). Such an interpretation did however become prominent amongst later readers (as evidenced by, for example, medieval commentators, see Norelius footnote 9) and to this extent, may have held a place in the development of Sāṃkhystic thought.
[41] Frauwallner, 1973: 5.

The nonexistent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time. There existed neither the airy space nor heaven beyond. What moved back and forth? From where and in whose protection? ...What existed as a thing coming into being, concealed by emptiness—that One was born by the power of heat. Then, in the beginning, from thought there evolved desire, which existed as the primal semen. Searching in their hearts through inspired thought, poets found the connection of the existent in the nonexistent. This creation — from where it came to be, if it was produced or if not — he who is the overseer of this (world) in the furthest heaven, he surely knows. Or if he does not know...?[42]

As with **I**.164.20, language is used that is suggestive of a passive "onlooker¨ or a "knower" that is separate from the rest of creation, and that inquiries into the identity of this onlooker/knower. This passage also pries into the origin of creation, describing this as the mind (thought) and more precisely, desire, a view that appears in some form within many later philosophies of south Asia, including classical Sāṃkhya.

Prominent Sources of Classical Sāṃkhya

Classical Sāṃkhya is commonly understood as having developed out of Vedic Brahmanism, especially the Brahman-ātman speculations of the oldest, pre-Buddhistic Upaniṣads, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya*.[43] The oldest Upaniṣads were written in the same period as the *Brahmana* section of the Veda and are therefore considered to belong to the same stream of development. Though fairly standard, this view is not unanimously accepted. Johannes Bronkhorst provides compelling evidence in support of the idea that many soteriological views that characterize Indian philosophy and that are popularly attributed to Vedic Brahmanism actually arose apart from it, originating instead within a culture associated with the movement that grew out of the people living in the eastern Ganges, in an area he refers to as "Greater Magadha."

Greater Magadha had a culture of its own which was different from the culture of the authors of Vedic and early post-Vedic literature. This was the culture of those who were responsible for the second urbanization in India, the rise of new political structures and the creation of the Mauryan

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[42] **X**.129.1-7. *The Rigveda, The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, trans., Jamison and Brereton, 2014: 1608-1609.
[43] Larson (1969) shows that Joseph Dahlmann, Paul Oltramare, Arthur Berriedale Keith, Hermann Oldenberg, Franklin Edgerton, E.H Johnston, Erich Frauwallner, J.A. B. van Buitenen, all attribute classical Saṃkhya's heritage to the Brahmanical tradition, especially to the speculations found within the early Upaniṣads.

empire and its successors. It was also the culture of those who founded, or joined, various religious movements, among which Buddhism, Jainism and Ajīvikism are best known.[44]

Besides the *Bṛhadāranyaka* and *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads, Jain and Buddhist literature provide the earliest clear accounts of some fundamental principles that later show up in the Sk, including ideas revolving around the soul-principle.[45] Perhaps most significant amongst these ideas is the notion of rebirth that is directly linked to karmic retribution determined by one's ethical and moral conduct, and of salvation as equivalent to freedom from rebirth.[46] Coupled with the ideas of karmic retribution and liberation as freedom from rebirth, are soteriological practices rooted in the modification of physical and mental processes to the extent that one achieves greater stillness, or absence of content, on both levels.[47] The idea of karmic retribution and the primary tenet of nonviolence held by both the Jains and Buddhists naturally leads to soteriological practices that demand high levels of meritorious and ethical action or non-action on the part of the individual, situating spiritual authority within the *individual* (as opposed to the Brahmanic priest or ritual technician).[48] Bronkhorst and others hold that these notions were only later absorbed by Brahmanical culture and Vedic spiritual scripture.

> There can be no doubt that the early Jaina and Brahmanical texts...describe forms of asceticism which are based on some shared assumptions. These assumptions were not part of the Brahmanical heritage. No, they should be considered as having been current in the spiritual culture of Greater Magadha, before they came to exert an influence on texts that present themselves as belonging to the Brahmanical tradition.[49]

Cross influences, especially between groups within the so-called *śramaṇa* movement (like the Jains, the Buddhists and even those responsible for the series of compositions included within certain Upaniṣads,

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[44] Bronkhorst, 2007: 9. For further support of this view, see Dundas, 2004: 14, who notes that the eastern regions, which were where Mahāvīra and his contemporary, the Buddha, moved, were originally regarded by Vedic literature as marginalized and impure, as opposed to the westerly areas which represented the heartland of Vedic culture.
[45] Dasgupta (1969: 212) writes, "the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy as we now get it is a system in which are found all the results of Buddhism and Jainism in such a manner that it unites the doctrine of permanence of the Upaniṣads with the doctrine of momentariness of the Buddhists and the doctrine of relativism of the Jains." See also pp. 210-211.
[46] "The Jains, along with the Buddhists, accepted the ideas of *karma* and rebirth as representing facts of human experience, taken for granted in the earliest scriptures with no need being felt to justify their validity." Dundas, 2004: 15.
[47] See, for example, Bronkhorst, 2007: 24-29.
[48] Dundass, 2004: 16.
[49] Bronkhorst, 2007: 28-29.

such the *Bṛhadāranyaka* and *Chāndogya*, for example)[50] seem almost certain, each composer/sage aware of and to a certain extent, guided by the others' perspectives.[51] For the current purposes, it is enough to know that speculations, which align with many of classical Sāṃkhya's points of view, may have begun around one thousand years prior to its conception, and are locatable within the canons of different traditions, implying that its influencers were numerous and diverse. Though speaking specifically in terms of medical traditions, the following passage written by Zysk is well applied to the evolution of philosophical and religious traditions as well:

> Perhaps one should abandon the thought of a one-to-one transfer of ideas, and consider as futile any search for a single text or group of texts that could provide the missing link or "smoking gun", if you will, between the two medical traditions. Rather, one should consider the possibility that there could well have been a fruitful verbal and practical exchange of techniques and knowledge on the mitigation of suffering by means of healing, which took place between specialists in the medical arts.[52]

By abandoning the thought of a one-to-one transfer of ideas in the development of classical Sāṃkhya, considering instead that the system was more likely to have taken influence from the fruitful verbal and practical exchange of techniques and knowledge arriving from various sources, we are better equipped to interpret the Sk itself.

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[50] References to *śramaṇas* are found in post-vedic literature to describe those (often Jain and Buddhist monks) who practiced an ascetic, self-denying, lifestyle in pursuit of spiritual liberation. *Śramaṇas* are often classified as *ṛṣi* (spiritual seer) and are included textually as both connected with and in opposition to Vedic Brahmanism. See Olivelle, 1993: 11-15.

[51] See Dundas, 2004: 15.

[52] Zysk, 1998: viii.

III. An Evolutionary Perspective on the Sāṃkhyan Soul-Principle and Liberated Condition

Gerald J. Larson favors using classical Sāṃkhya as the common denominator from which to gauge the Sāṃkhystic nature of other sources, and through doing so, better understand classical Sāṃkhya's evolution. He discusses the history of Sāṃkhya in terms of stages of development, contending that pre-*kārikā* lines of speculation not only relate to but are indeed the *basis* of classical Sāṃkhya.[53] This approach makes sense, given that the Sk is what remains to represent a normative Sāṃkhya system. Larson begins with "Ancient Speculations" (ca. 900 BCE - Jainism and early Buddhism = ca. 500 BCE) where either words or concepts occur within the early Vedic hymns or the oldest Upaniṣads that resemble those found in the Sk. "Proto-Sāṃkhya Speculations" (ca. 400 BCE-300 CE) follow the "Ancient Speculations," and include the middle Upaniṣads, like the *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara*;[54] āyurvedic medical texts, namely the *Caraka Samhitā* and *Suśruta Samithā*; the *Buddhacarita*; and sections of the *Mahābhārata* epic, such as the *Mokṣadharma* and the *Bhagavadgitā*. Larson views these "Proto-Sāṃkhya Speculations" as the primary precursors to classical Sāṃkhya speculation, which came to maturation in the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, the *Yogasūtra* and their related commentaries.[55]

Richard Garbe, whose early scholarship on Sāṃkhya preceded that of Larson but remains eminent today, contended that Sāṃkhya as a system did not undergo "any remarkable alteration from the time of the definitive redaction of the *Mahābhārata...*and no important change could have taken place earlier."[56] Whether viewing pre-classical Sāṃkhyan sources as parts of a growing body of knowledge and an evolving presentation of transmission, or like Garbe, contending that no remarkable alteration occurred from early to classical Sāṃkhya, both perspectives strongly support the investigative method of looking towards pre-classical Sāṃkhyan sources, especially the *Mahābhārata* and other materials written around this period (such as the *Buddhacarita* and *Carakasaṃhitā*) as guides to better understanding the soteriology and conception of *puruṣa* in the Sk.[57] For, if (1) no remarkable change occurred between pre- and classical Sāṃkhya or alternatively (2) *puruṣa* of the Sk encapsulates a fusion or evolution of pre-classical soul conceptions, then either way, we should be able to make greater sense of *puruṣa* in the Sk based upon conceptions of the soul/*puruṣa* that were articulated by earlier sources.[58]

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[53] Larson, 1979: 133. Larson's discussion on these three stages of development occurs throughout chapter II of his book on classical Sāṃkhya.

[54] Johnston (1937) also includes the *Muṇḍaka, Praśna* and *Maitrī* Upaniṣads within this general grouping.

[55] Larson, 1979: 75.

[56] Garbe, quoted in Larson, 1979: 17.

[57] See also Johnston, 1937: 41-65.

[58] See also Larson (1979: 196, footnote 95) referencing Keith.

Thus, with the guiding assumption that classical Sāṃkhya's notion of *puruṣa* was influenced by the respective soul theories adumbrated by earlier texts, I will proceed by underscoring some of the most noteworthy conceptions of the soul and soteriological features found within the "ancient speculations" of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (BU). Subsequently, I will examine in greater depth the soul-theories and important soteriological features within some "proto-Sāṃkhyan" sources. Altogether, this section and the section that follows intend to demonstrate the long-standing sense in which the term being used to describe the soul within texts related to Sāṃkhya has encapsulated different dimensions of oneself, and, that the soul principle itself was invariably defined using multiple terms.[59] Knowing this, we should not disregard the possibility that the term *puruṣa* within the Sk may have also encapsulated more than one conception of selfhood. This section should also have the effect of making evident how fine of a distinction, if any, has been forged historically between the transmigrating subtle body and the 'empirical soul,' which begins to explain why the Sk seems on different occasions to conflate *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga* (i.e., the empirical, to-be-liberated soul) with the subtle body (*liṅga*). Such an apparent conflation comes across especially in *kārikā* 18, wherein *puruṣa* is defined as multiple based on characteristics that, in every sense, could be equally applied to the *liṅga*. Also of interest is the recurrent explanation of the liberated condition in terms of what it is *not*, and/or in terms of its constituting an underlying absoluteness, or unity.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad

The messages contained within the BU are disparate, exposing the text as one belonging to a period of speculative transition, in which the ideas and customs current to the earlier Vedic periods were being replaced or enhanced by new currents of thought. As its name suggests, the *Bṛhad* (Great) *Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is considered both an 'Āraṇyaka' as well as an 'Upaniṣad.' Of the Upaniṣadic literature, the BU is thought by Patrick Olivelle to be "the oldest and most important part."[60] In keeping with older sections of the *Veda*, the BU makes extensive use of homologies to describe cosmological and individual structures, or simply to describe the sameness underlying two conditionally distinct phenomena. The BU markedly diverges from the hymns of its Vedic predecessors, in part, through the soteriological claim that liberation requires one's realization of one's true nature. *Puruṣa* is mostly conceived in terms of psychological processes and is not identical with the *ātman* or *jīva ātman*.[61] The term "*ātman*" is regularly

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[59] Johnston expands upon precisely this point between pages 41-65 in his 1937 essay.

[60] Olivelle, 2008: 3. The dating of early and middle Vedic literature is ca. 1500–800 BC, while the early and middle Upaniṣads are dated ca. 500 BC–200 CE. The BU is found at the end of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* of the *White Yajurveda*.

[61] Johnston, 1937: 47.

interchanged between describing one's body and the part of one that is everlasting, the "innermost thing."[62] Brian Black explains that by the time of the Upaniṣads, the term *ātman* had a wide range of meanings, including breath, spirit, body, life-force, consciousness, essence, nature, and ultimate reality.[63] At certain points in the BU, the spiritual teacher Yājñavalkya, describes *ātman* as that which exists outside of subject-object duality:

> For when there is a duality of some kind, then the one can see the other, the one can smell the other, the one can taste the other, the one can greet the other, the one can hear the other, the one can think of the other, the one can touch the other, and the one can perceive the other. When, however, the Whole has become one's very self (*ātman*), then who is there for one to see and by what means...by what means can one perceive him by means of whom one perceives this whole world?[64]

 Yajñavalkya subsequently proceeds to one of his most notable teachings, which explains the liberated state through "the rule of substitution," or "neti neti" (not——, not ——). Appearing on four different occasions, the rule of substitution is central to the text's soteriology.[65] In striking resemblance to classical Sāṃkhya, liberative knowledge is achieved by assessing oneself in terms of what one is *not* rather than by what one is. Although the four passages that include the rule of substitution may once have belonged to separate texts, the fact that they appear together in the BU strengthens their meaning, emphasizing that the essential nature of oneself is beyond articulation and intelligibility.

> About this self (*ātman*), one can only say "not—, not —." He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped. He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound...[66]

 However, *ātman* in the BU is also characterized as active and dynamic, called by Yajñavalkya, the "inner controller" (*antaryāmin*) which is distinct from, yet the controller of perceptual content and capacities. **3**.7.23 characterizes the *ātman* as "the agent or actor behind all sensing and cognizing."[67]

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[62] BU, **I**.4.8.
[63] Black, 2012: 11-12.
[64] **4**.5.15, Olivelle trans., 2008: 71.
[65] See BU **2**.3.6, **3**.9.26, **4**.2.4, **4**.4.22.
[66] **4**.5.15, Olivelle trans., 2008: 71.
[67] Black, 2012: 15.

This self (*ātman*) of yours who is present within but is different from the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth and who controls the earth from within — he is the inner controller, the immortal.[68]

As with certain references to *puruṣa* in classical Sāṃkhya,[69] the BU's qualification of the 'self' as the inner controller generates an ambiguity about the nature of one's innermost nature as an active participant in experience, or as absolutely 'not —.' One interpretive option is to understand that the *ātman* referred to as the controller is only referred to as such whilst being described in relation, i.e., relative to, the perceptual capacities and contents, as in **3**.7.3- **3**.7.23; whilst employing the "rule of substitution," the *ātman* is being presented as absolute. In the two different conceptions of the *ātman*, we are provided with two different pedagogical approaches towards self-realization. One facilitates our understanding of how the self operates by regarding the self in relation to a variety of psycho-physical faculties. The other instructs non-identification at any level, even insofar as the innermost part of oneself is concerned, which is more representative of the uncharacterizable liberated condition itself. It could be that the BU broaches this line of thinking of two different self-conceptions (or 'not —' conceptions) already in **2**.3.1-6, where *brahman* — indicating ultimate selfhood — is conceived of as a dual reality, the "real behind the real."

There are, indeed, two visible appearances (*rūpa*) of *brahman* — the one has a fixed shape, and the other is without a fixed shape; the one is mortal, and the other is immortal; the one is stationary and the other is in motion; the one is Sat, and the other is Tyam...Here, then, is the rule of substitution: 'not —, not —', for there is nothing beyond this 'not'. And this is the name — 'the real behind the real', for the real consists of the vital functions, is the real behind the vital functions.[70]

Surendranath Dasgupta mentions that the BU describes *brahman* as *asat* (non-being), incomprehensible through experience, yet also as 'being,' "for the universe subsists by him."[71] Unwilling to confine the nature of ultimate reality by defining it in affirmative terms, the composers of the BU would have found the description of *brahman* or *ātman* as the inner controller to be suitable only when applied to the conception of the self that relates to empirical reality, that is, in relation to the psycho-physical faculties.[72] This seems to be a part of the pedagogical approach of classical Sāṃkhya as well, and could account for

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[68] BU **3**.7.3.
[69] Gp's commentary on stanza 17, quoting the *Ṣaṣṭitantra:* "Primal matter moves forward when controlled by the subject."
[70] See **2**.3.1-6.
[71] Dasgupta, 1969: 44-45.
[72] Black, 2012: 13.

why the Sk goes through such a great length of explicating all of the faculties comprising human experience: *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga* is understood and even evidenced (as the *ātman* is in the BU) through psycho-physical criteria, and is also within the same context considered the inner controller of these faculties.[73]

It is also worth noting the convergent metaphorical images of transmigration employed by the BU and the Sk commentator, Gauḍapāda (Gp). The BU writes of the *ātman*,

> As a caterpillar, when it comes to the tip of a blade of grass, reaches out to a new foothold and draws itself onto it, so the self (*ātman*), after it has knocked down this body and rendered it unconscious, reaches out to a new foot hold and draws itself onto it.[74]

The following passage continues in the same vein, using the metaphor of a weaver who reuses the same yarn to recraft it into a newer and more attractive design. In a way similar to the BU's description of the transmigrating *ātman*, *kārikā* 42 and Gp describe the subtle body (*liṅga*). 42 explains that the *liṅga* is like an actor, who persists due to cause and effect. Gp adds, that as an actor changes his costume, so too does the subtle body change its external form from one birth to the next. The transmigrating entity is, in **4**.4.3 of the BU, *ātman*, while in the Sk, it is the *liṅga*. It has already been noted that the BU applies different meanings to the term *ātman*, and it is not clear from the above passage if the meaning in this case is what the Sk would consider the *liṅga*, or simply the "self" (*puruṣa*) that is relative to the conditions of *prakṛti*. Part of the Sk's motivation seems to have been overcoming what could have been perceived as internal doctrinal discrepancies found in older texts, specifically in the meanings of the terms *ātman*, *puruṣa, jña, jīva ātman*, etc., which are all present within the BU, and which together account for the psyche, the principle of life or animation, the transmigrating entity, the individual soul, the cosmic soul, and a principle that fuses all of these different aspects of selfhood together.[75] The Sk may have attempted to increase doctrinal consistency by distinguishing the *liṅga* from *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga*, and by using the term *puruṣa* to denote both the to-be-liberated and ever-liberated soul. Yet, the descriptive overlap we find between the Sk's *liṅga* and *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga*, remains.

Those authoring the BU evidently felt at liberty to define the persisting, innermost core of oneself in terms of its empirical situation, that *can* be defined by psycho-physical conditions, and its liberated

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[73] See Gp on *kārikā* 17, who includes the passage from the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* stating that primal matter moves forward when controlled by the Subject.

[74] Olivelle trans., BU, **4**.4.3

[75] See Johnston's discussion on early conception of selfhood in 1937: 52.

situation, that can only be defined in terms of what it is *not*. That at least some of the different terms and thus their associated meanings eventually became fused into one unitary conception of the soul (*puruṣa*) by the time of the Sk seems likely. *Puruṣa* of the Sk is considered as 1.) forming a part of experience, holding the purpose of liberation, and as associated with characteristics that are relative to *prakṛti*, and 2.) as liberated, condition-less, or in the words of the BU, "neti neti."[76]

The *Mahābhārata, Mokṣadharma*

It has been postulated that, prior to the appearance of the Sk around the fourth or fifth century CE, there were around eighteen schools of Sāṃkhya, demonstrating that a common current of 'Sāṃkhyistic' thought found expression in different forms from early times.[77] The presence of a variety of teachings on Sāṃkhya becomes especially pronounced within the *Mahābhārata* (ca. 400 BCE–400 CE). This ancient Indian epic accounts for the major portion of materials that Larson would call "Proto-Sāṃkhya Speculations," or what Larson and others have called the *basis* of classical Sāṃkhya.[78] I have chosen to focus here on Mbh book 12 — *Śānti-parva* — within the *Mokṣadharma* section,[79] specifically the notions of the soul, or *puruṣa*, contained therein.

As with the other texts that have been and will continue to be discussed within the present and subsequent chapter, the Mbh changes the name of the soul depending upon the context in which it is being described. Take, for example, the following passage of the *Mokṣadharma*:

> Ultimately this form of the soul [the *kṣetrajña*] goes out past the whole system of the Generative Matrix (prakṛti) to the Nārāyaṇātman, which is beyond prakṛti and all the pairs of oppositions (12.290.91). Here the Nārāyaṇātman is the paramātman, where the soul lodges permanently (12.290.91-92)...The kṣetrajña is capable of the cognition of entities within prakṛti, but once beyond prakṛti, having entered into the one being beyond prakṛti and beyond all distinctions, there is no longer anything of which to be cognizant.[80]

This passage expresses a simultaneous equivalence and distinction being made between the human and Supreme Soul. The soul is described in the spatiotemporal terms, "once beyond" and "having entered

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[76] As in *kārikās* 64 and 68, or as in BU **2**.3.1-6, for example.
[77] Takakusu, 1932: 49.
[78] Larson, 1979: 17. "*Any* formula of metaphysical truth, provided that *knowledge* thereof was conceived to tend towards salvation, might be called "Sāṃkhya"" Edgerton, 1924: 7-8.
[79] The *Mokṣadharma* section includes chapters 168-359 of book 12 (*Śānti-parva*) within the Mbh critical edition.
[80] Fitzgerald, 2007: 23-24, my square brackets.

into" to emphasize its changed yet unchanged status, and pronounced by different terms to reflect this. Fitzgerald writes that he sees as "a play upon the regular bifurcation of "ātman" between a higher, purer form (ātman unqualified, paramātman, sūkṣma ātman here at 289.40, 49) and the lower form that is qualified and, in some sense, embodied (bhūtātman, dehin, often)".[81] Johnston articulates a similar explanation when he writes:

> ...In general, the Mbh uses *ātman* for the cosmic soul, and the *ksetrajña*, when it is associated with it and is not merely a synonym for *puruṣa*, denotes not so much the individual soul as that portion of the cosmic soul that is attached to the individual.[82]

In my own understanding, conceptions and names that refer to some aspect of selfhood are distinguished by the set of conditions through which the conception is derived, rather than by changes occurring to the soul-principle itself. The world view, or "Sāṃkhya knowledge" articulated throughout the epic includes, on one hand, a conception of the soul that is bound and individual, the subject of an impermanent human experience. On the other hand, it includes the liberated soul, or the soul that cannot be characterized by any condition whatsoever, including the condition of plurality. This is emphasized in the following passage:

> The wise who are skilled in Sankhya and Yoga and seek the highest perceive the 25th (the soul) after Material Nature and its qualities (11361). "Unity is the imperishable; plurality is the perishable" (*ekatvam akṣaraṁ, nānātvaṁ kṣaram*; 11364); that is, the world of plurality is (not unreal, or false, but) finite, and rests on the basis of a greater, more fundamental unity, which is not finite but eternal. "When, standing upon (== rising superior to) the twenty-five (principles, including soul as well as material nature; *pañcaviṅśatiniṣṭha*) he (the soul) moves forward in the straight and clear way (*samyak pravartate*), then he sees unity and no plurality (literally, unity is his view and plurality is not-[his-] view; 11365)."[83]

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[81] Fitzgerald, 2007: 19.

[82] Johnston, 1937: 54-55.

[83] Edgerton, 1924: 20. See Mbh critical edition, **12**.293, 46-50: *etannidarśanaṃ samyagasamyaganudarśanam | budhyamānāprabuddhābhyāṃ pṛthakpṛthagariṃdama || 46 || paraspareṇaitaduktaṃ kṣarākṣaranidarśanam | ekatvamakṣaraṃ prāhurnānātvaṃ kṣaramucyate || 47 || pañcaviṃśatiniṣṭho'yaṃ yadāsamyakpravartate | ekatvaṃ darśanaṃ cāsya nānātvaṃ cāpyadarśanam || 48 || tattvanistattvayoretatpṛthageva nidarśanam | pañcaviṃśatisargaṃ tu tattvamāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ || 49 || nistattvaṃ pañcaviṃśasya paramāhurnidarśanam | vargasya vargamācāraṃ tattvaṃ tattvātsanātanam || 50 ||*

Experience, which is not conceived of as unreal, shows us that "we" (each of us being *puruṣa*) are multiple, and that we (as a multiplicity of *puruṣa*s) are finite. The above excerpts from the Mbh provided by Edgerton inform us that the perception of a plurality of subjects, though real insofar as one's experience is concerned, is also finite. The finite world of plurality, including the perceived plurality of witnessing subjects, is considered as resting upon a fundamental, eternal, unity. Such understanding is attained when the individual consciousness (i.e., the soul as one of the 25 principles) is "standing upon" or "rising superior to" itself as the 25th principle of the conglomeration of the person.

This theme is reinforced by many subsequent passages.

> 11393: Now I will explain the Sankhya-knowledge. This is made to include knowledge of the evolvents of *Prakṛti* (11394-7) and how they devolve back again into the unmanifest *Prakṛti*, which is therefore "unity in dissolution, plurality when it is creative" (11398-11400). The Soul (*mahān ātmā*, 11403) is the overseer, *adhiṣṭhātar* (11401, 4) or the *kṣetrajña* (11405-6) of *Prakṛti*, the *kṣetra*; it is called *puruṣa* when it enters into the evolvents of the unmanifest, *avyakta* = (the unitary, unevolved) *prakṛti* (11405); it is also called the 25th principle. Those who have knowledge distinguish soul from *Prakṛti*, material nature (11406). "Knowledge (*jñāna*) and the object of knowledge (*jñeya*) are two different things; knowledge is the unmanifest (=*prakṛti*), the object of knowledge is the 25th (the soul)."[84]

The above set of passages taken from the *Mokṣadharma* section of the Mbh provide descriptions of *puruṣa* and liberation that may be foreshadowing the conceptions of a to-be-liberated versus liberated *puruṣa* that occur within the Sk.[85] In the above passages, the *kṣetrajña*, the overseer of *prakṛti*, is said to be given the name "*puruṣa*" upon its incorporation with the "evolvents of the unmanifest." In other words, *puruṣa* is the condition of the soul within the context of human experience. Although the soul-principle in the Sk is simply named *puruṣa*, and is regarded theoretically in stark opposition to *prakṛti*, its function throughout the *kārikā*s is as the subject *of prakṛti*. Whether we call the *puruṣa* an "evolvent of the unmanifest" (as in the Mbh) or an unmanifest element that conjoins with creative *prakṛti* (as in the Sk) what remains consistent is that *puruṣa*, both in the Mbh and the Sk, whose purpose is liberation, functions as an essential element of the conglomeration that comprises the person.[86] This element's very existence

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[84] Edgerton, 1924: 12-13. Here Edgerton is citing and summarizing different chapters from the *Mokṣadharma*., that are included throughout chapter **12**.168-359 of the critical edition.

[85] Larson (1979: 28) also notes that the *Mokṣdharma* (a proto-classical Sāṃkhya treatise) includes a double notion of *puruṣa* as individual and cosmic. "When occasionally reference is made to a twenty-sixth principle, this is meant simply as an indication of the released *puruṣa* in contrast to the bound *puruṣa*."

[86] See *kārikā*s 17, 42 and 60, all of which include that the purpose is of the Subject.

is based on its being that which the conglomeration serves, and the subject of experience.[87] What the above cited passages make clear, is that this description of *puruṣa* — the soul within the context of human experience — is considered plural, but that the conception of plurality is a perishable one, resting on a greater, more fundamental unity.[88] These two conceptions are not spelled out within the Sk, but do appear more subtly, as will be shown within chapter five of the present thesis. The Mbh does not approach the definition of the liberated condition in quite the same fashion as the BU or *kārikā*s 64 and 68 (that is, through negative terms only, indicating what the liberated state is *not*) opting rather for defining this condition as a fundamental unity. Though different, both conceptions of the liberated condition are of use pedagogically, and both resoundingly differ from the conception of the liberated state as one of a plurality of separate souls. The Sk refined the name of the soul into "*puruṣa*," doing away with terms such as *kṣetrajña, mahān ātmā*, or *adhiṣṭhātar*, yet the nature of *puruṣa* of the Sk as relative to *prakṛti* (that is to say, as an individual to-be-liberated *puruṣa*) persists. Such an understanding of *puruṣa* as the individual soul that associates with the evolvents of *prakṛti* but that rests on a greater fundamental unity, as is found in the Mbh, may well have precipitated the nature of *puruṣa* and liberation put forth by the Sk.

The *Buddhacarita*

Despite the chronological difference between early Buddhist literature and the *Buddhacarita*, I have chosen to discuss Buddhism generally alongside the *Buddhacarita* specifically, mainly due to spatial limitations, but also because the *Buddhacarita* itself discusses ideas from the perspectives of both the Buddhists and the Sāṃkhyans.[89] A famous Sanskrit poem composed by Ashvaghoṣa, the *Buddhacarita* possesses many characteristics which make clear that the author of the text was well aware of some early Sāṃkhya doctrine.[90] The doctrine of Sāṃkhya within the *Buddhacarita* transmitted by the spiritual teacher Ārāḍa Kālāma, is of interest to the present thesis for its comprehensive explanations of a pre-*kārikā* Sāmkhya current of thought. Like the BU, the exposition in the *Buddhacarita* of Ārāḍa Kālāma's version of Sāṃkhya includes a soul-conception that is inclusive of the soul's being individual and empirical (microcosmic) and absolute (macrocosmic). Stephen A. Kent contends that the terms *ātman* and *kṣetrajña* have both individual and cosmic significance and that the text makes the distinction between *ātman* and *kṣetrajña* by usually regarding *ātman* as the "cosmic soul" and *kṣetrajña* as "that

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[87] See *kārikā*s 17-21.
[88] See also Radhakrishnan, 1927: 252.
[89] Early Buddhist literature is dated from ca. 400 BC onwards, while the *Buddhacarita* is dated ca. first or second century CE. Another mention of Kapila occurs in the *Buddhacarita* by Arāḍa Kālāma, who teaches a form of Sāṃkhya, which maintains that liberation occurs through self-knowledge. Ārāḍa (or Āḷāra) Kālāma is first mentioned in the Pāli Canon, and later in the *Buddhacarita*.
[90] One can find a clear summarization of these characteristics in Jakubczak, 2012: 34-36.

portion of the cosmic soul that is attached to the individual."[91] What's more, he suggests that these two different conceptions of the soul — that which is empirical, and that which is not — is reflected in classical Sāṃkhya:

> Furthermore, the unknowing *ātman* and the knowing *kṣetrajña* are reflected in the classical doctrines of the deluded *puruṣa* 'apparently' entangled in matter and the witnessing *puruṣa* conscious of its separate nature from it. The descriptions of the supreme Absolute in *Buddhacarita* xii 65 ("without attribute, everlasting and immutable") resemble those of *puruṣa* in *Sāṃkhyakarika* XIX (possessed of isolation or freedom, inactive, and indifferent). Finally, the similarity between the individual *kṣetrajña* and the individual *puruṣa*s is striking.[92]

In the Sk, the *puruṣa* that is described as being entangled with *prakṛti* is so only (and is by virtue of being) under the condition of *saṃyoga.* In the *Buddhacarita,* the name applied to the individual "inner self" (*ātman*) that experiences a similar entanglement prior to liberation is *ajña*, and the context in which entanglement occurs is *saṃsāra*.[93] A multiplicity of *puruṣa*s is not mentioned in the *Buddhacarita*, but rather, a plurality of embodied selves (*śarīrinām*). The condition of the liberated soul within the Sk and *Buddhacarita* is also similar. *Kārikā* 68 defines the condition of liberation as being the cessation of *pradhāna* (*prakṛti*) leaving no condition or characteristic through which the soul-principle can be defined. The Yd commentary complements this *kārikā* by synonymizing this state with the Buddhist term for liberation, "*nirvāṇa*," along with "the highest *Brahman*," which is unchangeable and pure.[94] The *Buddhacarita* (xii 65) also calls the liberated *kṣetrajña* "that supreme Absolute (*paramam brahma*) without attribute, everlasting, and immutable."[95] Finally, writes Kent, "the supreme Absolute is not to be taken as a cosmic being but rather as a cosmic condition of *mokṣa*."[96]

The critical arguments of the Buddha-to-be against the Sāṃkhya seer Ārāḍa Kālāma appear in *Buddhacarita* **12**.69-88. The Bodhisattva challenges such conceptions, pointing out that the very nature of a field *knower*, necessitates that there be a *field to be known*, and finds that this orientation towards a *field* "precludes the knower of the field from ever being released permanently from it."[97] Rather, liberation

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[91] Kent (1982: 269) following E.H. Johnston's distinction of these two terms in the Mbh (1937: 54-55). This is also in keeping with Larson (1979: 123). As with the previous texts mentioned, the *Buddhacarita* speaks of the soul-principle in terms of its different aspects (or subtle conceptual nuances) through the application of varied nomenclature, (*kṣetrajña*, *puruṣa* and *ātman*, etc.).

[92] Kent, 1982: 270.

[93] Kent, 1982: 269,-273.

[94] *Yuktidīpikā* on *kārikā* 68.

[95] Kent, 1982: 269.

[96] Kent, 1982: 270.

[97] Kent, 1982: 271, speaking to *Buddhacarita* xii 79-80.

requires an "abandonment of everything," including the sense in which a 'knower' even exists.[98] An obvious response to this advice of the Bodhisattva is the question, if no 'knower' exists, why do the Buddhists go on talking about freedom? Or in other words, what exactly is it that becomes liberated? This question is pertinent to the current study, which is, at least in part, considering this same question in relation to the Sk. Well known is the philosophical presupposition in Buddhism that denies the presence of an abiding, persisting soul, (Skt., *anātman*); yet the soteriological goal continues to be liberation (Skt., *nirvāṇa*; Pāli, *nibbāna*). This ambiguity around *what* precisely is liberated in Buddhism is, however, not dissimilar to the ambiguity we encounter regarding this same question in the Sk, whose doctrine wavers between liberation belonging to *puruṣa*, *pradhāna* or the subtle body (the latter two both falling under the domain of *prakṛti*). One possible interpretation of the Buddha's perspective, provided by Marzenna Jakubczak, is that the Buddha's denial of the self could have been from the perspective of nature, *prakṛti* (i.e., nothing pertaining to *prakṛti* is eternal) rather than the denial the soul's existence as such.[99] This coincides with what Karl Potter identifies to be the Buddhists' reply to the question of what becomes free as "a flux of discrete momentary flashes of energy [which] nevertheless has a kind of identity through time insofar as it manifests a pattern, like a wave in the ocean," and his definition of freedom according to the Buddhists as being "the laying bare of this pure consciousness, in which state it is unsullied by the particular manifestations of consciousness which characterize the waking or dream states."[100] What Potter identifies as that which becomes liberated ("a flux of discrete momentary flashes of energy") is comparable to *prakṛti*, while that which he defines as "a laying down of pure consciousness" could be likened to the liberated condition of *puruṣa.* The following revelation is provided by *kārikā* 62:

> Therefore nobody transmigrates, is bound and liberated. What transmigrates, is bound and liberated is primal matter with its various bases.[101]

Gp's commentary remarks that this *kārikā* reveals the "truth" about the subject (*puruṣa*) implying that what was said about *puruṣa* previously (its being bound, or unliberated) is not the complete truth. If we accept this, we have no reason not to accept that the previous conception of *puruṣa* as bound or in need of liberation, could not instead represent something that stands more in line with the Buddhist notion of selfhood that has yet to be laid bare as pure consciousness, or something that is itself slightly *more* than pure consciousness. Rather than strongly promoting some sort of ontological truth that vehemently denied the existence of the soul, the Buddha's teachings appear to be responses to the spiritual schools he encountered, including Sāṃkhya, whose emphasis on the ontological existence of the soul or subject

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[98] *Buddhacarita*, xii 82.
[99] Jakubczak, 2012: 45.
[100] Potter, 1991: 138.
[101] Trans., Maas, 2021.

likely went against what the Buddha found as pedagogically advantageous for one's liberation.[102] For, when examined critically, classical Sāṃkhya's notion of *puruṣa* within *saṃyoga* (which is described as the subject, whose purpose is experience and liberation, the possessor of *prakṛti,* and by certain commentarial English translations, as the "empirical soul") strongly resembles the mind and empirical consciousness that are found in the Buddhist notion of mind-consciousness (Skt., *manovijñāna*) or the consciousness that is dependent upon an object.[103]

Another compelling reason for the Buddha's *anattā* doctrine and his opposition to the Sāṃkhya teachings provided by Ārāḍa Kālāma in the *Buddhacarita* was undoubtedly due to the Buddha's soteriological pedagogy that did not dwell upon ontological metaphysics but rather prioritized personal experience, thus making the liberative directions of any teacher inadequate at a certain point. The Buddha is often described as advising his listeners to question alleged truths, including those which are provided by experts, including one's own teacher. "Only direct knowledge grounded in one's *own* experience can be called upon and accepted as certain teaching, only if, however, one is able to demonstrate to oneself that it is skillful, blameless, praiseworthy and conductive to liberation."[104] Yet, the prioritization of personal experience is also maintained by classical Sāṃkhya, and some important soteriological methods of the Buddhists and the Sāṃkhyans – which are in themselves experientially based – share strong affinities. The starting point of both systems is with the acknowledgement that suffering and rebirth are facts of human existence. Both contend that freedom from suffering requires knowledge of suffering's origin, and that one must take responsibility for generating the particular set of conditions that are conducive to its end.[105] According to the Buddhists, such conditions require the diminishment of the cause (*hetu*) of *karman* through the removal of *rāga* (passion), *dveṣa* (hatred, enmity) and *moha* (ignorance, as delusion of mind) the first two of which are occasionally called by Aśvaghosa within the *Buddhacarita*, *rajas.*[106] Likewise, in the Sk, the condition under which the ending of suffering and liberative knowledge occurs requires making the quality of *sattva* stronger, and those of *rajas* and *tamas* weaker, therefore enabling cognition to clearly discern consciousness from its non-conscious content.[107] For both, the presence of such conditions enables meditative practice centering around the condition-less state, expressed by the Sk in the following stanza:

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[102] Black, 2012: 20-21.
[103] Potter, 1991: 138-139.
[104] Jakubczak, 2012: 39.
[105] Dasgupta, 1969: 85-89.
[106]Kent, 1982: 262.
[107] See *kārikā* 37 alongside the Yd commentary, as well as *kārikā*s 40, 42-46.

Thus, from the assiduous practice of that-ness, the knowledge arises that 'I am not,' 'not mine,' 'not I'; which [knowledge], being free of delusion, is complete, pure, and singular.[108]

Many Buddhist sources include the very similar refrain, 'not mine, I am not, this is not myself.'[109] This teaching, considered to be the Buddha's teaching of the "not-self," is intended to explain how one should confront everything passing through one's awareness, including awareness itself, in order to comprehend the real nature of things.

In keeping with the current theme, which has so far sought to bring better understanding to *puruṣa* and the liberated condition in the Sk from an historical evolutionary perspective, I will now look more closely at the *Śārīrasthāna* of āyurveda's *Carakasaṃhitā*, and the conceptions of the soul and liberation contained therein. The eclectic blending of traditions and views revolving around the soul that are embraced by Śār make it a worthy candidate for this study, given that *puruṣa* of the Sk is likely to have adapted various ancient soul-theories to suit its stylistic requirements and soteriological enterprise. The following section will position āyurveda and the CS in premodern South Asia's religious and intellectual history, before looking at Śār's soteriology and comparing its conception of *puruṣa*, the soul-principle and liberation with those of classical Sāṃkhya.

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[108] Trans., Burley, 2007.

[109] Pāli, *n'etam mama n'eso'ham asmi n'eso me attā ti*. See *Anattālakkhaṇa Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 22.59), *Mahāpurṇṇama Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 109), and *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 22.26-7).

IV. Conceptions of Selfhood within Āyurveda's *Carakasaṃhitā*: *Śārīrasthāna* [110]

The term 'āyus' (of *āyur*-veda) stands for the combination of the body, sense organs, mind and soul, and its synonyms are *dhāri* (the one that prevents the body from decay), *jīvita* (which keeps [the body] alive), *nityaga* (which serves as a permanent substratum of this body) and *anubandha* (which transmigrates from one body to another). [111]

For many, āyurveda is understood to be eternal (*śāśvata*) and of divine status, having emerged from the creator God, *Brahmā*. [112] Commonly characterized as an *upāṅga* ("supplementary portion"), or as an *upaveda* ("supplementary Veda") the āyurveda has been deemed a fifth Veda, and within the CS, is declared to be the most sacred and honored Veda, "as it is beneficial to mankind in respect of both the worlds (i.e., this life and the life beyond)." [113] The exalted status afforded to āyurveda, and its close association with the Vedas, reflects the attitude taken towards virtually all systems of authoritative knowledge (*śāstra*) in South Asia, which is that the information or insight as such is perfect, or beyond any need for improvement. [114] A critical look at the historical development of āyurveda places it in a somewhat different light. Wujastyk projects that the system of āyurveda, in a recognizable form, most likely arose around the time of the Buddha (ca. 450 BCE) and began to be codified from that time forward. [115] The CS was compiled over several centuries, starting from as early as the third century CE, marking it as the earliest foundational work of āyurveda. Meulenbeld dates the CS, along with the Sāṃkhya found within Śār, around 100 BCE - 200 CE, the same period as the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* text that Īśvarakṛṣṇa claims to have summarized in the Sk. [116] Agniveśa, the illustrious disciple of the semi-legendary Ātreya Punarvasu, is credited with the authorship of the *Agniveśa-tantra*, the original treatise that a certain Caraka is said to have revised (*pratisaṃskṛta*) to such an extent, that it was renamed the "Compendium of Caraka," or the *Carakasaṃhitā*. [117] Written in a mixture of verse and prose, the

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[110] All subsequent citations that appear with a roman numeral and number will be specifying the chapter and passage number from Śār, specifically to the English translation by Sharma and Dash (2020 ed.) unless otherwise noted.

[111] *Sūtrasthāna* **I**.42. Dominik Wujastyk (2003: 31) defines āyurveda as "the knowledge for long life."

[112] See Cakrapāṇidatta on *Sūtrasthāna* **I**.4 and *Sūtrasthāna* **30**.27.

[113] *Sūtrasthāna* **I**.43.

[114] Maas, 2018: 12.

[115] Wujastyk, 2003: xvi.

[116] Larson (2014: 53) tentatively places the date of the CS even earlier, at 300-200 BCE. For Meulenbeld's dating of the CS, see 1999: 14, and for its association with the *Ṣaṣṭitantra,* see Meulenbeld, 1999: 112.

[117] The mention of Caraka as the revisor of an earlier text appears for the first time in Dṛḍhabala's redaction, which is the source of current texts. Meulenbeld places the date of Dṛḍhabala's revision at ca. 300-500 CE (1999: 141). Since the supposed final redaction by Dṛḍhabala, the CS has continued to experience certain degrees of evolution due to scribal and editorial changes of ancient manuscripts. See Maas, 2010.

compendium is presented as a dialogue between the teacher Ātreya and his disciple Agniveśa, the former providing detailed answers in response to inquiries made by the latter. What has survived into the modern era is generally understood to be the *Agniveśa-tantra*, with a considerable revision and addition made by Caraka and a final redaction by Dṛḍhabala. The name "Dṛḍhabala" does not appear in the chapter-endings of Śār, suggesting that the Śār probably formed a part of the compendium prior to Dṛḍhabala's redaction.[118]

 According to Zysk, the original āyurvedists were *śramaṇa*-physicians, and were themselves philosophers, seeking answers to the question of how to end suffering from a naturalistic perspective:

> ...that these *śramaṇa*-physicians were philosophers concerning mankind discloses the philosophical orientation of medicine that required a materialist or naturalist perspective. Human beings, according to the ancient āyurvedic physicians, were the epitome of nature. Proper understanding of nature (i.e., *svabhāvavāda*) required above all profound knowledge of the human species, and Indian medical theoreticians placed paramount emphasis on direct observation as the proper means to know everything about humankind.[119]

It should not come as a surprise then, that Indian medicine, which required knowledge of the relationship between the human being and its environment, possessed an inherently philosophical orientation, which led to theories about the purpose of life and the causes of life's afflictions.[120]

The Philosophical Orientation of *Śārīrasthāna*

To a greater or lesser extent, all topics within the CS are informed by a larger teleology and intellectual environment. One's health is considered as rudimentary to one's pursuit of liberation: "Good health stands at the very root of virtuous acts, acquirement of wealth, gratification of desire and final

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Other early references to the name as a medical authority include the Bower Manuscript (6th century CE) and a Chinese translation of a Sanskrit work called *Saṃyuktaratnapiṭakasūtra* (5th century CE) that associates a physician named Caraka with King Kaniṣka of the Kushan empire (ca. 100-150 CE). See Wujastyk, 2003: 3-4. Caraka may also have referred to a wandering group of individuals well versed in the healing arts. See Meulenbeld (1999: 9). In this same vein, Zysk suggests that that the CS treatise might refer to "The Compilation [of Medical Knowledge] of the Wanderers [i.e., the *śramaṇas*]" (1991: 44).

[118] Dṛḍhabala claims at the end of *Cikististhāna* and *Siddhisthāna* to have contributed seventeen chapters of the sixth section (*Cikisitasthāna*) and all of the seventh and eighth sections, called *Kalpasthāna* and *Siddhisthāna*. See Hoernle, 1907: 39-40.

[119] Zysk, 1991: 38. The strong connection between the medical arts and *śramaṇas* is evidenced clearly by the accounts of Greek historian named Megasthenes (fl. 300 BCE). Zysk believes *śramaṇa* sects to have been common from the 6th century BCE (p. 27).

[120] Zysk, 1991: 38. See also Larson, 1987: 247-248.

emancipation."[121] Philosophical speculations spread throughout the CS appear to be purposefully included so as to increase one's chances of attaining a state of increased well-being; conversely, advocated therapeutic and lifestyle practices are themselves rooted in certain ontological and soteriological notions. Śār does not commit itself to any specific philosophical school. Rather, the positions maintained come across as independent, and partially eclectic, "a mosaic of elements derived from diverse schools of thought."[122] Zysk and others have demonstrated that classical āyurveda owes much to Buddhist healers and the faithful record keeping maintained within the Buddhist monastery.

> Through a careful study of medical material in the Buddhist Pāli records, a clear picture of Buddhist monastic medicine emerges and, when compared with the relevant sections of the classical medical treatises of the *Caraka*, *Bhela* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, provides a deeper understanding of the common storehouse of *śramaṇa* medicine from which the Buddhists and compilers of the early medical treatises derived their respective medical data.[123]

An obvious reference to technical vocabulary taken directly from Buddhist sources, are the terms *sukha* and *duḥkha*, which are applied at various points in the CS in the framing of health and disease.[124] Buddhist spiritual notions also play a key role in the soteriology of Śār. Wujastyk considers Śār to include an early "yogic tract," which "contains several references to Buddhist meditation and a previously unknown eightfold path leading to the recollection or mindfulness that is the key to liberation."[125] Of equal undeniability is the presence of various other philosophies of the times, including Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya, Upaniṣadic monism and Sāṃkhya philosophy.[126] If the chronological positioning of Śār is accepted as falling somewhere between the last centuries BCE and the first centuries CE, then the philosophical positions may be seen as providing insight into a formative period of Indian philosophy, connecting the period of the Upaniṣads to that of the classical *darśanas*.[127]

The stylistic contrast, yet undeniable family resemblance of Sāṃkhyan heritage shared between Śār and the Sk set the two especially well poised for comparison. We learn from both Śār and the Sk that one's

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[121] *Sūtrasthāna* **I.**15. These are what are often cited as the four 'goals of human life' (*puruṣārthas*): *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa.*

[122] Meulenbeld, 1999: 113-14.

[123] Zysk, 1991: 96.

[124] Robertson, 2017: 841. Also noteworthy is that the three humors are not known to the vedic corpus, but rather appear in the Pāli canon in the sermons called the "Connected Sayings" (*Saṃyutta Nikāya*). The factors that the Buddha lists as the causes of disease are the three humors (bile, phlegm, wind); the pathological combination of the humors, changes of the seasons, the stress of unusual activities, external agency, and the ripening of bad karma. See Wujastyk, 2011: 32.

[125] Wujastyk, 2012: 31.

[126] See Robertson, 2017: 837, 842, 851, etc.

[127] Hellwig, 2009: 19.

individual sense of experience, and hence one's identification as an individuated, conscious subject, results from the association of two ontologically distinct principles, namely, the source of consciousness, and the source of all manifest (*vyakta*) and unmanifest (*avyakta*) conditions of experience. The Sk names the former as *puruṣa*, and the latter *prakṛti*; within Śār, the same principles are identified by the same, and different terms, but are more broadly construed as *kṣetrajña*, "the knower of the field," and *kṣetra*, "the field." The ontological schemes share much in common,[128] and require the dismantling of any preconceived dichotomy between mind and body, and between mind-body and the spiritual principle. One must conceive of the 'mental' faculties not as exclusively intellectual, and the 'spiritual' principle not as external but rather, both as forming parts of the embodied experience, and therefore, to accept that all elements composing the conglomeration of the person, eternal and impermanent, hold soteriological value.

I approached Śār with the hypothesis that, despite certain textual inconsistencies, a more representative picture of the soul could be drawn through the inclusion of chapters one through five, rather than examining any one chapter in isolation.[129] This way of reading the philosophical positions and motivations provided by the text has proved fruitful; each chapter conjoins synergistically with the others, and individually offers a unique layer of insight into what we can call Śār's overall vision of the *guṇas*,[130] the soul, soteric practice, and transmigration. My understanding of Śār's conception of selfhood and its soteriology, thus, diverges somewhat from interpretations that have addressed these themes in chapter one alone.[131] Read together, chapters I-V of Śār offer a fairly comprehensive and complete ontological and soteriological exposition, which includes: information about the nature of being; the causes of happiness and suffering; a doctrine of transmigration; and the methods for achieving freedom from rebirth.[132] The following sections seek to determine what can be known about the theories of selfhood spread throughout Śār I-V.

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[128] See Śār's ontological scheme (from **I**.63-66) paraphrased by Hellwig, 1957: 214.

[129] There are, in total, eight chapters within *Śārīrasthāna*. I have left aside chapters VI-VIII, as these chapters cover almost exclusively topics on anatomy, physiology and therapeutics, especially in relation to reproduction, birth and postpartum care. Any specific ontological or soteriological information included in these later chapters appears to be reiterative of ideas already developed within chapters I-V.

[130] *Guṇa*, lit. 'strand,' is usually translated as 'quality.' Śār primarily represents the *guṇas* as qualifying the different types of mental faculties and objects of the senses (see for instance Śār **III**.13 and **IV**.34-40). Similarly, in classical Sāṃkhya, the three *guṇas* stand for or qualities or constituents of *prakṛti.*

[131] Dasgupta (1969: 213-217), Larson (1979: 104), and Hellwig (2009: 27-69) all base their interpretations of Śār off chapter one only. Hellwig (p. 27) highlights the fact that scholarly studies, even in connection with this first chapter alone, have not reached a consensus regarding its philosophical orientation.

[132] I have included English translations made by Sharma and Dash (2020 ed.) and P.V. Sharma (2008 ed.) but prioritize the translations and commentaries of Śār I, made by Oliver Hellwig (2009) and Dominik Wujastyk (2011) and of Śār I and V by Robertson (2017). Robertson does not provide a full translation of Śār V as Hellwig has provided for Śār I.

Preliminary Remarks on *Puruṣa, Śārīrarsthāna* I

The first chapter within Śār begins by specifying the different constituents from which the human being is composed and the factors inherent to, specifically human, experience. By explicating the derivation of one's experience or existence, the introduction to Śār enables one to theoretically differentiate between the transient aspects and eternal aspect of oneself. Śār commences with an introduction to *puruṣa* (translated by P.V Sharma as the "personal self" and by Sharma and Dash as the "empirical soul") which is provided by the preceptor Ātreya Punarvasu in response to the multifarious queries put forth by his disciple Agniveśa.[133] The meanings of *puruṣa* according to Punarvasu are provided as [134]

> 1.1) The five elements (*dhātu*) in combination with *cetanā* ("consciousness") are called *puruṣa*.
>
> 1.2) The *cetanā*-element alone is called *puruṣa*.
>
> 1.3) *Puruṣa* consists of the 24 elements (*dhātu*): *manas*, ten faculties (*indriya*), [five] sense objects, and the eightfold *prakṛti.*

These definitions of *puruṣa* placed at the beginning of Śār I are invaluable, as they, by virtue of their being multiple, inform us of the multidimensional connotation that the term holds, even within the single chapter that the definitions introduce. The fact that one, clear-cut definition of *puruṣa* is not provided also adds a degree of confusion. For example, passages transition seamlessly between referencing *puruṣa* as *the combination* of the 24 elements, and as *distinct from,* yet *associated with* the other elements, creating a scenario where either 24 or 25 overall categories are specified, or in which *puruṣa* could signify the entire conglomeration of the person, or the soul-element alone.[135] However, if one considers the different accounts of *puruṣa* that are presented throughout Śār, what appears to be a striking definitional inconsistency in the chapter's opening remarks, may instead be seen as a broad representation of selfhood. In other words, these initial definitions of *puruṣa* may attest to three situational backdrops of oneself, representing different modes of being, that the same core personality, or essence, pervades.[136]

The most famous of the CS's commentators, Cakrapāṇi (11th cent. CE) makes two implications that could otherwise come across as contradictory. "The term *puruṣa* implies the Empirical Self (Empirical Soul) as distinct from the twenty-four elements. *Puruṣa* represents the element of consciousness, i.e., the

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[133] Agniveśa, throughout his inquisition, also refers to the empirical soul as the "knower" and "witness."

[134] The following translations of Śār **I**.1-1.3 are provided by Hellwig, 2009.

[135] For example: "The combination of the above mentioned 24 elements is known as *Puruṣa"* (**I**.35). "The contact of *Puruṣa* with 24 elements continues so long as..." (**I**.36). "It is in this combination of 24 elements which is known as *Puruṣa...*" (**I**.37-38). Sharma and Dash translation.

[136] Robertson (2017: 844) considers the fashion in which these three definitions are placed together by Caraka as "innovative" and an attempt "to synthesize these otherwise competing philosophical viewpoints."

'soul,' different from the body."[137] On the other hand, he compares the *puruṣa* to the totality of oneself which, like a tripod, cannot stand without all three of its supports. Without the entirety of the three-way conjunction that defines the *purusa*, "it is said that the world does not exist."[138] Oliver Hellwig and other more recent commentators have criticized Cakrapāṇi for his predominantly classical Sāṃkhyan gloss on Śār in general.[139] Hellwig also acknowledges, however, the dominantly Sāṃkhyan nature of these initial passages, as well as the chapter's overall identification of *puruṣa* with the embodied soul, as much as with the conglomeration of the person.[140] This makes sense given the empirically-oriented connotations afforded to the term *puruṣa* according to the pre-*kārikā* Sāṃkhyistic doctrines discussed so far (consider the *Mokṣadharma*, which explains that the soul is called *puruṣa* when it enters into the evolvents of the unmanifest, and that it is also called the 25th principle; or the BU, which primarily refers to *puruṣa* in terms of psychological processes). Later on, Śār, like in various sections of the Mbh, makes a distinction between the empirical soul, the transmigrating soul, and the liberated soul by calling the same essential soul by different names (*puruṣa, jīvātmān, nityapuruṣa, paramātman,* etc.). It should be acknowledged that, although the doctrine of classical Sāṃkhya consistently refers to the soul principle as '*puruṣa*' — as opposed to alternating the nomenclature to match the soul's conditional context — it does not propose such a different enterprise from its pre-classical predecessors: as proto-Sāṃkhyan texts make a distinction between the soul that is empirically bound versus absolute (or liberated) so too does the Sk include descriptions of the to-be-liberated *puruṣa* that is apparently entangled in matter; the witnessing *puruṣa*, which is conscious of but separate from it its unconscious content; and the liberated state itself (which is no longer described in terms of *puruṣa*, or as being the subject).

It is fair to say that the preliminary remarks on *puruṣa* provided by Śār I identify *puruṣa* as the subject of experience, that is, as an individuated complex of perspectival consciousness, aptly translated as the "empirical soul." This description is, in my opinion, more in keeping with the definitions placed at the beginning of the text and with the way *puruṣa* continues to be applied throughout Śār, than the definition of *puruṣa* as the "person" or the "embodied person," alone. To further elucidate Śār's conceptions of selfhood and later, how the idea of an individualized transmigrating subtle body interacts with Śār's soteriological practices, I will move forward to chapter V, which explains the person and the soul constituent itself in terms of the micro-macro homology.

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[137] CS, Sharma and Dash ed., p. 314, paraphrasing Cakrapāṇi's text. My rounded brackets.
[138] Excerpt from Cakrapāṇi, on **I**.1.46-47. See also **II**.31-37.
[139] See Hellwig, 2009: 28.
[140] For example, following his reading of **I**.63-66 on p. 38, Hellwig reinforces the idea of *puruṣa* being the term used to designate not the "embodied person" alone, but rather the imperceptible "knower of the field."

Puruṣa and the Micro-Macro Homology, *Śārīrarsthāna* V

 Chapter five, like chapter one, endeavors to reveal the fundamental nature of reality and what it considers the best means of liberation. The two chapters arrive at complementary conclusions through different pedagogical approaches. In chapter one, an existential map of the person is laid; chapter five closes any remaining metaphysical gaps by homologizing the person with the universe.[141] Knowledge of the individual can be attained through the observation of external material/phenomena, and likewise, external material/ phenomena can be understood through the observation of the individual.

> An individual is an epitome of the universe, as all the material and spiritual phenomena of the universe are present in the individual, and all those present in the individual are also contained in the universe.[142]

Robertson translates the key phrase in Śār V, *puruso 'yam lokasaṃmitaḥ,* as: "this person is the same measure as the world."[143] He stresses that *puruṣa,* rather than being delimited by contours of the physical body, must be treated in the broader sense of a "phenomenal whole," which is to say,

> ...by the horizons of his subjective, sensory experience — all of which is especially well expressed by Ayurveda's functional concerns for "harmonious conjunction" (*samāyoga*) and various kinds of "appropriateness" (*sātmya*) that provide the technical basis for manipulating the highly individualized nature of the person's relation to the world.[144]

While *puruṣa* of the Sk would be better defined as phenomenal consciousness rather than as a phenomenal whole, treating *puruṣa* as the subject of sensory experience, due to "harmonious conjunction" is precisely the context in which *puruṣa* of the Sk finds itself. Śār's individual-universe homology, which underlies its soteriological notions as well as medical advice, is not actively promoted within the Sk, yet is regularly assumed at the level of the *pañca mahābhūtas* (five great elements) and the *guṇas.* Indeed, it would be more surprising if homologies of some form were *not* assumed within the Sk. Such a perspective assumes that through inference, knowledge of one constituent or phenomenon permits one's comprehension of this element's or phenomenon's nature, no matter the scale. Conceiving of the

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[141] Passages comparing the individual to the universe are common throughout the CS. Chapter five is unique in that its focus is on forming homologies between the material and spiritual phenomena pertaining to the individual, with the material and spiritual phenomena pertaining to the universe, specifically for the purpose of providing liberative insight.
[142] V.3, Translation by Sharma and Dash.
[143] Robertson, 2017: 839-841.
[144] Robertson, 2017: 840.

five elements through the paradigm of homology is fairly straight forward: the elements' presence is undeniable environmentally and observable within the biological features and processes of the human organism as well. For example, mass and structural aspects of the body are of the same nature as the solidity of the earth; bodily fluids and moisture evidence the presence of water; heat, or any sort of energy-requiring process, is ascribable to the element of transformation, the fire element.[145] Air moves through our bodies, as well as the atmosphere. According to Śār, an individual's psychological disposition, as well as the effectual propensity behind virtually any content external to the individual, are comprised of the same *guṇas* in varying proportions. As with the elements, the scale to which the *guṇa* is applied changes, however the *guṇa* itself does not. Śār asserts that by knowing empirically the scalability of "material phenomena," one may apply the same sort of scalability to so-called "spiritual phenomena," namely, to the soul. By cosmicizing the person, Śār sees through the contrariety of the *guṇas* and the soul and into their commonality, this being their compresence and scalability. Generating a uniformity around the person and the universe also establishes the underlying presupposition that *brahman*, the liberated condition, is the macrocosm of the microcosmic individual soul.[146] Śār describes *brahman* as the attainment of the Eternal, Immutable, Tranquil and Indestructible, offering as synonyms 'liberation' (*śānti*) 'immortality' (*amṛta*) 'immutability' (*avyaya*) 'the state of extinction of all miseries' (*nirvāṇa*) and 'absolute tranquility (*praśama*), i.e., salvation.[147] The Absolute Soul is "only one," with no source of origin, omnipresent and ubiquitous, impersonal, and inaccessible by any sign, symptom, or sensation. In this sense, the individual soul, though conceived of as capable of viewing the world from a particular perspective, multiple and the undergoer of experience, is, in itself, ever liberated, of the same essence as *brahman.*[148]

Homologizing the soul in this way creates a uniformity between the two conceptions of the soul, opening otherwise closed ontological or epistemological borders. The liberated condition is free from subject-object relativity, implying a breaking through from one way of knowing— as the subject knows its object, or the knower (*kṣetrajña*) knows its field (*kṣetra*)— and into another that can only be conceived of as transcendence, or that cannot be characterized at all.[149]

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[145] For a list of more equivalences between the elements and the human body, see **IV**.12.

[146] Ātreya uses the term "*sāmānya*" to explain the correspondences between the person and the world. See again Robertson, 2017: 848.

[147] See **V**.23-24.

[148] "*Pṛthivī* constitutes the form of man, *jala*, moisture, *tejas*, heat; *vāyu,* elan vital; *ākāśa*, all the porous parts; and *Brahman* the Internal Soul" (**V**.5).

[149] "It is not possible even to characterize the liberated Soul. For he has no contact whatsoever with mental or other sense faculties. So, being detached of all sensory contacts he is considered to be a liberated Soul" (**V**.22).

Transmigration and the Psychic Continuum

Inextricably tied to understanding the totality of *puruṣa* — the individuated complex of perspectival consciousness, that is intertwined with its perceptible contents — is the concept of rebirth, and the acceptance of an immortal transmigrating body that carries psychosomatic impressions, or seeds of experience, from one life to the next. Only through perceptive experiences can impressions be gathered, and can transmigration proceed.[150]

> Being guided by the associated past actions, the Soul who travels with the help of the mind, transmigrates from one body to another along with the four subtle *bhūtas*... [151]

The cessation of the transmigrating body that flows between lives, animating one physical form after another, and therefore the cessation of the full spectrum of joys and miseries that accompany life, occurs only when the soteriological goal of Śār has been accomplished, this being the individual soul's self-realization, and the resignation of perspectival consciousness and its corporeal constituents (the "empirical soul") altogether. Paradoxically, the experience from which the soul must disidentify and effectively be removed, is also the context in which the instruments for such removal —the appropriate physical body endowed with sensory and action capacities — are provided, and the purpose of the soul may be fulfilled. According to Śār, transmigration functions as the link between one's life experience and a sort-of spiritual evolution: the *karmic* fabric woven through the body-mind within one life presents the base from which subsequent threads are added or subtracted. One's psychic disposition is not lost upon one's death, but in another form, reborn. The, *puruṣa/bhūtātman* is endowed with the power of perception and sensation, and is obstructed by ignorance, craving and aversion.[152] Personal desires/aversions/sensations/impressions all belong to the animated physical body composed of the elements and more significantly still, to the subtle transmigrating body which, as the depository of impressions, faces an indefinite number of rebirths. The soul constituent within the physical and

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[150] The perceptual faculty is impaired due to the presence of two vitiating factors, *tamas* and *rajas,* whose influence occurs, via psychophysical sensation. *Tamas* and *rajas* are responsible for perpetuating the cycle of rebirth, representing all that is unvirtuous and *adharmic*, contrary to that which is *sattvic* (virtuous, or *dharmic*). They are conceived of as the basis of psychosomatic impressions (*karman*) inhibiting the soteriological aim of *puruṣa*. See, for example, **I.**36, 67-69, 101-108; **III.**13; **IV.**36.

[151] **II.**31. *Akāśa* (space) does not transmigrate (p. 361).

[152] See **I.**45, 53-55.

transmigrating body is therefore conceived of as perspectival and plural, relative to an indeterminable number of conditions.

> The self (i.e., soul) though omnipresent, when it puts on a body becomes restricted to his own tactile sense organ. That is why he is incapable of perceiving all senses and those pertaining to all bodies.[153]

CP makes a similar comment on **I**.18-19: "Unlike the soul who is omnipresent and ubiquitous, the mind is atomic and only one in nature. If it were not so, all kinds of perceptions would have occurred at the same time." As already noted, the imagery of changing bodies between reincarnations is also employed by the BU (**4**.4.3) and Sk 42 alongside the commentary by Gp. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (**II**.22) also provides the analogy of a person giving up old garments that are no longer of use to illustrate how the soul, too, gives up old bodies in exchange for new ones. In each case, the essentially unchanged soul is depicted figuratively as "putting on a body" in order to clearly illustrate that the soul is conceptualized as both relative and unrelative to the body-mind. Just as a person can put on a costume and assume the role that the costume represents, so too can the soul "put on a body," and effectively *be* the body-mind experiencer, the empirical soul, or the embodied person. Having ceased to identify with its capacities and with sensation — or figuratively speaking, upon the soul's removal of the physical and subtle bodies — the empirical soul ceases to exist (**I**.154-155). Naked, free from any sign (*aliṅga*) or state (*bhāva*), the soul can no longer be described as relative to the person, and is instead considered absolute.

To summarize, Śār I-V describes selfhood from within two overarching categories: the first is associated with an individualized body-mind, and the second is separate from any association, "free from contacts," and in this latter sense, liberated.[154] These two main conceptions are reinforced by the textual nomenclature itself, spanning across chapters I-V. The different names afforded to the soul-principle throughout Śār does not signify a literal cut and divide of the soul out of the highest principle into fractionated parts that are disconnected in an ultimate sense. Rather, addressing the soul by different titles appears to be, at least in part, intentional, the different titles helping to expose the enigmatic shifts in context or the distinct set of conditions of "the field" in which the core of oneself is situated. The first conception of the soul is relative to the field of experience, constituting a part of the person or subtle body that generates or holds *karman.* When associated with the living, breathing person, the soul generally

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[153] **I**.79.

[154] To contrast these different conceptions of selfhood, P.V Sharma's edition uses the terms 'Personal Self' versus 'Supreme Self,' while Sharma and Dash translates these same principles as the 'Empirical Soul' versus the 'Supreme Soul' or 'Absolute Soul.'

assumes the name *puruṣa* or *bhūtātman*, and is also referred to as *rāśipuruṣa* or *jña* (mainly in chapter **I**). The nature ascribed to *puruṣa*, the empirical soul, besides consciousness, is perceptivity. That is, when defined as *puruṣa*, etc., the implication must be that this core of oneself is capable of perception and that it is as good as fused with the perceptive capacities and contents.[155] Whilst referring to the soul as a constituent of the transmigrating body, the names *ātman*, *jīvātman*, "animated soul," or *antarātman* and *garbhātman*, "soul in the fetus," are used instead (mainly in chapters **II-IV**. See specifically **III**.1-8). Though provided with different names, the transmigrating soul fits into the first main conception of the soul alongside the soul that forms a part of the psychophysical body: the soul that transmigrates is also relative to the experiential field, being bound to the mind by impressions formed through perceptual activity. The second conception of the soul, translated as the 'Absolute Soul' throughout Sharma and Dash, is in Sanskrit called *nitya-, nityatva-,* or *anādi-puruṣa* (that is, *puruṣa* with a prefix that qualifies the *puruṣa* as "eternal") or more frequently, *paramātman* and *brahman*.[156]

> The released bhūtātman is disconnected from all states and becomes brahman. He can be neither perceived nor thought about by the non-knower (ajña) because he lacks [external] signs.[157]

The following section of the current thesis will present the liberative methods spread throughout chapters one through five of Śār. Examining the liberative methods of these chapters is important both to demonstrate that these methods are by and large in keeping with proto-Sāṃkhya and classical Sāṃkhya schools, especially their empirical nature, which demands the soul be considered in terms that are relative to one's life experience.

Liberative Methods in *Śārīrasthāna*: Cultivating a *Sattvic* Mode of Experience

"Indeed, the good or bad state of an existing object is [according to an āyurvedist] a function solely of its use, overuse, underuse, or wrong use. Things are in good or bad states depending on the usage which is appropriate to them."[158] This view does not deny that objects possess qualities that harbor ramifications, but insists that the resultant ramification, the good or the bad of it, lies in the *way* in which it is used, meaning the way the mental domain comes to associate with the object/action. Right utilization, or

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[155] See **I**.35-37-38; 53, 56-58.
[156] Terms used to describe the absolute soul are mainly found in chapters I and V. See specifically **I**.53, 59, 155, etc., and **V**.22-24.
[157] **I**.155. Hellwig, 2009. I have replaced his translation of *ajña* as "uninitiated" with "non-knower." See also Johnston (1937: 49-50) who discusses the term *bhūtātman,* sharing that different instances within the CS could refer to the term *bhūtātman* as **"***jīva* alone or for *jīva* with those parts of the body that transmigrate, but in the last case it appears to denote the individual soul."
[158] Wujastyk, 2003: 69-70. My square brackets.

association, is subject to the way in which the sense faculties engage with sensory contents, and the state of mind in which such contact occurs. Understanding the field of experience to be potentially wholesome or unwholesome — beneficial or detrimental — empowers one to form a relationship with reality that is purpose-driven and meaningful.

To a certain extent, virtually everything *can* be beneficial, depending on the needs and motivations of the subject. If the goal is liberative insight and the non-accumulation of consequence-bearing impressions, certain types of mind-states and associations are in this case unwholesome, and counterproductive. Paramount to our comprehension of Śār's soteriology, is first understanding its notion of the *guṇa*s. The *guṇa*s not only determine *how* one perceives, but *that* one perceives, making perception possible precisely because they are constitutive of everything that is perceptible. Mentally, the *guṇa*s act as transmutable lenses. Depending on the *guṇa* that is dominant in any given moment will vary how one perceives, and the impression that is formed.

> The objects of senses are of three types, viz *sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa.* The mind dominated by any of the above-mentioned attributes in one life follows in the subsequent life as well...All of them occur in the same man but all of them are not manifested at the same time. An individual is said to belong to that particular type of mind by which he is dominated.[159]

All perceptible content, including mental content, is related via the *guṇa*s. Or, returning to **V**.3, all the material and spiritual phenomena of the universe is present in the individual, and all that is present in the individual is also contained in the universe. Apparent differences occur due to varying proportions and combinations of the same core ingredients, whose overall effect determines one's quality of experience. The vitiating essential qualities are called *rajas* and *tamas*, while the quality representing purity is called *sattva*.[160] The domination of *sattva* in either the mental domain, or in the effectual propensity of the object or action, will influence how sensory content is perceived in one way; *rajas* will exert another influence, and *tamas,* another still. Transforming one's quality of experience into one that is conducive to the soul's self-realization requires recombining and re-proportioning the *guṇa*s in the microcosmic, sphere of the individuated body-mind, to the extent that *sattva* is dominant. This is, in part, achieved by associating with experiential contents of the macrocosmic sphere that are also predominantly *sattvic*.

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[159] **III**.13.
[160] **IV**.32, 36 and others also use *sattva* in place of "psyche." This is the case in both the Sharma and Dash, and P.V Sharma editions.

Mental faculty is of three types - *sāttvika*, *rājasa*, or *tāmasa*. The *sāttvika* one is free from defects as it is endowed with auspiciousness. The *rājas* type is defective because it promotes (agitated) disposition. The *tāmasa* one is similarly defective because it suffers from ignorance. Each of the three types of mental faculty is in fact of innumerable variety by permutation and combination of the various factors relating to the body, species, and mutual interactions.[161]

Each *guṇa* is self-reinforcing. A mental faculty dominated by one type increases the likeliness for actions or engagements with objects possessing the same effectual propensity to occur. This engagement produces a sensation of the same type, which in turn reinforces the same type of mental quality, be this *dharmic*/*sattvic*/pure, *rajasic or tamasic* types. The list of psychological shortcomings-derangements due to *rajas* and *tamas* are extensive.[162] In sum, they are responsible for "intellectual error"— the incapacity to interpret what is beneficial versus harmful, or to comprehend the true nature of the soul.[163] Misery persists so long as one identifies with the contents of experience, a misidentification that is perpetuated by what Śār calls *upadhā* or *tṛṣṇā*: the "thirst" of desire/passion/allurement.[164]

Happiness and miseries bring about [allurement][165] in the form of likes and dislikes respectively. Then again this allurement is responsible for happiness and miseries. It is allurement which gathers factors, which serve as substrata for happiness and misery...[166]

Allurement in the guise of craving or aversion initiates mental patterns and actions characteristic of *rajas* or *tamas* (overindulgence of any sort, loss of modesty, selfishness, fear, anger, ignorance, and lack of patience for example).[167] These give rise to happiness or misery in the mental faculty in conjunction with any assortment of sensory receptors spread throughout the body.[168] The cycle begins again, with happiness or misery leading to further allurement, which reinforces intellectual error, and hence confusion about the nature of oneself and the experience one is having. To break free from this cycle, the sensations

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[161] **IV**.36. I have exchanged "wrathful" for "agitated."

[162] **IV**.36-40 describe the various features of different types of *sāttvika*, *rājasa*, and *tāmasa* psyches, objects and actions in detail.

[163] For more on intellectual error caused by *rajas* and *tamas*, see **I**.99-108.

[164] **I**.134-135, etc. The English translations of Sharma and Dash ed., P.V Sharma ed., as well as from Hellwig, 2009: 42. desire/passion/allurement.

[165] I have substituted P.V. Sharmaʹs use of the word "desire" for "allurement," as it seems to more accurately convey the sentiment being described within this context. See P.V. Sharma **I**.134-135.

[166] P.V. Sharma, **I**.134.

[167] See **I**.97 and CP commentary on **I**.102-108.

[168] Paraphrase of **I**.134-136.

generated by any association must be accompanied by equanimous observation. Sharma and Dash translate identification as "a *feeling* of ownership" with the contents of experience, and state that this feeling is incongruous with real (salvific) knowledge.[169] It would follow then that the sense of non-ownership *is* congruous with salvific knowledge. This supposition is supported by **I**.68-69, which read:

> Impelled by *rajas* and *tamas*, he (the *puruṣa*) becomes manifest (*vyaktatāṃ yāti*) and unmanifest again (*avyaktatāṃ yāti*). Only a person who abstains from dualism (*dvandvasakti*) and selfishness (*ahaṃkāra*) is able to escape this circle.[170]

Regarding this passage, Hellwig notes that the "dualism" of craving and aversion from which one must abstain (*dvandvasakti)* is in the felt rather than theoretical sense. The types of associations required for fulfilling the soteriological mission of Śār may be regarded, then, as those which foster a *sattvic*/pure mode of experience, where the mind-body complex is suffused with a sense of equanimity, rather than attachment or allurement.

> *Mokṣa* or salvation is nothing but an absolute detachment of all contacts by virtue of the absence of *rajas* and *tamas* in the mind and [the ending of] effects of potent past actions (*karman)*. This is a state after which there is no more physical or mental contact.[171]

The importance of the nexus drawn between mind and body throughout Śār cannot be overstated, nor can the role of sensations, forged through experience, in the entanglement or liberation of the soul. All elements composing the conglomeration of the person hold soteriological purpose, because every association that one entertains invariably involves mental-physical sensation, wherein, *rajas* and *tamas* may be eliminated, and *sattva* or purity may be cultivated, by means of transforming the sensation of dualism (craving and aversion) into one of equanimity. Converting *rajasic* or *tamasic* associations into *sattvic* ones, especially as the association relates to a felt experience, may reasonably be held as the primary soteriological method of Śār.[172] One must increase *sattva* by engaging with objects and behaviors

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[169] See **I**.152-153, my italics.
[170] Hellwig, 2009: 39.
[171] **I**.142. This soteriological method aligns with that of Sk stanzas 43-45.
[172] **I**. 36-38: "The connection (*saṃyoga*) [between the 24 principles and the transcendental *puruṣa*?] is endless if [the *puruṣa*] is influenced by *rajas* and *tamas*. It is terminated by the increase in sattva. *karman*, the result [of *karman*],

that hold *sattvic* effectual propensities, while avoiding those of *rajas* and *tamas*.[173] The following soteriological methods advocated by the CS are facilitated by this "primary method's" employment. In other words, the elimination of *rajas* and *tamas* is inherent to or implied by each soteriological method included in Śār.

Liberative Methods in *Śārīrasthāna*: Yoga, Recollection and 'The Rule of Substitution'

I.150-151 explain that yoga and "recollection" lead to liberation. Previously, in 137-141, Śār defines yoga as "the means of obtaining release from positive and negative sensations," which is attained by 1.) "terminating the connections between *ātman*, faculties, *manas*, and objects," and 2.) "concentration of a pure *sattva* (= manas (?); *shuddhasattvasamādhānāt*)."[174] The concentration being referred to is a state in which both types of sensations (craving and aversion) disappear, and where one's mental faculty of awareness disidentifies with the sense organs, capacities and objects of the senses, being instead absorbed in consciousness itself. In such a state of pure awareness, one has attained *mokṣa*, which leads to the final eradication of sensations, including the sense of consciousness being "one's own."[175]

> Yoga and the remembrance of truth/principles lead to liberation...Everything that is caused and transient is suffering. As soon as the "knower" (*jña*; = *ātman*?)[176] understands the difference between himself and the transient phenomena, he is released (*ativṛt*).[177]

Culminating in passages **I**.143-151, recollection of the truth/principles (*tattvasmṛti*) is conveyed throughout Śār chapter one as the means of achieving liberation, or alternatively said, as the means of releasing one from suffering.[178] Here we learn that "positive characteristics" (characteristics that are conducive to liberation, i.e., the quality of *sattva*) are caused by the "recollection of truth/principles" (*tattvasmṛti*) and that this recollection is in turn based on moral (*sattvic*) behavior. By remembering the nature of phenomena (*smṛtvā svabhāvaṃ bhāvānām*) one is released from suffering. **I**.150-151 reads:

> The power of recollecting the truth (*tattva*) is the one path of liberation, the one that is revealed by liberated people. Those who have gone by it have not returned again. Yogins call this

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knowledge, emotions, etc., are based on this connection (*atra*, 37). True knowledge of this connection is relevant for medical treatment and helps to clarify one's position in *saṃsāra*." Hellwig, 2009: 34.

[173] **I**.143-146, **V**.11-12.

[174] Quoted phrases are from Hellwig, 2009: 43.

[175] Hellwig suggests that strophe 142 could be connected with PYŚ 2.25 or similar statements in the Mbh, in which the separation that leads to salvation is seen to occur between the "owner" (*svāmin*) and "owned" (*sva*).

[176] The term *jña* occurs in Sk 2, where it appears to be a synonym for *puruṣa*,

[177] **I**.150-153, from Hellwig 2009: 45.

[178] Verse **I**.147 and others identify the final goal of "recollection" with freedom from suffering.

the way of yoga. Those *sāṃkhyas* who have reckoned the *dharmas* and those who are liberated
call it the way of liberation.[179]

Wujastyk explains that the Sanskrit *smṛti-upasthāna* corresponds to the Pāli compound word
satī-paṭṭhāna, which is the Buddhist meditational practice leading to mindfulness.[180] *Tattva-smṛter*
upasthānāt may be best translated as "abiding in the memory of reality," and as Wujastyk explains,
implies a deepening of "one's experiential awareness of the present moment."[181] Mindfulness, or
experiential awareness of the present moment, is the practice from which all of the acclaimed *siddhis* and
moral behaviors are said to arise; conversely, partaking in virtuous behavior (the liberative conditions,
listed in 143-144) leads to recollection.[182] Wujastyk concludes that Caraka's "yoga tract" must have been
adapted from very ancient ascetic materials, which are mainly known to us from Buddhism[183] (and as
I.15o-151 evidence, was also the method of liberation proposed by the Sāṃkhyans of the day.)

> For Caraka, it is recollection that leads to yoga, and yoga that leads to the acquisition of
> supernatural powers and to ultimate liberation. The language and conceptualization of this
> passage in the medical literature places it squarely within the tradition of the Buddhist
> mindfulness meditation (Pāli *satipaṭṭhāna*), often practiced today under the name
> *vipassanā***.** [184]

The following passage goes on to explain that one's remembrance of the true nature of things (i.e., the
"truth principles") is the same as remembering that that which is transient is not one's true nature. **I**.152-
153 reads:

> Everything that has a cause is pain, not the self, and impermanent. For that is not manufactured
> by the self. And in that arises ownership, as long as the true realization has not arisen by which
> the knower, having known "I am not this, this is not mine," transcends everything.[185]

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[179] Translation by Wujastyk, 2001: 41. The Sharma and Dash translation reads, "metaphysical memory constitutes
the best way of liberation [as said by the] *yogins*, the virtuous ones, the followers of the Sāṃkhya system, and the
liberated ones." Passages such as this suggest that Edgerton's (1924) opinion, that a Sāṃkhya system did not exist
prior to the *kārikā*s, is not necessarily representative of the historical situation.
[180] Wujastyk, 2011: 34.
[181] Wujastyk, 2011: 35.
[182] See **I**.143-147. Caraka inverts the cause-effect relation in verse 147.
[183] Wujastyk, 2011: 35.
[184] Wujastyk, 2011: 34.
[185] Wujastyk, 2011: 41.

One is directly reminded of the BU's Yajñavalkya teaching, "neti neti," and the Buddhist refrain "not mine, I am not, this is not myself." This teaching also resonates with *kārikā* 64, in which the liberative knowledge is relayed as, 'I am not,' 'not mine,' 'not I'.

According to Śār, true knowledge (*satyā buddhirnaitadahaṃ*) of the difference between the eternal soul and impermanent constituents forming one's experience is the *sine qua non* of liberation. **I.**154-155 explain that the "empirical soul" — human, perspectival, or "corporal" consciousness — effectively becomes (or is self-realized as) transempirical; that which persists in one, simply *is*, beyond any empirical relation or detection implied by relative conditions. Śār's conception of liberation is the replacement of the empirical soul with the eternal soul, i.e., "*brahman*," or the supraconscious condition.[186] **I.**154-155 read:

> When this final renunciation exists, all pains and their causes, with consciousness, knowledge, and understanding, stop completely. After that, the corporeal self that has become *brahman* is not perceived. Having departed from all conditions, not a sign can be found. But an ignorant person cannot know this knowledge of those who understand *brahman*.[187]

These final passages convey that upon one's ultimate emancipation, the empirical faculties themselves no longer operate as experiential vehicles, and by association, the experiencer ceases to experience. The "Eternal, Immutable, Tranquil and Indestructible" transcendent, remains.

That Śār applies similar soteriological strategies and even textual wording to the Sk indicates that the borders separating the two traditions may be permeable. The extensive use of homologies throughout chapter five of Śār provides a window into the existential situation being described throughout Śār generally and, made amidst the notion of the *guṇa*s and the soul, into the rudimentary fabric undergirding Śār's soteriological practices of *dharma*, yogic concentration, and the cultivation of non-attachment.

Liberative Methods in *Śārīrasthāna*: The Micro-Macro Homology

Chapter one of Śār breaks down the conglomeration of 'the Person' into its composite parts, explaining the parts' respective services, thereby affirming the existential purpose of each. Outlining the individual in this way serves a soteriological function. Clearly differentiating (and thus allowing the reader to

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[186] Erich Frauwallner (1973: xxxiii) refers to the goal of Buddhist meditation also being "the superconscious condition...a condition which represents the last goal of a super-individual self-realization."
[187] Wujastyk, 2011: 42.

differentiate) between the eternal element versus non-eternal elements of oneself supports one's capacity to disidentify with or be less attached to the non-eternal aspects, and in such a spirit of non-attachment, capable of comprehending the truth, "I am not (this body), this (body) is not mine."[188] The method of chapter five is derived from its general theme of cosmicizing the person, which in so doing (or as a result) allows one to realize that detachment leads to happiness and ultimately to liberation.[189] Where chapter one directs one to realize the *difference* between the soul and the other constituents comprising the person, chapter five instructs one to perceive the *likeness* between the person and the universe. In other words, the prescription here continues to be the cultivation of non-attachment and the soul's self-identification, yet the pedagogy changes; rather than remembering what one is *not*, one is urged to remember what one *is*.

> Listen, Agnivesa! Seeing equally the Self (*ātman*) in the entire world and the entire world in the Self, the true intellect (*satyā buddhi*) arises. Indeed, seeing the entire world in the Self one becomes the Self alone, the author of pleasure and pain - it is not otherwise. Due to having the nature of action, the Self is constrained (*yukta*) by causes and the like. [However,] having known, 'I am the whole world,' the ancient wisdom that leads to emancipation is aroused. In this case, the word 'world' (*loka*) refers to that which depends upon the conjunction [of the six elements]; for every world is a combination of six elements due to [this underlying fact of] identity.[190]

"True knowledge" that arises from seeing equally the entire universe in oneself consists of realizing one's individual sense of consciousness to be the same as *brahman* — absolute, eternal, liberated, singular— and one's individual mental and physical constitution to be, like the outward environment, within the domain of the *guṇa*s, and thus in a state of perpetual flux. One cannot conceivably answer to any higher authority than oneself, because the highest authority of all *is* oneself. Being one's own highest authority, one is the controller of his or her actions and mental/felt states. Free from attachments and allurements, one is free of any causative factor that could generate further miseries.[191]

> The pure and true knowledge comes forth from the pure mind by which the *tamas* (darkness), very strong and consisting of great ignorance, is dispelled; one becomes free from desires by knowing the nature of all beings, yoga is accomplished and Sāṃkhya is attained; one does not

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[188] **I**.152-153, P.V Sharma edition.
[189] See **V**.8.
[190] **V**.6-7. Robertson, 2017: 849.
[191] See **V**.8.

get affected by ego, does not get attached to the cause (of miseries), does not hold anything rather renounces all; *Brahman*, the eternal, unchangeable, blissful, indestructible, is attained...[192]

Without admitting a consciousness element that is in touch with the perceptive faculties, all phenomena are inexplicable, or simply, could not exist. And, without accepting the condition of liberation to be absolutely free from contact with perceptual content or faculties, the idea of the empirical soul's liberation, and the invariable end of suffering that such liberation implies, would have little value. As will be brought out further in the following section, the same approach is taken by the Sk, which refers to the consciousness element (*puruṣa*) as being associated with the content and faculties of perception in *saṃyoga*, or whilst the state of suffering persists, only to deny this contact entirely upon the conscious entity's having realized "I do not exist, I do not possess, there is no 'I.'" The latter liberative practice or realization, which is accompanied by final liberation from rebirth and the suffering rebirth entails, requires the awareness of an individual, empirical consciousness, even if the role of such an awareness is to negate what it is.

The pedagogical device of homology, though not explicitly present in the Sk, also has the potential of forming a base from which to approach the 'to-be-liberated' and 'liberated' conception of *puruṣa* within classical Sāṃkhya. On my interpretation, the divergent conceptions of *puruṣa* in the Sk are also attempts to reveal on one hand, the soul constituent relative to a specific embodiment and transmigrating apparatus, and on the other hand, liberated, or unrelative. Read in this way, the Sk presupposes two conceptions of the soul, a homologous pair as it were, of the to-be-liberated and liberated soul, comparable to the multi-mode, micro-macro soul conception recounted by Śār. Śār creates an interface between soul references being relative to the individual on one hand, and absolute on the other, by considering the soul in terms of its "microcosmic" and "macrocosmic" dimension. Homologizing the two allows for a binary conception of the soul to occur, which may be either plural or singular, relative or absolute, without designating one conception as the "real" version of the two. Given that mutable phenomena — the field of experience — is validated by Śār (along with the Sk) as real, then the conception of the *puruṣa* in the Sk that associates with the mutable constituents of the individual person is also metaphysically real, so long as experience persists, or so long as *prakṛti* is held in a fixed enough form by individuating conditions. In other words, the empirical soul element of Śār (and as we will see, *puruṣa* of the Sk) effectively pertain to a microcosmic, experienceable, human dimension, while also holding a macrocosmic trans-empirical structure.

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[192] **V**.16-19.

How Pre-Classical Sources Can Contribute to Our Better Understanding of *Puruṣa* and Liberation in the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*

In each of the discussed pre-classical Sāṃkhya sources, we can see conceptions of the soul that may be precursors of *puruṣa* in classical Sāṃkhya. Johnston concludes,

> Assuming that Indian thought started originally from the standpoint of the existence firstly of a psyche, and secondly of a principle animating the body, we would expect one of the two entities gradually to absorb the functions of the other and develop into a unitary and independent soul, and in the main this did happen.[193]

There are discernable similarities between the pre-classical Sāṃkhya works and classical Sāṃkhya in many important respects, including: soteriological practices revolving around ethical codes and making the subtle discernment between what one *is* or what one is *not*; views on transmigration and rebirth that go hand in hand with the idea that suffering is an inevitability of life; and the notion of the liberated condition as being one of a transcendental absoluteness, or one that is beyond definability. This section has argued that, given these similarities, on top of the fact that the Sk claims to be summarizing a text written during a period that was fairly contemporary to other "proto-Sāṃkhya" works (especially the Śār) it is not unreasonable to assume that the conception of *puruṣa* and liberation in the Sk may share more in common with the conceptions of soul and liberation held by its predecessors than is often assumed. There are many reasons to suspect, based on the aforementioned soul-theories and no-soul theory, that *puruṣa* of the Sk is also conceived in terms of its being phenomenal consciousness, that is, a consciousness characterized by its involvement with the psycho-physical capacities and contents. and as such, plural. There is also good reason to suspect, based on the aforementioned conceptions of the liberated condition, that classical Sāṃkhya would have taken on the notion of this condition being one of absoluteness, or of "not —," a condition that is inherently exclusive of plurality, even the plurality of the soul (*puruṣa*). However, conceiving of *puruṣa* and liberation in the Sk from an evolutionary perspective is but one approach to the better understanding of each. Evidence to support the claim that liberation in the Sk is better conceived as an absoluteness (not relative to *prakṛti*) rather than as a multitude of disconnected souls, and that *puruṣa*'s multiplicity within *kārikā* 18 refers instead to *puruṣa*'s deluded/empirical/*saṃyoga* condition, can be based on other lines of reasoning, also. Moving forward, the following section will approach *puruṣa* and liberation of the Sk from a perspective that 1.) assumes a high

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[193] Johnston, 1937: 56.

level of textual coherency, 2.) acknowledges the text's soteriology as being empirically, teleologically and pedagogically based and 3.) frames *puruṣa* in light of the text's liberative methods.

V. Classical Sāṃkhya

India's classical period of philosophy is characterized by the rising of more clearly identifiable philosophical schools or 'ways of seeing' (Skt. *darśana*s) that are recorded in systematic treatises written in pithy though complex stanzas or aphorisms known as *kārikā*s or *sūtra*s, respectively.

> The systematic treatises were written in short and pregnant half-sentences (*sūtras*) which did not elaborate the subject in detail but served only to hold before the reader the lost threads of memory of elaborate disquisitions with which he was already thoroughly acquainted. It seems, therefore, that these pithy half sentences were like lecture hints. Intended for those who had had direct elaborate oral instructions on the subject. It is indeed difficult to guess from the sūtras the extent of their significance, or how far the discussions which they gave rise to in later days were originally intended by them.[194]

The different philosophical systems are routinely named in terms of their orthodoxy (*āstika-mata,* i.e., their acceptance of the Veda's authority), and heterodoxy (*nāstika*, i.e., their denial of the Veda's authority), the former including Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, and the latter including Buddhism, Jainism and the Cārvāka.[195] Differences between the various streams of thought circulating throughout ancient India were brought out historically through the vibrant tradition of philosophical debate, which demanded the steady refinement of any given philosophical position, so that the power of its logic and argument could triumph over those of the others and in so doing, receive wider spread support. As tempting as it is to try to clearly demarcate the above-named philosophical systems, or even their orthodoxy or heterodoxy (at least in the case of Sāṃkhya and Yoga) it is important while forming any interpretation of the classical *darśana*s to keep in mind that certain differences in convention may have occurred due to political pressures as much as to an ideological commitment, and also that many doctrinal overlaps of the pre-systematic philosophical era remain within the systematized philosophies, as well. Remember that the Sk is considered to be simply a summarization, or codification, of a more extensive source text (the *Ṣaṣṭitantra*). As was already mentioned, the dating of the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* and the Sāṃkhya of the CS is largely coincident, both belonging to a period that predated the establishment and codification of doctrines pertaining to the various *darśana*s, including Sāṃkhya *darśana*.[196] Though the simplification and style of the systematic treatises held many advantages, such advantages did not preclude their exegetical disadvantages, to which I will be drawing attention below.

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[194] Dasgupta, 1969: 62.
[195] Dasgupta, 1969: 67-68.
[196] Meulenbeld, 1999: 112.

Interpretive Complications in the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*

One vexed subject that has persisted into the modern era, is whether *puruṣa* is to be conceived of as universal (and absolute) or as personal (and multiple). This question stems from two cardinal questions, the first being, what does classical Sāṃkhya validate as "real," and, according to this definition, is the conception of *puruṣa* as personal (and therefore empirically multiple) any more real than the conception of *puruṣa* as absolute (and therefore inconceivably multiple) or vice versa? The second cardinal question (which relates directly to the first) is about ultimate self-hood, that is, about the nature of the misidentified versus liberated *puruṣa*. Any opinion about the personal versus absolute, or plural versus singular nature of *puruṣa,* asserted without having addressed these preliminary meta-questions, would be lacking in context and meaning.

While interpreting the *guṇa*s or evolvents of *prakṛti* as both personal and cosmic is standard practice amongst writers on classical Sāṃkhya,[197] interpreting *puruṣa* in this way is not. Larson (1979) remarks that if one is to view the *tanmātra*s both as the basis of the individual and as generative of the external world, then the other categories should be viewed in the same way. If one accepts this interpretation, as many interpreters have, writes Larson,

> ...then it becomes difficult to appreciate the classical Sāṃkhya doctrine of the plurality of *puruṣas.* The *puruṣas* must then be seen as one totality, the presence of which brings about the emergence of a cosmic *buddhi,* a cosmic *ahaṃkāra,* etc., which somehow then generate or bring forth individual *buddhis* and *ahaṃkāras* which transmigrate.[198]

Larson explains, "classical Sāṃkhya understands the basic evolutes or emergents primarily in individual terms..." as the system in general is seeking to find an answer to the problem of suffering in human life.[199] Understood within the framework of one's individual life, we can appreciate the description of *puruṣa* as multiple, given that a multiplicity of conscious subjects is precisely what one's life experience demonstrates to be the case. Representing quality-less or form-less (*aguṇa*) consciousness *(cetanā)*, *puruṣa* can exist in relation to many forms. Larson later reasons that *puruṣa-bahutva* (the "manyness" of *puruṣa*) arises alongside classical Sāṃkhya's conception of *mahat-buddhi*, and the faculty of discrimination with which *mahat-buddhi* is associated. Afterall, according to classical Sāṃkhya, discrimination is, even on the highest level,

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[197] See Ashton, 2018: 98; Larson, 1979: 163-164; J.A.B. van Buitenen, 1964; Radhakrishnan, 1927: 263.
[198] Larson, 1979: 195-196.
[199] Larson, 1979: 196.

...a discovery of what is *not* the case, thus implying that there are as many realizations of contentless consciousness as there are *buddhis* engaging in discrimination, or put another way, insofar as *puruṣa* appears as what it is not and insofar as *buddhi* distinguishes itself as what it is not, the final discrimination is to be interpreted individually or pluralistically so long as one assumes a plurality of *buddhis*.[200]

 In general, however, the suggestion that the Sk includes a conception of the *puruṣa* that is *not* multiple is one that has been met by resounding criticism. A.B. Keith, whose early research around Sāṃkhya continues to influence more recent scholarship, concluded that classical Sāṃkhya is "a system which denies an absolute and asserts instead a multiplicity of individual souls."[201] Rodney J. Parrott writes, "*Puruṣa* is not cosmic or universal...*Puruṣa* is individual."[202] In the following passage from his essay, "Manyness of Selves," R.K. Sharma seeks to establish that Sāṃkhya affirms a multiplicity of embodied and unembodied, viz. transmigrating or liberated, souls:

> If there is any one Sāṃkhya doctrine about which little doubt is entertained as to its Sāṃkhya character, it is that the self is individual and not cosmic, and that it is this individual self over against which the world exists as a real world.[203]

The current thesis does not aim to deny the plural nature of the individual self (*puruṣa*) in the Sk, but hopes to impress upon the reader that the doctrine of the Sk is based within an empirical context, which leaves aside affirmative explanations of the trans-empirical, liberated condition. According to my interpretation, the Sk can be best understood when read as including a to-be-liberated conception of *puruṣa* that is relative to *prakṛti* and empirically plural, and a liberated conception of *puruṣa*, whose condition would be more accurately construed as transcendental absoluteness (in no way relative to *prakṛti*). Such descriptions of the to-be-liberated and liberated *puruṣa* allow for a more textually coherent reading of the Sk itself; imply a greater affinity between the Sk's soul-theory and the soul-theories of the Sk's Sāṃkhyistic predecessors; and does away with the widely accepted notion that classical Sāṃkhya asserts the existence of innumerable eternal and unrelated, liberated consciousness monads.[204] Before examining the stanzas that have led to this generally accepted notion about classical Sāṃkhya's view of the liberated condition, I will endeavor to disambiguate "*puruṣa*" of the Sk, and in doing so, discuss the measure by which something's, particularly *puruṣa*'s, realness is established.

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[200] Larson, 1979: 235.
[201] Keith, 1918: 53.
[202] Parrott, 1986: 32.
[203] Sharma, 2004: 440.
[204] See Sharma, 2004: 433, et passim.

An Empirico-Teleologic Spirituality: Re-framing Puruṣa in Classical Sāṃkhya[205]

The Sk was composed during a time and place of tremendous religious and intellectual activity. Equally important to the question of *what* currents of thought were arising during this period, is *how* these views arose. In other words, what was the general approach taken by the Sāṃkhyan philosophers of the day, and how might this approach have influenced the views themselves? In relation to the healer-philosophers of the centuries preceding and contemporary to the Sk, Zysk emphasizes the strong weight placed on direct observation, and how these philosophers believed that knowledge was best gleaned from experience.[206] The Sk, or the philosophical lineage from which the Sk is derived, almost certainly arose within a culture (be this classical vedic, *śramaṇic* or a combination of both) that afforded particular value to understanding the nature of oneself and of liberation through empirico-rational efforts and reflection.[207] This being the case, it would make sense that the doctrine itself would also be presented along empirical lines, that is, speaking from the angle of the individual and conceiving of liberation from the perspective of one's individual life experience. This is evidenced through the Sk's initial claim to be presenting the means for one to become liberated from suffering; the centrality of the doctrine of *puruṣārtha* (which asserts the activity of *prakṛti* to be 'for the sake of' the liberation of each *puruṣa*) as well as due to its presentation of all ontological constituents and liberative advice from within the context of conjunction between the object (*prakṛti*) and subject (*puruṣa*), and hence from within one's objective-subjective experience. *Jña*, "the knower," is used interchangeably with or as defining *puruṣa*, as are states such as 'seer-ness' (*draṣṭṛtva*) and 'witnessing' (*sākṣitva*).[208] *Svāmin,* which means 'the self -possessor,' or 'owner,' is a synonym of *puruṣa*, while an alternative definition of *prakṛti* is *sva*, meaning 'one's own' or 'one's self.'[209] Read together, these terms suggest that the empirical world and its conditioning factors *belong* to *puruṣa*.[210] Along these same lines, Gp informs us that, according to the *Ṣaṣṭitantra,* the evolution of *prakṛti* occurs only when *controlled* by the subject.[211]

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[205] "Empirico-teleologic" is a play on Zysk's "Empirico-rational," which he uses to describe India's ancient medical knowledge, āyurveda.

[206] See, for example, Zysk, 1991: 24-25 and 28.

[207] *Kārikā* 4, which, having listed "perception, inference, and the receiving of verbal testimony," declares these three to constitute "all the means of achieving knowledge." Sāṃkhya as a way of knowing may be referring to both the empirical attitude that the Sāṃkhyans found indispensable to one's theoretical comprehension of life and liberation, as well as to *the* transempirical knowledge, which in itself is liberative.

[208] See, for example, *kārikā*s 2 and 19.

[209] Burley 2007: 161.

[210] Burley 2007: 161. This description of *puruṣa* clearly echos the second definition of *puruṣa* as the "empirical soul" in Śār **I**.17.

[211] Gp's commentary on stanza 17, quoting the *Ṣaṣṭitantra: "*Primal matter moves forward when controlled by the subject." The classical commentaries of Gp, the Yd and the *Suvarṇasaptati* all occasionally replace *puruṣa* with *ātman.* Such interchanging is consistent throughout Śār and many other early Sāṃkhyistic texts.

I take the fact that the *kārikā*s include a "before" (to-be liberated) and "after" (liberated) version of *puruṣa*, as further evidence that empirical reality is the context in which the Sk is based. In other words, the Sk includes the concept of time, which can only be deduced from the empirical world.[212] Generating the conception of an unliberated *puruṣa* that *eventually becomes* liberated speaks directly to the potential of one's life experience in personal terms, and in doing so, provides the motivation and justification for Sāṃkhya's soteriological praxis. The interpretation of classical Sāṃkhya as a metaphysics of experience was advanced by Mikel Burley in 2007:

> The main point I have sought to establish is that the metaphysics of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga does indeed result from an analysis of experience. Or, to put the point slightly differently: the metaphysics of these systems *makes sense* when it is interpreted as the result of an analysis of experience...[213]

Geoff Ashton also proposes a largely phenomenological approach. He suggests re-framing the metaphysics of classical Sāṃkhya "as an existential phenomenology of life," where life amounts to *lived reality,* "and life represents the self-manifestation of the *samyoga* of *mūlaprakṛti* and *puruṣa*, not either of these two unmanifest principles in themselves."[214] Framing classical Sāṃkhya as either a metaphysics of experience or an existential phenomenology of life aligns well with the perspective taken earlier by Larson, which is that the basic presupposition or concern of classical Sāṃkhya is the salvation of *puruṣa*, and that therefore, the nature of *puruṣa* should be determined with this primary concern in mind.[215] Classical Sāṃkhya, writes Larson, is "a soteriological system which seeks to find an answer to the problem of suffering in human life," whose metaphysics should be understood primarily in "individual terms," that is, in relationship to one personally.[216] I press the main points of Larson, Burley and Ashton further, directing them towards the conception of *puruṣa*, whose alleged multiplicity appears to result from the text's teleology revolving around the experience of each *puruṣa*, which requires a profound understanding of one's experience as the subject of "lived reality." Therefore, within the *kārikā*s, whose primary concern is the liberation of *puruṣa*, and which treat the domain of individual experience as crucial to the liberative process, I contend that the term *puruṣa* is primarily used to identify the soul from the perspective of *saṃyoga*, as the to-be-liberated subject of experience.

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[212] Maas, 2020: 964.
[213] Burley, 2007: 159.
[214] Ashton, 2018: 100.
[215] Larson, 1979: 163 and 197. Ashton also notes, "the abiding purpose of Sāṃkhya is to disclose the soteric freedom (*kaivalya*) of the *puruṣa*, not just explain how lived realities come into being" (2018: 100, footnote 9).
[216] Larson, 1979: 196.

In addition to being in the empirical role of controlling, possessing, owning, or as "the seer," "enjoyer" or "intelligent user" *of prakṛti*, however, stanzas 11 and 19 describe *puruṣa* in a way that diverges from the empirical nature of the aforenoted characteristics, namely, as equanimity, pure awareness, inactivity, autonomy (that is, being distinct and separate from and unmixable with *prakṛti*) all pervasiveness, and inactivity.[217]

> These qualities are equally to be found in the *puruṣa* of the classical school, which is permanent *ex hypothese*, omnipresent (*sarvatraga*, Gaudapāda and *Mātharavrtti* on SK, 10), immanent (vibhu, *Mātharavrtti*, p. 34, introduction to SK , 21, or *vyāpin*, Gaudapāda on SK , 23), and inactive.[218]

The above sets of descriptions, which do not address *puruṣa* from the perspective of the deluded world-experiencer, make it clear enough that the Sk generates two distinct conceptions of *puruṣa*. The first presents *puruṣa* as an engaged participant in, or the subject *of*, any variety of experiences (pain, pleasure, delusion).[219] The second conception gestures to *puruṣa* as the featureless (*nirdharmaka*), inactive, equanimous, all-pervading (*vyāpin* = not spatially limited) source of consciousness. Hence, we can see that the Sk applies subtle conceptual shifts in its explanations of the soul principle, not so unlike its less refined predecessors (such as the BU, the Mbh or Śār). While disambiguation of *puruṣa* is required, such inconsistent accounts may simply reflect the inescapable fact that any attempt to articulate what one *really* is, and of reality itself, is bound to present some form of existential paradox. The existential paradox of the Sk can at least be significantly diminished by accepting the compresence of two distinct understandings of *puruṣa*, and interpreting each within its rightful context. According to the Sk*, puruṣa*, the core of oneself, that which one *really* is, is the subject, whose experience attests to his or her need to be liberated from suffering; and, according to the Sk*, puruṣa*, the core of oneself, that which one *really* is, in its essential, unobstructed nature, is the vacant subject without object, which is a homologue of the liberated condition itself.

'The Manyness of *Puruṣa*' (*puruṣa-bahutvaṃ*) within its Rightful Context
Secondary literature on the Sk tends to define *puruṣa* as "consciousness" or as "the subject," leaving aside what being the conscious subject means in the empirical and liberated domains, respectively. At the same

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[217] Gp's commentary on stanza 11 shares that the similarities between the two *avyakta*s — *mūlaprakṛti* and *puruṣa* — are provided in the previous stanza, indicating that the *puruṣa* is also considered permanent, all-pervasive, inactive, independent, and singular.

[218] Johnston, 1937: 54.

[219] See Gp's commentary on *kārikā* 11.

time, the received view of classical Sāṃkhya maintains that the liberated condition is comprised of a multiplicity of *puruṣa*s, an opinion which is ultimately lacking in textual coherency and justification.[220] Sharma puts forth the poignant questions:

> What sense does it make to cast it [*puruṣa*] in the mold of a unique inner subject who is supposed to have a direct, privileged access to its conscious states and processes, which conscious states in any case do not in reality belong to it...and does it make sense to speak of an existent with these characteristics [of witness, alone, seer, and nonactive, as in stanza 19] as a subject of experience and thought?[221]

These are the sorts of questions that ought to be raised regarding *puruṣa*'s multiplicity, as it indeed does *not* make sense to cast all-pervading consciousness, etc., in the mold of an embodied subject, or conversely, to impute the characteristic of 'multiplicity' onto the uncharacterizable (*aliṅga*) condition of liberation. The assertion of *puruṣa*'s multiplicity arises in light of the term *puruṣa-bahutvaṃ* where "*bahutvaṃ*" is translated as many-ness, multiplicity or plurality.[222]

> The plurality of *puruṣas* is established, (a) because of the diversity of births, deaths, and faculties; (b) because of actions or functions (that take place) at different times; (c) and because of differences in the proportions of the three *guṇas* (in different entities).[223]

What is readily evident from the above *kārikā* is that Sāṃkhya's primary thesis for justifying the multiplicity of *puruṣa* relies on an argument that could be equally, if not more appropriately, used to justify the multiplicity of transmigrating apparatuses, which, as the holders of impressions, are what influence the various patterns of birth, death and capacities, etc., described above, rather than the principle of *consciousness* itself.[224] By accepting a multiplicity of *puruṣa*s, *kārikā* 18 situates the conscious entity

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[220] See, for example, Sharma 2018: *xc* footnote 1. The phrase 'for the sake of the liberation of each (*prati*) *puruṣa*' (Sk 56) might be taken to imply that, even when liberated, there are many *puruṣa*s. This sort of phrasing, on my interpretation, continues to refer to *puruṣa* from the perspective *saṃyoga*. Consider the following analogy: In English, one might say, "each dead man," yet this statement does not imply that each man, no longer living, continues to exist literally as an individual man.

[221] Sharma, 2004: 427. Squared brackets are mine.

[222] Paramārtha's translation of the *Suvarṇasaptati* commentary reads *puruṣa-bahutvaṃ* as "the principle of the individual spirit."

[223] *Kārikā* 18, trans., Larson, 1979: 261.

[224] Sharma, 2004: 427.

within the play of experience, and accounts for the indisputable facts that individuals partake in different actions and are engaged with different psychological processes at the same moment in time; that the same action and psychological processes can occur in different spatial contexts; and that all experience is dependent upon the presence of a conscious subject. In other words, the explanation provided by *kārikā* 18 about why there are many *puruṣa*s is based on a conception of *puruṣa* that is conjoined with *buddhi*, through the physical and transmigrating/subtle bodies. This point was articulated by the 9th century commentator Vācaspatimiśra, who writes, "'*Puruṣa,* literally meaning 'One who sleeps in the [subtle] body,' and this latter being connected with *Buddhi* and its properties, leads to the idea of the Spirit being connected with them."[225] Experientially, the seer or subject of experience (*puruṣa*) is realizable within innumerable embodiments as one's personal sense of awareness or consciousness. Said another way, one is individually conscious of an individually subjective set of experiential contents and capacities, which pertain to the ontological category of *prakṛti*.

 Hence, it seems extremely likely that the Sk's 'many-ness of *puruṣa*s' is being acknowledged from the perspective of *saṃyoga*. Speaking of *puruṣa* from this perspective makes sense, especially when we remember that the Sk places paramount emphasis on exposing the fundamental difference between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* amidst their conjunction, and on providing insight into the process of the *puruṣa*'s re-identification with itself, via experience. *Puruṣa*'s compresence with *prakṛti* brings forth the conception of *puruṣa* as empirical; in other words, the conception of an "empirical *puruṣa*" is required for there to be any experience at all. Proof of *puruṣa*'s multiplicity is not all that is measured through experience: our knowledge of the very existence of *puruṣa* results from inference requiring cognition. Knowledge of the existence of *puruṣa* is therefore due to the capacities of perception and sensation, just as the existence of experiential contents or capacities is equivalent to their appearing to one or more conscious subjects. Sāṃkhya does not acknowledge the "reality" of something (in this case, *puruṣa*) based on its eternality, but due to its knowability, based on inference derived from empirical evidence.[226] Stanza 17 makes this point clear:

> The *Puruṣa* exists: (a) because aggregations or combinations exist for another; (b) because (this other) must be apart or opposite from the three *guṇas*; (c) because (this other) (must be) a

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[225] G. Jha, 1896:100, translating Vācaspatimiśra. The Yd also gives the definition of *puruṣa* in the Sk as "one who rests in the body." This is also one of Śār's preliminary definitions of *puruṣa* at the start of chapter I.
[226] This is in contrast to the perspective taken by certain authors like Parrot, who conflate what is real for Sāṃkhya with what is real from an Advaita Vedantic perspective. Parrot (1986) writes, "*puruṣa* is the only reality of each human being" (p. 65) and "The only reality of the human being is consciousness; all else is *prakṛti*" (p. 60). Such a perspective reduces *prakṛti* to an illusory principle and in so doing, bypasses the teleological value the Sk affords to experience.

superintending power or control; (d) because of the existence or need of an enjoyer; (e) because there is functioning or activity for the sake of isolation or freedom.[227]

If the teleology of the Sk centers as it does, around the subject's experience, and its definitive removal from the suffering that experience begets, then analyzing the factors that lead to the soul's misidentification and liberation in terms of an individual subject's involvement is far more meaningful than if such analyzation was made in relation to a single consciousness that extended throughout all individuals. The particular content that 'one' must remove is specific to one's mind-body complex.[228] Spiritual praxis therefore necessitates the removal of a particular set of contents that accompany 'one' of an innumerable set of conscious subjects (*puruṣa*s).

Liberative Methods in Classical Sāṃkhya

Over the course of this section, I turn to what can be identified as a liberative method in the Sk. Sāṃkhya's prescribed soteriological practices, just like those advised by Śār, revolve around the elimination of psychosomatically bound impressions, through cultivating a *dharmic* mode of experience, non-attachment and yoga.[229] The introduction of the current thesis already noted the most apparent liberative methods of the Sk to be *kārikā*s: 44-45, where we are informed about the necessity of *dharma*, or virtuousness, which is permissive of "knowledge," and thus liberation; 63-64, where we learn that the doctrine supports the assiduous practice of truth, or *that-ness*, through which one develops the knowledge 'I am not,' 'not mine,' 'not I;' and, in *kārikā* 66, where classical Sāṃkhya's emphasis on the indispensability of experience, or of witnessing and of being witnessed, is brought to a climax. These liberative methods shed light on what is deemed to be of greatest soteriological value by the system itself, and therefore provide another important line of reasoning for why an acknowledgement of *puruṣa*'s plurality was required.

For classical Sāṃkhya, the superior means of ending suffering is expressed as arising "from the discrimination of the manifest [manifest *prakṛti*], the unmanifest [unmanifest *prakṛti*] and the knower [*puruṣa*]."[230] As with Śār (and to a lesser extent, the Bc and the cited sections of the Mbh) the Sk provides an explanation of experience and liberation that revolves around the *guṇa*s, which act as principles/qualities that are bound up with the soteriological enterprise, insomuch as cultivating *sattva,* or

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[227] Trans., Larson, 1979: 261.
[228] As in *kārikā*s 43-45, or 64-66.
[229] See Sk 43-45 and 64-66.
[230] Trans., Burley, 2007: 164. Square brackets are mine.

purity, and eliminating *rajas* and *tamas* over the course of multiple lifetimes precipitates the liberative goal. The Sk condenses the theme of transmigration and rebirth into three *kārikā*s:

> **42.** This *liṅga* (subtle, transmigrating body), motivated for the sake of *puruṣa*, by means of the association of causes and effects, and due to its connection with the manifestness of *prakṛti*, performs like a dancer. **43.** The dispositions [namely] *dharma* and the rest, both natural and acquired, are perceived to abide in the instrument (the psychic domain, which transmigrates), and the embryo and so forth abide in the object (the gross body, which decays). **44.** By means of virtue (*dharma*) there is movement upwards, by means of non-virtue (*adharma*) there is movement downwards; by means of knowledge liberation is attained, and bondage is due to the opposite.[231]

Virtue (*dharma*) according to the Sk, leads to "movement upwards"[232] while non-virtue (*adharma*) leads to the opposite (Sk 44). Transmigration and rebirth result from craving, or attachment, while dispassion facilitates *prakṛti*'s dissolution (Sk 45). Virtue and non-attachment precipitate the liberative goal, while the opposite generates further obstruction. According to various commentaries on the Sk, merit/*dharma* refers to five commitments (*yamas*) and five obligations (*niyama*). The Yd lists the five *yamas* as 1. non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), 2. truthfulness (*satya*), 3. not-stealing (*asteya*), 4. integrity (*akalkatā*), and 5. chastity (*brahmacarya*); the *niyamas* are listed as: 1. not becoming angry, 2. obedience to the master (*guru*), 3. purity, 4. following a light diet, and 5. carefulness.[233] For classical Sāṃkhya, the practicing of *yama* and *niyama* provides the essential conditions for directing one's life towards the soteriological goal:

> Through the uninterrupted practice of these (dharmic behaviors) the quality of sattva comes to be an impression and it causes the attainment of forms of intellect like knowledge. This is the first phase serving as a first step to worldly prosperity and liberation.[234]

The transmigrating body holds impressions forged by the physical body in association with the psychological faculty. Pure, *sattvic* impressions, characterized by equanimity, are permissive of

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[231] Trans., Burley, 2007: 173; interpolations in round brackets are mine, except for '(*dharma*)' and '(*adharma*)' in stanza 44.

[232] Trans., Burley, 2007, on *kārikā* 44.

[233] Yd, Shiv Kumar (trans.) 1990: 190. Gp on stanza 23 also explains the *yamas* and *niyamas* in terms of their characterizing *sattva guṇa*: "That intellect has eight parts on account of the different forms, Sāttvika and Tāmasa. The Sāttvika form of intellect is of four kinds viz. Virtue, Knowledge, Non-Attachment and Power. The virtue is the nature of mercy, charity, the five yamas, restraints, and the five niyamas, obligations." Translation by Mainkar, T. G, 2004: 108.

[234] The Yd on Sk stanza 23, p. 191.

liberation, while *rājasic* and *tāmasic* impressions are not. The preeminent element within the psychological/perceptive faculty in the Sk is *mahat-buddhi* (discernment, intentional consciousness) "...its lucid (*sāttvika*) form [comprising] *dharma,* knowledge, non-attachment, [and] masterfulness, and its darkened (*tāmasa*) form [comprising] the opposite."[235] One's capacity to participate in and perpetuate either *dharma* or *adharma* revolves around the notion of an individual transmigratory apparatus, animated by an individual subject, through which impressions are being removed or acquired. The empirical *puruṣa* is a necessary condition for there to be any need for soteric practice based on individual efforts, or any transmigration of the transmigrating body due to individually retained impressions. Indeed, the very sense of participating in an individualized experience is contingent upon one's state of awareness being something personal. The empirical *puruṣa* is not only the ultimate experiencer, but by virtue of being perspectival consciousness, is the phenomenological substrate of experience itself. *Dharma* can be counted as a legitimate soteric practice insomuch as there exists a transmigrating apparatus, animated by the *individual puruṣa*, that "my" *dharmic* practices can serve by eliminating impressions from. Non-attachment is facilitated by the notion that "I," the individual subject, can be unidentified with the contents of my experience. The same holds true for stanza 64, which although already mentioned, is worth mentioning here again, on account of its regular citation in discussions of Sāṃkhya's liberative methods.

The Yd explains that the next phase consists of knowledge characterized by the understanding of the difference between puruṣa and the guṇas,[236] and that this knowledge is both unparalleled (apūrva) and generated from practice (abhyāsa).[237] "That generated through practice is caused by non-attachment, is calm, pure, everlasting and contradictory to all the worldly (produced) and non-worldly (unproduced) objects."[238] This type of knowledge is then linked directly to the knowledge described in stanza 64, which concludes:

> Thus it is that by the practice of truth, wisdom is attained, which is complete, incontrovertible (and hence) pure and absolute: (by means of which the idea is obtained that) "I am not, naught is *mine*, and *I* do not exist.[239]

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[235] Stanza 23. Trans., Burley, 2007.

[236] In this case, the *guṇa*s are being referred to as the independently necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of *prakṛti* (from which the capacities for and content of experience originate) rather than modes of mind and behavior.

[237] Yd on Sk stanza 23: "Knowledge is of two kinds, that which is characterized by the understanding of words and so forth, and that which is characterized by the understanding of *purusa* and the *gunas*."

[238] Yd on Sk 23, trans. Shiv Kumar, 1990: 190-191.

[239] G. Jha translating Vācaspatimiśra, 1896: 106.

Occurring solely in stanza 64, the term "*tattva*" or more specifically, *tattvābhyāsān*, is translated above by Ganganatha Jha as the "practice of truth." Although different classical commentators and more recent authors have proposed different meanings for this particular term, what arises from *tattvābhyāsān* remains fairly interpretationally standard, this being *sattvapuruṣānyatā* — the disassociation between the ultimate source of conscious subjectivity from the very capacity for differentiation or discrimination (*sattva*, i.e., *buddhi*).[240] As previously noted, a similar refrain to 'I am not,' 'not mine,' 'not I' also appears in **I**.152-153 of Śār and within various Buddhist sources; in each context, the phrase presupposes the need for a soteriological practice that uses a personal sense of self from which to subsequently self-disidentify. The result is that all internal and external activities — reflections and observations, along with the conception of an individual consciousness ("self-consciousness") — cease to exist as such.

 Soteric methods that work with an individual consciousness principle prior to this principle's abandonment offer good reason for the doctrinal inclusion of a multiplicity of *puruṣa*s. Each individual *buddhi* may use its individual, pure awareness as the object on which to concentrate, before the conditions of *buddhi*/*prakṛti* evolve to the extent that even the knower of the "object" (individual consciousness) ceases to be an individuated condition; abiding in its own nature, absolute consciousness remains as the vacant 'subject' without object.[241] The fact that the Sk holds a conception of *puruṣa* that is relative to the conditions of *prakṛti* and plural does not mean that a conception of the liberated condition of *puruṣa* as trans-empirical absoluteness is excluded, despite the opinions of most authors. *Puruṣa*'s multiplicity in stanza 18 is evinced through conditions of *prakṛti* alone, conditions which no longer hold any significance upon *puruṣa*'s liberation. Therefore, however textually validated or real *puruṣa*'s "manyness" is, there remains scope for another conception of *puruṣa* having exited the empirical stage and assumed the liberated condition, which has no further need or justification for being described in terms of a multiplicity. The final practice that comes across as a liberative method in the Sk is that of experience itself, in the sense of "witnessing" and of being witnessed. This method will be returned to after the following section, which looks towards classical Sāṃkhya's description of the liberated condition and contrasts this conception with that of the to-be-liberated *puruṣa*.

Saṃyoga, Liberation, and Sāṃkhya's Presupposition of Relativity and Absoluteness
Conveying two distinct epistemological situations of *puruṣa*/consciousness is reflective of the classical Sāṃkhya's pragmatic soteriological hermeneutics that revolve around experience being the fertile ground for suffering, as well as for finding the means of liberation from suffering. The constitutive conditions

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[240] Burley, 2024: 77-92.
[241] As seen in the section on the Mbh of the current thesis, *puruṣa* in Mbh 11393 is also defined as the human soul, the "25th principle" and the "object" which must be known, before becoming the subject without object.

under which experience can occur requires the conjunction of consciousness *and* something that cognizes, together creating the "conscious experience" and thus the conscious experienc*er*, the "empirical *puruṣa*." Through *saṃyoga*, consciousness is made relative and effectively perspectival. I, the conscious experiencer, am conscious *of* innumerable thought and felt experiences, or of one long drawn-out experience that relates to *me*. My awareness of being consciousness (and of being conscious *of* X) arises from my association with the various faculties of *prakṛti*. This sort of relative, perspectival consciousness, or the condition of a conscious experiencer in need of being liberated, is how the Sk most often refers to *puruṣa*.[242] Yet we mustn't forget: the ideological basis undergirding every aspect of the text itself is moving towards the subject's freedom from experience, and thus away from the very notion of oneself as a subjected experienc*er*.

Interpretive complications in the Sk arise when ascribing characteristics that relate to the concept of the to-be-liberated *puruṣa*, to the concept of the liberated condition, which is not relative to the gross or subtle transmigrating bodies at all.[243] Rather than making a clear distinction between two soul conceptions, as is the purpose of the present thesis, some secondary sources have tried resolving this complication by conflating *puruṣa* with *buddhi,* or *antaḥkaraṇa*, which signifies the totality of one's mental faculty. For example, Dasgupta writes:

> A return of this manifold world into the quiescent state (*pralaya*) of *prakṛti* takes place when the *karmas* of all *puruṣas* collectively require that there should be such a temporary cessation of all experience.[244]

By referencing *karmas* as being "of all *puruṣa*s," Dasgupta demonstrates how intricately woven *puruṣa* — conceived of as a multiplicity of perspectival subjects — is with the concept of *buddhi/antaḥkaraṇa*, the faculty through which impressions transmigrate from one physical body to another and through which cognition of consciousness occurs. In the state of conjunction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (*saṃyoga*) the two principles of *buddhi* and *puruṣa* are inextricable; and yet to claim like Dasgupta that *karmas* are *of puruṣa* is antithetical to the claim that *puruṣa* is altogether separate from *prakṛti*, or to the idea that "*purusa*," as used throughout the Sk identifies the ontological principle of liberated consciousness alone. However, if Dasgupta were to have been speaking of the *karmas* of all *puruṣas* in the sense of the *karmas* of all of the to-be-liberated subjects, i.e., the empirical *puruṣas*, that are conceived of in terms of their

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[242] Sharma, 2004: 427.
[243] In stanzas 17, 18, 20, 21, 55, 56 and 65, for example, characteristics of *prakṛti* are applied to *puruṣa*, treating *puruṣa* as relative to *prakṛti* rather than as absolute.
[244] Dasgupta, 1957: 247.

relativity to the conditions of *prakṛti,* then speaking of the two things together (the *karma*s and the *puruṣa*s that relate to the *karma*s) would be fitting. *Puruṣa* conceptualized as the to-be-liberated subject of experience is *really* multiple to the extent that *buddhi*'s reflection of consciousness, or the conjunction of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, persists. The very conception of *puruṣa* as bound and personal demands that there be binding, individuating conditions of *prakṛti* (i.e., mind and body, or just mind, in the case of the transmigrating apparatus) and that *puruṣa*/consciousness is epistemically situated as the seer or knower of *prakṛti.* However, *puruṣa* as empirical, the subject of *buddhi*'s*/prakṛti*'s unique vantage point, is not a compatible description for *puruṣa* having attained *kaivalya*, or complete separation from *prakṛti* in stanza 68. If the soul conceptualized as liberated is not the subject *of* something else, so it would follow that being "the subject" must apply only to *puruṣa* in conjunction with *prakṛti* (*saṃyoga*). With no supportive structure (the individuated physical and subtle bodies no longer extant) how correct is it to say that *puruṣa* continues to be multiple, when the conditions of *prakṛti* that led to defining *puruṣa* in terms of a multiplicity in the first place, no longer apply?

It is worth taking into account what classical commentators have written on the matter of what the present thesis is referring to as the 'to-be-liberated' and 'liberated' conceptions of *puruṣa* of the Sk. We see in *kārikā* 55 that *puruṣa* acquires the suffering related to the conditions of *prakṛti until* its deliverance from the *liṅga* (subtle/fine body). *Puruṣa*'s removal from the subtle body can occur when the subtle body's "form" permits such removal, that is, when liberative knowledge has rendered it free of impressions originating from *rajas, tamas,* or even *sattva*.[245] *Kārikā* 62 reveals, "No one, then, is bound, nor released, nor wanders; it is *prakṛti*, in its various abodes (*āśrayā*) that wanders, and is bound and released."[246] The compatible *form* is therefore void of form, the precise conditions that constituted any form to begin with having necessarily disappeared. Gp makes the following comment:

> The truth about the Subject is revealed through knowledge of the difference between *sattva* (= purified *buddhi*) and the Subject. When this is revealed, the Subject is autonomous, pure, liberated and established in its own form. In this regard, [one could object that] if the bondage of the Subject does not exist, therefore also liberation does not exist. In this regard, it has been said that only primal matter binds itself and liberates itself, in which [process] the fine body, consisting of the fine elements and being endowed with the threefold instrument, is bound through the triple bondage. And [on this] it has been taught:

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[245] See Gp on stanza 63.
[246] Burley trans., 2007.

What is bound through [bondage] derived from primal matter, likewise from modifications, and from the payment for sacrificial service as the third, is liberated by nothing else. And this is the subtle body, which is connected with merit and demerit.[247]

Thus, we are provided with further evidence for why the *puruṣa-bahutvaṃ* of *kārikā* 18 can be attributed to an individuated mode of *prakṛti*: *kārikā* 62 alongside Gp's commentary inform us that, until this point, *puruṣa* has been conceived in terms of its to-be-liberated status, the subject of an individuated set of conditions. This is in keeping with the commentary of the Yd, which, just before *kārikā* 18, clearly affirms that the definitions afforded to *puruṣa* at this stage of the text relate to its empirical *rather than* transcendental condition. Commenting on stanza 17, the Yd shares:

This is the description of the empirical state of the consciousness entity. In its transcendental state it is in the nature of pure consciousness, free from its contact with the intellect.[248]

This comment is important, as it supports the position of the present thesis, that two conceptions of *puruṣa* are maintained by the Sk (or a single conception, but one in which there are said to be two states in which *puruṣa* can exist); and, that descriptions of *puruṣa* in the "empirical state" are not representative of the liberated condition, the "transcendental state." From *kārikā* 62 onward, *puruṣa*'s identity as the subject of *prakṛti*, via the impressions stored in the gross and subtle bodies, begins to have less meaning. The *kārikā*s do not provide a rich description of the liberated condition; only *kārikā* 68 provides something of an affirmative description:

When the separation from the body arrives and primal matter has become inactive because it has reached its purpose, one attains the autonomy that is both invariable and permanent.[249]

Having attained *kaivalya* in an eternal sense, the conception of an empirical *puruṣa* is replaced by transcendental absoluteness, situated outside the purview of experience. In the 'condition' of *kaivalya*, there are no contents of experience; *prakṛti* has dissolved and hence no contents are left. The Yd's commentary on *kārikā* 68 adds:

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[247] Gp commenting here on stanza 62. Trans., Maas, 2021. Round brackets are mine.
[248] Kumar, trans., Yd commentary on stanza 17, p. 140.
[249] *Kārikā* 68. Trans., Maas, 2021.

And the Buddhists have named this state, which is liberation, *Nirvāṇa* without any remainder of bonds (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*). This is the highest *Brahman*, which is unchangeable, pure and secure. In this [state], all properties of the Forces become re-absorbed. Having attained this [liberation], one becomes separated from all troubles, from all bondages, from cravings and aversions that were active for a time without beginning.[250]

The above passage equates the liberated condition of the Sk with *Nirvāna* or *Brahman*, and in so doing, suggests that the conception of this condition according to the Sk was indeed influenced by (or aligned with) other philosophical schools (i.e., the Buddhists and certain monistic teachings of *Brahman*).[251] The Sk does not suggest that *puruṣa,* once liberated, absolute and eternal— the highest *Brahman* — is the only "real" description of *puruṣa*. The fundamental error according to Sāṃkhya is not failing to distinguish what is real from what is not real (viz. eternal versus phenomenal, *à la* Advaita Vedānta); rather, it is the chronically warped state of being in which one's personal sense of awareness (consciousness) becomes self-assumed as its unconscious contents, which are nevertheless, empirically real.[252]

Evidenced by *kārikā*s 68, 62 and others, the change from a to-be-liberated *puruṣa*/consciousness/soul, to a liberated one, does not take place through a change in the *puruṣa*/consciousness/soul per se, but through a change in *prakṛti* that results in the dissolution of the *guṇa*s into a state of unmanifest quiescence.[253] Phenomenal consciousness — the consciousness through which the most refined level of a cognitive system can come to be self-conceived as a conscious experiencer, and that is given direct access to its own cognitive contents via *buddhi* — is different from liberated consciousness only in so much as the former is viewed from the perspective of *prakṛti* and the latter is not. This interpretation also helps to make sense of why *kaivalya* is used to describe *puruṣa* already in *kārikā* 19: in both 19 and 68, *kaivalya* affirms that *puruṣa* is essentially *not prakṛti.* But while the *kaivalya* of 19 amounts to a distinction that is inferable from the perspective of *saṃyoga*, the *kaivalya* of stanza 68 signifies the cessation of *saṃyoga*, and hence of the conception of *puruṣa* as the witness of experience, of which there are innumerable exemplars. With primal matter no longer impelled to transform, and thus with the absence of all

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[250] Maas (2021) translation of the Yd (ed. Wezler & Motegi, p. 266f) on Sk 68.
[251] The passage also suggests that the well-known debates, which occurred between these different schools of thought, did not necessarily center around the condition of liberation itself.
[252] See, for example, Krishna (1968: 200), who claims that the fundamental error according to Sāṃkhya is the misidentification of *puruṣa.*
[253] In relation to liberation occurring through *prakṛti*'s dissolution, see stanzas 45, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66 and 68.

conditioning factors, for the liberated *puruṣa*, there are no remaining attributes, including the attribute of individuality. According to what the Sk makes of the liberation condition, there is no basis on which to define this condition as a multiplicity of differentiated souls, unless innumerable unconditioned consciousness entities could be thought of as forming a unified, infinite whole, the nature of which would presumably be the same as its constitutive parts.[254] Even if this did fit the portrayal of the liberated *puruṣa* provided by classical Sāṃkhya, one must remain cognizant of the fact that such a portrayal of *puruṣa* as multiple then becomes indiscernible from a single existence of all-pervading consciousness, or a shared *puruṣa*-consciousness substrate emanating individual parts (and is not remotely close to making out liberation to be comprised of a multiplicity of ontologically distinct consciousness-monads). Like a molecule of water having been reabsorbed by the atmosphere or into an undifferentiated ocean, the core of oneself that was understood as individual has no further need or pretense to be conceived of as such.

Liberation, which Arises from the Experience of Witnessing and of Being Witnessed

Being beyond the categories of mutability, *puruṣa* itself does not undergo any change; and yet, from the point of being considered "bound" to being considered "liberated," neither is there no change. Liberation requires a shift in the state surrounding consciousness and to this extent, in the state of consciousness itself. As was discussed in the foregoing section, the change takes place from within the framework of *prakṛti*. According to the Sk, purified *buddhi* is capable of *knowing* pure consciousness so intimately, that the one (*buddhi*) becomes fully eclipsed by the other. *Buddhi*, suffused with pure consciousness, makes the infinitesimal yet soteriologically crucial epistemic shift of self-evanescence, removing the knower *of* consciousness (viz., the knowing, "I am conscious") and leaving cognition-less consciousness to simply "abide in its own nature," as indivisible, non-perspectival, utterly featureless awareness.[255] Stanza 66 emblematically illustrates the state of lucid awareness, desireless-ness and equanimity that precipitates the pivotal move away from the cognition of consciousness and into consciousness alone:

'I have seen her,' says the spectating one; 'I have been seen,' says the other, desisting; although the two remain in conjunction, there is no initiation of [further] emergence.[256]

Due to the conjunction of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, *prakṛti* appears as though conscious and similarly, the non-engaged *puruṣa* appears as though perceptive.[257] Having displayed herself before the gaze of the audience

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[254] Sharma conjures a similar image of the liberated *puruṣa* in his essay, 2004: 433.
[255] See also PYŚ 1.3.
[256] Trans., Burley, 2007.
[257] See stanza 20.

— seen by perspectival consciousness and touched by the liberative power of awareness — *prakṛti* desists from dancing, the consciously activated impulse itself no longer elicited by its fervent need for acknowledgement.[258] This passage appears to be an attempt at capturing the essence of a meditative process, in which consciousness knowing itself (or knowing itself to be anything other than itself) through cognition, takes its final breath as it were. It affirms the purpose of experience, specifically how the experiences of witnessing and being witnessed are themselves fundamental to liberation. Like the final flame of a fire having consumed its own fuel, the person continues to exist, but with no further generative purpose of witnessing, nor of being witnessed.[259]

We are also shown how intensely minute a distinction the *kārikā*s make between (1) *puruṣa* in the sense of absolute consciousness, (2) *puruṣa* in the sense of empirical consciousness, or consciousness understood from the perspective of *prakṛti*, and (3) cognition itself (*buddhi = prakṛti*). Rather than drawing hard lines between *puruṣa* as consciousness alone (free of perceptivity) and *prakṛti* as content alone (free of consciousness) the passage reminds us that, amidst *saṃyoga*, the line demarcating *buddhi* and the conception of *puruṣa* as empirical consciousness — indeed, the line demarcating duality itself — is ever so fine if not porous (remember, *"'puruṣa'* = one who sleeps in the [subtle] body"). If we were to accept that the conception of *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga*, "the empirical soul," features most prominently throughout the Sk, but that this conception gives way fully to the conception of *puruṣa* as "absoluteness" come *kārikā* 68, then the Sk would arrive at a new level of philosophical congruency, especially in respect to its portrayal of the liberated condition.

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[258] See stanza 55.
[259] Similar imagery is alluded to in the *Pātañjala-Yogasūtra-Bhāṣya-Vivaraṇa of Śaṅkara-Bhagavatpāda*. See Maas, 2009, footnote 35.

VI. Conclusion

The current thesis has provided a reading of the Sk in which two conceptions of *puruṣa* are identified and distinguished from one another by virtue of one being based in *saṃyoga*, and the other arising out of the soteriological aim of *kaivalya*. In addition, it argued that although the "manyness of *puruṣa*s" in *kārikā* 18 is in keeping with the text's rational approach, which seeks to elucidate the liberative process from within the framework of *saṃyoga* alone, *kārikā* 18 does not expressly seek to qualify the liberated condition. Both conclusions will inevitably remain open. This is due in part to the relatively limited textual analysis and historical tracing that could be undertaken by the present study, but more so, because descriptions of a liberated consciousness are beyond the scope of phenomenology.[260] Nevertheless, if we do *not* grant that the text's author formed a distinction between the conception of *puruṣa* in *saṃyoga* and the conception of the liberated condition, we must project onto the author an alarming degree of philosophical inconsistency and incoherency regarding his chief subject. If one insists upon applying *kārikā* 18 to the liberated condition itself, one will inevitably encounter a serious problem attempting to find a principled criterion of differentiation that would be applicable to a purported multiplicity of 'pure consciousnesses,' or the advocation of such a claim within primary source materials.

Making a distinction between the Sk's conception of the *puruṣa*, the to-be-liberated world-experiencer, and the liberated condition, which is a possibility for and indeed the essential nature of each empirical *puruṣa*, implicates a sort of ontological category that extends beyond the spectrum of experience. This ontological category consists of *puruṣa*, or one's essential core, not as the subject *of prakṛti* ('the field' of experience) but as the liberated non-relative 'subject' without object. In the words of Mircea Eliade, liberation requires "an abolition of the conditioned world...a break in ontological level and passage from one mode of being to another, or, more precisely, passage from conditioned existence to an unconditioned mode of being, that is, to perfect freedom."[261] The 'abolition of the conditioned world' within *kārikā* 68 necessitates the abolition of the experience of subjective-objective duality, where the co-fundamental ontological dyad consists of *puruṣa*, the subject *of prakṛti*, and *prakṛti*, the object of *puruṣa.* The 'break in ontological level' within the Sk may equally be regarded as an epistemic breakthrough on the part of the individual: one's knowledge of oneself transforms to the extent that 'one' is no longer self-known as anything divisible, conditioned or relative.

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[260] O'Brien-Kop, 2023: 10.
[261] Eliade, 1968: 176-177.

Figuring two different conceptions of *puruṣa* into the writing of the text likely served various soteriological functions. An early Sāṃkhyan philosopher could argue, writes Jakubczak,

> ...to capture the meaning of 'self' one must distinguish between the upper or true self – being pure, eternal, transcendent to nature (*prakṛti*) but also absolutely passive, not involved in the process of doing or knowing – and, on the other hand, the lower self, or empirical Í'– the psychophysical organism fully engaged in all bodily and mental activities.[262]

The Sk's soteriology is conveyed from the perspective of one's non-transcendent lived experience, making ample use of analogy and symbolism as a form of ideological transmission. Caught in the fluid interplay of archetypal duads — light and dark, allurement and aversion, contentment and dissatisfaction, masculinity and femininity — the experiencer is presented with the task of seeing through the primal duality of his or her own mind-body complex, and into the consciousness through which this complex comes to be known. Instead of fixating on religious ideals or practices that sit outside the purview of one's experiential domain, the main liberative practices in classical Sāṃkhya demand that one's energies be harnessed towards the cultivation of *dharma*, and towards the steady concentration of conscious cognition, which provides one with the knowledge of the difference between the two, and ultimately to the abandonment of cognition altogether. If suffering results from the epistemological conflation of one's true identity with transient and mutable content, then liberation results from the opposite. Separating one's personal sense of consciousness from consciousness's unconscious contents, does not arise from denying the fact of duality that experience invariably demonstrates, but by greeting experience face to face as it were, through the process of witnessing and of being witnessed, endeavoring to approach this process in a way that is all-embracing, ethical and dispassionate.

Puruṣa of the Sk, preconceived as the essence of who one really is, is fundamental to one's experience, but extends beyond experience and being of "one." *Puruṣa* is the conscient presence that one distinguishes from the fluctuating contents/capacities of one's person, that is ever-more evident when one's mode of experience in dominantly *sattvic*, and yet that exists outside of any mental apparatus formulating distinctions. *Puruṣa* is the source of one's consciousness, and the consciousness that the source itself consists of. The empirical finding that consciousness is something relative to the time-and-

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[262] Jakubczak, 2012: 40.

space-indwelling individual, alongside the soteriological claim that the core of oneself persists beyond all conditions that constitute individuality, makes for the likely scenario that the two conceptions of *puruṣa* were so taken for granted by the author, not unlike the doctrine of reincarnation, that elaborating upon this detail specifically was felt to be unnecessary. Alternatively, the ambiguity of *puruṣa* could have been an intentional feature included by the Sk's poet-author. Encapsulating the nature of the bound and liberated soul within the single term "*puruṣa*" could have served by discouraging the initiate from forming a distinction between his or her own sense of selfhood and ultimate selfhood. Like Śār's lyrical depiction of the microcosmic-macrocosmic soul, the conception of *puruṣa* prior to and post liberation in the Sk does not amount to a measurable difference in the unchanging core of oneself. Perhaps the *kārīka*s, in their brevity, chose to maintain the term *puruṣa* whilst acknowledging one's to-be-liberated nature and liberated potential, knowing fully well the futility of trying to elaborate upon the transcendental condition itself. The transcendent is transcendent: any interpretation of transcendence that employs temporal and spatial terms is bound to be met by misunderstandings, precisely because the transcendent transcends both time and space. Yet "transcendence" is perhaps the most suitable term we have available to describe what the Sk considers to be *puruṣa*, liberated from *prakṛti.* It transcends all speech, thought, time, space and modes of differentiation.

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