

the Self. Some consider this entity or Puruṣa to be endowed with attributes at certain stages, while others think that it is always an attributeless impersonal witness and illuminer. The Sāṃkhya view is of the latter type. According to Sāṃkhya philosophy Ātman or Soul or Puruṣa is many in number. It holds that the Soul is attributeless in itself, while according to the purity or otherwise of the mind of an embodied Soul, it seems to become godly or the reverse.

Reviewing the emergence of these two different conceptions it would appear that at first the soul was regarded as an entity with function and attributes. Rituals and sacrifices appertained to the worship associated with such a Saguṇa Ātman or a Soul with attribute. Ṛṣi Kapila was the first to discover the knowledge of the Nirguṇa or attributeless Self. That knowledge gradually spread amongst the Ṛṣis and ultimately found its way into the Upaniṣads. This is pre-eminently noticeable in the Kathopaniṣad. We thus see that first came the rituals, then the knowledge of the Soul with attributes, after which came the knowledge of the attributeless Soul. Such was the evolution of knowledge of the Self.

Turning now to the development of the philosophy of Self, we find that in the age of the Ṛṣis, Pañchaśikha framed the Sāṃkhya aphorisms according to the instructions left by Ṛṣi Kapila. Although the treatise produced by Pañchaśikha is not in existence in its entirety, the little that is available gives us an idea of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. In Sāṃkhya Kārikā composed by Īśwarakṛṣṇa all the fragments then available of Sāṃkhya philosophy were collected and preserved. The later product, viz. Sāṃkhya Pravachna Sūtra in six chapters, although variously transmuted, is commonly known as the Sāṃkhya philosophy. In addition to these, there is a very short collection of aphorisms known as Tattvva-Samāsa, which though regarded by some as very ancient is not really so.

In ancient India, amongst the seekers of spiritual salvation, there were two distinct sects, one known as the Sāṃkhya sect and the other as the Yoga sect. When the philosophy dealing with knowledge of Self with its attributes was propounded the Yoga or the method to be followed for its realisation was also enunciated, because no knowledge of the Self is attainable without conception, contemplation, and Samādhi (intense concentration). When the knowledge of the attributeless Self was discovered, Yoga for the attainment of such knowledge was also framed accordingly. From Ṛṣi Kapila came the knowledge of the pure unconditioned Soul, as well as the method of realisation of the conception of such a Self. That is why in the ancient philosophies of India there are countless exhortations for regarding Sāṃkhya and Yoga as