

Puruṣa who has not attained proficiency has for the same reason remained eternally allied to the beginningless knowable. It cannot be that there was a time before, when there was no alliance between the Seer and the seen and that it has taken place at a particular time. In such a case how will the cause for the alliance arise? It will be explained later that the cause of this alliance is Avidyā or wrong knowledge. Wrong conception begets wrong knowledge. So the chain of misconception is beginningless. This has been very cogently described in the aphorism of Pañchaśikha quoted above. The primordial causes are the three Guṇas. As they have been allied with the Puruṣa from time without beginning their modifications in the shape of Buddhi, the instruments and their objects like sight, sound etc. are also eternally allied to the Puruṣa.

Plurality of Puruṣa and the unit nature of Pradhāna (collective name of the three Guṇas) have been referred to in this aphorism (see II-23 and IV-16). On this point Vāchaspati Miśra says, "Puruṣa is not one like Pradhāna. Multitude of Puruṣas, births and deaths, experiences of pleasure and pain, liberation and bondage, from all these, plurality of Puruṣa is established, as it is logical to assume that the simultaneous knower of many things must be many in number. The Śruti which (apparently) advances the oneness of Puruṣa is contradicted by other evidences. As the Seers cannot be divided by time and space, being beyond time and space, devoted persons urge that it is not proper to imagine that one Seer is present here and another Seer at another place, and that is why they say that the Seer is one". In reality the Śruti does not mention the oneness of the supreme Seer, but only refers to the oneness of the soul of the Universe—the Creator, the Protector and Destroyer, the Saguna Īśvara. In Mahābhārata also it is said, "At the time of creation He creates, and at the time of destruction He eats it up again. Destroying everything and withdrawing all into Himself, the soul of the Universe lies in water, i.e. in homogeneous primordial cause". In Śruti this soul of Creation has been called one. He is not pure Awareness or Ātmā. The unity of Prakṛti and plurality of Puruṣa have been established directly by the Śruti as in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad : "One Puruṣa without birth (i.e. eternal) enjoys or experiences