

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Sāṃkhya is one of the oldest system of Indian Philosophy. Īśvarakṛṣṇa has presented the Sāṃkhya philosophy concisely in seventy two verses in his *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. One of the significant features of Sāṃkhya philosophy is that it is atheistic.

Sāṃkhya philosophy is an example of metaphysical dualism – the two entities, which explains creation being Puruṣa and Prakṛti which may be translated as the principle of consciousness and unconscious nature. The features of these two principles are diametrically opposite. Nevertheless creation proceeds out of the conjunction of the two principles. As a matter of fact for the Sāṃkhya philosophers the proximity of Puruṣa and Prakṛti results in the disturbance of the elements of Prakṛti which signals the starting point of creation. Prakṛti which is unconscious, but active, is composed of three *guṇa*-s called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is light and the instrument of manifestation, *rajas* is the principle of change and restlessness and *tamas* is the principle of heaviness and inactivity. Prakṛti is the fundamental principle from which the material world springs. The human body is also analysable into the physical and the non-physical – the gross material body and the element of consciousness which is Puruṣa. This, according to the Sāṃkhya philosophers, is human bondage. Men are in bondage so long as they confuse between matter and

consciousness - Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Man escapes from bondage when he realises the difference between the unconscious and the conscious - Prakṛti and Puruṣa. This, in brief, is the metaphysical position of the Sāṃkhya system.

The Sāṃkhya system has a very old tradition. The last major figure in the tradition is Vijñānabhikṣu. But the real source of our information regarding Sāṃkhya system is Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, which still remains the universally accepted classic of the tradition. *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* still remains the complete text of Sāṃkhya philosophy.

The age of the Sāṃkhya system can be ascertained by the fact that we find reference of the system in the writing of Buddhist philosophers like Aśvaghoṣa, in the Mahābhārata and even in the Upaniṣadas – particularly in Kaṭha and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣadas.

The Sāṃkhya view seems to have grown out of a kind of dualism. The union of the Sun – God and the Earth Goddess are concepts which speaks of two productive forces. One of them is spiritual and the other material. The concepts of Puruṣa and Prakṛti might be the legacy of this dualism. Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya philosophy is the immaterial consciousness and the primordial material principle.

If we trace history, we shall find that there are adequate hints to the effect that there had been different opinions regarding Sāṃkhya philosophy. It is probable from these ancient records that there were many branches of this systems. The yoga system which is otherwise known as *Seśvara* Sāṃkhya, testifies the truth of this remarks. Sāṃkhya which was basically atheistic, gets a new dimension and character in the yoga system.

Kapila is believed to be the father of Sāṃkhya philosophy. Name of other philosophers are also available among whom mention may be made of Āsuri, Pañcaśikha, Varsagaṇya and Vindhyaśins. Āsuri is a prehistoric figure, but Pañcaśikha is a historical one who is believed to be the author of Ṣaṣṭi-Tantra. Īśvarakṛṣṇa is supposed to live after the period of Gautama of the Nyāya-sūtra and Vasubandhu, the Buddhist philosopher. The *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* consists of a very clear account of Sāṃkhya philosophy contained in seventy-two verses. In this book, there is no reference to the philosophy of other systems. Perhaps Īśvarakṛṣṇa believed that the Sāṃkhya philosophy is acceptable to everybody as the representative of Indian philosophy. This is not just an expectation. As a matter of fact we find reference to Sāṃkhya philosophy in the Upaniṣadas, ancient epics, and in the Yoga system. In fact yoga of Patañjali appears to be a version of Sāṃkhya.

A historical source of the Sāṃkhya system is available in *Yuktidīpikā* composed by a person known as Rājana. The book is

a polemical one and enters into debate with certain metaphysical and epistemological issues considered in other systems of philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Vācaspati Misra's *Sāṃkhya-Tattvakaumudī* is another important contribution to the Sāṃkhya literature. Vācaspati's commentary on Sāṃkhya philosophy is believed to be unique of all commentators as it is the case with his other bhāṣyas.

Sāṃkhya philosophy begins with the undeniable fact that there is suffering in the world. We are in bondage and consequently we suffer. Freedom from suffering is the ultimate goal of human life. This freedom, however cannot be attained by any empirical means. Even the non-empirical means suggested in the Vedas are of no avail, because liberation from suffering cannot emancipate a man unless it is permanent. Suffering returns after the force of such empirical and non-empirical means comes to an end.

The Sāṃkhya philosophers claim that a clear knowledge of the *tattvas* can only remove suffering from good. The metaphysical structure of the world has been analysed by the Sāṃkhya philosophers into two basic entities out of the proximity or cooperation of which the world springs. These two entities are Puruṣa and Prakṛti which are diametrically opposed to each other. Puruṣa is conscious while Prakṛti is unconscious and inert. Out of

beginningless nescience these two fundamental entities come close to each other. The three *guṇa*-s – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which compose Prakṛti are originally in a state of equilibrium. The proximity with Puruṣa results in the destruction of the state of equilibrium and evolution begins. The evolutes of Prakṛti are twenty three in number – *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Ahaṅkāra* etc.

Entire metaphysics of Sāṃkhya philosophy is a consequence of their subscription to the theory of causation known as Satkāryavāda. The theory holds that the effect pre-exists in the cause prior to production. If we hold a contrary view and hold that the effect is non-existent or *asat* before its production, then effectuation would be a mystery. If oil is supposed to be non-existent in its material cause, we cannot explain how the effect comes into existence. Out of nothing comes nothing. Hence, it must be conceded that the effect is *sat* or real in the material cause prior to production. Just as a thousand artists cannot turn blue into yellow similarly no amount effort can make the unreal real.

The following five considerations are used in the argument for the *satkāryavāda* : (a) the non-existent cannot produce anything (given the assumed definition of “existence” as the ability to have some effect); (b) when producing a specific thing, we always need a specific substance as material cause (such as clay for a pot, or milk for curds); (c) otherwise everything (or at least anything) would come into being from anything; (d) the

creative agent (the efficient cause) produces only what is contained in the material cause (a potter cannot make jewelry); (e) the effect is essentially identical with its material cause, and so it has many of its qualities (a pot is still clay, and thus consists of the primary attributes of clay). This last argument is utilized to determine the basic attributes of the imperceptible metaphysical causes of the empirical world: the substrate must have the same fundamental attributes and abilities as the manifest world.

Sāṃkhya philosophers use their theory of causation for proving Prakṛti as the ultimate material stuff of the universe. This in fact is the major argument for proving Prakṛti. It will be agreed on all hands that every material thing of the world is capable of producing threefold feeling in us – the feeling of pleasure, pain and dullness or stupefaction. Rainfall eg. produces the feeling of pleasure or *prīti* in the mind of the ploughman, pain and dissatisfaction in the mind of the person who intends to go to his office and a feeling of dullness in the mind of the lazy man who just idles away time. Since according to *Satkāryavāda* the effect pre-exists in the cause, the three feelings of pleasure, pain and dullness must exist in the object which causes them, of course, not as feelings which are psychological. The threefold feelings exist in the object in the form of three *guṇa*-s – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Since every material object has the potency to produce pleasure etc. they must be composed of three *guṇa*-s. *Sattva* corresponds to pleasure (*prīti*), *rajas* to pain (*apṛīti*) and *tamas* to dullness. If all objects are constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*

there must be a primordial material substance which is composed to the three *guṇa*-s. This material substance is Prakṛti.

In *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa the nature of the three *guṇa*-s has been explained in clear terms. *Sattva* is laghu or light, *rajas* is active and *tamas* is heavy and it obstructs revelation. In modern terms the three *guṇa*-s may be paraphrased as coherence, information, revelation and intelligence (*Sattva*); energy, movement, impulse (*Rajas*); and inertia, mass, passivity, conservation (*Tamas*).

The other category of real is Puruṣa. Puruṣa is the principle of consciousness. It is characterized as the conscious subject, uncaused eternal, all-pervasive, self-sustaining and independent. It is devoid of the *guṇa*-s (*agūṇa*), and therefore inactive and unable to produce. The existence of Puruṣa can be known only from inference. Five arguments are given to prove its existence, (1) All complex structures serve an external purpose, for instance, a bed is for somebody to lie on; so the whole of nature, or more specifically the body – a very complex system – must also serve something different from it, which is the Puruṣa, (2) The three *guṇa*-s give an exhaustive explanation of material phenomena, but in sentient beings we find features that are the direct opposites of the *guṇa*-s (such as consciousness or being strictly private), and thus they need a non-material cause, which is the Puruṣa, (3) The coordinated activity of all the parts of a human being prove that there is something supervising it;

without it, it would fall apart, as we see in a dead body, hence the Puruṣa must exist. (4) Although we cannot perceive ourselves as Puruṣa-s with the senses, we have immediate awareness of ourselves as conscious beings; the “enjoyer”, the experiencing self is the Puruṣa. (5) Liberation, or the separation of soul and matter, would be impossible without their being separate Puruṣa to be liberated. Thus Puruṣa must exist.

Sāṃkhya adduces three arguments to prove that there is a separate Puruṣa for each individual: (1) Birth, death and the personal history of everybody is different (it is determined by the law of *karma*, according to our merits collected to previous lives). If there were one Puruṣa only, all bodies should be identical or at least indistinguishable for the function of the self or Puruṣa is to be a supervisor of the body. But this is clearly not so. Hence, there must be a plurality of distinct Puruṣa-s. (2) If there were only one Puruṣa, everyone would act simultaneously alike, for the Puruṣa is the supervisor of the body. But this is clearly not so. Hence, there must be a plurality of distinct Puruṣa-s. (3) If there were only one Puruṣa, we would all experience the same things. However, it is evident that the opposite is true: our experiences are inherently diverse and private, and they cannot be directly shared. Hence, there must be a separate Puruṣa for us all.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa, through diametrically opposed to each other must be conjoined with one another and this conjunction is responsible for creation. There is an apparent implausibility in this

mechanism of creation. Puruṣa as pure consciousness remains outside the realm of causality. So how the conjunction of Prakṛti and Puruṣa comes about remains a mystery. According to the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* Puruṣa and Prakṛti are like the lame and the blind. If the lame is seated on the shoulder of the blind, the lame can give direction to the blind who makes his way home.

The nature of the relation between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is highly problematic. Puruṣa being inactive cannot influence matter or Prakṛti. It is said that Prakṛti serves the purpose of Puruṣa. But how can an intelligent substance serve anybody's purpose? Puruṣa is unable to move Prakṛti, but Prakṛti is able to respond to Puruṣa's intentions. This is possible because Prakṛti has *Sattva guṇa* – the intelligent aspect of nature. Milk is unconscious, but it flows from the udder of the cow out of affection for the calf. Similarly, Prakṛti evolves for the purpose of the Puruṣa. In the later texts the problem, how the two principles borrow each others' property is explained in a different way. In those tasks illumination and reflection are the standard models of the connection between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Puruṣa is said to illuminate Prakṛti and Prakṛti reflects the nature of Puruṣa.

In consequence of Prakṛti's connection with the soul, Prakṛti evolves many forms: the twenty-three *tattva-s* (realities) of manifest Prakṛti. The character of this evolution (*pariṇāma*) is somewhat vague. Is this an account of the origin of the cosmos, or of single being? The cosmogenic understanding is probably

older, and it seems to predominate in later accounts as well. In a pantheistic account the two accounts could be harmonized, but pantheism is alien from classical Sankhya. Īśvarakṛṣṇa is again probably intentionally silent on this conflicting issue, but he seems to be inclined to the microcosmic interpretation: otherwise either a single super-Puruṣa's influence would be needed (that is, God's influence) to account for how the universe on the whole comes about, or a coordinated effect of all the Puruṣa-s – together would be required - there seems to be no foundation for either of these views of Sāṃkhya.

The central mechanism of evolution is the complicated interaction of the *guṇa*-s, which is sensitive to the environment, the substrate or locus of the current process. Just as water in different places behaves differently (on the top of the Himalaya Mountain as ice, in a hill creek, in the ocean or as the juice of a fruit) so do the *guṇa*-s. In the various manifestations of nature the dominance of the *guṇa*-s varies - in the highest form *sattva* rules, in the lowest *tamas* covers everything.

The actual order of evolution is as follows: from root – nature first appears intellect (*buddhi*); from it, ego (*ahaṃkāra*) and from the *tanmātras* the elements (*bhūtas*).

The function of the *buddhi* (intellect) is specified as *adhyavasāya* (determination); it can be understood as definite

conceptual knowledge. It has eight forms: virtue, knowledge, dispassion and command, and their opposites. So it seems that on the material plane, *buddhi* is the locus of cognition, emotion, moral judgment and volition. All these may be thought to belong also to consciousness, or the Puruṣa. However, on the Sāṃkhya account, Puruṣa is connected directly only to the intellect, and the latter does all cognitions, mediates all experiences for it. The view of Sāṃkhya appears to be that when *sattva* (quality of goodness, or illumination) predominates in *buddhi* (the intellect), it can act acceptably for Puruṣa, when there is a predominance of *tamas*, it will be weak and insufficient.

The ego or *Ahaṃkāra* (making the I) is explained as *Abhimāna* – thinking of as [mine]. It delineates that part of the world that we consider to be or to belong to ourselves: mind, body perhaps family, property, rank .... It individuates and identifies parts of Prakṛti: by itself nature is one, continuous and unseparated. It communicates the individuality inherent in the Puruṣa-s to the essentially common Prakṛti that comprises the psyche of the individual. So it has a purely cognitive and a material function as well – like so many principles of Sāṃkhya.

The eleven powers (*indriya*) are mind (*manas*), the senses and the “powers of action” (*karmendriya*), the biological faculties. The senses (powers of cognition, *buddhīndriya*) are sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching – they are the abilities, not the physical organs themselves through which they operate.

The crude names of the powers of action are speech, hand, foot, anus and lap. They symbolize the fundamental biological abilities to communicate, to take in or consume, to move, to excrete and to generate.

"*Manas*" (often translated as "mind", though this may be misleading), designates the lowest, almost vegetative part of the central information-processing structure. Its function is *sarṅkalpa* – arranging (literally 'fitting together') or coordinating the *indriya-s*. It functions partly to make a unified picture from sense data, provided by the senses, and partly to translate the commands from the intellect to actual, separate actions of the organs. So, it is both a cognitive power and a power of action. (Later authors take "*manas*" to also designate the will, for *sarṅkalpa* also has this meaning).

Intellect, ego and mind together constitute the *antaḥ-karaṇa* (internal organ), or the material psyche, while the other *indriya-s* (powers) collectively are called the external organs. The internal organ as an inseparable unit is the principle of life (*prāṇa*). In cognition, the internal organ's activity follows upon that of the external, but they are continuously active, so their activity is also simultaneous. The external organ is strictly bound to the present tense, while the psyche is active in the past and future as well (memory, planning, and the grasping of timeless truths).

The material elements are derived from the gross, *tāmasic* aspect of the ego, which yields what Sāṅkhya calls *tanmātra-s* (only that, that is, unmixed). These in turn yield the elements (*bhūta, mahābhūta*). The elements are ether (*ākāśa*), air, fire, water and earth. The *tanmātra-s* seem to be uncompounded sensibilia; perhaps subtle elements or substances, each having only one sensible quality: sound, touch, visibility, taste and smell. The gross elements are probably fixed compounds of the *tanmātra-s*. Ether has only sound, air also touch, fire is also visible, water has in addition taste and earth has all the five qualities. Human beings are a compound of all these. At death we lose the body made up of the five gross elements; the rest (from intellect down to the *tanmātra-s*) make up the transmigrating entity, called *linga or linga-śarīra* (sign-body), often known in English translations as the "subtle body." The Puruṣa itself does not transmigrate; it only watches. Transmigration is compared to an actor putting on different clothes and taking up many roles; it is determined by the law of (efficient) cause and effect, known also as the law of *karma* (action).<sup>2</sup>

Because Prakṛti is essentially changing, nothing is constant in the material world: everything decays and meets its destruction in the end. Therefore as long as the transmigrating entity persists, the suffering of old age and death is unavoidable.

The only way to fight suffering is to leave the circle of transmigration (*samsāra*) for ever. This is the liberation of Puruṣa, in Sāṃkhya, normally called *kaivalya* (isolation). It comes about through loosening the bond between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. This bond was originally produced by the curiosity of the soul, and it is extremely strong because the ego identifies ourselves with our empirical state: the body and the more subtle organs, including the material psyche. Although Puruṣa is not actually bound by any external force, it is an enchanted observer that cannot take his eyes off from the performance.

As all cognition is performed by the intellect for the soul, it is also the intellect that can recognize the very subtle distinction between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. But first the effect of the ego must be neutralized, and this is done by a special kind of meditational praxis. Step by step, starting from the lowest *tattva-s*, the material elements, and gradually reaching the intellect itself, the follower of Sāṃkhya must practice as follows: "the constituent is not me; it is not mine; I am not this." When this has been fully interiorized with regard to all forms of Prakṛti, then arises the absolutely pure knowledge of the metaphysical solitude of Puruṣa; it is *kevala*, (alone), without anything external-material belongings to it.

And as a dancer, after having performed, stops dancing, so does Prakṛti cease to perform for an individual Puruṣa when its task is accomplished. She has always acted for the Puruṣa, and as

he is no longer interested in her (“I have seen her”), she stops forever (“I have already been seen”) – the given subtle body gets dissolved into the root-Prakṛti. This happens only at death, for the gross body (like a potter’s wheel still turning although no longer impelled) due to causally determined karmic tendencies (*saṁskāra-s*) goes on to operate for a little while.

Puruṣa enters into liberation, forever. Although Puruṣa and Prakṛti are physically as much in contact as before-both seem to be all-pervading in extension – there is no purpose of a new start: Puruṣa has experienced all that it wanted.<sup>3</sup>

We may now try to highlight some of the theories of Sāṁkhya as given above.

Of all the books on Sāṁkhya Philosophy, the *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa is the most authentic one. Many think that Īśvarakṛṣṇa is the disciple of Pañcaśikha. *The Sāṁkhya Kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa is also known as *Sāṁkhyasaptati* because it presents the whole of Sāṁkhya system in seventy verses. This kārikā has several excellent commentaries of which the *Tattvakaumudī* of Vācaspati Miśra is most important. Besides Gouḍpāda Svāmī also wrote an authentic commentary on the *kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Acārya Sankara also quoted from *Sāṁkhya kārikā* in his Śārīraka Bhāṣya. The account of Sāṁkhya philosophy given by Mādhāvācārya in his Sarvadarśana sangraha follows the same

book by Īśvarakṛṣṇa. The commentary by Vācaspati Mīśra called *Tattvakoumudī* is also a very famous treatise.<sup>4</sup>

The *Sāṃkhya sūtra* is divided into six chapters or *adhyāya*. The number of the sūtras in the first chapter deals with suffering, its causes, the removal of suffering and the means for its removal. The second chapter contains forty-seven *sūtras*. In this chapter the purpose of creation, its process, the nature of number of created objects have been described. The number of *sūtras* in the third chapter is eighty four. They consider how the five gross elements evolve from five subtle elements. It also considers the varieties of physical bodies, the way in which the subtle body takes another body, because of bondage, the means of liberation, the importance of *āsana, prāṇāyāma etc* , the concept of non-attachment, five *viparyayas*, twenty-eight *āsakti*, nine *tuṣhties*, eight *siddhis*, the marks of liberated persons, while embodied etc. Vijñānabhikṣu has given different names of each of the chapters. The first chapter has been named *Viśayādhyāya*, the second chapter *Kāryādhyāya*, the third *Vairāgyadhyāya*, the fourth *Akhyāikādhyāya*, the fifth *parapakṣanirjayādhyāya* and the sixth *tantrādhyāya*.

The word *Sāṃkhya* has been derived from the word *Saṃkhyā*. The word *Saṃkhyā* may have again two meanings. It may mean the number of the *tattva* or *padārthas*. Maharṣi Kapila has mentioned twenty-five reals. In his opinion knowledge of these reals leads to liberation. For this reason the philosophy of

Kapila is known as *Sāṃkhya-darśana*. It may be mentioned that for the Nyāya philosophers' knowledge of sixteen categories of reals leads to liberation while for the Vaiśeṣika's liberation proceeds from the knowledge of the six categories. But for this reason the philosophy of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika is not described as Sāṃkhya philosophy. Sāṃkhya philosophy is really a new system. It appears therefore, that the word 'Sāṃkhya' must be taken in another sense. It is said that the word 'Sāṃkhya' means *samyak jñāna* or right knowledge. The philosophy which tells us about the right knowledge is Sāṃkhya philosophy. The philosophy propounded by Kapila deals with the nature, need and means of right knowledge and hence it has been described as Sāṃkhya philosophy. In Kapila's philosophy we come across teaching relating to self knowledge, the like of which is not to be found in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophy. In Vedānta philosophy self-knowledge is described as the cause of liberation; the same is true of Sāṃkhya philosophy. But as a matter of fact right knowledge in Sāṃkhya philosophy means knowledge of discrimination between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Right knowledge in Vedānta philosophy is knowledge of Brahman.<sup>5</sup>

According to Gauḍapāda *Tattvasamāsa* is the oldest book on Sāṃkhya philosophy. It contains twenty-two sūtras. In the opinion of Vijñānabhikṣu *Sāṃkhya-Pravacana* is actually the extension of the six chapters of the Sāṃkhya mentioned above and *tattvasamāsa*.



The central purpose of Sāṃkhya philosophers is the cessation of the three kinds of sufferings – *ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhoutika* and *ādhidaivika*. The suffering or misery which springs from ādhi and Vyādhī is known *ādhyātmika* misery. The misery which comes from birds and beasts, insects, reptiles etc is called *ādhibhoutika* misery.

Further the suffering caused by excessive rain, absence of rainfall of nature is called *ādhidaivika*. These sufferings are not eliminated for good by ordinary or Vedic means. It is found that although such means can remove suffering but that is only temporary. The same suffering comes back again.

In the opinion of Īśvarakṛṣṇa there are two kinds of reals – *Avyakta* and *Jñā*. The word *avyakta* stands for cause in which all effects are contained in an unmanifested form. According to *Satkāryavāda*, the theory of causation endorsed by Sāṃkhya philosophy, the effect exists in the cause prior to its production. So the word '*avyakta*' means the material cause otherwise known as Prakṛti. The word '*Jñā*' means consciousness. In Sāṃkhya philosophy it is known as 'Puruṣa'.

Sāṃkhya philosophy divides all entities or real into two – conscious and material or unconscious. Reasons have been given why a principle of consciousness like Puruṣa is to be admitted besides material things. Prakṛti which is constituted by the three

*guṇa-s* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* has then in a state of equilibrium. When this state of equilibrium of the three *guṇa-s* is destroyed Prakṛti transforms itself into its evolutes. Puruṣa, however, is not subject to change or transformation.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of Prakṛti rests heavily on the doctrine of *satkāryavāda*. This causal theory has been proved with the help of several reasons, e.g. it has been argued that if the cause does not contain the effect in a latent form the effect can not come out of it. This is the reason why we do not get oil from sand, but only from mustered seed. Mustered seed does contain oil in an unmanifested form while sand does not. If it is not admitted then we could have oil from any and every material thing.

*Satkāryavāda* believes in actual transformation of the causal substance. Both cause and effect are real, i.e. they have the same kind of being. However, the Advaitins, although they subscribe to *Satkāryavāda*, believe that the effect does not enjoy being independent of the being of the cause. So it is not reasonable to believe that the cause actually transforms itself into the effect.<sup>7</sup>

On Sāṃkhya philosophy both the difference and identity of the cause and effect has been admitted. The two may be different as entities having different ontological status. For example, Prakṛti and *mahat* are different but Prakṛti being the

material cause it is non-different from *mahat*. It is philosophically correct to endorse only the cause as ontologically real. But in order to agree with the empirical world, the Sāṃkhya philosophers admit of difference and also non-difference of the cause and the effect. This idea is expressed in the following statement – "*Kāraṇakārya vibhāgātabhibhagāt Vaiśyarūpasya*" - it means that there is no complete identity between the cause and the effect, there is no complete difference either.

For the Sāṃkhya philosophers both the cause and effect have been accepted as *sat* or real. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers subscribe to this. They also believe that four kinds of *paramāṇus* are the causes of this world. These *paramāṇus* are eternal or real, and whatever comes from these *paramāṇus* are equally real. Here we find some kind of affinity between Sāṃkhya and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy. But they differ so far as the nature of the effect is concerned. For the Sāṃkhya philosophers, whatever is real is always real. The same thing cannot be sometimes real and sometimes unreal. But for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers the something may be real and unreal at different times.

The conception of Prakṛti in Sāṃkhya philosophy is the conception of a primordial material substance in which the entire material world is contained in an unmanifested form. Creation is the manifestation of the unmanifested. So for this philosopher the world come into being from unconscious material cause. This is a thesis which is analogous to philosophy of creation as we find in

Cārvāka, Bauddha, Jaina, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The Cārvākas believe that four kinds of atoms are the material cause of the world. The Sāṃkhya philosophers however, do not subscribe to *paramāṇukāraṇatāvāda*. They argue that certain gross things may originate from the conjunction of the four kinds of atoms, but there are many subtle entities which cannot come from atomic conjunction. So *paramāṇukāraṇatāvāda* can not explain the origin of everything that composes the universe. The Sāṃkhya philosophers hold that the central cause of the world must be such which can explain the origin of both gross and subtle entities. A cause is always more subtle and pervasive than an effect, clay, for example, is more subtle and pervasive than a pot. Gold is more subtle and more pervasive than the ornament. According to Sāṃkhya philosophy, whatever is the ultimate cause of the world must be more subtle and more pervasive than the things of the world. This most subtle element is Prakṛti. Prakṛti naturally is something that is the cause of everything but is not itself caused by anything.

Sāṃkhya philosophers are dualists. They divide the ultimate reality into two – one is an unconscious principle and the other is a conscious principle. A conscious principle, usually known as the self, is designated by the term Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya philosophy. The fundamental feature of Puruṣa is that it is never an object. Puruṣa is a subject. An object is amenable to perception, but a subject cannot be perceived. This is the reason why perceptual knowledge of Puruṣa is not possible. Nevertheless the existence

of Puruṣa has to be admitted. As a matter of fact, there is nothing which disproves the existence of self. It has been said by Kapila, “*asti hyātmā nāstitva-sādhanābhāvāt*”, which means that since the non-existence of self cannot be proved, the existence of self must be conceded.

In the opinion of the Sāṃkhya Philosophy; the existence of Puruṣa is necessary for explaining the enjoyment and the ultimate liberation of Prakṛti.

In all the arguments which have been given in support of Puruṣa’s existence, there is a central theme. The world which proceeds from Prakṛti must be justified for its existence. The justification is that the world has been created for satisfying certain needs. The concept of need is empty if it is not the need of a conscious principle. This conscious principle is called Puruṣa.

We have seen that the unconscious objects of nature are the medium for satisfying the need of the self. Such objects do not have need of its own. Self is not a means to any end which means that its existence can be justified irrespective of practical necessity. If we consider conscious object, we find that they can not satisfy their needs without the help of a conscious agent, even as the unconscious chariot can not go to a place without being guided by a conscious person. It is proved thus that their

must be a conscious principle besides unconscious Prakṛti or objects of nature.

The conception of self which we find in different systems of Indian Philosophy is not identical. For example, according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Prābhākaras self is not of the nature of consciousness; consciousness is an accidental or contingent property of the self. But for the Sāṃkhya philosophers self is conscious. It is held by them that pleasure and pain, happiness and misery do not have any relation with self. This is why in Sāṃkhya system, the self has been described as consciousness and not of the nature of *Ānanda* or bliss.

If we turn to Advaita philosophy, we find that the self for them is one. For the Sāṃkhya philosophers self is many. One should notice that self is admitted to many by the Jainas, but for them self is all – pervading, but it pervades only in the body. In *Sāṃkhya* philosophy although self is admitted to be many each individual self is all-pervading. If there are ten lamps in a room the light emitted by each pervades the entire room. Similarly each self pervades the whole of nature. For the Jainas, the self has infinite knowledge, unending happiness and power. But for the Sāṃkhya philosophers self is devoid of all qualities. Puruṣa is the enjoyer but not an agent. Prakṛti transforms itself for the enjoyment and liberation of Puruṣa. Puruṣa is inactive and remains as consciousness. It does not change or transform itself.

Why do the Sāṃkhya philosophers describe the self as consciousness? It may be argued that there is no reason to consider consciousness as self or Puruṣa. We can think of consciousness as a property of the self in which case such consciousness can reveal Prakṛti. If it is imagined that self and consciousness are different, consciousness can reveal objects. The contention is that consciousness may be admitted for the revelation of unconscious object. But such consciousness may not be considered as self.

In reply to this contention it is said that if consciousness is a property of the self we should believe that self and consciousness are different. Whatever is different from consciousness must be unconscious or material. So if self is different from consciousness then a self should be considered as material. But if the self is unconscious or material it cannot possess consciousness which is diametrically opposite to it. A material substance can not possess something which is not material. Hence, consciousness is not a property of the self but self is of the nature of consciousness.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa are the two fundamental reals which are responsible for creation. Prakṛti has been described as the state of equilibrium of the three *guṇa*-s - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Creation demands the destruction of the state of equilibrium. According to the Sāṃkhya philosophy such state can be destroyed by the conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Conjunction or co-

operation of these two reals is necessary because Prakṛti or Puruṣa by itself cannot create. Creation involves activities and Puruṣa being inactive cannot create. Similarly, Prakṛti by itself cannot be the cause of creation because it is unconscious. It is possible that Puruṣa can provide what Prakṛti lacks for example, consciousness. Prakṛti similarly provides what Puruṣa lacks namely impact or activity. It shows that the world can be created by the co-operation or conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

It is said that, when Prakṛti and Puruṣa are conjoined with each other, equilibrium of Prakṛti is disturbed. Each *guṇa* tries to predominate over the others. As a result this world of variety comes into existence and the objects of the world sometimes display the predominance of *sattva* and sometimes of *rajas* and *tamas*. Sāṃkhya philosophers give us a detailed account of the evolution of the world from *mahat* to the five fundamental elements or *mahābhūtas*.

The transformation of Prakṛti is not for the sake of Prakṛti, but for something else. Prakṛti is unconscious and material. Hence, it cannot create the world for its own benefit. For Sāṃkhya philosophers an unconscious stuff can not have any interest of its own. It is said that the purpose of the transformation of Prakṛti is for the benefit of Puruṣas' enjoyment and liberation.

It is a fact that the world which is created is not purposeless or without any discipline. Nevertheless Sāṃkhya

philosophy does not believe in the intervention of God for this teleological creation. In a similar way although Prakṛti is unconscious it transforms itself spontaneously without the intervention of God. The Sāṃkhya differs from others systems of Indian Philosophy at this particular point. The other theistic philosopher holds that the transformation of Prakṛti does not require a separate conscious agent for guiding the process of creation. In Sāṃkhya philosophy, the proximity of Puruṣa and Prakṛti is enough for creation. Puruṣa is conscious and is responsible for the destruction of the state of equilibrium of Prakṛti. Just as magnet and iron-particles, though they are devoid of motion, can move when there is contact between the two. Similarly, the proximity of Puruṣa with Prakṛti is responsible for evolution.

In the writings of Kapila there is no concept of God as the efficient cause of the transformation of Prakṛti. The proximity of the two reals is enough to explain the creation of the universe. But commentators like Vijñānabhikṣu entertain a different view. They think that Kapila does not clearly deny a divine role in matter of creation. He simply says that the existence of God is not provable. Vijñānabhikṣu thinks that Sāṃkhya philosophy is designed to explain liberation of *jīva*. Consequently, the question of God's existence does not arise. Liberation proceeds from self-knowledge. For this reason, the author of Sāṃkhya philosophy does not say anything regarding God. Vijñānabhikṣu refers to Upaniṣads where it is said that man can attain liberation through

the knowledge of the fundamental reals admitted in Sāṃkhya philosophy.

However, it is difficult to indicate the opinion of Vijñāna-bhikṣu. The simple reason is that Kapila himself has tried to establish atheism which means that the role of God in creation is simply imaginary.

The two reals, Prakṛti and Puruṣa are of fundamentally different character. Nevertheless creation proceeds from the co-operation of these two principles. It is said that when the two principles come in contact with each other Prakṛti evolves into the world. Prakṛti being partless, the transformation of Prakṛti must be total, which means there would remain no part of Prakṛti untransformed. This, in its turn, means that when Prakṛti is transformed, the transformation being total, Prakṛti itself will be eliminated. The reason is that whatever is not amenable to transformation is Prakṛti. This is what is meant by the remark that Prakṛti is *Avikṛti*. In the state of transformation, nothing of Prakṛti remains unchanged which means that there would be no Prakṛti. The above means that Prakṛti is non-eternal or *Anitya*. It goes against the basic contention of Sāṃkhya philosophy. To answer the question of the non-eternity of Prakṛti we should carefully notice the real meaning of *Parīṇāma* or transformation *Parīṇāma* is the state of a thing which does not imply any change of the thing itself. In simple terms the disappearance of a property and the appearance of another property leave the locus of such

property unchanged. The lump of gold changes into an ornament but inspite of change gold remains unchanged. Consequently, although the Sāṃkhya philosophers speak of the transformation of Prakṛti the nature of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* remain unchanged.

Vijñānabhikṣu however, gives a different account in his *Pravacanabhāṣya*. He says that Prakṛti and Puruṣa are all - pervading and eternal. Hence, the transformation of Prakṛti which proceeds from its relation to Puruṣa must be eternal. Consequently, creation must also be supposed to be eternal. But this is contrary to the contention of Sāṃkhya philosophy which speaks of the creation and dissolution of the world. Vijñānabhikṣu says in reply that the three *guṇa*-s of Prakṛti are unlimited. Nevertheless, they become connected with Prakṛti. The conjunction of this principle is eternal and different from the natural conjunction of them. Transformation is two kinds – *Sadrśa* and *Visadrśa*. The natural conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti leads to *Sadrśa Parināma* and it does not cause *Visadrśa Parināma*. In the case of *Sadrśa Parināma* there is no question of the elimination of Prakṛti because in *Sadrśa Parināma* Prakṛti does not really change.

Evolution of the world does not proceed directly from Prakṛti. The first evolute of Prakṛti is *Mahat* which is followed by *ahamkāra*, the five *tanmātras*, eleven sense-organs and five elements of *mahābhūtas*.

Prakṛti is extremely subtle. But it ultimately transforms itself into the manifested world. It is seen everywhere that something which is originally very small and subtle gradually assumes a gross form. The seed which is small in size produces the great tree. It passes through different stages where we find a gradual change of a seed – a change from subtle stage to the gross one.

Why is Sāṁkhya philosophy written by Kapila? Like most other theistic systems Sāṁkhya philosophy believes that the study of Sāṁkhya philosophy leads to liberation. Men of the world are continuously suffering from these kinds of miseries. It has been claimed that knowledge of the different *tattvas* mentioned in Sāṁkhya philosophy is conducive to salvation. But who is liberated? It is said that Puruṣa is liberated. For how should we understand the liberation of Puruṣa, who is ever liberated. The answer is to be found in the idea of bondage. Bondage is the imposition of *kaṛttva* and *bhokṛttva* on *buddhi* which is accounted by the reflection of Puruṣa. It is this phenomenon which makes Puruṣa *avivekī*. It is held that knowledge of the discrimination between Puruṣa and Prakṛti succeeds in removing Puruṣa's suffering for all time to come.

Since Puruṣa is not amenable to transformation, it suffers no bondage and enjoys no liberation. But this state belongs to Prakṛti. Prakṛti transforms itself for the Puruṣas and so Puruṣa is kept in bondage by Prakṛti.

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