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A B S T R A C T

Śāṁkhya and Yoga are two major systems of Indian Philosophy. There are many similarities between these two systems, although we cannot deny the dissimilarities also between them. The present Paper tries mainly to show the differences between them. We know that the Vedānta has borrowed many Śāṁkhya concepts to its philosophy. Yet the Vedānta has come away from the original Śāṁkhya beliefs and constructed entirely a new philosophy. Later on the Vedānta has become a living philosophy and the Śāṁkhya has become a forgotten phenomenon. The present writer has tried to prove the importance of Śāṁkhya Philosophy and he feels that we cannot forget this philosophy because the very edifice of Yoga Philosophy has been erected by it..

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Introduction:-

Sāṁkhya is a philosophy based on the Sūtras as formulated by Kapila. But his *Sāṁkhyasūtra* is not available at present. However the latter commentators and Sāṁkhya philosophers constructed these sūtras and included them in the *Sāṁkhyapravacanasūtra*.

Sāṁkhya and Vedānta are two diametrically opposite systems. One is atheistic, the other theistic; one is dualistic, the other non-dualistic; one calls the self Puruṣa, the other Ātman; the ground of one is Prakṛti i.e. the material principle, that of the other is Brahman, the spiritual principle; one believes in evolution, the other in creation; one is a rationalist philosophy, the other is an intuitive philosophy; for one the world is real, for the other it is unreal. So there is a vast difference between these two systems.

Had there been no concept of Puruṣa, the Sāṁkhya would have been out and out a materialist philosophy. But Kapila, founder of this philosophy, had to compromise with

idealism that was prevalent at that time. So he had to import the concept of Puruṣa to satisfy the reactionary section of society. Even then his books were destroyed by the idealist fanatics of that time. Now we are to base on the *Sāṁkhyapravacanasūtra* which was written later.

Although the concept of Puruṣa is there in Sāṁkhya, it has no role in making the world except its first proximity with Prakṛti being the primordial matter from which the world evolves. Prakṛti in itself seems to be a dead matter; but Kapila says that it is quite dynamic in nature. Its tendency is to ever evolve, only it waits to be energized which is possible through Puruṣa. When Puruṣa comes into its contact it begins to evolve, and out of this evolution all the psychophysical elements evolve.

Sāṁkhya is mainly concerned with the evolution of man. Man was not created by God; but rather was evolved by Prakṛti. All the twenty-five elements are there in man

including the self or soul. All the twenty-four elements that are there in man have evolved from Prakṛti; only the Puruṣa i.e. the soul is foreign to Prakṛti or to the psycho-physical set up. By psycho-physical set up it is meant that in man there are five gross elements like earth, water, fire, air and ether apart from the five subtle elements like smell, taste, colour, touch and sound. Smell gives rise to earth; taste gives rise to water; colour gives rise to fire or light; touch gives rise to air and sound gives to ether. We have the five sense organs like eyes, nose, ear, tongue and skin. Our eyes see colours; our nose smells fragrance or foul smell; our ear hears sound; our tongue tastes sweet, sour etc.; our skin touches something. Apart from these five sense organs we have five motor organs like the hands, feet, mouth, anus and genital organs. With the help of hands we hold or catch; with the help of feet we walk; with the help of the mouth we eat; with the help of the anus we pass stool; with the help of genital organs we pass urine and have sexual intercourse. All these sense organs are known as external organs. Apart from these external organs we have internal sense organ like the mind. Internal perception is possible through the mind. Apart from the mind we have buddhi i.e. the intellect or reason. Through it we think, argue, infer and draw conclusions. Then we have ahaṁkāra i.e. ego-sense. This ego-sense gives us the awareness that we are individual beings. All this scheme is admitted by Vedānta also, although it has imported a new concept like prāṇa i.e. the vital organ.

Sāṁkhya does not admit of a creator God. In Vedānta although there is the concept of Brahman i.e. the Absolute, it has the concept of a creator God, who with the help of his power māyā, creates the world. The concept of māyā is absent in Sāṁkhya. In Vedānta although the world is created yet it is unreal, because it has been created with the help of the illusory power māyā. It is something like the creation of a magician, which has no reality. So for Vedānta the world is unreal; it is unreal like the snake seen in a rope. Here the rope is real while the snake is unreal. The world is of the status of this unreal or

illusory snake. For Vedānta only Brahman is real; apart from Brahman all others are unreal. But it holds that the self or the Ātman is real, and Ātman and Brahman are identical. This identity is absent in Sāṁkhya.

Although Sāṁkhya admits the existence of Puruṣa in the sense of the soul, it is not an entity, but pure consciousness (śuddha caitanya). The Vedānta also admits this fact. But Vedānta denies the plurality of the soul, while Sāṁkhya admits it. Vedānta says that the plurality of the soul is unreal; we have the concept of plurality of the soul only out of ignorance (avidyā) due to the influence of māyā, the principle of illusion.

We know that the *Bhagavadgītā* is a Vedāntic text. We have two chapters in it viz. Sāṁkhyayoga and Jñānayoga. Sāṁkhyayoga means the way to arrive at the knowledge of the soul and jñānayoga means the way of knowing God. But Sāṁkhya does not admit of jñānayoga, because as there is no God; so the question of knowing God does not arise. It therefore lays emphasis on the knowledge of the soul; for it is necessary to know the soul so that we can liberate it from the subjugation of Prakṛti. For this release Sāṁkhya does not think of God like Yoga's Īśvarapraṇidhāna. Without God's help one can liberate oneself with the knowledge of the soul.

Sāṁkhya is a very old school. Its elements in archaic form is found in the *Rgveda* and in the Upaniṣads like *Kaṭha*, *Śvetasvatara*, *Bṛhadāranyaka*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītakī*. In the *Rgveda* we find the word Saṁkhyā (number) several times in the Maṇḍalas, e.g. first (164) and the tenth (90,129). These may however be regarded as outline of Sāṁkhya ideas, not theories. In the *Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad* (6.13) we find both the names of Kapila and Sāṁkhya. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* we find different Sāṁkhya concepts in its verses 3.10 and 6.7-11. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* we find the concept of ahaṁkāra (1.2, 1.4.). We have these concepts in the dialogues between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also we find this concept (7.25). The concepts of the three

guṇas are found in the *Chāndogya* and *Śvetasvatara* Upaniṣads. The Sāṃkhya tattvas may also traced in the *Taittirīya* and *Aitareya* Upaniṣads. Another Sāṃkhya concept viz. satkāryavāda also is found in the Upaniṣads. In the Ṛgveda also we find the name Kapila. In the *Bhagavadgītā* apart from the name Kapila we find many Sāṃkhya terminologies and concepts. The *Mahābhārata* also in its Śānti Parva uses many concepts of Sāṃkhya. In *Caraka Samhitā* also we find many concepts of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. In the *Sarvadarśana Samgraha* of Mādhavācārya, the earliest anthology of Indian systems, we have chapter (13th) on Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Ancient seers like Āsuri, Pañcaśikha, Īśvarakṛṣṇa are associated with Sāṃkhya.

We have said that in the *Bhagavadgītā* there are many concepts of the Sāṃkhya. We know that the Gītā is a source book of Vedānta (i.e. one of the prasthānatrayī). We have here mainly the concept of Prakṛti. In one verse it is said that under Krishna's guidance prakṛti gives birth to all the things of the world (IX.10). Prakṛti is said to be Krishna's own nature and into it all beings pass (IX.7).

Prakṛti finds its importance in the *Gītā*. Krishna says that all the things and beings of the world are under the control of Prakṛti. Śaṅkarācārya also has not forgotten to define Prakṛti as “Prakṛtiḥ pradhānam sattvarajasatamaścam guṇānām sāmāyāvasthā”, meaning Prakṛti or Pradhāna maintains its equilibrium in the three guṇas sattva, rajas and tamas. These three guṇas are regarded by the Gītā to be the three modes of Prakṛti. It is also said that no creature either on earth or in heaven can be from these three guṇas.

Original sūtras (aphorisms) written by Kapila have been lost. Now we have only the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa as the authentic source of it. There are many Chinese translations of earlier works; but we do not find the original sources. Simply we have found the names of them. One of them is Śaṣṭitantra.

There are many commentaries on the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. *Gauḍapābhāsyā* is one of them. Unfortunately Gauḍapāda was a Vedāntin; so he commented upon the Kārikā with an idealistic tone. Vācaspati's *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī* is another important bhāṣya (commentary).

The Sāṃkhya was mostly popularized by an important work viz. *Sāṃkhyapravacanasūtra*. Its importance is next to the *Kārikā*. We have several commentaries on this work. Some of them are: *Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti* by Aniruddha, *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya* by Vijñābhikṣu, *Laghusāṃkhyasūtravṛtti* by Nāgeśa, etc.

Sāṃkhya may be regarded as a realistic philosophy, because like western realism of mind body dualism it also admits the dualism of Puruṣa i.e. the spirit or self and Prakṛti i.e. matter.

It seems that Sāṃkhya stands against Brāhmaṇic hegemony. It is very much polemical to the Brāhmaṇic tradition.

Sāṃkhya believes much more on reason than on revelation.

Sāṃkhya and Vedānta Epistemology

Sāṃkhya lays emphasis on viveka jñāna i.e. discriminative knowledge. This knowledge enables us to correctly differentiate between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and non-eternal. This discriminative knowledge is different from empirical knowledge which is the result of our sense organs, our mind and intellect. Neither perceptual knowledge nor rational knowledge can give us reality.

The Vedānta speaks of svayam prakāśā (self-revealed) knowledge which is characterised by svataḥ prāmāṇya, which means that its truth is self-revealed, not parataḥ prāmāṇya i.e. truth is proved by outward conditions. This svayam prakāśā jñāna is self-knowledge (ātma jñāna).

While Sāṃkhya lays emphasis on discriminative knowledge i.e. knowledge of duality, Advaita Vedānta lays emphasis on advaita jñāna i.e. non-dual knowledge.

The empirical knowledge in Vedānta is received through three pramāṇas (instruments of knowledge) such as perception, inference, comparison, postulation, non-perception and verbal testimony. On the other hand Sāṅkhya accepts only perception, inference and verbal testimony.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa

We have already said that Prakṛti is the material cause of the universe. In that case Puruṣa may be regarded as the efficient or instrumental cause. Prakṛti is regarded as avyakta i.e. unmanifested, while the world is vyakta i.e. manifested. This question of manifestation of the world depicts the very theory of evolution which in Sāṅkhya terminology is known as pariṇāmavāda. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* however thinks avyakta to be higher than Prakṛti (3.10,11); and it regards Puruṣa to be higher than this avyakta. It says that higher than Puruṣa there is nothing.

Sāṅkhya would have been quite Prakṛtivāda had there been no concept of Puruṣavāda. But as the concept of Puruṣa is there so it may be regarded as Prakṛti-Puruṣa-vāda. This Prakṛti-Puruṣa-vāda combines the two concepts: one is inert primal matter and the other is primal consciousness.

The Puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya system has been transformed into Puruṣa-viśeṣa by Patañjali importing the concept of God to his philosophy. Perhaps he had to compromise with the Brāhmaṇic tradition with the fear that his philosophy and yoga practice might not be accepted by the people. It appears that he has done so very reluctantly.

Prakṛti is not only the cause of the world but also its substratum. It is the material cause (upādāna kāraṇa) of the universe. Consciousness however is not an evolute of Prakṛti as is held by the materialists. It is due to Puruṣa. Prakṛti can evolve only the psycho-physical universe, not consciousness as such. The essence of consciousness is not there in Prakṛti, but in Puruṣa.

Denial of God

God is not there in Sāṅkhya philosophy. It not only denies God as the creator of the world but also as the moral governor. It argues that if God is good then how can he create a world full of evil and suffering (kleśa)? Again if he creates the world then he must have the desire to create it; and if he has desire then he will come down to the human level. A worldly God is no God at all. Moreover it is unnecessary to think of God beyond individual Puruṣas and Prakṛti. *Yuktidīpikā*, a commentary on *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, however admits the existence of God in Sāṅkhya.

God is denied because his existence cannot be proved.

Śaṅkarācārya has regarded Sāṅkhya as the principal opponent (pradhāna-malla) to his philosophy viz. Vedānta. According to Śaṅkara Prakṛti cannot be the cause of the world. It is so because Prakṛti is unconscious. An unconscious principle cannot create the world. So he posits Brahman in place of Prakṛti. He lowers the position of Prakṛti to the level of Māyā. But it is to be remembered that the Vedānta has incorporated many Sāṅkhya concepts to its philosophy.

The Sāṅkhya and Vedantic tradition includes manas, buddhi, citta and ahaṁkāra within the concept antahkaraṇa. Kapila speaks of antahkaraṇa in his sūtra 1.65. As these are the inner (antah) instruments (karaṇa, but not kāraṇa, meaning cause) of knowledge (“Mano buddhirahaṁkāraścittaṁ karaṇātaram”). It depicts the psychical aspect of man. It is opposed to bāhyakaraṇa i.e. external sense organs like eyes, ears etc. We may regard it as the mental body as this concept we find in western philosophy.

In Sāṅkhya tradition the sūkṣmaśarīra is comprised of the tanmātras, the sense organs, the mind, the ahaṁkāra and the buddhi. When a man dies the soul goes along with this sūkṣma śarīra. This sūkṣma śarīra goes on birth after birth, and it determines punar janma i.e. rebirth. This sūkṣma śarīra can be separated from the soul

when man acquires true knowledge of the soul.

From one point of view Advaita Vedānta may also be designated as atheistic, because it denies the ultimate reality of God. In it not God but Brahman i.e. the Absolute is ultimately real. God is produced by maya. It has simply an empirical reality (vyavahārika sattā), no metaphysical or ultimate reality (paramārthika sattā). Krishna, the God of the *Bhagavadgītā*, says that he creates himself through Māyā.

The *Gītā* admits the theory of the incarnation of God. Krishna says, “Though (I am) unborn, and my self (is) imperishable, though (I am) the lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature I come into (empiric) being through My power (*māyā*)”. (IV.6, S. Radhakrishnan’s tran., henceforth S.R.’s tran.)

The *Gītā* seems to hold theistic Vedānta. Of course its philosophy can never be called pure theism, because theism admits the dualism of God and the world. Its philosophy may be regarded as absolutistic theism as the concept of Brahman is also there. Yet the theistic element sometimes comes to the forefront as in one of the slokas Krishna, the God of the *Gītā*, says, “As I surpass the perishable and am higher even than the imperishable, I am celebrated as the Supreme Person in the world and in the *Veda*.” (XV.18, S.R.’s tran.)

Idealist thinkers like Radha Nath Phukan has grafted God into Sāṅkhya philosophy making it unnecessarily a theistic philosophy. Similarly commentators like Vijnānabhikṣu also try to explain Sāṅkhya in the theistic line. These arguments are very weak and implausible. The Sāṅkhya system in no way considers the existence of God to be relevant to its philosophy. To think of God in it will be quite redundant.

Prakṛti and Māyā

The Vedānta has transformed Prakṛti into Māyā. Especially the *Bhagavadgītā* is very much eloquent in this respect. Girish Baruah elaborates this point in the following way: “The *Gita* considers prakṛiti to be maya. It does so under the influence of the Vedānta. As *maya*, *prakṛiti* must be *asati*. i.e. non-being. Non-being means something does not exist. So *prakṛiti* really does not exist. Yet it is necessary for the rise of the world.” (*The Bhagavadgita: A Philosophical Analysis*, p. 81) Elucidating this point Radhakrishnan also says, “Non-being... is a necessary element in the world, for it is the material in which the ideas of God are actualized.” (*The Bhagavadgita*, p. 39) He says further, “Non-being is a necessary moment in reality for the unfolding of the Supreme.” (*Loc. Cit.*)

The Status of the World

We have already said that for Sāṅkhya the world is real; because it is the pariṇāma i.e. the evolution of Prakṛti, not apparent modification (vivarta) of Brahman as the Advaita Vedānta holds. But Advaita Vedānta also regards the world to be anādi i.e. beginningless. If it were beginningless then how can it be real? Actually the Vedāntic interpretation is that the world is anādi potentially, not actually. Actually the world has a beginning, but potentially it has no beginning, and whatever has no beginning has no end also. In that case it will be eternal like Brahman. This is a pantheistic tendency as we find in the Vedānta.

When the world comes into destruction where does it go? Definitely to the bosom of Brahman. Not to speak of the world even God i.e. Krishna has gone to the bosom of Brahman after his phenomenal death. That means both the world and God are potential in Brahman. If Brahman is not potential with the world it cannot produce it. Both Sāṅkhya and Vedānta hold that unless a cause is potential, it cannot produce the effect. Thus both the systems accept the theory that the effect is pre-existent in the cause prior to its production (satkāryavāda).

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