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INTRODUCTION TO SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY

The Samkhya system derives its name from the word samkhya, meaning number, since it enumerates the metaphysical principles of reality. Or, the word samkhya may mean perfect knowledge. The system is called Samkhya, since it gives perfect knowledge of the self (purusa) as quite distinct from prakrti and its evolutes, body, sense-organs, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), and egoism (ahamkara), which annihilates all kinds of suffering. It is propounded by Maharshi Kapila. Sankhya is one of the earliest philosophical school of thought in India. Another early extant of text of this school is Samkhya karika of Ishvarakrishna (3rd century). Vacaspati Mishra, the great scholar, wrote a commentary on Samkhyakarika, known as Samkhyatattvakaumudi which is regarded as one of the most authoritative works on Sankhya system.

METAPHYSICS OF SANKHYA

- ▶ Samkhya system classified all objects into two categories –
- ▶ Purusha
- ▶ Prakriti

Sankhya maintains an intermingled duality between the two

All physical events are considered to be manifestations of the evolution of Prakriti or primal nature (From which all physical bodies are derived).

Karika no. 17 – Proofs for the existence of Purusa.

**Sanghat Pararthattvat
Trigunaadi Viparyayat |
Adhistanat Bhoktribhavat
Kaivalyārtha Pravrittesch ||**

- ▶ Sanghat Pararthattvat – All composed objects are meant for someone else. The unconscious element cannot make use of them, hence all these substances are for purusa or self. The body, sense organs, mind, intellect are only the tools of the purusa. The three gunas, prakriti, Subtle body, all serve the purpose of the purusa. Evolution is teleological. Its purpose is to work for the purusa.
- ▶ Trigunadi Viparyayat – All substances are composed of three gunas. Purusa is the witness of these gunas and is himself beyond them. The substances composed of the three gunas prove the existence of the purusa who is not made of three gunas and is beyond them.
- ▶ Adhistanat – There should be a pure consciousness, which is beyond experience and is capable of synthesizing to create harmony among all the experiences. All knowledge depends upon the knower. Purusa is the substratum of all practical knowledge. He must be present in all kinds of affirmations and negations. There can be no experience without him.
- ▶ Bhoktribhavat – Unconscious prakriti cannot make use of its own creation. A conscious element is needed to make use of them. Prakriti is the one to be enjoyed hence there must be someone to enjoy it. All the objects of the world create either pain or pleasure or indifference, but there must be some conscious element to experience these three feelings of pain, pleasure or indifference. Hence, there must necessarily be a purusa or self.

- ▶ Kaivalyārtha Pravṛtti – In this world there are many individuals who endeavour to gain freedom from the pains and displeasures of the world. For the desire of salvation to exist a person is needed to wish for salvation or mokṣa and to make an effort for it and attain it. For there to be any prayer there must be someone to pray. Hence it is necessary to accept the existence of puruṣas