CHAPTER - V
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1. THE CONCEPTS OF SPACE AND TIME

Space and time are the two conceptions of Indian philosophy which are invariably involved in our experience of the objects of this world. Objects of our experience, in normal situation are always spatio-temporal. In other words, it can be said that the spatio-temporal characterisation is a necessary requisite of objective experience. This necessity as found in the context of the relation between objects and space and time has made the notions of space and time very important. Scientists as well as philosophers have been engaging themselves in the task of explaining the mystery of the universe from the very beginning of civilisation and as notions of space and time are associated with the explanation of the universe these are equally significant both for the scientists and for the philosophers. The main problems regarding space and time are: have space and time got any objective reality or not? If they have got an objective reality, what are their nature? In solving these problems, some thinkers regard space and time as both empirically and transcendentally real; some thinkers hold their empirical reality but deny their transcendental existence; some others totally deny the objective reality of space and time both empirical and transcendental. As regards the nature of space and time, philosophers differ in their views.

Indian thinkers are found to be more inclined towards the ontological discussion of space and time than towards the epistemological one. The world first exists, then it is known. It exists in space and time, then is known as spatio-temporal. We find that the Indian thinkers are treating space and time as substantial
entities or as ultimate elements as identifical with the real itself, thereby ascribing to them a metaphysical significance. We come across such discussions too, where space and time are considered as conditions of knowledge.

2. INDIAN VIEWS OF SPACE AND TIME

It would be useful to bear in mind that the Indian thinkers explored various meanings of space and time and used different terms to signify their different aspects. The Sanskrit equivalents of these two being desa (space) and kāla (time). In Indian philosophy, the word 'space' has been used in three distinct senses: (1) Ākāśa (the greater space), (2) Desa (locus of existence or room) and (3) Dik (direction). Ākāśa besides meaning greater space also means one (i.e., vyoma) of the five elements of which the universe is produced. Desa and dik are also used as interchangeable terms. Like space, time also has two different uses, one as the condition or factor of existence and the other as the great destroyer (mahākāla). In the most primary sense kāla signifies the eternal flow of unending continuum of events incessantly running from past through present to future. Kāla also stands for the great destroyer (mahākāla) who sweeps away everything finite and perishable. In its third sense kāla instead of standing for the beginningless and endless principle, means a created product having a beginning point. There is still a fourth meaning of kāla which describes it as the cause of appearance and disappearance of all that is mundane.

From the above observation it becomes clear that Indian philosophers did not look upon space and time as conditions of knowledge or existence only. Rather space and time were viewed by them as multifaceted concepts conveying variety of senses and allowing varied interpretations. Thus the problem of space
and time in India assumes a complex and intricate appearance.

(i) The View of the Vaiśeṣikas

Space and time are regarded as substance in the Vaiśeṣika philosophy.¹ According to the Vaiśeṣikas all substance are created by kāla or time.² The cause of the notion of distance, nearness etc. is called dik. It is one and eternal.³ In their transcendental nature, space and time are eternal, unitary, indivisible and infinite which transcend our sense knowledge. Space and time are the common objective background of all the events of the world. But space and time are also empirical. The empirical space and time can be known from the notions of east, west etc., and past, present, future, hour, day etc., respectively. They are non-eternal, manifold, divisible and finite and are perceptible to the senses. The divisions of space and time are, however, not inherent in the nature of space and time, they are due only to the limiting adjuncts.⁴

(ii) The View of Classical Sāṃkhya

The Sāṃkhya-yoga does not accept the view of the Vaiśeṣikas. According to Sāṃkhya philosophers, space and time are not two separate categories, since these are included in the concept of ākāśa i.e space and time are produced from ākāśa.⁵ The knowledge of space and time are samyukta. It is said by Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya in Encyclopedia of Indian

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1. tatra dravyāni prthivyāptejovāyavākāśakaladigatama manāṃsi navaiva. TSA, 2
2. janyānam janakah kālo jagatāmaśrayo matah / Bh P, 46
3. dūrantikādi dhīheturekāntyā dig ucyate / Ibid., 47
4. kṣanādhiḥ syād upādhitah / Ibid., 46
   upādhibhedadekāpi prācyādvivapadesabhak / Ibid., 47
5. dikkāḷavākāsadibhyāḥ. SS, 2.12
Philosophies, that space and time are considered to be phenomenal derivatives of the fundamental principles and are not in themselves real in the sense that the twenty five fundamental principles are real. What we call space and time are nothing but ākāśa conditioned by the movements or actions of the luminaries. Vijnānabhikṣu maintains that space and time are produced from ākāśa and are endowed with objective reality. Our phenomenal experience is always the experience of objects as co-existent or as in sequence, such experiences represent objects in space and time. These ideas of space and time as determined by objects of experience are said to arise from ākāśa, the evolute of Prakṛti. Vijnānabhikṣu considers eternal space and time to be of the nature of ether and to be specific modes of Prakṛti. According to Bhikṣu, space and time, which are limited, are produced from ākāśa through the conjunction of this or that limiting objects. Vijnānabhikṣu clearly distinguishes between the empirical space and time and the transcendental space and time. He said that beyond the empirical space and time admitting of division due to the upādhis or conditions, there are eternal space and time. These partake of the nature of ākāśa and kāla and are, therefore, eternal and all-pervasive.

Again, Vijnānabhikṣu opines in his Isvaragīta that time is that entity which brings about a conjunction between Prakṛti and the Purusa, as a result of which categories like mahat, ahamkāra etc. are produced from Prakṛti. He also said

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7. upādhibhedād ākāśameva dikkalasabdhavacyam, tasmad akase antarbhutau, AnV on SS, 2.12.
8. nityau yau dik-kalau tav-ākasaprakṛtibhutau........................................
yau tu khaṇḍadikkalau, tau tu tattadupadhisaṃyo gadakāsādutpadyete. SPB on SS, 2.12.
9. Ibid.
that time is conditioned by God's will: it is the moment of God's will for connecting *Prakṛti* and the *Puruṣa*. These two ultimate realities i.e. *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are really inactive. But they are rendered active by time. This time is non-eternal. As it does not exist in *Pralaya*, when the relation between *Prakṛti* and the *Puruṣa* does not exist. It is clear that this time is the empirical time, since he speaks of the transcendental time as an eternal, dynamic power inherent in Brahman in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra.*

The commentator of *Samkhya Karika*, Vacaspati Misra does not recognize time as a distinct category. He strictly criticises the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of the independent reality of time. It has already been said that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika considers time as eternal and indivisible and explain the division of time experienced by us with the help of *upādhis* or conditions. But Vacaspati Misra maintains that the actions like origination, stay, destruction etc. of the said *upādhis* can themselves explain the notions of past, present, future etc., it is superfluous to accept time as a distinct principle apart from the *upādhis.*

The author of *Yuktidipika* also denies the existence of time. According to him, time has been imagined from the succession of movements or actions like the movement of the luminaries, the beating of pulses etc. He states that 'time' is not the factor that brings out modification in an entity, it only renders some assistance by means of its mere relation. Hence time has no distinct principle.

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10. *kālasya prakṛti-puruṣa-saṃyogakhyāryonmukhatvam paramesvare cchaya eva bhavati.*
   IGB as quoted from *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Dasgupta, S.N, Vol. III, P. 488.

11. *kālādikārahāvargesvāra saṃkhyāvārasaṃkhyāsu pratipadakśrutaryāthā śvetasvātaḥ kālah svabhāvah.*
   VB on BS, 1.4.28

12. *yairupādhibhedairanāgaṭādibhe’dair anāgataśutpadyate santu ta evopāyah, ye’nāgaṭādivyavahārāhārāhātāh, kṛtamatāntantavagasvāmatā kalena.*
   STK on SK, 33.

13. *na kalo nāma kasciptadarthastit kim tarhi kriyāsu kalaśamijña.*
   YDi on SK, 50.

   STK on SK, 33.

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apart from action.

Regarding the concept of space and time Yoga-philosophy also does not accept the view of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas. In the Yoga-philosophy, it is found that time is nothing but the succession of moment (ksañas). Time is unreal. There is no time beyond the moments. According to Vyāsa, a moment is the indivisible unit of time even as an atom is the indivisible unit of a material substance. A moment is the duration of time which an atom in motion requires to leave one point in space and reach the next point. Sequence (krama) is the continuous flow of moments. Moments (ksañas) and their sequences (krama) cannot be combined into real things. So, time, being of this Prakṛti, does not correspond to anything real, because it is a product of mind, and it is the knowledge of perceptions or the transformation of words. He also maintains that moment is objective and rests on the sequence. The opinion of time as an order of separate moments makes the present moment all important. In this respect, the observation of B.N. Seal is noteworthy: “Order in time is nothing but the relation of antecedence and sequence, between the moment that is and the moment that went just before. But only one moment, the present exists.” The past and future have no meaning apart from their relation to the present. B.N. Seal also said, “The
present is the mark of actuality, the future the mark of potentiality, and the past, of sub-latency, in a phenomenon. Only one single moment is actual and the whole universe evolves in that one single moment. The rest is but potential or sub-latent."²⁰

The significant view of the Śāmkhya-yoga is that space and time whether considered as empirical or eternal are always attached to the process of evolution. The evolutionary process may be approached by human understanding through the empirical consciousness or through that of intellectual intuition. Our understanding conceives the tanmatras (subtle element) as standing in three different relations, viz., position in space (desāvācchinnā), position in time (kalāvācchinnā) and position in the causal series (nimitīśvācchinnā). This process of being conscious about something with reference to space, time and causality is termed as empirical intuition (savīcārānirvikalkaprapajñā) and pure relationless intuition is called intellectual intuition (nirvicārānirvikalkaprapajñā).²¹ Space, time, causality etc. are necessary for empirical intuition of the guṇas of Prakṛti. Space apart from objects has no concrete existence. Space is only a subjective concept formed out of empirical data of co-existence of objects by the way of conception. In this way time conceived as objective devoid of all reference to the fact of phenomenal change is also an conception, a non-entity. Our understanding makes the idea of time as infinite on the basis of the observation on changes in the phenomenal sphere. In the words of B.N. Seal, "These phenomenal changes as intuited by us in the empirical consciousness fall into a series, which the understanding conceives

²⁰ Ibid.
²¹ tatra bhutasūksmesu abhivyaktadharmakeṣu desākalanīmīttanubhavavacchinneṣu ya samāpattih sa savicāretyucyate. tatrapyekabuddhiningrāhyamevoditadharmavisistam bhutasūksmamalambanibhūtām samadhiprajñāyāmupatisthate. Ibid., 1.44.
as order in time." Actually, eternality and infinity of space and time are universally accepted since these ideas are only the specific modifications of Prakṛti.

Another point to be taken notice of in relation to the Śāmkhya opinion is the distinction conceived between space as locus (deśa) and space is direction (dik). Space (dik) has no ultimate unit since it arises only from the various relations in which ākāśa stands to the finite objects. K.P. Sinha points out that space has no objective reality beyond the perceiving mind, it is a necessary postulate of human thinking. Dr. K.P. Sinha also explains the concept of space and time from the transcendental point of view. According to him, the transcendental time and transcendental space are nothing but an aspect of God or the Absolute, rather space and time are identical with God or the Absolute. The so-called transcendental space and time are not two distinct categories. These are the eternality of God or the Absolute that is interpreted by us as the transcendental time and transcendental space.

Naturally, one question comes to our mind that space and time are known to all. But how is it then that space and time are not included in the tatväs of the Śāmkhya? In this regard, K.P. Bahadur opines that in reality time and space are eternal and absolute, and as such are the source of ether. Space and time are all-pervading. But being conditioned by limiting objects, they become limited and in their limited aspects they arise from ether. So, there are two aspects of space and time the eternal and the limited. In the former they are the source of ether, and in the latter ether is their source.

24. Ibid., Pp. 89, 98
25. The wisdom of Saṅkhya, Bahadur, K.P., P. 106
From the above discussion we can say that the Śāṅkhyā’s space and time are relational concepts which the understanding constructs depending on different spatial and temporal relations obtaining among phenomenal objects.

(iii) The View of the Mahābhārata

Time occupies an important place in the creation theory of the epic Mahābhārata. In the Mahābhārata, it is said that time is the creator, destroyer and the protector of living beings. Individuals are born in different bodies, due to their accumulated merits and demerits, under the influence of time. As a category, time regulates and determines to a certain extent, the destiny of living beings. In the conversation of Asita Devala and Nārada, eight eternal principles are mentioned where time is one of the principles. These are bhāva, abhāva, kāla, prthivi, apas, vāyu, ākāśa and tejas. Kāla being impelled by bhāva, brings into existence all bhūtas out of the five elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and sky.

(iv) The View of the Purāṇas

The explanation of the concept of time is also noticed in the Purāṇas. The Purāṇas admit time as the principle that brings about a connection between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. In the Purāṇas, it is described that kāla is one of the four different forms of the highest reality i.e. God. “The function of kāla is to associate puruṣa and prakṛti at the time of creation and also to dissociate them at the time of dissolution. It is beginningless and is the instrumental cause of all evolution.

26. kalah sarvam samādatte kalah sarvam prayacchati / 
   kālena vidhṛtaṁ sarvāṁ mā krthā sakra paurusam // Mahābhārata, 12.217.25
27. Ibid., 12. 275, 9

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and dissolution." In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, time occupies a prominent place where time is regarded as a category which regulates and determines to a certain extent, the destiny of living beings. Individuals are born in different bodies due to their accumulated merits and demerits under the influence of time. Time is not a product of *Prakṛti*. It exists in God as his transcendent effort and transforms the unmanifest nature into the form of the manifest world. In this *Purāṇa*, time is described as the external form of God from whom proceeds the activity of *Prakṛti*. Anima Sengupta points out that, “He is the Reverend one Himself and *kāla* too, who by His own divine active energy presides over the elements internally as *puruṣa* and externally as time.”

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* holds that time is an eternal entity existing not only in creation, but also in pralaya. Here, it is said that time is not an evolute of *Prakṛti*, it is different from *Prakṛti* and its evolutes, and inheres in God as His eternal dynamic power. It is by this power called time that God connects *Prakṛti* and the *Purusas* in creation, and disconnects them in pralaya.

3. RADHANATH PHUKAN’S VIEWS ON SPACE AND TIME

Regarding the idea of space and time also Radhanath Phukan’s view is noteworthy. Radhanath Phukan conforms to the views of Kapila, Vyāsa, Vasaspati Miśra and Vijnānabhikṣu holds that space and time are linked together and they are produced from the five *mahābhūtas*. Radhanath Phukan has said that space and time are at the root of all knowledge. It is not possible to understand anything.
to think, or to speak of anything without the underlying concept of space and
time. At the same time it is not possible to separate the concept of time from that
of space. One is a part of the other and includes it. Radhanath Phukan has also
explained the Saṁkhya concept of space and time with the help of modern science.
The most amazing discovery in the scientific field about space and time is Einstein’s
‘Theory of Relativity’ in which space and time are conceived as relative. According
to this theory, in this world everything is relative on space and time. It is a fact
that stability, length, even colour etc. of the external universe are all relative.
Actually, not only the external universe but also our idea of time and space are
relative. Hence, Phukan says, “Einstein proved not only that the shape and size of
the external Universe are relative, he also proved that our concept of time is
relative depending as it does, upon the velocity of the observer in space.”32 This
theory proves that measure of time is not the same everywhere. In this respect
Phukan has referred to the story of princess Revati of the Viśṇu Puraṇa.33 This
story indicates that the measure of time in heaven and earth is not the same.34
Again, Phukan also refers to some ancient sages who retain their youth for ever.35
For establishing his view Phukan has take the help of the Fitzgerald Contraction.
‘Fitzgerald Contraction’ is a phenomenon of physics which relates to length
contraction. In physics, length contraction is the physical phenomenon of a
decrease in length by an observer of objects that travel at any nonzero velocity
relative to that observer. This is also called Lorentz contraction or Lorentz-
Fitzgerald contraction. This contraction is usually noticeable at a substantial fraction

32. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 572
33. Supra, Pp. 14-15
34. VP., 4.1.66-92
35. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 572
of the speed of light, the contraction is only in the direction parallel to the
direction in which the observed body is travelling. This effect is negligible at
everyday speeds. Only at greater speed it becomes important.36 This contraction
can be calculated easily if the velocity is known. Fitzgerald Contraction is a
result of the inseparable relation between space and time. Phukan says, ‘Fitzgerald
Contraction’ appears in all our calculations because we calculate time and space
separately instead of regarding them as an inseparable unit designated by modern
science as ‘Space Time.”37 Regarding the concept of space Phukan also refers to
the view of Einstein, Whitehead etc.

Radhanath Phukan said that the real time is one and indivisible
(akhandakāla) from the transcendental point of view. What we call time is only
relative time which is expressed in relation to the space occupied by the speaker.
Relative time is true for all persons living in the same world. Therefore the
measurement of time is different for a person living in a different world. In
Radhanath Phukan’s view this idea of space time is established in the story of
Revati of Vīṣṇu Purāṇa. According to him, “it seems that the sages who thought
out such stories has a clear idea about the truth regarding space and time. They
knew quite well that the measure of time was not the same everywhere.”38 This
scientific truth was known to the ancient Śāmkhyists. It is evident from the fact
that they have propounded the view that space-time are linked together.

Radhanath Phukan maintains that the concept of endless time is the same
as the concept of our existence. “I exist’ means that I am always living in endless

37. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P. 570
38. Ibid., P. 573
time. The English scientists call this concept 'becoming' or 'time lived'. This is the real Time. But we have seen that it is actually relative, its length, like spatial length, depends on velocity."³⁹ According to him, relative time is entirely a personal matter and this is not realized from the external world through the senses. The time will remain even if all external events, becomes annihilated. It cannot be communicated to others. Whenever this relative time is to be indicated to others it has to be mixed up with space, otherwise it is not possible to communicate one's own idea of time to others.⁴⁰

In order to do so, two things are necessary: (1) the persons, viz. the speaker and the hearer must live at about the same space in the universe; (2) the external objects must be seen by both the persons at the same time. On the basis of these two only one can explain to others the concept of time in terms of hours, minutes etc. This is actually a makeshift measurement of time. It is not relative, because it is the same for all people living in the same space. This is the time of our everyday use. This is a mixture of relative time with space. The scientists call this 'Astronomical Time'. Phukan expresses it as khaṇḍakāla or empirical time. This is not Relative time.

Referring to the commentary of Vacaspati Misra on the Karika ³³, Phukan says that the rejection of objectivity of time by the Sāṁkhists refers to the Astronomical Time or khaṇḍakāla only. According to Phukan, "The relative and the only real time which the scientists speaks of, is not called time at all in the Sāṁkhya philosophy, ............... it is only the idea of our own existence (ego-sense) in an endless time."⁴¹

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³⁹. Ibid.
⁴⁰. Ibid., P. 573
⁴¹. Ibid., P. 608 n

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Like Radhanath Phukan, M.N. Roy also tries to explain the concept of
time and space from the point of 'Theory of Relativity' and modern science. M.N.
Roy holds that all motions are relative, bodies move relating to one another, the
speed of a body is measured in relation to another, which is supposed to be at
rest, but there are no bodies in absolute rest. Roy also pointed out that our
experience of time is dependent on the changes in the external and internal
relations of a body. So, the interdependence of time and space is an empirical
fact. He has clearly stated that dynamic view of the universe is represented by
the Theory of Relativity "......... these are not independent entities, as conceived
previously, but are woven inextricably in a background on which all physical
phenomena occur. Philosophically, the fundamental achievement of the 'Theory
of Relativity' is to have brought about this revolution in the concepts of Space
and Time." Roy also opines that time can never exist independent of space,
nature has welded it together with space.

Eddington in his book *The Nature of the Physical world*, gives an
interesting account as to how our notions of space and time are relative to the
motion of the observer and the measuring system applied. Illustrating the
Einsteinean theory with the help of an example Eddington says that if of two
observers one is imagined to be moving in space very rapidly, while the other as
staying on the slowly moving planet earth, the first observer will live very slowly
while the second will live a faster life on earth. To quote Eddington, "If the speed
of travel is very great at home individual has aged 70 years, the traveller has aged

42. *Science And Philosophy*, Roy, M.N., P. 73
43. Ibid., P. 77
44. Ibid., P. 76
45. Ibid., P. 80

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only one year. He has only found appetite for 365 breakfasts, lunches etc. his intellect, clogged by a slow-moving brain, has only traversed the amount of thought appropriate to one year of terrestrial life."

4. PROBLEM OF GOD

The idea of God is the most important and almost a universal concept of religion. Man always has had a belief in something supernatural usually called God. God is the supreme reality, the supreme value and the supreme end. The very earliest historical records that we possess indicate that man has always sought to explain the existence of the universe and his existence on the earth. And when he inquires he obtains a solution in the concept of God. God is the creator, the infinite designer man’s beginning and end. He is creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.

God is the cause of this world. In this external world, an indivisible God exists which is the root cause of this world. We know that the world is a system of effects and the effects have their causes. Again, these causes are effects of their causes, and so on. But we cannot go on indefinitely backward from effects to causes. There can be no infinite regress. So, we must stop at a point and suppose the existence of an absolute first cause, which is self existent and self caused and independent of any other cause. This causeless cause is termed as God in all the scriptures.

The whole world is contingent, dependent, relative and finite or limited in space and time. So, it must depend upon a necessary, independent, absolute and infinite Being for its existence, which is not contingent and dependent on any

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other being. This Being is God. He is unlimited in space and time, absolute and the ground of the world. God is not only the creator and destroyer of the whole universe. God also controls it.\(^47\)

In Indian philosophy also the doctrine of God is an important one. The concept of God has been mentioned by different philosophers either to accept it or to deny it. Those who deny the existence of God are termed as atheist and those who accept the existence of God are termed as theist. Different thinkers give different conceptions about God. Now let us see what is the place of God in Śāṅkhyā philosophy. The history of the Śāṅkhyā philosophy has been divided into three phases by the scholars. These are: the Epic Śāṅkhyā, the Transitional Śāṅkhyā and the Classical Śāṅkhyā.\(^48\) The Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas (like \textit{Bhāgavata}, \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} etc.) are the evidence of the Epic Śāṅkhyā which is theistic. The Transitional Śāṅkhyā is found in the \textit{Caraka Saṁhitā} and in the teachings of Pañcaśikha as recorded in the Mahābhārata. The Classical Śāṅkhyā is illustrated in the \textit{Saṁkhyaśāstra} of Isvarakṛṣṇa and the Saṁkhya\textit{ṣūtra} ascribed to Kapila. Regarding the concept of God there is a problem in Śāṅkhyā philosophy. It is seen that the Epic Śāṅkhyā totally accepts the concept of God as the controller of \textit{Prakṛti} and \textit{Puruṣa}. Hence, Epic Śāṅkhyā is theistic. But the problem arises in connection with Transitional Śāṅkhyā and classical Śāṅkhyā. Most of the scholars opine that the classical Śāṅkhyā is not theistic and the Transitional Śāṅkhyā is theistic. On the other hand, some scholars said that the classical Śāṅkhyā and the Transitional Śāṅkhyā are also theistic.

The Transitional Śāṅkhyā does not accept any God governing the world of

\(^{47}\) \textit{The Essentials of Indian Philosophy}, Hiriyanna, M., P. 191

\(^{48}\) \textit{Reflections of Indian Philosophy}, Sinha, Dr.K.P., P.217
Prakṛti and Puruṣa. But they accepted an ultimate reality. Naturally the question arises: what is that ultimate reality? Pāṇcasikha accepted the ultimate reality which is a unified category of Avyakta and Puruṣa i.e., Avyakta in the state of Puruṣa⁴⁹.

Caraka does not accept Puruṣa and Prakṛti as two distinct and independent principles, but as forming one unified category, which is called Avyakta. It is regarded as the matrix of the world. Dr.Anima Sengupta says, “The ultimate category is neither the transcendental Puruṣa nor the guṇamayee prakṛti but a mixed one of both the principles⁵⁰.” Caraka does not accept any God supervising or regulating the process of creation and evolution.

Gan̄gadhara, a commentator of Carakasamhita, also holds the same view, as he says that Avyakta is a unified principle⁵¹. Thus, Pāṇcasikha and Caraka had an atheistic tendency which developed into the atheism of Classical Śamkhyā.

However, there are some other scholars who point out that in liberation, according to Caraka, the individual self-losing all knowledge, feeling and action, is merged into an indeterminate being, just as rivers merge into the vast ocean⁵². This state is not different from the state of Brahma-hood, which is similar to the view of Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara. Brahman has been accepted by Pāṇcasikha as the Absolute.

Caraka also maintains that the transcendental self and the empirical self are the two kinds of self. The transcendental self is eternal, uncaused and devoid

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⁴⁹. puruṣāvastham avyaktaṁ paramārtham nyavedayat. Mahābhārata, 12.218.12
⁵⁰. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, The Evolution of the Śamkhyā School of Thought, P. 120
⁵¹. avyaktastu samhatarūpam..........., Gangadhara’s Comm.Caraka Samhita, (Sarirasthana), 1.63
⁵². Cf., The Evolution of the Śamkhyā School of Thought, Sengupta, Dr. Anima, P.80
of any relation. But the empirical self is a conglomeration of six or twenty-four elements. The empirical self is an effect. Hence it must be subject to decay. But Caraka has never described Puruṣa to be destructible. According to Caraka, the real self is separate from the empirical self.

However, though Pancaśikha and Caraka have accepted an ultimate reality, it is not related with the creation process. The evolution of the universe is explained with reference to the principles of Prakṛti and the Puruṣa only. No God has been requisitioned by them for the illustration of the evolutionary process. But is clear that though these thinkers do not accept a creator God, yet they accept Brahman as the ultimate Reality behind the Puruṣa and Prakṛti. But the question is whether this ultimate reality can be accepted as God? In this respect Anima Sengupta argues that if it is not related to creation, this ultimate reality is not God at all.

But then Dr. Sinha has contested this view. K.P. Sinha holds that relation with production is not the criterion of God-hood. It is not necessary that God should be concerned with the world process. It is enough if God forms the basis of the world and if God’s essence is spiritual. Sinha refers to the view of Śrī Aurobinda in support of his view. According to Śrī Aurobinda, “the Īśvara is supracosmic as well as intracosmic. He is that which exceeds and inhabits and supports all individuality, He is the supreme and universal Brahman, the Absolute, the Supreme Self.”

53. prabhavo na hyanāditvād vidyate paramātmanah, anādiḥ puruṣo nityah.puruṣah pralaye cestaḥ punarbhavairviyujyate. Caraka Samhīta, (Sārirasthāna), 1.53,59,67
54. Ibid., 1.16,17
55. puruṣo raśisamjñastu mobeccādveṣa karmajah; viparītastu hetujah. Ibid., 1.53,59
56. The Evolution of the Samkhya School of Thought, Sengupta, Dr. Anima, P.47
57. Life Divine, Cf., On Brahman, Purusha, Īśvara, as quoted from Ibid., P.224

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Hence, Sinha upholds that as the Supreme Reality accepted by Paṇcaśikha and Caraka forms the basis of the world of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, it can be none other than God or Isvara.

Now, let us see whether classical Saṁkhya is theistic or atheistic. The general view is that classical Saṁkhya does not believe in the existence of God. It has already been said that the classical Saṁkhya represented by the Sāṁkhyakarikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Sāṁkhyaśūtra of Kapila, is regarded as atheistic Saṁkhya. There is no place for devotion and worship of God in classical Saṁkhya. Kapila denied the existence of God in the āṣṭa viśeṣādakṣarāṇa, i.e., the existence of Īśvara cannot be established. But in the Sāṁkhyakarikā, Īśvarakṛṣṇa neither denies nor admits the existence of God. According to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Prakṛti is the material cause of this world. Puruṣa is inactive but conscious and Prakṛti is active but unconscious. In the beginning of this world, the equilibrium of Prakṛti is disturbed by the contact of the Puruṣa, which, acts as a stimulus, as a result of which Prakṛti evolves into the manifold world. So, Īśvarakṛṣṇa does not admit a creator God, because it is inconsistent with his philosophy of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Īśvarakṛṣṇa also pointed out that at the time of pralaya, Puruṣas are separated from Prakṛti then the evolutes return to the original state of Prakṛti. All the manifestation of Prakṛti are meant for the enjoyment and liberation of the Purusas. Thus, in the Sāṁkhyakarikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, there is no place for the idea of God as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this world.

58. Reflexions of Indian Philosophy, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P. 224
60. SS,1.92; also Cf. mukta-bandhahoranyatarābhāvānna tattsidhiḥ .SS,1.93
61. puruṣārtha eva hetumena kāriyate kāraṇam / SK, 31
62. ityesa prakṛtikṛto mahadādi viseṣaśabhumāyanātah /
   pratipuruṣvimokṣārtham svārthā iva parārthā ārambhah//Ibid.,56

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The commentator of *Sāṁkhya-kārikā*, Vācaspāti Miśra also rejected the existence of God. He proves that God is unnecessary for the explanation of the creation of the world. Generally, God is assumed for giving an explanation to the universe of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣas* as also to the ultimate end of human life. But Vācaspāti Miśra pointed that as all this can be described with the concepts of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* there is no need to accept another *tattva* i.e. God. Vācaspāti Miśra opines that the idea of God is not in harmony with the process of evolution or creation and dissolution. Because the whole process of this universe is due to the actions (*karmāṇaḥ*) of the *Puruṣas* as also to the inherent teleology of *Prakṛti*. So, production and destruction of the universe happen due to the totality of the actions of all the *Puruṣas*. The inherent teleology in *Prakṛti* regulates the events of the universe in such a way as to render proper services to the *Puruṣas*.

The author of *Yukti-dīpikā* supported the view of Vācaspāti Miśra and denied the existence of God. According to him, the concept of God is not in harmony with the process of creation and dissolution.

Naturally, a question arises, how can *Puruṣa*, act as a stimulus which is devoid of action. On the other hand, *Prakṛti* being non-intelligent, must be controlled and directed by some intelligent agent to create the world. The individual selves are limited in knowledge and power. Therefore, these individual selves cannot control the subtle material cause of the world. So, it is essential to accept an infinite and powerful God, who directs and guides the *Prakṛti* or the world.

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63. *ārmbhyate iti ‘ārmbbah’ sargah mahadādibhūtaḥ prakṛtyaiva krto nesvareṇa, na brahmopadāno, nāpyakāraṇah, akāraṇate hya tyantabhāvo tyantabhāvo vā syāt. na brahmopadānaḥ citsaṅkṣeparipāṇāmāt. nesvarādhisthita prakṛtikṛto, nirvṛtāparasyādhisthaḥ prakṛttvacarbhat. STK on Ibid.*

64. *YDionSK, 16*
But this theistic view is not accepted by the Śāmkhyist. They say that to control or guide is to act or do something which is not possible for God, who is said to be immutable and self complete. Any action, they say, necessarily brings a change in the agent and, hence a changeless entity cannot be the agent of any action. The milk which is insentient, flows for the nourishment of the calf. Similarly, Prakṛti, though insentient, could act towards the emancipation of the Purusottama. In this way Vacaspati Misra also supports the view of atheistic Samkhyists and opposed the view of theistic Śāmkhyists. The Samkhyists Kapila, Vacaspati Misra argue that if God is conceived as a being with good will, God is sure to create only happy beings. But it is not so. The world is so full of sorrows and sufferings that it cannot be called an act of kindness of God. Similar explanation is also given by the author of Yuktidipika.

According to the Śāmkhyas, the law of karman is sufficient to explain all facts of life and hence it is needless to bring the notion of God. The immortality of the souls cannot be explained consistently, if we conceive God as creator and infinite. Thus, the Śaṁkhyācāryas hold that on the logical ground, the existence of God cannot be established.

The scriptural passage to support the existence of God, are nothing but eulogies of the liberated selves who, being omniscient and omnipotent are capable of regulating the evolution of the universe in the next creation. Such an empirical

65. tasmādasti sarvārthadarsi prakṛterdhīṣṭhātaḥ, sa cesvāra. STK on SK, 56
66. vatsāvīrdhinimittāṃ kṣirasya yathā pravṛttirajñasya/
puruṣavimokṣanimitāṁ tathā pravṛtīḥ pradhānasya//SK,57
67. preṣāvāt pravṛttēḥ svārthakarunyābhām vyāptatvāt.STK on lbid
68. YDi on SK, 16
69. nesvarādhisṣhite phalanispattīḥ karmanā tatsiddheḥ. SS,§2

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or practical (vyavahārika) God can be accepted, while there is no ground for accepting God as the eternal governor of the world.

Gaudapāda has also refuted the existence of God. He argues: how can beings endowed with qualities proceed from Ṣvāra, who is devoid of qualities? Thus from white threads white cloth is produced, from black threads black cloth only. Hence, it must be admitted that the three worlds endowed with three qualities proceed from the Nature endowed with the three qualities. Ṣvāra is without qualities. The view of Gaudapāda is that if there is a God, he is not a creator. It is also implied that anything void of qualities is not likely to find a place in the Sāmkhya universe, since everything consists of either, Prakṛti or Puruṣa, both of which have qualities. So far as Gaudapāda is concerned, there is no third nature and hence God is non-existent.

But the aforementioned view of the Sāmkhya ācāryas is opposed by Vijñānabhañku. According to Vijñānabhañku, the sūtras of Kapila are not meant for denying the existence of God but to for pointing out that there are no proof for the existence of God. If the refusal of God were intended by Kapila, Vijñānabhañku argues, he would have framed the sūtras as Isvarabhavat meaning 'as there is no God'. In the view of Vijñānabhañku, Kapila has included that sūtra in his work

70. muktatmanah prasamsa, upasā siddhasya va. Ibid., 1.95; na karanalaya krtakrtyat, magnavadutthānat. Ibid., 3.54; sa hi sarvavit sarvakarta. Ibid., 3.56; iddṛṣṭvarasiddhiḥ siddhā. Ibid., 3.57

71. nirgunatvādiśvarasya katham sagunāḥ prajāḥ jayaren, katham vā puruṣān nirgunādeva. tasmāt prakṛteruṣyajate, yathā suklebhyah tantubhyah sūkla eva pato bhavati, kṛṣṇebrvah kṛṣṇa eveti. evam trigunāt pradhānāt trayo lokastrigunāḥ samutpānā iti ganyate. nirgunāḥ Ṣvāraḥ. GB on SK, 61

72. Isvare pramanābhavat, na doṣa ityanuvarttate. ayam cesvārāpratiṣedha ekadesinām praudhāvadēnaiveṁ prageva pratipāditaṁ; anyathā hisvarabhāvādityevocetya. SPB on SS, 1.92
in order to show that there is no proof for supporting the view that there is God. Vijnānabhikṣu explains thus: (I) God has been rejected only to induce men to refrain from excessive contemplation on God and his immeasurable powers, which might stand in the way of the rise of true discriminative knowledge. (II) The importance of the refusal of God is that even without accepting the existence of God, liberation can be attained through the discriminative knowledge of Prakṛti and the Puruṣa. These sutras ensure emancipation even for those who do not have any faith in God. (III) The refusal of God may be interpreted to deny God as ordinarily conceived, the transcendental God remaining undenied. (IV) The atheistic stand of the Sāṁkhyācārya may be accepted as abhyupagama-vāda or praudhi-vāda (a concession to others views) the actual significance being that this system does not stand in need of God for the description of the world of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. It was for the sake of argument and to prove that God was no integral part of the system, and not to assert its antagonism to theism as such, that the Sāṁkhyas had not included God in its philosophy.

Vijnānabhikṣu further points out that though the existence of God as possessed of activity is not admissible yet Isvāra or Brahman must be accepted as the eternally perfect Puruṣa who is the witness of the world. According to him, mere presence or sannidhi of God involves Prakṛti to act and create the whole world, just as a piece of magnet moves a piece of iron. The reality of a universal spirit as the ground of the Puruṣa and Prakṛti is thus admitted by Vijnānabhikṣu. According to him, the supreme which is the universal or collective Puruṣa, possesses the power of omniscience and also the power of doing all

73. abhyupagama-vāda-praudhi-vāдаdinaiva sāṁkhyasya vyāvahārikеśvara-pratiseḍhapaṭataya. SPB on Ibid., (Introduction)
becomes the inducer of activity by means of mere proximity⁷⁴. Again Vijnānabhikṣu opines that the God or Brahman is the ultimate ground behind Prakṛti and Purusās and is the guide of the inner harmony and order in their mutual relation. God or Brahman is the Absolute. Brahman means universal consciousness free from impurities and others and unlimited by any condition⁷⁵.

Vijnānabhikṣu also has introduced God in his philosophy simply as a static principle of revelation. He is not the real creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. All activities, all thoughts and all feeling belong to His prakṛtimulaka upādhi only. Hence although Prakṛti has been assigned a subordinate status, still because of the essentially inactive nature of Bhikṣu’s Brahman, the independence of Prakṛti has been maintained to a very great extent in his philosophy.

Now coming to the Yoga philosophy it is seen that the philosophy of Patanjali accepts the existence of God⁷⁶. In Yoga philosophy, Patanjali defines God as a special kind of Puruṣa who is always free from pains, actions, effects and impressions⁷⁷. He is eternally free and was never bound nor has any possibility of being bound. He is above the law of karman. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. But God of Yoga is not the creator, preserver or destroyer of this world.

Thus it is seen that the Saṁkhya philosophers are not totally unanimous regarding the existence of God. Some later Saṁkhyaists propound the existence of God. Also, the Yoga philosophy which is an allied system of Saṁkhya clearly

⁷⁴. sa hi parah puruṣasāmānyam sarvajnānasaktimat sarvakartrā sāktimacca, avaskāntavat sannidhitatreṇa prerakatvādityarthāh. tada cāsamaśātprathapuruṣasannidhyā tatadarthamanyeccha'nhādhiyā api prakṛteh pravṛttiśvasyakīti. Ibid., 3.57
⁷⁵. brahmāsabda aupadhikaparicchedamalinyādirahitaparpūrṇacetanasāmānyavācī. Ibid., 5.116
⁷⁶. iśvarapraṇidhānādyā. YS, 1.23
⁷⁷. klesākarma vipākasāyairaparaṁratāh puruṣaśvēsasīvarah. Ibid, 1.24
declare the existence of God. Hence, the question naturally arises why Kapila has forwarded this view in sharp contrast to his predecessors of epic Śāṅkhya and others. This is clarified by Anima Sengupta. She opines, "God does not exist, for if He exists, he must be either bound or liberated. A bound spirit cannot be accepted as God because of his attachment with merit and demerit, nor can a freed soul be regarded as the creator God, as the world have no desire to act and create this manifold world. Hence, God cannot be admitted as the agent in the process of creation because of his liberated and non-attached nature. Nor can we say that God has undertaken the task of creating this universe disinterestedly for the good of his own creatures only. The world is so full of sins and sufferings that it cannot said to be the creation of a good God who works only for the benefit of his own off springs." So, the classical Śāṅkhya denies the existence of Ṣvāra.

Clarifying the stand of the Śāṅkhayas Dr. K.P. Sinha says that the Śāṅkhyaists averted the question of Ṣvāra, as it is not possible to establish His existence though reasoning process.

5. PHUKAN'S VIEW ON GOD

Regarding the problem of God Radhanath Phukan’s view is noteworthy. He strongly criticizes the view of the commentators of the Śāṅkhya philosophy. Phukan maintains that the Śāṅkhya philosophy is not atheistic. This philosophy is a system based on reason. According to him, the Śāṅkhya system has established the real nature of this world and of the soul.

78. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, Classical Śāṅkhya-A critical Study, P.176
79. Reflexions of Indian Philosophy, Sinha, Dr. K.P., P.234
Radhanath Phukan does not conform to the view of those commentators who identify *Avyakta* with *Prakṛti*. They illustrate that the non-conscious *Prakṛti* is the real cause of the world. As the real cause of the world is non-conscious, so the Sāṁkhya philosophy must be atheistic. Radhanath Phukan opposed it and said that at the stage of *Avyakta, if Prakṛti* is conceived as of separate existence, then this *Prakṛti* must be conscious. But it is not possible. He refers to the view of Tantras. According to Tantras, "Prakṛti has been named the Primeval Prakṛti or Mahāmāyā and it has been shown that there is no difference between Śiva and Śakti and that the two are fundamentally identical"\(^{80}\). Radhanath Phukan has reached to this conclusion again on the basis of the *Sāṁkhya-kārīki* itself. It has already been shown in a previous chapter that according to Radhanath Phukan, *Avyakta* refers to the state before creation. In his view, beyond this universe, there is only one thing, which is eternal and all-pervading, which is inactive, conscious and is the seer i.e. the consciousness itself. He also speaks, "How can the non-conscious Prakṛti be the ultimate cause of the Universe, if it is admitted that an all-pervading consciousness (Cit-śakti) existed everywhere?"\(^{81}\) In support of his own view, Phukan also refers to the view of Manoranjan Sāstri who was also his friend. Sāstri maintains that there was no fundamental difference between early Sāṁkhya and Vedānta. In his words, "In ancient times, the Sāṁkhya philosophy and the Vedānta formed one system and were interdependent. In Narasiṁha Svāmin's *Sāṁkhya-taru-vasantah*, a commentary on the *Sāṁkhya-kārīki*, it was shown that there was fundamentally no difference between the Sāṁkhya and the Vedānta."\(^{82}\)

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80. Phukan, Radhanath, SKI, P.581
81. Ibid., P.582
82. Ibid., P.581
However, this fundamental position of the early Sāṁkhyists have been overlooked by the later commentators. They identified Prakṛti with Avyakta and regarded it as unconscious. But Phukan has already established that Avyakta cannot but be conscious. Even the explanation of Vacaspati Misra, who explained the Sāṁkhyya system with an atheistic outlook, indicates that before creation there was an entity different from both Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Vacaspati has stated that the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa is without beginning and end and creation is due to this union. This state is nothing but Avyakta state. Hence, Phukan says, “In verse XXI it has been clearly stated that the ultimate cause of the Universe is neither the Puruṣa alone nor the Prakṛti alone. Creation is due to the union of the two. The matter is made quite clear by the Gītā (Chapter XIV,8).”

Phukan also says that regarding creation there is no difference between the Yoga system of Patanjali and Sāṁkhyya system of Kapila. “Then how is it that the Sāṁkhyya system is considered atheistic while the Yoga system is admitted to be theistic?”

Whatever defects there might be in the Sāṁkhyya system, Radhanath Phukan says that this system is not atheistic. He refers to the criticisms leveled against this system by Badarāyana. In the Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyana, he criticized the Sāṁkhyya system in four places but no where did Bādarāyana suggest that the Sāṁkhyya philosophy is atheistic. Phukan also refers to the criticisms against the Sāṁkhyya philosophy by Śaṅkarācārya. Śaṅkarācārya also has not said that this philosophy is atheistic. “He fully realized that if the Sāṁkhyya be atheistic, he would himself be so.” Radhanath Phukan concludes that “Neither Śaṅkarācārya

83. Ibid., P. 582
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., P.583
nor Kapila was an atheist; both were Supertheists."86

Lastly, Radhanath Phukan said that there arises no difficulty whatsoever, if the Śāmkhya system is described on the basis of common sense. No problem arises if we make an idea of the real truth in the Śāmkhya philosophy. But a controversy has been raised among the commentators blaming each other which is an interruption in the Śāmkhyadarsāna. But this controversy never comes to an end. So, he says that it is better to accept it with common sense without making any controversy.

So, it is seen from the above discussion that Śāmkhya system is not based on atheism, rather, it believes in the existence of God. Radhanath Phukan had great respect for Vijnānabhikṣu who holds that, according to Śāmkhya philosophy, universal consciousness free from impurities etc. and unlimited by any condition is the ultimate reality, it is Brahman.87

Supporting the view of Vijnānabhikṣu, Dr. Anima Sengupta said that God is the unmodifiable principle of pure consciousness which vitalizes Prakṛti by His presence as the only witnessing self of the pre-evolutionary stage. "According to Bhikṣu, God is the substratum of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the material and the efficient cause of the world, the Sāksīn of all and is also the aṁśin of which the individual self is the aṁśa.88 According to Śāmkhya and the Yoga philosophy, Prakṛti is supposed to be associated with the Puruṣas through the inner and inherent teleology, but according to the Vedāntic view as interpreted by Bhikṣu

86. Ibid.
87. brahmasabdahaupadhikaparicchedamālīnīyādīraitaparipūrnacetanaśāmānīyavācī. SPB on SS, 5.116
88. Sengupta, Dr. Anima, Essays on Śāmkhya And Other Systems of Indian Philosophy, P. 75
their mutual association is due to the operation of God.89

Though the Sāṃkhya system is widely accepted as an atheistic system, some modern scholars have pointed out that the classical Sāṃkhya is not actually atheistic. What the Sāṃkhya denies, according to them, is not the existence of an eternal God as such, but the causality and agency of such a God. God is not the direct cause of the world. The denial of causality does not imply in any way the denial of his existence. He may not be a cause, but that does not necessarily imply that he does not exist also. The universe is a system of different grades of Puruṣa in which God is the super Puruṣa. According to them, the super Puruṣa is the ultimate source of all activities.90

In this way Phukan has established that the Sāṃkhya philosophy is not atheistic which is a remarkable contribution of him. Of course his view in this respect is also shared by some other modern scholars like Dr. K.P. Sinha, M.N. Roy etc.

89. VB on BS, Vijnānabhiṣṣu, 1.1.2
90. The Sāṃkhya Conceptions of Personality, Majundar, A.K., P. 14