CHAPTER VII

A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF DESCARTES AND SĀMKHYA:

(A) OF DESCARTES:

(i) Dualism of Matter and Mind:

We have so far considered some aspects of the philosophy of Descartes according to the conventional notion that he is a dualist, believing in the interaction of two substances, body and mind. Now we have to examine how far his dualistic philosophy is logical and consistent within itself. Are the two substances, matter and mind, independent, absolute and ultimate? If they are not, how can they be supposed to give us an idea of reality.

In Principle LIV, Descartes refers to matter and mind as two created substances and God as uncreated substance, and according to his own version, the created substances are not on the same footing as the uncreated substance, viz God. Obviously we fail to understand how Descartes has reached the conclusion that matter and mind form the conception of a dualistic reality, when they are dependent on the supreme

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reality of God. Are there then three realities, one Supreme and the other two dependent? Descartes' position with regard to his dualistic notion of reality, seems to be untenable. He has failed to give two independent and ultimate substances forming the conception of dualism.

Moreover, Descartes' dualism of matter and mind is inadequate. It cannot explain all the aspects of the world. In this universe, 'motion' and 'rest' are so glaring phenomena that they cannot be ignored by a thinker who is trying to explain the world. Descartes' matter and mind, taken in themselves, do not explain 'motion' and 'rest'. Motion is not derived from matter nor matter from motion and the same thing can be said of the 'rest' also. It seems that Descartes saw this defect of his philosophy and dragged God into his system to explain the two phenomena. Is it not a failure of dualism?

Then Descartes maintains that God has given a certain amount of motion to this world and that motion is constant. It means that the motion given by God is not destroyed with the destruction of the objects in motion. It only changes its form. This notion of Descartes, it is said, became the foundation-stone of the principle of Conservation of Energy in modern physics. But as it is known to us, this principle of modern physics is under fire
now. Many scientists have questioned its validity. What is the amount which remains constant? Is the quantity of changed form of motion same or is it more or less? How do we know it? Questions like these are being raised against the Principle of Conservation of Energy. And it is a well-known fact that scientists have not been able to answer these questions satisfactorily. May we not raise these very same questions against Descartes' concept of motion? A close examination of Descartes' works reveals the fact that he has nowhere tried to answer these questions. A man of faith may feel satisfied with this position but a man of reason is sure to remain unconvinced.

Further, it may be said that if we somehow ignore God, the Supreme Reality, even then the dualism of matter and mind does not seem to us a satisfactory metaphysical classification. We may ask, what are the rationalistic grounds for assuming that Reality divides itself without remainder into what is mental and what is material?

Are there only two compartments, labelled 'mental' and 'material' in which all objects of the world may be put? Is there no other compartment for the third type of entity that has been left out? We now put a more direct question. Have we in this scheme of dualism any place for living things
which have no minds? Are they less in number than human beings that they have been so left out? Or are they, the poor creatures, less in importance? These are the questions which the uncompromising dualist will have to answer before he justifies his scheme of dividing the world into two watertight compartments. Descartes seems to have failed to solve this problem satisfactorily. So, his dualism is inadequate.

The cleavage of the universe into two realms, having almost no attributes in common, has resulted in the isolation of the mental from the physical order. Descartes, it seems, has failed to show satisfactorily how these two orders act on each other.

In spite of these difficulties, it may be stated that there are certain points which go in favour of such dualistic philosophy.

Dualism may not have proved a metaphysical triumph, but for the common person it seems to have given a satisfactory solution of the problem of the world. It is one of the main criteria of philosophy that it should satisfy our common-sense also, and as such, dualism is a popular conception of philosophy.

Descartes' dualism was a revolt against scholasticism and blind faith. The theological conception of treating
matter as a debasing substance was given up in Descartes' philosophy. He treated matter as a substance out of which the material world came into being. Another substance in his dualism was soul, which he distinguished as the thinking substance and which was supposed to be understood as something essentially self-sufficient and homogeneous.

Descartes' dualism represented a very sharp distinction between the two spheres, mental and physical. The advantage of the separation of the two spheres was immense, because each could develop its principles and methods on its own lines without the one interfering with the other.

It was for the first time that in Descartes' philosophy we were able to have a clear and distinct conception of both mind and matter. Reality, as conceived by Descartes, began to be felt as a vital principle in his philosophy.

The separation of mind and matter gave us more than a clarification of concepts. It marked a distinct progress both in matters relating to the principles of life, and in achievements in physical sciences. On the one hand, we see an increased activity of thought, resulting in an aspiration to realise the highest ideals in life, on the other hand, we witness the phenomena of marvellous progress in science resulting in a more intimate relationship between
man and his environment, and an increased knowledge of the means of making material progress and attaining a high standard of civilization from the worldly point of view.

Descartes' dualism may also be appreciated on the grounds that it has created metaphysical problems for his successors in the line. At least two thinkers after him, viz. Spinoza and Leibniz, tried to get over the artificial difficulties created by the bifurcation of nature in Descartes' dualism. Spinoza sought the solution of the problem by assuming only one substance, viz. God. Thought and extension are its two attributes. Leibniz sought the solution in his well-known theory of Pre-established Harmony. Subsequent thinkers solved the problem created by Descartes in their own ways.

So, we conclude that Descartes' dualism, in spite of its metaphysical drawbacks, has been the harbinger of progress in physical and psychological researches. It should not be considered an unmixed evil.

Here, it may also be said that Descartes, in the history of western philosophy, is first to give us a clear-cut notion of a dualistic universe. But, as with many other great thinkers, his dualism is crude. It cannot explain itself and it cannot explain the world. Having initiated the idea that there are two independent realities,
Descartes seems to forget his own dualistic creed, when he makes the two substances dependent on God. He has now plunged back into the theological ditch from which it may not be easy for him to climb back to his purely metaphysical suppositions! His successors may perhaps try to rectify the shortcomings of his dualism.

(ii) Deism

Descartes also propounds a type of deism. Deism is a system of thought based on human reason rather than on miracles of religion.

From the views that Descartes has expressed about the relation of God with the world, we infer that he is inclined towards some of the assumptions of deism, but, as we shall see, he has not given an unqualified support to all of them.

In the first place, Descartes believes in the creation of the world by God, who is supreme and eternal; who existed before creation and who will continue to exist even after all his creation may come to nought without receiving His concurrence. This shows that God is transcendent to His creation.

1. Descartes' -Philosophical Works Vol I, P. 141.
agree to give us the freedom of will. Unless man is free how can he realize his goal of life? Descartes realized this difficulty and has gone to say that even the freedom of will is innate. He writes that "Finally, it is so evident that we are possessed of a free-will that can give or withhold its assent, that this may be counted as one of the first and most ordinary notions that are found innately in us". The original works of Śāmkhya philosophy do not give us such a clear version about freedom of will but they seem to recognize it. In the very beginning of Śāmkhya Kārika three types of sorrows are described. We can only get rid of these sorrows if we follow the code of conduct prescribed by Śāmkhya and acquire the necessary knowledge. All this requires freedom of will without which it will be difficult to make efforts in the right direction.

(b) Contrast:

We have seen, in brief, how the two dualistic systems agree in certain respects. But they also differ on many points. It is generally said that if the two systems agree on all points, one of them may not be an original thought. Needless to say that both Śāmkhya and the philosophy of Descartes give us something original. Hence they are bound to differ. Let us see on what points these two dualistic philosophies do not see eye to eye with each other.

First of all, it should be mentioned that both these systems seem to differ as regards the origin of philosophy. For Descartes, philosophy begins with doubt. There is a stage when Descartes doubts everything. This is indicated when he says, "At the end I feel constrained to confess that there is nothing in all that I formerly believed to be true, of which I cannot in some measure doubt." He doubts even his own hands and feet. And on the basis of this fact of doubting he reaches a self-evident truth which becomes the foundation stone of his philosophy. Thus it is Descartes' doubt which compels him to think and reach certain conclusions which have given him a place in the history of philosophy. The case with Śāṅkhyā is otherwise. Here philosophy does not begin with doubt but it begins with the fact of pain or human suffering. The three types of pains mentioned in the beginning of Śāṅkhyā Kārikā inspired the Śāṅkhyā thinkers to seek a way which leads to a stage free from all these pains or sufferings. And in doing that, they have given us a system of philosophy. Here it should be kept in mind that for Śāṅkhyā, philosophy only begins with pain but it does not end with it.

It is evident that Śāṅkhyā philosophy starts with concrete facts of human life. Like Buddha, Śāṅkhyā thinkers

2. S.K. 1.
came to realize that human life is full of different kinds of pains and sorrows. And the main aim of our life is to get rid of these worldly sufferings. Filled with sympathy and kindness for all human beings, these thinkers tried to give us a remedy which, according to them, can root out these evils of life forever. They were confident that worldly remedies are unable to bring out human life from the ditch of these terrible evils. To our surprise, they invented a metaphysical remedy for physical diseases. It may convince us or not but their devotion to purify human life of all impurities can hardly be doubted. Their metaphysics is for man and not man for metaphysics. In this respect, Sāṃkhya philosophy is humanistic. But, on the other hand, we do not find any such aim in Descartes' philosophy. He starts with the single aim of finding out self-evident truths in philosophy. No doubt, it is an intellectual effort of the highest order but it is least humanistic. It may satisfy all persons for sometimes and some persons for all times, yet a zeal to purge human life of all types of sufferings is missing. Is not this a vital point of difference between these two dualistic philosophies of east and west? Nobody may perhaps answer this question negatively.

In this connection it may also be stated that Sāṃkhya thinkers seem to have taken life as a whole. The tendency to compartmentalize human life is missing there. And to explain human life, they have given us a systematic cosmology. Here, both man and the universe seem to be the two aspects of the same scheme. So, we find in it metaphysics, ethics, psychology, religion and even cosmology. And the efforts have never been made to separate ethics from religion or religion from metaphysics. But in Descartes this synthetic outlook towards life is absent. He seems to be concerned only with intellectual aspect of human life more than any other aspect. He seems to draw a clear-cut line of demarcation between philosophy and religion. Moreover, he has not given any systematic ethics or religion to us. Hence, we can maintain that Descartes deals mostly with one aspect of human life while in Sāṃkhya, life is taken in its entirety.

Then Sāṃkhya has given us a teleological view of this universe. Though the universe is unconscious yet it has a purpose before it. It is a process which is going towards a definite end. These objects have come into existence not for their own sake not accidentally, but for the enjoyment and liberation of puruṣa or soul. These plants, rivers, mountains and fields have a purpose. This is unconscious teleology. Descartes, on the other hand, gives us
a mechanical explanation of the world. He does not see any
teleology in this universe. This whole cosmos with matter,
motion and laws of nature at its back, is functioning as a
huge machine. Neither does anything push it from the back
nor attract it. Even animals are nothing but little walking
machines on this earth. This is an extreme position of
mechanism. Here Śaṅkhaṇya and Descartes say good-bye to each
other.

Moreover, in Śaṅkhaṇya philosophy evolution of
universe is admitted. The myth of creationism could not
satisfy the Śaṅkhaṇya thinkers. These objects have come as
a result of evolution from prakṛti. In the previous chapters,
we have seen how prakṛti gives rise to mahat and mahat to
ahāmkāra and ahaṁkāra, in turn, produces other constituents
of the world. We may accept or reject the evolutionary
process given by Śaṅkhaṇya but it goes without saying that
evolution is a cosmological fact for Śaṅkhaṇya thinkers.
Descartes, on the other hand seems to favour creationism.
Though he does not say that these objects as such are created,
yet even the two relative substances, matter and mind, are
created by God or Absolute substance. God can create and
destroy matter and mind at His own sweet will. In this
respect Descartes seems to agree with the Old Testament view

1. Descartes - Principles of Philosophy Part I Principle No.LIII
of creationism. He gives absolute authority to God to make or unmake this universe. This can never be admitted by Śāmkhya thinkers of India.

In this connection, it may also be stated that God plays an important role in Descartes' philosophy. He does not only believe in God but proves His existence with certain arguments. He also takes help, as we have seen, of Scriptures to prove the existence of God. The idea of God is ingrained in human mind. Descartes could believe in the objectivity of sensations, only when he thought that God would not deceive him. His belief in the existence of God is stronger than his belief in any other thing of the world. But in Śāmkhya philosophy the existence of God has never been admitted. Śāmkhya thinkers do not see any necessity of God in the evolution of this cosmos. Not to speak of proving the existence of God, the author of Śāmkhya Pravacana Sūtra even seems to criticize the existence of God. The author of Śāmkhya Kārikā neither refutes nor proves His existence. In preceding pages Śāmkhya attitude towards God has been discussed in detail. On the whole, Śāmkhya system remains atheistic in this sense. It is a striking point of difference between these two dualistic philosophies of the world. With the denial of God, prakṛti and puruṣa become

the absolute substances in Śāmkhya philosophy. The two ultimate constituents of the world have not been subordinated by any other third agency. But in Descartes, matter and mind are not the absolute substances. Unlike the Śāmkhya puruṣa and prakṛti, they can be created and destroyed. This difference may also not go unnoticed between these two systems of philosophy.

One of the most important points of difference between these two philosophies is that in Śāmkhya prakṛti is the cause of physical as well as of the psychological world. Our buddhi, ahaṁkāra, manas etc. all are the evolutes of prakṛti. Thus both the types of universe, physical and psychological, are rooted in prakṛti. But Descartes will never agree with the view that the same principle which gives rise to physical world can also give rise to our psychological universe. Descartes can never believe that our intellect is the product of matter of which our body is composed. Though critics may not agree with Śāmkhya in this respect, this is a glaring point of difference between these two philosophies.

Then the two absolute substances of Śāmkhya philosophy are abstract in nature. The evolutes of prakṛti are concrete but prakṛti itself is avyakta and is beyond all concreteness. Puruṣa also is devoid of all concreteness and is a subtle principle which is of transcendental nature. They
are in themselves untouched, unperceived and may never be felt even in any case. But the mind and matter of Descartes are not abstract in nature as the two principles of Śāmkhya philosophy. Though mind and matter are also not perceived through senses, yet at least we can feel their qualities. For Descartes, thinking is the attribute of mind and every body of us can at least feel his own act of thinking. Extension is the attribute of matter and it is without doubt true that extension is always felt by us. In this sense, Śāmkhya philosophy can be termed as more speculative than that of Descartes.

It may also be pointed out that the prakṛti of Śāmkhya is composed of three guṇas. They are not mere qualities. They are in a way substances in which other qualities inhere. They are types of real and are like three strands of one rope. These three guṇas differ from each other in their nature and effect. Every straw of this universe is pervaded by these guṇas. These guṇas explain, up to a certain extent, the difference in nature of different individuals. This guṇa theory is completely absent in Descartes' philosophy. The matter conceived by Descartes is not a rope of three strands. It is a matter which has extension, as its attribute and is, therefore, infinitely

divisible. There are no atoms of which Descartes' matter is composed. Here the concept of matter of Descartes widely differs from the Sāṃkhya concept of prakṛti.

Another point of difference between these two philosophies seems to be about the nature of motion which we find in the universe. After propounding two substances, mind and matter, Descartes must have felt the difficulty of explaining the motion which is so apparent in the world. Moreover, without motion worldly objects would have looked like a painted ship on a painted ocean. Matter, in the form of mere extension will look like a passive existence. So to bring motion in the universe Descartes takes help of the Prime-Mover or God. God has given motion to the universe.

Descartes himself has said that "God originally created matter along with motion and rest and now by his concourse alone preserves in the whole the same amount of motion that he then placed in it."

Thus, according to him motion is neither a product of matter nor that of mind. It is God's gift to the universe. And the motion which God has given to the universe is constant. It is not destroyed. It changes only its form. In Sāṃkhya philosophy, on the other hand, it is maintained that motion is not a supernatural gift. It is

1. Quoted by Prof. Thilly in his History of Philosophy. P.309.
inherent in the very nature of prakṛti. Rajas guṇa which is one of the constituents of prakṛti, is the principle of motion or activity. This principle is operative in the whole of the universe and it leaves no room for any supernatural agency to create motion for the universe.

In the case of rest also Sāṃkhya and Descartes differ. Descartes, as we have seen in the above-cited lines, believes that the rest which we find in the universe is also created by God. But in Sāṃkhya philosophy tamas guṇa, one of the three constituents of prakṛti is thought to be responsible for rest.

Truly speaking, God is such a dominating power in Descartes' philosophy that He is needed at every point. God is here, there and everywhere. Every important concept is explained with the help of God. Thus Descartes' system turns out to be a type of deism in place of Dualism. Whatever are the merits and demerits of Deism will be seen in the next chapter, but here it suffices to say that Descartes' system is something more, or less, than mere Dualism. But this concept of Deism can hardly be traced in Sāṃkhya philosophy. There prakṛti and puruṣa are sufficient to

1. S.K. 12.
2. Ibid.
explain this universe. Hence this is also a point of difference between the philosophies of Descartes and Sāṃkhya.

Then Sāṃkhya also believes in the state of pralaya or dissolution. The Sāṃkhya thinkers advocate the view that the order of the world is cyclic. There is evolution of the universe and then pralaya and this process goes on for ever. In the state of dissolution all the worldly objects go to their original source or prakṛti. And in this state the three guṇas of prakṛti remain in the state of equilibrium. When this equilibrium is disturbed by the sannidhi or proximity of puruṣa, creation starts by leaps and bounds. But this concept of dissolution or pralaya is completely absent from the philosophy of Descartes. Descartes never advocates the cyclic order of the universe. He seems to be busy with the present universe only.

Coming to the nature of puruṣa, it may be stated here that there is a lot of difference between Descartes' mind and puruṣa of Sāṃkhya. Puruṣa in Sāṃkhya is an absolute substance and is a transcendental and transempirical concept. It is conscious but inactive. It is essentially untouched by all worldly activities. It is all-pervading. The cartesian mind, on the other hand, is not inactive. At least the activities like thinking and doubting are the qualities of mind. Thus soul or mind of Descartes is not
essentially inactive. Then Descartes' mind is also not all-pervading. Though Descartes seems to believe in the plurality of minds or souls, he has nowhere said that mind or soul is all-pervading. Moreover, the mind of Descartes does not seem to be totally untouched by the world and its objects. We have seen that the puruṣa of Śāmkhya is beyond all the pleasures and pains of the world. All these things go on with the buddhi, and puruṣa is said to have assumed them wrongly as its own. But Descartes' mind or soul seems to be directly involved in all those feelings of pleasure or pain.

If it is asked as to how puruṣa, which is pure and transcendental in nature, assumes the activities of prakṛti or buddhi as its own, the Śāmkhya thinkers will reply that it is ignorance or avidyā under the influence of which puruṣa does so. And this avidyā or ignorance is beginningless and it is the cause of bondage of all of us. It is the net of avidyā due to which puruṣa falls into the trap of prakṛti. Though this avidyā is beginningless, yet it is not endless. It will go away as soon as the distinctive knowledge of puruṣa and prakṛti dawns upon the disillusioned jīva or individual soul. Now Descartes has never assumed anything like avidyā or ignorance. Mind comes in contact with matter directly without the help of any third force like that of avidyā. These assumptions of Śāmkhya are unique and can hardly be traced in the philosophy of Descartes. Though
Descartes also sometimes speaks of ignorance or wrong knowledge, it is completely in a different sense. It is not the ignorance or avidyā of Śāmkhya.

Another point of difference between the soul of Descartes and that of Śāmkhya philosophy is that in Śāmkhya philosophy human soul or puruṣa is eternal. But according to Descartes, soul is the creation of God. It is created by God along with matter and if He likes, He can even destroy both these entities. Thus, in no case, the mind or soul of Descartes may be said to be eternal. In one way we can say that it is immortal as it does not perish when our body perishes.

Moreover, the distinction between mind and soul is unique in Śāmkhya philosophy which Descartes does not seem even to be aware of. For Śāmkhya thinkers, mind is a product of prakṛti and is a physical entity in that sense. Its nature is totally different from that of puruṣa. It is a separate entity. But the case with Descartes is a bit different. For him, mind and soul are not the two different entities but they are one and the same thing. Here it may be pointed out that in the whole of the history of Western Philosophy, the distinction between soul and mind does not

1. S.P.S. 1. 19.
2. Synopsis of the Six Following Meditations. P. 141.
seems to have been generally made. And consequently, Descartes could also not distinguish between them. This is a glaring point of difference between these two philosophies.

Then purusa of Sāmkhya philosophy is in bondage and will remain in it so long as it does not acquire the distinctive knowledge. It will go from birth to death according to the deeds performed by it. It means the doctrine of Karmavāda or deeds has been accepted by Sāmkhya thinkers without any hesitation. We cannot get out of the wheel of birth and death so long as the right knowledge does not dawn upon us. This doctrine of deeds or Karmavāda brings before us the theory of rebirth also. We all will be born again, according to our actions and will continue to be born again and again indefinitely. Now, these concepts of Karmavāda and rebirth are not found in Descartes' philosophy. Here it may be mentioned that Descartes seems to be a silent follower of Christian faith. We have seen in previous pages that he has all respect for the scriptures. In Christian religion, we do not find any trace of the theory of rebirth. Though the importance of actions is recognized in Christianity, it is different from the theory of deeds in Sāmkhya philosophy. In Christianity it is believed that on the day of judgment we shall be rewarded or punished according to our actions but it is nowhere said that we will be born again according to our actions. Moreover, the concept of Grace is also found in Christianity which
virtually does away with the doctrine of deeds or actions. Thus, we can maintain that the concepts of Rebirth and Karmavāda are not found in Descartes' Philosophy.

Then the concept of liberation is also a unique thing in Śāmkhya philosophy. We have seen, while discussing the philosophy of Śāmkhya, that man's goal of life is to get liberation. In the state of liberation, puruṣa detaches itself from prakṛti and regains his true position. This is a state which is beyond all worldly pains and sorrows and puruṣa is seated in its own self. A distinctive knowledge of puruṣa and prakṛti is the only way to be liberated. This knowledge is not an objective one. It is a type of self-realization which should inevitably be preceded by moral discipline. Once this knowledge comes to us we get rid of this wheel of birth and death. This type of goal of life is completely unknown to Descartes' philosophy. Descartes is busy only in explaining the universe. His realm is this physical level which we perceive and on which we act and react in our every-day life. Transcendental realm is beyond his reach and could not attract his imagination.

Then the theory of innate ideas found in Descartes' philosophy is not available in Śāmkhya philosophy. Certain truths are ingrained in human soul which it brings with it
since birth. Not only this, but Descartes thinks that God Himself has ingrained certain ideas in our minds. These ideas, according to Descartes, are the sources of true knowledge in human life. Though Sāṃkhya thinkers also believe that certain Saṃskāras come with us since birth these Saṃskāras are nothing but our own creations and actions which are not given to us by God or any other power but for which we are responsible. They are destroyed as soon as true knowledge dawns upon us. Thus we do not find anything like innate ideas of Descartes in Sāṃkhya philosophy. The soul in Sāṃkhya philosophy, is untouched by any such ideas.

Moreover, for Descartes, human mind is the only criterion of true knowledge. Senses cannot give us right knowledge. And Descartes could not think anything apart from mind. It is the highest faculty of knowledge. So, mind is the first and highest source of true knowledge. But Sāṃkhya thinkers could go beyond mind or maṇas. For them, mind cannot give us true knowledge. It works only at empirical level and is ineffective so far as the higher level is concerned. Here the level of self is deemed to be highest. It is the only source of true knowledge.

Then both these systems differ as regards the seat of human soul. For Descartes soul can be located at a
particular point in human body. He believes that "The soul, though united with the whole body, has its principal seat in the pineal gland of the brain." From this place, our soul conducts the movement of animal spirits. Whether this hypothesis of Descartes may be verified or not, his contention is that our soul has a definite place in our body. But Sāṃkhya thinkers can hardly agree to this view. For them, puruṣa or human soul cannot be located at one definite place in our body. Even jīva, which is always associated with subtle body or sūkhma śarīra, can hardly be said to have his seat in this or that part of the human organism. Though our body is conscious only due to the presence of jīva or conscious principle, we may not find it here or there like the soul of Descartes.

Here, it may also be pointed out that Descartes has eliminated mind totally from nature. They are the two different fields. For Descartes animals and even human bodies are the parts of nature. Descartes will say that the human body also like animal body, is a machine and is governed by the laws of nature. Thus he has drawn a clear-cut line of demarcation between these two spheres. Sāṃkhya will hardly agree to this view. Here, human body is not governed exclusively by the laws of nature. A conscious

1. Prof. Thilly - History of Philosophy P. 311 Vide also Descartes - Passions of the soul Part I Article XXXI P.345.
principle presides over our body. Moreover, our body is not a machine. It has a purpose to serve and that purpose is to help purusa to enjoy prakrti. Here we do not mean that our body is not at all affected by the laws of nature. The fire will not burn it or ice will not make it cold. We only mean that according to Sāmkhya we cannot understand it only as a machine.

Both these systems seem to differ in their methodology also. Descartes has brought in the mathematical method in philosophy because his aim is to reach such self-evident truths in philosophy as there are in mathematics. By mathematical method he means to deduce conclusions from axioms. And such conclusions he thinks to be sound. The use of mathematical method in philosophy is a unique thing with Descartes. This is one of the reasons why Descartes is known to be the Father of modern philosophy. His mathematical method is also known as the deductive method. In Sāmkhya system, we do not find a systematic use of this method. Its conclusions are not reached on the basis of the deductive method. Its method seems to be a speculative one. No doubt, in the use of the speculative method, Sāmkhya thinkers, seem to take the help of experience but the very fact remains that the method of philosophy with Sāmkhya
thinkers is not deductive or mathematical. This is one of the reasons that Descartes' philosophy is said to be more scientific than that of Sāṃkhya.

In the end, we may point out that these two systems which have originated in two different cultures have deep-rooted differences between them. As we have seen, these systems differ in respect of their origin, purpose and even methodology. Their contents also differ. In this connection we have to keep in mind that every thinker or system of philosophy is the product of his own environment. The scientific and this-worldly attitude of the Westerners could not—but cast a deep influence on cartesian philosophy. The spiritualistic or other-worldly attitude of Indian sages from the very beginning seems to play a great role in Sāṃkhya philosophical thinking. It does not mean that they have no meeting-ground at all. Frankly speaking, the similarity between these two systems is not so perceptible as the points of difference. Hence, when there are essential differences between the two systems of philosophy, the question naturally arises as to what is their comparative worth. Therefore, an attempt is made in the succeeding pages of this chapter to study them from this point of view.
(c) A Comparative Estimate of the Worth of the Two Systems:

While judging the comparative worth of the two dualistic philosophies like those of Sāṃkhya and Descartes, we have to keep two things in mind. First, which of these philosophies satisfies our intellectual needs better than the other and, secondly, which guides us best in our worldly life. In simple words, we have to see both theoretical and practical aspects of the systems concerned.

As regards the theoretical aspects of the two systems, it may be seen that the dualism of Sāmkhya seems to be more independent and self-consistent than that of Descartes. The two ultimate entities of Sāmkhya philosophy enjoy their autonomy better than the two of the cartesian philosophy. Sāmkhya thinkers have taken puruṣa and prakṛti as completely independent, ultimate principles which have never been subordinated by any third principle whatsoever. Thus it remains a more consistent dualism than that of Descartes where the two substances depend on the will of God for their existence. Frankly speaking, a man of reason may feel shy of calling Descartes a dualistic thinker.

Moreover, Descartes' dualism, as we have seen, does not even seem to be self-sufficient. In Descartes' philosophy, matter and mind, minus God, are helpless to explain the world. Even the laws of Nature, including
motion and rest, are given by God. On the other hand, purusa and prakrti of Sāmkhya do not require anything to help them to explain the universe.

Descartes starts with mathematical method but falls a prey to those theological assumptions which were deep-rooted in his age. Sometimes, to our surprise, he talks more like a theologian than a philosopher. In this respect, Sāmkhya thinkers have done well to separate philosophy from theology and have tried to get rid of the traditional theological notions which may come in the way of philosophy. They have given philosophy an independent place.

Here, it may also be noted that Descartes' attempt to put philosophy at par with mathematics is a new idea, but, soon after, we notice certain inconsistencies also in his philosophy. These inconsistencies incline us to under-rate his philosophical thoughts. How inconsistent it looks to start with doubting everything but, after sometime the gentlemen's believing even in the authority of scriptures. At one place we find him talking in terms of Deism but at another, he seems to go in favour of theism. We do not find such gross inconsistencies, at least in the original books of Sāmkhya philosophy. If they are dualists, they are dualists throughout and if they are atheists, they are atheists consistently. By this we do not mean that there are no weak points
in Sāmkhya philosophy; we only mean that the thinkers of this philosophy are not habituated to talk opposite things with one voice. This is, no doubt, a philosophical virtue in this system.

Then, another point goes in favour of Sāmkhya philosophy. It is a product of an age when, at least, modern scientific knowledge was completely unknown to human beings. Even then, they could free philosophical thought from the clutches of dogmatic theology. Descartes, however, though he was born at the dawn of scientific discoveries, could not make himself free from that dogmatism which gives us an impression that he was doing something other than philosophy.

Coming to the practical aspect of philosophy, we have to face a very big question which philosophers of all ages have faced. Why Philosophy? The thinkers may close their eyes to evade this 'why', but the 'why' remains. Western philosophers, in general, and Descartes, in particular, may answer this question by pointing out that the whole philosophy is an evidence of the autonomy of human reason. Well, then, the reader may press his question further and ask, "Is autonomy of reason enough for human beings?" The answer to this question must be given in the negative. The whole history of western philosophy bears the evidence that the mere autonomy of reason
leads us nowhere. That is why thinkers like Kant had to demarcate the sphere of reason and could categorically declare that the use of reason, after certain limits, would necessarily lead us to absurdities. So, in our humble opinion, the mere use of reason without some practical goal before us, may sound much but signify nothing. Indeed, it is very charming to hear that a philosopher is philosophising in order to make us free from all the pangs of life. Do not the philosophers like Buddha, Christ, Confucius and Gandhi charm us when we see them trying to take humanity out of the sordid dreams of life? Does not Sāmkhya philosophy, in this respect, attract us more than the mere philosophising of Descartes? The Sāmkhya philosophers are philosophising in order to take human life out of the ditch of sufferings, but Descartes, on the other hand, seems to philosophise for the sake of philosophising. The philosophy of this type, sometimes, may appeal to our heads but our hearts are untouched. Man is not only head but also heart. Sāmkhya philosophy tries to touch both head and heart. It is a philosophy of life rather than a mere play of reason.

Some people try to point out the practical value of Sāmkhya system by basing the Indian medical system (Āyurveda) on the assumptions of Sāmkhya philosophy. For them, three gunas of Sāmkhya philosophy correspond to the three qualities
of human body, namely, pitta, vāyu and kaffa; Pitta corresponds to rajas, vāyu to sattva and kaffa is compared to tamas. Just as equilibrium of the three guṇas is said to be the normal state of prakṛti and when this equilibrium is destroyed, disturbance starts in prakṛti itself. So the equilibrium of pitta, vāyu and kaffa is the normal state of human body but when one of these dominates over the other, bodily disturbances or diseases take place. Moreover, all the constituents of human organism are enumerated in Śāmkhya philosophy. Buḍḍhi, ahaṅkāra etc. are nothing but the different constituents of our organism. The twenty-four evolutes of prakṛti may all be traced to human organism. This statement of ours would have been a mere hypothesis, had not the author of Čaraka Saṁhitā (A book on Indian Medicines) mentioned the main principles of Śāmkhya philosophy in the very beginning of his book.

Moreover, the most practical aspect of Śāmkhya philosophy comes to us as the Yoga system of Patañjali. If the Śāmkhya is theory, Yoga is its practice. And in the form of this practice, the contribution of Śāmkhya towards philosophy in general and to Indian philosophical thought in particular cannot be over-emphasised. The intellectuals of the whole world are now coming to realize the utility of Yoga-therapy in our day-to-day physical and psychological
diseases. In these days, one can easily see the Yoga centres
being established almost all over the globe. Does not this
credit go to the philosophical principles enunciated by
Sāmkhya thinkers? One who deprives Sāmkhya philosophy of
this credit, will show his ignorance about the system
concerned.

Thus this brief discussion about the comparative
worth of the two systems will bring home to the reader a glaring fact that this Indian dualistic thought is closer to
human life than the philosophy of the Western thinker,
Descartes. The reader may try to read national pride in our
statements but in our humble opinion these are facts which a
sincere student of comparative philosophy can hardly ignore.
CHAPTER VII

A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF DESCARTES AND SĀMKHYA:

(A) OF DESCARTES:

(i) Dualism of Matter and Mind:

We have so far considered some aspects of the philosophy of Descartes according to the conventional notion that he is a dualist, believing in the interaction of two substances, body and mind. Now we have to examine how far his dualistic philosophy is logical and consistent within itself. Are the two substances, matter and mind, independent, absolute and ultimate? If they are not, how can they be supposed to give us an idea of reality.

In Principle LIV, Descartes refers to matter and mind as two created substances and God as uncreated substance, and according to his own version, the created substances are not on the same footing as the uncreated substance, viz God. Obviously we fail to understand how Descartes has reached the conclusion that matter and mind form the conception of a dualistic reality, when they are dependent on the supreme

reality of God. Are there then three realities, one Supreme and the other two dependent? Descartes' position with regard to his dualistic notion of reality, seems to be untenable. He has failed to give two independent and ultimate substances forming the conception of dualism.

Moreover, Descartes' dualism of matter and mind is inadequate. It cannot explain all the aspects of the world. In this universe, 'motion' and 'rest' are so glaring phenomena that they cannot be ignored by a thinker who is trying to explain the world. Descartes' matter and mind, taken in themselves, do not explain 'motion' and 'rest'. Motion is not derived from matter nor matter from motion and the same thing can be said of the 'rest' also. It seems that Descartes saw this defect of his philosophy and dragged God into his system to explain the two phenomena. Is it not a failure of dualism?

Then Descartes maintains that God has given a certain amount of motion to this world and that motion is constant. It means that the motion given by God is not destroyed with the destruction of the objects in motion. It only changes its form. This notion of Descartes, it is said, became the foundation-stone of the principle of Conservation of Energy in modern physics. But as it is known to us, this principle of modern physics is under fire
now. Many scientists have questioned its validity. What is the amount which remains constant? Is the quantity of changed form of motion same or is it more or less? How do we know it? Questions like these are being raised against the Principle of Conservation of Energy. And it is a well-known fact that scientists have not been able to answer these questions satisfactorily. May we not raise these very same questions against Descartes' concept of motion? A close examination of Descartes' works reveals the fact that he has nowhere tried to answer these questions. A man of faith may feel satisfied with this position but a man of reason is sure to remain unconvinced.

Further, it may be said that if we somehow ignore God, the Supreme Reality, even then the dualism of matter and mind does not seem to us a satisfactory metaphysical classification. We may ask, what are the rationalistic grounds for assuming that Reality divides itself without remainder into what is mental and what is material?

Are there only two compartments, labelled 'mental' and 'material' in which all objects of the world may be put? Is there no other Compartment for the third type of entity that has been left out? We now put a more direct question. Have we in this scheme of dualism any place for living things?
which have no minds? Are they less in number than human beings that they have been so left out? Or are they, the poor creatures, less in importance? These are the questions which the uncompromising dualist will have to answer before he justifies his scheme of dividing the world into two watertight compartments. Descartes seems to have failed to solve this problem satisfactorily. So, his dualism is inadequate.

The cleavage of the universe into two realms, having almost no attributes in common, has resulted in the isolation of the mental from the physical order. Descartes, it seems, has failed to show satisfactorily how these two orders act on each other.

In spite of these difficulties, it may be stated that there are certain points which go in favour of such dualistic philosophy.

Dualism may not have proved a metaphysical triumph, but for the common person it seems to have given a satisfactory solution of the problem of the world. It is one of the main criteria of philosophy that it should satisfy our common-sense also, and as such, dualism is a popular conception of philosophy.

Descartes' dualism was a revolt against scholasticism and blind faith. The theological conception of treating
matter as a debasing substance was given up in Descartes' philosophy. He treated matter as a substance out of which the material world came into being. Another substance in his dualism was soul, which he distinguished as the thinking substance and which was supposed to be understood as something essentially self-sufficient and homogeneous.

Descartes' dualism represented a very sharp distinction between the two spheres, mental and physical. The advantage of the separation of the two spheres was immense, because each could develop its principles and methods on its own lines without the one interfering with the other.

It was for the first time that in Descartes' philosophy we were able to have a clear and distinct conception of both mind and matter. Reality, as conceived by Descartes, began to be felt as a vital principle in his philosophy.

The separation of mind and matter gave us more than a clarification of concepts. It marked a distinct progress both in matters relating to the principles of life, and in achievements in physical sciences. On the one hand, we see an increased activity of thought, resulting in an aspiration to realise the highest ideals in life, on the other hand, we witness the phenomena of marvellous progress in science resulting in a more intimate relationship between
man and his environment, and an increased knowledge of the means of making material progress and attaining a high standard of civilization from the worldly point of view.

Descartes' dualism may also be appreciated on the grounds that it has created metaphysical problems for his successors in the line. At least two thinkers after him, viz. Spinoza and Leibniz, tried to get over the artificial difficulties created by the bifurcation of nature in Descartes' dualism. Spinoza sought the solution of the problem by assuming only one substance, viz. God. Thought and extension are its two attributes. Leibniz sought the solution in his well-known theory of Pre-established Harmony. Subsequent thinkers solved the problem created by Descartes in their own ways.

So, we conclude that Descartes' dualism, in spite of its metaphysical drawbacks, has been the harbingers of progress in physical and psychological researches. It should not be considered an unmixed evil.

Here, it may also be said that Descartes, in the history of western philosophy, is first to give us a clear-cut notion of a dualistic universe. But, as with many other great thinkers, his dualism is crude. It cannot explain itself and it cannot explain the world. Having initiated the idea that there are two independent realities,
Further, in his Discourse on Method, he says that there are certain laws which God has so established in nature that we cannot doubt their being accurately observed in all that exists or is done in the world. These laws of nature operate without any pressure from God. This he illustrates by an example. He says, "I resolve to speak only of what would happen in a new world of God now created somewhere in imaginary space, and conclude His work by merely—leaving it to act in accordance with the laws which He had established."

Some of these doctrines of deism have been criticised on rationalistic or religious grounds. For example, it may be pointed out that deism starts with the assumption that God first exists and then He creates the world. The inquisitive reader may ask what God does in the intervening period? Obviously there seems to be no satisfactory reply. How can deism bridge the ditch which it has knowingly dug between God and His creation? Further, creationism, as has already been indicated in chapter V of this thesis, is not a satisfactory solution of the cosmological problem.

1. Descartes' Philosophical Works Vol I, P. 106.
Here Descartes seems to be influenced by Christian theology where God is thought to be the Creator of this universe. This acceptance of Christian belief has landed Descartes in many philosophical difficulties which he could never overcome in his life. And with the Cartesian doubt in mind we may ask whether Descartes is a theologian or a rationalist thinker. His belief in creationism, which is a tenet of Christianity clearly indicates that he was more of the former than of the latter type.

Then arises another question. When God's own existence, as Supreme Being, is undisputed, why does He create the world at all? Is it to remove His own imperfections? This, too, is unbelievable because God's perfection can never be doubted.

It may further be asked, 'Will not His power, as an Infinite Being, be reduced by assuming that the world can exist independently of Him even for a while?' To this the deist may reply that God may intervene in the universe, if there is some disorder. It means that after creation, God's position becomes secondary. His existence can be compared to that of a colonel who is required to put down disorder whenever it occurs in his country.
The deists have also failed to find in the nature of God any motive towards the work of creation. They explain creation as an arbitrary act of the supreme power of God. This seems to be contrary to the true spirit of religion which teaches us that God has created the world for the benefit of man.

Further, the deistic conception of the freedom of the human will is against reason and the true spirit of humility in religion. The human will should be conceived as reconciled with the Supreme will of God. In some cases, at least, we find that human will fails and God's will is done.

There are certain moral grounds on which we do not consider deism as a satisfactory creed.

Isolation of God from His creation rules out the possibility of man's finding consolation in his communion with God. The deistic conception of the absentee God goes against the cherished beliefs of christianity. As Descartes was a devout Roman catholic, believing in Scriptures, he could not agree to this deistic notion of God.

A closer examination of Descartes' views reveals the fact that he could not remain a consistent deist. There

are certain portions of his book where he clearly and categorically goes in favour of theism, for example, his belief in continuous creation and revelations of God, as mentioned below. It seems that Descartes, though he wants to give a deistic explanation of this universe, cannot get rid of the theological influences which were prevalent in his own days. So, his position wavers between deism and theism. This goes to show that Descartes is not himself very clear about the relation between God and the world.

In some respects, Descartes' position with regard to his deistic leanings seems to be anomalous. On the one hand, he holds with the deists that the laws of nature are sufficient to operate the world, while, on the other hand, he professes his belief in continuous creation and preservation of the world.

Still more glaring is his clear departure from deism when he says, "that we must believe all that God has revealed even though it is above the range of our capacities." Deism, as we have already shown, does not believe in miracles and revelations. How is it that Descartes believes in them?

2. Ibid. P. 229.
These are the defects of Descartes' philosophy which Spinoza set himself to rectify in his pantheistic system. For Spinoza, God and the world are one. God is an impersonal principle which is not outside of nature but is identified with it.

Yet, in spite of its drawbacks, we may say that deism represented the spirit of the age. It was a reaction against the extreme theological beliefs which failed to recognise the need of scientific investigation. Deism, however, insisted that man must depend upon his own reason to know God and nature.

Deism aroused the true spirit of religion to discard all forms of conventional beliefs in time-honoured rituals and formal practices. It advocated religious toleration and taught man to recognise his moral duties. Such revivals are expected when the light of religion seems to grow dim and the soul of man is in quest of divine light.

(iii) Mechanistic View of the World:

Descartes' dualism has given him a free scope also in dealing with matter according to the laws of science.

We have already noted how Descartes' problem of the soul has given rise to rich philosophical discussions by his
successors. Now, we shall see that his mechanistic view of
the universe is no less important in so far as it proves to
be the forerunner of a dominant approach in the field of
physical and biological sciences.

The marvellous progress made in these sciences
shows that mechanistic approach has given a great impetus
to their study. The credit for inaugurating this approach
to the universe at the dawn of the modern era of European
culture and philosophy may be assigned to Descartes.

Yet, it will not be correct to say that the
mechanistic view can satisfactorily explain the mysterious
working of the universe.

In the case of material things, we find that Des-
cartes' assumption that they are governed purely by mechanical
laws may not be a sound view. We should not be oblivious of
the fact that Descartes himself has said that all laws of nature
have been created by God and that He has given motion and
heat to the universe, for the individuation of matter into
all types of objects. Further, all things exist by His
concurrence. If this be the position, may we not argue that
the same supreme power that has given laws of nature to the
world and preserves the existence of material things, also
ordains their functioning continuously and regularly. If
this be so, why do we suppose that the physical world functions
like a machine? Even those who do not conscientiously believe in the existence of God, admit that there is unconscious teleology which explains the creation and maintenance of worldly objects. All natural phenomena are guided by final purposes which are beyond the human ken, but which, nevertheless, exist and function. It seems that the principle of life and thought is rooted in the very basis of matter. This may not be proved, but it can be assumed that matter does not consist of dead atoms but is a conglomerate of active centres of energy. Therefore, every object of nature has a destined goal which it reaches through an active teleological principle.

Moreover, latest researches in Modern Physics Descartes' Mechanistic explanation of also go against the world. Modern Physics tells us that the behaviour of the electrons at the ultimate point cannot be predicted. In this connection the researches of the German physicist, Heisenberg, have shown us that ultimately physics reaches the Law of Uncertainty or Indeterminacy. It means that there is a point where we cannot predict the action of electrons, so, ultimately, their behaviour remains undetermined. Now, one can easily conclude that, in the light of these researches, the mechanistic explanation of the universe like that of Descartes, becomes redundant. Descartes can explain this or that phenomenon of nature mechanically
but his view that this whole universe is like a big machine, turns out a mere hypothesis and this hypothesis can easily be disproved by the researches indicated above.

It may be pointed out that this purely mechanistic explanation of a huge cosmos like this does not seem to be consistent with the theological assumptions which Descartes seems to have advocated. If God has created this universe with its laws then it may very well be asked as to what is his purpose in creating it. The history of philosophy, both Eastern and Western, clearly tells us that all those who advocate creationism give us this or that purpose of creation, may it be 'leela' of Vedantism or 'Absolute realizing Itself' of Hegel. In every such case some purpose is there. May we then, ask what purpose Descartes assigns to the creation of this huge machine by God? If Descartes assigns some purpose to the creation of this universe, then his mechanism becomes meaningless. And if he does not assign any purpose, his creationism remains a type of mystery. In any case Descartes' position is untenable.

It is also not true that the mechanistic approach can explain the entire human behaviour. Mechanism breaks down when we consider human motives, will, desires and higher purposes of life. Living organisms are quite different from machines. In the first place, machines of a particular size
and pattern work in one and the same way. There are no
individual differences in machines, as we have in men. Human
beings have the capacity to develop their latent potentiali-
ities, but machines, work according to a set plan. Machines
lack initiated awareness and will of their own.

On the other hand, the human mind which controls
and operates the human body is capable of improvisement as
well as taking instantaneous decisions depending upon
circumstances and environment. Human mind exerts upon the
human body some forces which are different from the physical
ones and are commonly known as spiritual forces, sometimes
working even against physical laws. These spiritual prin-
ciples can be explained only on metaphysical grounds, and
are not the same for all individuals. As aims of life
differ, rigid mechanical rules may not fix the goal for
each person and determine his line of action. Human behaviour
is not amenable to causal description. Even if it be supposed
for the sake of argument that there is a causal order in
human behaviour it is so complex and unpredictable that it
cannot be governed by the rule of the thumb.

If an attempt is made to bring all human behaviour
under rigid rules, all talk of good and evil will be meaning-
less. Obviously, if men are machines, how will they respond
meaningfully to moral urges in humanity.
Thus, it may be concluded that the mechanistic view can neither explain the world nor can explain the entire human behaviour satisfactorily.

(iv) **Interactionism**

Given mind and body, the two opposite substances, the problem is to know how they are related to each other. The easiest line of thinking seems to be that mind acts on the body and the body acts on the mind, that is to say, there is interactionism between these two substances. Descartes has advocated this theory in order to explain human behaviour.

Interactionism, as enunciated by Descartes, suffers from serious defects.

In the first place, it is a primitive conception. It may appeal to the popular mind, but it has little metaphysical value. It does not satisfy the criterion of logical thinking. Two totally independent substances like mind and body, cannot act on each other.

It is also pointed out that there is no affinity between the two opposite substances, mind and body, so interaction between the two is not possible. Interaction takes place between two substances of the same nature.
The answer to this criticism may be found in Paul Edwards Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, wherein the writer says that mental events do not pre-suppose a sub-stratum any more than meteorological events do. If we are asked what changes when meteorological events occur, e.g. when it begins to rain or snow, we may say that the weather changes, although no one would take this to mean that the weather is some sort of substance. Similarly, we may say that it is the mind that changes, as mental events occur but that does not commit us to a mental substance theory in any serious sense.

Further, advances in Science have added to the difficulty of the problem we are discussing. It is a charge against interactionism that it violates the Law of Conservation of Energy. It is a general assumption of physical sciences that the total amount of energy in the universe as a whole is constant. If a light wave starts certain chemical actions in the retina, there is bound to be a resultant activity in some neurones. This activity, when it touches off brain centres, causes a mental experience. Thus a physical process ends in a mental activity, leading to a certain amount of physical energy being apparently lost from the physical side. Similarly, if a mental process results in a physical activity, there will be a corresponding
gain in physical energy. The total energy will not remain the same in either case. Thus, the Law of Conservation of Energy will be violated.

The argument that interactionism violates the Law of Conservation of Energy is not valid on certain grounds. In the first place, even the validity of this principle itself can be denied. How can it be proved that energy in the universe is constant? Who can measure it and how? Secondly, what evidence is there that the principle can apply to the area of complex brain phenomena?

Further, it may be argued that mental events may not be the causes of physical occurrences, they may be only symptoms of physical events which are the real causes. Mechanical laws seem completely to determine all the actions of the human brain and the human body, just as they govern the processes of the inorganic world. Those who maintain this mechanistic view refer us to such things as reflexes and habitual actions among human beings. Mental causes in such examples are out of question.

The above argument that mental events may not be the causes of physical occurrences, leads us to the conclusion, that mechanistic laws operate not only in the inorganic world,
but also in the human organism. It must be admitted that our present scientific knowledge is too limited to justify us in formulating such hypothesis. The mechanistic view, as has already been pointed out in this chapter, is not quite sound. It has no argument excepting that of question-begging analogy between inorganic substances and organic bodies.

There are, however, some arguments against interactionism which could not be countered and which may prove the crux of the problem. They are the rocks on which the ship of Interactionism will wreck and founder.

Mind or soul is a thinking substance. Descartes says that soul resides in the pineal gland. He has given it a fixed place. It appears from this fact that he has forgotten that soul is not an extended substance, as only an extended substance can occupy a particular place or space. This is contrary to his description of the soul as a thinking substance having no extension. However, it is not certain whether the pineal gland actually exists in the human body. Modern physiology is not certain about it.

It may also be pointed out that mind and body are two opposite and independent substances. How can they be

causally related to each other? There can be a causal relation between one mental experience and another, or one bodily occurrence and another. There should be some affinity or likeness between cause and effect. Descartes himself has unwillingly ruled out causal relation between mind and body by denying to both of them properties in common between the two. Causal relation between the two independent substances, is therefore, not intelligible.

Moreover, it can be said that to justify interaction between body and mind, Descartes goes too far. He makes soul or mind seated on a particular point somewhere in brain. Here we fail to understand how the soul which is totally different from body sits on it. Moreover, does not our soul or mind lose its significance when it is made a type of parasite on our body? In our opinion, to explain human behaviour, Descartes sacrifices the independent and absolute nature of mind.

Besides, interactionism is repugnant to Descartes' mechanistic view of the world. Descartes never seems to maintain that our mind is also governed by mechanical laws. Mind is an unextended thinking substance and as such it should also be incorporeal. By virtue of its nature no mechanical laws can operate in it as it has no corporeal existence. If mind is not governed by mechanical laws, how can its effects
on body be said to be governed by such laws. Descartes seems to have reached the anomalous position when he has to choose between interactionism and mechanism.

Therefore, we come to the conclusion that though interaction may be justified on the grounds of its being a common-sense view of the problem, it cannot be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of the relation of mind and body. However, thinkers, fed up with the defects of interactionism, evolved other theories such as Parallelism and Pre-established Harmony. These theories may not be considered here for want of space. Suffice it to say, that the day this mind-body problem is solved most of the metaphysical controversies will come to an end.

(v) Arguments for the Existence of God

Descartes has given some arguments to prove the existence of God. Let us now consider how far these arguments are valid.

The first argument is based on the assumption that the idea of God is innate in us and God is the cause of that idea. Descartes has given no proof of this fact. It is possible that the idea may have been derived from books, from the conversation with other men, or from the observation of
worldly objects. Descartes should have proved more clearly that this idea could not present itself unless a Supreme Being did exist. He seems to be working under the assumption that as the idea of God exists in his mind, so God does exist. Descartes does not give any convincing proof of the existence of the innate idea but only makes a dogmatic statement about it.

Further, it is alleged by some thinkers that the innate idea of God does not exist in the minds of children, idiots and savages. So, it can be said that this argument for the existence of God seems to have collapsed.

It seems to be highly probable that the idea of God has come from our experience of the external objects, or from the qualities possessed by men whom we meet. For example, from the idea of infinite, there does not necessarily arise an idea of the Divine Infinity, but it arises from our own limitations, from which we infer the idea of God as an Infinite Being.

Similarly, all such attributes as All-powerful, 'All-knowing,' 'All-merciful,' originate from such ideas about human beings as possess physical strength, knowledge and a kindly heart. What we actually seem to do is to increase the notions of these human qualities to an infinite degree in the case of God.
Descartes says that there is more objective reality in the idea of an Infinite God than in the idea of a finite thing. This, too, cannot be proved because human understanding is not capable of conceiving infinity. Descartes tries to explain away this objection by saying that we need not comprehend the Infinite or all that is in it, but that it is sufficient for us to understand a few particulars in order to have a little knowledge about it. Will it not be said that, in that case, we can utmost know a part of the infinite but not, on that account, the infinite itself? Descartes does not seem to be very consistent in his idea of the Infinite.

Descartes' claim "that all things which I perceive very clearly and very distinctly are true." is untenable. In fact, the truth about things is hidden from us and we cannot say that we know it clearly and distinctly. Descartes' contention that mathematical truths are so clear and distinct that we can infer from them the existence of God, is also not true. An atheist knows clearly and distinctly that three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles, yet he is far from believing in the existence of God.

1. Descartes - Philosophical Works Vol I. P. 158.
Further, elaborating the idea of God, he says, "that God in creating me, placed this idea within me to be like the mark of the workman imprinted on his work." Several questions arise from this statement. What is the form of that mark? How can it be proved that such a mark has been made? Has it not been made on the minds of all persons? If so, why some of them are atheists? If atheists have been excluded from others, then on what grounds? These are such questions as baffle human ingenuity to answer them. It appears that there are no convincing grounds on which it can be said that we possess innate idea of God.

The second argument starts from the assumption of the reality of the self. If the self is a real substance then its maker also is a real being and has existence. The argument presupposes that I have been created by some power more perfect than myself. It rules out the possibility of a person being created by himself or by some other person, because nobody other than God could give him a soul.

The question now arises as to what would happen if the soul had always existed just as at present? In that

2. Descartes.
3. Descartes - Philosophical Works Vol I, P. 162.
case, no efficient cause of the soul was needed, so that question of God's existence did not arise. To obviate this difficulty, Descartes has taken shelter under the theory of continuous creation, which runs as follows:

"For all the course of my life may be divided into an infinite number of parts, none of which is in any way dependent on the other, and thus from the fact that I was in existence a short time ago, it does not follow that I must be in existence now, unless some cause at this instant, so to speak, produces me anew, that is to say, conserves me."

This means that for the preservation of the soul, we have to assume the existence of God. Now, as Descartes' formula of 'cogito ergo sum' has established the reality of the soul, so God who is the creator of the soul must exist. Moreover, as souls' preservation from moment to moment is necessary for its survival, so God's existence becomes peremptory.

Here, the objection may be raised that Descartes does not seem to have given anywhere the proof of the theory of continuous creation. Such assumptions need proof, if they are used to establish some philosophical truths.

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Elsewhere, Descartes has said, "I must inquire whether there is a God, as soon as the occasion presents itself, and if I find that there is a God, I must also enquire whether He may be a deceiver, for without a knowledge of these two truths, I do not see that I can ever be certain of anything." ¹ Now, a big question arises, Did Descartes possess the knowledge of these two truths before he became certain of the reality of his own self? If not, on what grounds did he say that cogito ergo sum revealed to him the reality of the soul? Is Descartes' argument not circular?

The third argument is known as the ontological proof of God. It starts with the assumption that whatever is contained in the nature or essence of any thing is the same as to say it is true of that thing. As existence is contained in the idea of the essence of God so it is true to affirm that God exists. In the case of other things of the world it may not be necessary that if we have the essence of those things in our minds they do exist, e.g. we may have the idea in our minds of a beautiful garden but it may exist nowhere in actuality.

The argument of Descartes that in the case of worldly objects the idea of essence does not necessarily imply their existence, does not seem to be quite convincing.

¹. Descartes - Philosophical Works Vol I. P. 159.
Even in the actual world, also, we do not have any idea in our minds corresponding to which existence is not there. Only, in the case of imagination, we can say that corresponding existence is not necessarily there. As the psychologists tell us, an 'idea' is radically different from a fiction of imagination, so Descartes' position is true only in the realm of imagination and we cannot talk of an idea of a thing without its existence.

It is, therefore, necessary that God's existence should first be proved, beyond the shadow of doubt, before we can say that in His case essence and existence are the same. How did Descartes get an idea of the essence of God unless it was from some external sources. We hope that it was not by revelation, otherwise he should not have taken the trouble of proving the existence of God.

According to Hintum, Descartes' ontological argument is not sound. "We cannot infer the existence of a perfect Being, just as from the premise 'nothing is or could be perfect without existing,' we cannot conclude that something is perfect." In order to justify his argument, the thinker first has to prove that there is something perfect.

1. Philosophical Quackerly - Published by the University of St. Andrews - April, 1972, P. 110.
Thus we have discussed the main arguments of Descartes to prove the existence of God. Really speaking, God's existence has been a subject of great controversy throughout the history of philosophy. The ontological argument has been the subject of controversy among some thinkers and theologians of the modern age, such as John Hick, J.N. Finlay and Karl Barth. From the discussions on the subject we can maintain that God's existence has so far been neither proved nor disproved. The arguments given by various thinkers may suggest His existence, but they cannot prove it.

Thus, we have discussed, in brief, the main criticisms of some important points in Descartes' philosophy. An appreciation of his views has also been given. His position, on the whole, appears to be of great importance to the history of philosophy in general and that of the West in particular. In spite of various defects in his philosophical system, he has a unique place in the history of Modern Western Philosophy. He has tried to tell us that philosophy has got its own, sphere apart from religion or theology which was thought to be the guideline of philosophical thinking in the mediaeval ages. In this direction he might not have succeeded according to our expectations, yet his initiative for the purpose stands unchallenged. Moreover, he gave rise
to independent and individual thinking in philosophical sphere. For this very reason, he stands out apart as a great thinker of his age, without any academy or school running under his guidance. The bold assertions of his views, in spite of severe opposition from his contemporaries, deserve to be fully praised by every man of reason. Descartes' philosophy has given us a rationalism which has been attacked by subsequent empiricists. A hide-and-seek game is being played even now by these two systems in the philosophical atmosphere of the West. From what we have seen in the critical appreciation of some of Descartes' important metaphysical principles, our belief is confirmed that Descartes has been rightly called the Father of modern Western philosophy.

(B) OF SĀMKHYA

(1) Dualism of Prakṛti and Puruṣa:

Sāmkhya dualism claims to be an unqualified metaphysical system which explains the universe by the assumption of two opposite, independent and eternal substances. No third power is needed to guide them or initiate their functioning.

The two substances, prakṛti and puruṣa, are abstract notions, which cannot be substantiated by our
experience and observation. As they are of opposite nature, there seems to be no basis of their mutual relation. If the puruṣa had been of the same kind as prakṛti, it would not have the desire of freedom. The desire to become free postulates that the puruṣa is different from prakṛti. Prakṛti is, on the other hand, the original cause of all things. But it is not the cause of the soul. Further, the stolid nature of puruṣa has no affinity with the incessant activity of prakṛti. The two substances are poles asunder and so mutually exclusive that it is not possible to explain how they can have contact with each other.

If there is no contact possible between them, how can the process of evolution start? Can one entity alone do it? Śaṅkhaṇya thinkers are ready with the reply. They say that as the entities are abstract, it is not necessary that there should be a physical contact. By the proximity of puruṣa, the equilibrium of the guṇas is disturbed and the evolution starts. This does not seem to be a satisfactory explanation as guṇas are unconscious, so they cannot be affected by the presence of puruṣa.

Then, again, the substances being so different, do they work harmoniously or come into conflict with each other? The Śaṅkhaṇya dualism presupposes smooth working between
purusa and prakrti, the reason being that their aims and objectives are the same. Purusa is keen to become free through discriminatory knowledge. Prakrti helps it in doing so by placing before it for its enjoyment all the fruits of its creation, so that it may get satiated and disillusioned from its folly. In fact, the whole evolutionary process, from mahat to the specific elements, is brought about by the modifications of prakrti for the emancipation, of each spirit. The whole description seems to be fantastic when we remember that the two entities, purusa and prakrti, being of opposite nature, have no point of contact between them.

The Samkhya conception of dualism cannot adequately explain the excellent adaptation of prakrti to the needs of purusa. How can the generous but blind prakrti minister to the multifarious needs of the conscious purusa? Is there any third entity that helps it to do it? Samkhya thinkers are not prepared to admit any third substance to interfere with their dualistic system. They hit upon the plan of explaining the phenomenon by assuming unconscious teleology in prakrti, which explains the perfect arrangement and order in the evolutionary process. To the naive mind this does not seem to be a satisfactory solution.

1. S.K. 56.
Later Sāṁkhya commentators, such as Vacaspati Misra and Vīrānti, are inclined to the view that God or universal spirit is the only power which adjusts all relations between prakṛti and puruṣa for the realisation of the common aim of the liberation of puruṣa.

Sāṁkhya dualism seems to be inadequate to give due importance to the role which prakṛti plays in the evolutionary process. Kapil muni, who is the author of the Sāṁkhya śūtras, has given the impression that prakṛti plays only the second fiddle to puruṣa. This biased view of Kapila in favour of puruṣa led even modern thinkers, like Prof. J.N. Sinha, to come to the conclusion that Sāṁkhya implicitly gives primacy to puruṣas over prakṛti and paves the way for idealism.  

To give undue importance to puruṣa is initially wrong. The fact of the matter is that the author of the Sāṁkhya śūtra himself overlooks the fundamental problem of dualism when it gives undue importance to the role played by puruṣa and makes prakṛti subservient to it. What power has

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1. Radhakrishnan - Indian Philosophy Vol. II. p. 313-319.
2. S.P.S. III, 61 ("as a servant, without any desire of his own, serves the master").
3. Prof. J.N. Sinha - History of Indian Philosophy Vol. II. P. 93.
the purusa to compel prakrti to help it in gaining discrimina-
tory knowledge? Indeed, the instruments of intellect, mind
and the senses, by means of which the soul may be said to
acquire knowledge, are all the creations of prakrti and so
subject to its control. The purusa merely comes near
prakrti, casts its reflection on buddhi, gains discriminatory
knowledge, becomes free and vanishes out of sight. He does
not play directly any significant part in the evolutionary
process. The question may now arise that if purusa is not
so important why should it not be deleted from the picture.
Will this not lead to materialism, pure and simple?

It appears that the founder of the Samkhya system
himself, being steeped in the Vedic lore and imbued with the
spiritual teachings of the Upanisadic seers could not
advocate an avowedly materialistic system of philosophy. So
a conscious principle to posit against matter was absolutely
necessary. But Samkhya purusa is merely an apology for a
real spiritual power which may control the forces of nature
and contribute its due share in the evolutionary process.
In the absence of the Supreme Power of God, Samkhya has prakrti
and purusa, the two abstract, independent principles forming
the notion of dualism.

We shall now see that Samkhya dualism is untenable
on epistemological grounds also. In order to establish this
fact, we have first to analyse the mechanism of knowledge and then to find out where the actual flaw lies in the process of knowledge. In every act or form of knowledge, we are concerned with three factors, namely:

(i) the subject or the knower,
(ii) the object to be known and
(iii) the process of gaining knowledge.

This seems to be all very fine but we have to examine critically the various factors of knowledge involved and to see how they function. Purusa has been defined as "pure spirit, without attributes, without parts, inactive, unaffected by pains and pleasures, devoid of feelings and emotions, completely indifferent to sensations."\(^1\) It is incorporeal, while buddhi is by nature corporeal. How can these two substances which are poles asunder have contact with each other. According to Vacaspati, there can be none between the two on the plane of time and space.\(^2\) Even Vijnanabhiksu does not seem to see any real contact between the two, excepting the symbolical one as between a crystal and a rose the reflection of which falls on it.\(^3\)

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1. Zimmer - Philosophies of India-under the chapter, 'Sāmkhya Psychology'- P. 314-332
Then again how is it possible for purusa which has no form or shape, to reflect itself in buddhi which is constantly changing. Moreover, purusa only receives a reflection. Is reflection a reality? Does purusa come into close contact with the real objects? If not, how can it have a direct and intimate knowledge of the objects? We have to examine whether there is any causal relation between the external object and internal idea? If they are causally related, are they of the same substance? What is common between the two to justify causal relation?

Thus it is difficult to explain how purusa gets acquainted with external objects.

In spite of all the philosophical complications in which the Sāṅkhya system seems to be involved, it has from its very inception, attracted the minds of the people by the simplicity of its basic principles. It was a true product of its age. The materialism of Gārvaka had failed to satisfy the spiritual needs of the people. They felt that matter alone is not enough to solve their problems of life. On the other hand, there were Vedic and Upanisadic philosophies which suggested that only one principle, viz, Brahman, is enough to explain the whole universe. These philosophies were one-sided and seemed to be dogmatic.
Under these circumstances, the Saṃkhya dualism appealed to people's mind in general, because it embodied certain principles with which they were already familiar, and which had passed into current beliefs. It may not have given the satisfactory metaphysical solution to the real problems of life, but it freed the public mind from the dead weight of customs practised in the name of religion.

Saṃkhya dualism gives reality to the world. The Upaniṣads discarded this world, as they did not think it to be real. They thought it to be imaginary. Buddhist thinkers also discarded it. Both have said that we gain freedom through renunciation, and not by enjoying its products. Saṃkhya, on the other hand, says that purusa can gain freedom only by enjoying the fruits of prakṛti, so that it may experience real disillusionment and attain liberation.

Renunciation is no remedy for mental and bodily ailments, nor can it solve the problems of life. It is a counsel of despair, suggesting escapism from the grim struggle for existence. Saṃkhya dualism is based on the principle of gaining true knowledge and attaining liberation by one's efforts. The propounder of this philosophy had clearly seen that absolute dependence on God is likely to lead to a life of contentment, sloth and inertia. Replacing God by matter, we lose sight of all ethical values in life. While
ignoring God, Śāmkhya retained the spiritual principle in its task of evolution. Śāmkhya dualism thus gives a great relief to the soul of man hankering after its liberation from the pangs of suffering.

(11) Evolution of the World:

As we have seen, Śāmkhya philosophy is based on two principles of opposite nature, which account for the evolution of the world. The evolutionary process starts with the purusa coming into close proximity to prakṛti and causing disturbance in the equilibrium of the gunas. Śāmkhya thinkers have given the analogy of magnet and iron to indicate how the unconscious prakṛti is attracted towards the conscious purusa. Just as the presence of the magnet produces disturbance in iron, so the presence of purusa disturbs the equilibrium of the three gunas.1

Śāmkhya thinkers have not satisfactorily explained how equilibrium is disturbed and evolution of prakṛti begins. Their analogy of magnet and iron is also not very sound. The question arises, 'Is there something special in magnet only that it attracts? Has the power been centralised in magnet

1. S.R.S. I -96.1
only? If this is so, then magnet will attract all things, e.g. wood, stone etc. and not only iron. It means that there is something in iron also by which it gets attracted by the magnet. If we apply this analogy in the case of *purusa* and *prakrti*, we have to face some difficulties. What is that quality in *prakrti* by which it is attracted? Again, in the case of iron and magnet, both are material, so there may be some special powers in them. But in the case of *prakrti* and *purusa*, both are of opposite nature. One is conscious while the other is unconscious, one is inactive while the other is active, one is simple while the other is complex. It seems unintelligible how *purusa* which is of totally different nature from *prakrti* disturbs the equilibrium of the three *guna*s.

If it is said that both conscious *purusa* and unconscious *prakrti* have one and the same purpose which forms the basis of attraction, then it can very well be asked as to how a totally unconscious entity has the oneness of purpose with a conscious entity. Thus, in no way, the iron and magnet analogy seems to be a sound one.

Supposing we agree with *Sankhya* that equilibrium is disturbed by *purusa* coming close to *prakrti*, then the next question arises as to whether the coming close to each other of *purusa* and *prakrti* is pre-ordained or accidental. According
to the Sāṃkhya thinkers it does not seem to be accidental because they try to give us a cyclic order of the universe. There is a cyclic process of evolution and dissolution; evolution is followed by dissolution and dissolution is followed by evolution. Thus, it does not seem to be accidental but pre-arranged rather than pre-ordained.

If it is pre-arranged, then we may ask another question. How did purusa come in contact with prakṛti in the very beginning? Naturally, the Sāṃkhya thinkers will reply that this cyclic order is beginningless. But does this explanation of Sāṃkhya thinkers satisfy our reason? Such a statement about a central problem of human thought seems to be a device to explain away the problem itself.

Prof. D.M. Dutta experiences a real difficulty in this matter. He says that "The first problem is the possibility of creation. Sāṃkhya believes that the world is beginningless and endless, so the creation is as succeeding any of the states of dissolution and not first creation."¹

The unevolved prakṛti represents the state of dissolution. The first evolution obviously starts from dissolution. It cannot be the first creation. The first

creation cannot be explained. Out of faith and devotion we may accept this assumption of Sāmkhya but to understand it with the help of reason seems to be rather difficult.

Sāmkhya thinkers describe the beginning of the evolutionary process by saying that after the disturbance of equilibrium one guṇa rises to dominate the other and thus the process of evolution starts. Here a question may be asked "How can unconscious guṇas try to dominate one another? The question of domination cannot arise when they themselves are unconscious. The capacity to dominate is possible only in conscious entities.

Closely connected with the above point is another problem. How can unintelligent prākṛti evolve the world without being guided by an intelligent principle? We find that all the works of design are guided by some intelligent being. Who is the designer in the Sāmkhya evolution? Mere wood cannot turn itself into a chair, unless the carpenter makes it after a design or pattern. So, mere unconscious prākṛti cannot evolve the world in which there is design, order and harmony without being guided by an intelligent principle. Sāmkhyas also emphasized the same point by saying that "non-intelligent (acetana) prākṛti can never act and evolve the world without being supervised by an intelligent principle. Unconscious prākṛti cannot produce the world with
a particular arrangement, order and harmony, adapted to the merits and demerits of the individual souls without being supervised by an intelligent principle."

Another question may now arise as to why prakṛti evolves. Sāṃkhya thinkers have replied to this question by saying that prakṛti evolves for the sake of the purusa, and that evolution is teleological. It is also pertinent to ask how unconscious prakṛti acts with a purpose. Sāṃkhya thinkers explain it by means of analogies. The first analogy is that even as unconscious milk flows from the udders of a cow by its very nature for the nourishment of the calf, so does prakṛti evolve for the benefit of the purusas. The analogy does not seem to be appropriate, as milk proceeds from the udders due to the instinctive love of the cow for the calf. This analogy would make the prakṛti conscious and the purusa active.

Similarly inadequate is the famous analogy of the lame and blind persons, passing through a jungle in which a big fire is blazing. The lame man represents purusa.

1. J.N. Sinha - History of Indian Philosophy - Page 467.
2. S.K. 56.
3. S.K. 57 also in S.P.S. II - 37.
and the blind man prakṛti. Here, it may be noted that both
the persons are conscious and intelligent. The lame man
guides the blind man by his words and the blind man also
understands the instructions of the lame man. In the case
of prakṛti and puruṣa, prakṛti is blind and unconscious.
How can it understand and respond to the gestures of the
conscious but inactive puruṣa. Therefore, Sāmkhya thinkers
have failed to explain the purpose of evolution with the help
of analogies.

It may be concluded that the theory of evolution
has not been satisfactorily explained by Sāmkhya thinkers and
that it is not a sound metaphysical assumption. The objections
that have been raised against it are many and, as we have
seen, most of which cannot be answered.

Moreover, we are surprised to note that Sāmkhya
system which seems to be an example of intellectual courage
and advancement falls back upon irrational elements. It is
surprising that a system which seems to be based on concrete
human experience goes, for its support, to such analogies and
effects, as sometimes, seem to be childish. We may accept
it on the basis of our faith but reason goes against it.

It can, however, be said that in spite of
certain drawbacks in the system there are certain good points
in it which appeal to most of us. In fact, the problem of the world has been a subject of controversy since days immemorial. Sāṃkhya system however, has given us a scheme of evolution which tries to present to us a metaphysical solution of a difficult problem.

There are certain features which are peculiar to the Sāṃkhya evolution, and which make it superbly attractive on account of the novelty of the scheme. To begin with, it is not a continuous process, progressing in one direction only. In it evolution and dissolution take place alternately, in a cyclic order. Dissolution is followed by the successive stages of evolution till the entire universe with its multitudinous objects comes into being. It appeals to our minds, as it is based on scientific principles. It starts with the belief in the indestructibility of matter. Even in the state of dissolution, no destruction of the matter takes place. All the evolutes are absorbed in prakṛti to be manifested again when evolution takes place, in a systematic form. There is nothing haphazard or out of order in the entire process. It assumes that production is only the manifestation of what is hidden in prakṛti in a potential form. It is a process which is based on the fundamental scientific principle that something cannot come out of nothing, and whatever is has always been. Prof. Hiriyanna stresses the same point when he says, "The so-called beginning
of an object is only an event in its history, the object itself is not and cannot be made.\textsuperscript{1} Things may undergo a sea-change but their complete annihilation is out of question.

The supreme contribution of Śāṅkhya evolution lies in its strictly psychological interpretation of existence.\textsuperscript{2} It gives a vivid and picturesque description of human organism. It presents an exhaustive view of entire personality.

It is a unique thing in this system alone that the cosmological and psychic principles come out of the same source and develop on parallel lines. Maxmuller appreciates this feature of the system when he says, "By admitting the blending of the cosmic and psychological events much in the Śāṅkhya philosophy would cease to be obscure, the buddhi of the world and the buddhi of ourselves would indeed become one."\textsuperscript{3} It may be remembered that purusa is reflected only in one buddhi, and the cosmological and psychic evolutions proceed on parallel lines smoothly without a conflict or a break.

The evolutionary process of Śāṅkhya would seem to many as fantastic, but a little thought given to it would

\begin{enumerate}
\item Prof. Hiriyanna -Outline of Indian Philosophy, Page 273.
\item Zimmer.
\item Maxmuller - The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, Page 294.
\end{enumerate}
reveal that it is based on sound practical considerations. No God of creation has been mentioned in this scheme, no supernatural powers control human destiny, no miracles of saints misinterpret the hard facts of life.

Moreover, Śāṅkhyā thinkers have tried to take out a fundamental cosmological problem from theological mysticism. It definitely represents an advance on the Upanisadic explanations of the origin of the world. The Upanisadic analogies of spider and its web or fire and its sparks about the origin of this cosmos do not satisfy our intellect.

Thus when the cosmological problems were being solved by the priests with the help of fables, the Śāṅkhyā thinkers evolved a system of philosophy which made a realistic approach to their solution. Śāṅkhyā conception of evolution may fall short of the criteria of scientific methods; but this does not detract from its value as an original system of great importance.

(iii) Plurality of the Purusas

When Śāṅkhyā thinkers formulated their dualistic philosophy, several alternative suggestions must have come to

2. Ibid, II - I - 1.
their minds. Should there be one universal spirit to explain not only the cosmos but also their philosophy of life? Secondly, if that were so, what will be the nature of this single spiritual principle? Obviously, it will be in the position of the creator of the world.

It may be remembered that, all metaphysical considerations apart, Sāmkhya thinkers from the very beginning have been averse to giving God any place in their scheme. So the presumption of a single spiritual principle is ruled out.

Then they seem to have thought of assuming a multiplicity of spirits to explain the universe. Their conception of these spirits was greatly influenced by that of the self in the Upaniṣads. It may, however, be pointed out that in the Upaniṣads the idea of multiplicity is given in reference to the empirical selves, but Sāmkhya has applied the idea of multiplicity to the purusas of its conception. This is bound to lead to some metaphysical difficulties.

The arguments for the plurality of purusas are inconsistent with the description of purusas given by Sāmkhya thinkers. Purusa has been defined by them as eternal, devoid of gunas, spotless, pure and inactive. The multiplicity of such purusas is proved on the basis of the diversity of births and deaths among different persons. If the word

1. S.K. 12 also in S.P.S. I. 149.
'purusa' here stands for pure consciousness, then the argument becomes untenable because soul is beyond origination and decay.

Again, the argument that the difference in activity of different persons proves the plurality of purusas is also irrelevant. Purusa is inactive and it has nothing to do with the activities of the body.

Still, the third argument urged in favour of the plurality of purusas is far more untenable than the former two. Purusa is devoid of gunas and its plurality has been proved in this argument on the basis of the differences in the proportion of the three constituents (gunas) among different persons. How far consistent is it with the description of purusa as given by Śaṁkhya thinkers?

From the above discussion it may be inferred that the arguments of plurality as given in Karīka 18, cannot be applied to the transcendental purusas. They can only be applied to jīvas or empirical selves. Prof. Keith also is of the same opinion when he says, "that the conception of the subject cannot logically maintained when many purusas are allowed." Their number and individuality will be conditioned by the different experiences, aims and objectives. He has given us a very sound view when he says, that "Had the Śaṁkhya conception been of a number of souls as opposed to spirits, no logical objection.

could be raised to the theory of multiplicity."\(^1\) In this connection Dr. Radhakrishnan is more emphatic than Prof. Keith when he says that "the Śāṅkhya arguments for the existence of the puruṣa turn out to be proofs for the existence of the empirical individuals and not transcendental subjects."\(^2\)

Moreover, it can also be said that Śāṅkhya thinkers are not very clear about the nature of puruṣa. "Throughout the Śāṅkhya system there is confusion between puruṣa and jīva."\(^3\) Had Śāṅkhya recognised the plurality of the jīvas there would have been no dispute. But what causes difficulty is that Śāṅkhya believes in the plurality of puruṣas which have identical nature. It seems logical to maintain plurality if one puruṣa differs from another, but we do not find any feature of this distinction in Śāṅkhya. May we then not ask that if plurality is real, then what distinguishes one puruṣa from another, when both are free. For plurality, it is necessary that there must be some difference among different puruṣas because "multiplicity without distinction is impossible."\(^4\)

1. Prof. Keith - Śāṅkhya System P. 88.
2. Dr. Radhakrishnan - Indian Philosophy Vo. II. P. 321.
3. Philosophical Quarterly April, 1926 - The Śāṅkhya System. Some Critical considerations - Dr. Radhakrishnan.
4. Ibid.
Here it may also be pointed out that Nāyā- Vaiśeṣika thinkers also believe in the plurality of souls. They also believe that all souls are of the same nature but to maintain the plurality of souls they have propounded a category of 'Viṣeṣa' which, according to them, distinguishes one soul from another but such an assumption is totally absent from Sāmkhya philosophy. Frankly speaking, Sāmkhya thinkers committed a mistake in not propounding any such thing as will distinguish one purusa from the other.

Manyness has also made it impossible to distinguish one purusa from the other because their mere number precludes the possibility of their having any distinctive features of their own. Nor have they been categorised that we could know them by the classes to which they would have belonged. It seems funny that all of them are inactive, indifferent, devoid of all qualities, doing nothing but only casting their reflections in their respective buddhis. No separate work for each purusa can be assigned, because it does not possess any distinctive quality of its own.

Again, multiplicity of purusas cannot be established because purusa is described in Sāmkhya philosophy as all-pervading. ¹ "Logically, it is inconsistent to hold

¹ S.P.B. I - 49.
the multiplicity of such an all-pervading entity because in that case, multiplicity would limit the all-pervasiveness of other purusas. Thus it can be maintained that Samkhya conception about the plurality of purusas is not very convincing. We have pointed out in the beginning of this discussion that Samkhya conception of purusas has been influenced by Upanisadic concept of self. But it seems that in order to give some original tinge to the very old conception of 'self', Samkhya thinkers insisted to maintain the ultimate plurality of self or soul. Thus, they seem to be involved in two contradictory positions. On the one hand, they have eternal, all-pervading and pure nature of purusas and on the other hand, the concept of plurality. Both these concepts, it seems to us, cannot go together. Either Samkhya thinkers should propound the purusa of different nature or they should say good-bye to their favourite concept of plurality. If they do not do so, their position will remain always unintelligible to a man of reason and thought.

It seems that modern thinkers have taken note of this position. That is why they are inclined to interpret Śāmkhya concept of puruṣa in terms of those of Upaniṣads. The names of Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Umesh Misra can be cited in our favour. According to them, Śāmkhya concept of puruṣa takes us towards the concept of one single puruṣa. We are also of the opinion that the Śāmkhya concept of puruṣa does not, ipso facto, seem to be consistent within itself. A clearer notion of puruṣa is needed, which may be free from all ambiguities.

In spite of all these difficulties one thing may, undoubtedly, be said about the Śāmkhya conception of many purusas. This system, as we have indicated previously, has its roots in concrete human experience. And the actual experience of our life tells us that different individuals of this universe have different souls. Common-sense can hardly believe that these different individuals, being so differently constituted, are ultimately one. So the notion of multiplicity of purusas may seem more convincing to a man of common-sense than to a man of intellectual pursuits. In propounding such a conception, it seems, Śāmkhya thinkers wish to satisfy a large number of men rather than a few intellectuals.

1. Dr. Radhakrishnan - Indian Philosophy Vol II and Dr. Umesh Misra - Bhartiya Darshana P. 297.
(iv) Realism

In Sāṃkhya Philosophy, the world is real and all the objects, which we perceive in it, have their own existence, independent of our consciousness. Prakṛti, the formless matter, evolves objects of a real nature. The purusa, who is inactive, uses all these objects for its benefit. Kapila, the founder of the Sāṃkhya system, is reputed to have said that the world is not of the nature of mere ideas, but it is real.¹

This realistic attitude of Sāṃkhya may be criticised on certain grounds. It may be urged against it that it tries to derive concrete material objects from the abstract notions such as prakṛti and gunas. It is hard to believe and harder still to prove. Dr. Radhakrishnan has pointed out that "the account of the prakṛti and the gunas inclines one to the view that prakṛti and its development are not real in the ultimate sense of the term."² It is contrary to the realistic view of Sāṃkhya.

Still more incomprehensible is the theory that at the time of pralaya, all the concrete objects will

¹ S.P.S. I 42.
² Philosophical Quarterly April, 1926 -The Sāṃkhya System: Some critical considerations- Dr. Radhakrishnan.
dissolve and disappear in the matrix (avyakta) and nothing of them will remain. May we ask Shall the high mountains, the vast deserts, the unfathomable oceans, the entire solar system, with all its stars, planets and satellites, vanish leaving no traces behind? It is not clear by what process such big things will disappear. If these things disappear, then we fail to understand what is meant by the statement of Sākhya thinkers that these objects are real. If these things do not disappear then the very assumptions of Sākhya thinkers are contradicted.

The notion of purusa is also abstract. It is not a fact of experience, but a figment of imagination. It is devoid of all activity. It is a shadow and no substance. "It does not figure among the dramatis personae of the play it witnesses."¹ It does not play any active part in the drama of the evolution of the world. Its role is only passive.

Moreover, even the reflection theory, which starts the evolutionary process seems to be imaginary. How can mere reflection produce concrete results?

From the above discussion, we are driven to the conclusion that Sākhya has given us a plethora of real

¹ Dr. Radhakrishnan -Indian Philosophy Vol II, P. 321.
objects from abstract principles. How difficult it is to understand the mystery of Śaṅkhya evolution when all descriptions about it do not tally with facts of experience.

Moreover, of the two entities of Śaṅkhya Philosophy viz. prakṛti and purusa, prakṛti has been given a subordinate position to that of purusa i.e. matter is subordinated to the principle of consciousness. The whole activity of prakṛti is for the sake of purusa. All things exist for being enjoyed by the pure conscious spirit. So the world is not real and independent of the conscious principle.

The reasoning that the reality of the world is superficial is not true; firstly, from the common man's point of view this world is real and Śaṅkhya has adopted the common man's view-point with regard to the realistic nature of the world.

Then it is also not a fact that matter has been subordinated to the conscious principle. The entire evolution comes out of prakṛti, the purusa is merely an onlooker. Also the argument is not sound that as purusa sees and enjoys those objects, therefore, the Śaṅkhya system tends towards idealism. Things are real, not on account of the puruṣas, but in spite of them. When the puruṣas become embodied, they use these objects for their benefit in this
matter-of-fact world and not in the dream-land. Things do not become phenomenal as they evolve from the abstract principle, the avyakta, because it has in it the potentiality to evolve. It goes to the credit of Śāmkhya thinkers that they have not started with the presumption that matter exists in some form, but that matter also evolves not from something concrete but from a hidden potentiality. This is carrying the notion of evolution to the farthest extremity of its commencement, but herein lies the metaphysical triumph of Śāmkhya.

Now, we have to see on what grounds Śāmkhya claims to be a realistic philosophy. Three sources of knowledge are given in Śāmkhya viz (i) pratyakṣa (ii) anumāna and (iii) āptavacana. Pratyakṣa is sensuous perception, anumāna is inference from perception and āptavacana is the word of authority of the Vedas. It may be noted here that all these sources of knowledge are likely to give us a realistic view of the world. There may be illusions leading to false conclusions but they are exceptions rather than the rule. Similarly, there are some ailments which falsify our perceptions. But when we see things with our eyes wide open, we are inclined to believe that we are in a real world and not in the dreamland.
Further, it may be argued that the Sāmkhya thinkers intended to give us a realistic point of view of the world. Twenty-four categories of the system are busy, day in and day out, producing real objects. Neither the psychic apparatus nor the material world produced by prakṛti and its evolutes, is unreal. It is a metaphysical conception that Sāmkhya traces reality from potentiality hidden from the view of sentient human beings. Both prakṛti and purusa are unseen, even the guṇas are abstract notions. But we should remember that they are symbols rather than actual things.

Sāmkhya is a realistic philosophy as will appear from the views of some distinguished Sāmkhya thinkers. Vijñānabhikṣu asserts that external objects are real in as much as they are proved by perception. In his Yoga commentary he says that all perceptible objects are presented to consciousness through their intercourse with the sense organs. They cannot be likened to objects of dream cognitions. Vacaspati holds the same view of the reality of objects in Sāmkhya. He says that the object is the cause of its cognition. If the object does not exist, its cognition cannot arise. Whatever is manifested to consciousness

1. S.P.B. I - 42.
2. Yogavāttika IV 14 Cited by J.N. Sinha in his book 'Indian Realism' in the Chapter 'Sāmkhya Yoga Realism'.
as "this" is real and existent.  

Patañjali, the founder of the Yoga system, which has incorporated in it most of the principles of Śāmkhya, says that an object does not depend on a particular mind, for what will happen to it when it is not apprehended by that mind. Hence, Vyāsa has concluded that the external reality is independent of all minds and is the common object of observation of all persons.

We have now seen that some of the distinguished interpreters and commentators of Śāmkhya hold the view that the system is based on its realistic approach to the problems of the world. We appreciate the system for it, because it has given us a clear vision of the world as it is, "Imagination cannot override the authority of perception". We perceive that the world is real and what Śāmkhya says about it has indeed much truth in it.

(v) Thoughts about God:

Having abjured the existence of God, the problem before the Śāmkhya thinkers was how to explain the creation, preservation and the general working of the universe. They

1. T.V. IV 14 Ibid.
2. Y.S. IV. 16.
3. Y.B. IV. 16.
4. T.V. IV 14 Cited by J.N. Sinha in his book 'Indian Realism' in the Chapter 'Śāmkhya-Yoga Realism'.
tried to solve this problem without the help of God. Now, let us see how far they succeeded in their attempt.

Sāṁkhya thinkers cannot satisfactorily explain the relation of puruṣa and prakṛti without the help of God. The two substances are of opposite nature - prakṛti is unconscious but active and puruṣa is conscious, inactive and indifferent. They cannot be related to each other without the third entity which may bring them together and make them function harmoniously.

The question now arises as to how one puruṣa is related to another? This cannot be satisfactorily explained. They are members of a group. There must be some intercourse between them. But Sāṁkhya has described them as pure consciousness. They are devoid of qualities. So there is nothing to relate them to each other. Without the assumption of God, it is impossible to explain the relation of one puruṣa to another.

Again, how can the equilibrium of the guṇas be disturbed and evolution start without the assumption of God, when we are told that the guṇas are unconscious? Now, does it not seem ridiculous that by the mere proximity of a puruṣa which is inactive, inert and indifferent, the equilibrium of the guṇas is disturbed. How can they
become active, and one dominate over the others? These are the questions which do not appear to be solved satisfactorily without the help of God.

Moreover, prakṛti is unconscious. How can it work with a certain purpose without the guidance of some Supreme Being? Śāṅkhya thinkers reply that there is unconscious teleology in nature. Prakṛti evolves the world for the sake of purusa. How can unconscious prakṛti know the purpose of purusa? Śāṅkhya thinkers try to solve these problems with the help of similes and analogies, but these do not take us far. In fact unconscious teleology is contradiction in terms. Teleology should be related to the hidden purposes of God or some other conscious being.

We see all around us that there are differences in this world due to the diversity of karmas, past or present. People suffer due to bad karmas and enjoy their lives due to good karmas. What power is that which guides the prakṛti to evolve in such a manner that a man gets only that which he has collected previously? Purusas are indifferent so they cannot do this. There must be some other conscious principle to do this work. It can be no other than God who is omniscient and omnipotent.
For the unconscious prakṛti, God's guidance is necessary at each step of its evolutionary process. Without His help it cannot evolve a world so full of design and purpose. Even the most ingenious workman cannot form a conception of this complex world.

These are some metaphysical difficulties which Śāṅkhyā has to face by denying the existence of God. If it accepts such a conscious principle as can control the whole universe, it can explain all the problems raised above more satisfactorily.

The question now arises as to why the Śāṅkhyā propounder landed himself in such difficulties. Was it not possible for him to sing the praise of God and to entrust all the work of creation, preservation and destruction of the world to Him, the Supreme Soul, the Transcendent Brahman?

Kapila Muni could not do it. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of sacrificing the hidden potentialities of human beings by relying on God. He was against rites and rituals practised in the name of religion. He was hostile to priesthood "Among the different kinds of bondages to which men are liable, but not to be, is
one called 'Dakshinā bandha', i.e. bondage arising from having to offer gifts to priests, which seems to be condemned as superstitious and mischievous. He was dead against animal sacrifices, the torture of the human body for self-realisation, all forms of cant and hypocrisy, practised by priests.

The three kinds of suffering, mentioned by Sāmkhya thinkers, were sought to be remedied, merely by sacrificing animals or performing some ceremonies. Kapila traced all these evils to the uncritical belief in God. All priest-craft was based only on the assumption of propitiating the deity by rites, rituals and sacrifices. Kapila, therefore, wanted to get rid of God.

Having noticed the existing evils in religion affecting the soul of man, Kapila propounded his dualistic philosophy of Sāmkhya. The problem before him might have been how to ignore God and yet propound a philosophy which may explain the universe and satisfy its people. The answer was quite easy for him. He could abjure the conscious principle altogether and become a materialist. This was impossible for him, for he respected the scriptures and considered some conscious principle necessary to help the unconscious matter.

1. Maxmuller - The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, P. 233.
The question now is whether Saṃkhya system has gained anything by ignoring God. The answer is in the affirmative. We may say that by ignoring God, Kapila has made the foundation of his dualism firm. The two substances, purusa and prakṛti, are eternal and have their independent existence. There is no third entity which is ruling over them. So by denying the assumption of God Kapila has made his system dualistic.

Again, it appears to us that it has restored to man self-confidence, self-reliance and self-elevation. Man's spirit of seeking his destiny by his own efforts had been crushed by false religious notions emanating from blind faith in God. By believing in the philosophy of Saṃkhya, he could have discriminatory knowledge through which he could gain liberation. Indirectly, Saṃkhya has shown the way to a better future life and perfect liberation from the entanglements of false attachments.

Under the topics discussed above we have critically examined some of the basic principles of Saṃkhya, in order to have a clearer insight into one of the oldest systems of Indian philosophy.

From what we have studied so far we can conclude that, in spite of certain weak points, Saṃkhya system
deserves the credit of initiating and stimulating a definite line of thought in the history of Indian Philosophy. According to this system, it is knowledge and knowledge alone, which can liberate us from all the pangs of life. So, one of the most important contributions of this system is the way of knowledge or Jñāna-Mārga. Here the reader may point out that the way of knowledge or Jñāna-Mārga can very well be traced to Upanisads and Bhagavadgītā. But in these sacred texts many things are mixed together. If a Jñāni traces his Jñāna-Mārga in Upanisads and the Gītā, a Karmayogī and a Bhakta also may trace the origin of his belief there. So the Jñāna-Mārga is not a special feature of these sacred texts, but it can least be said of Sāmkhya Philosophy. The unshakable faith in the way of knowledge is characteristic feature of Sāmkhya dualism. In this respect, Saṅkara, though a staunch critic of Sāmkhya philosophy, seems to follow the Sāmkhya line of thought. In this and in other few respects, some of which have already been pointed out in this chapter, this system has a unique place in the orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy.