CHAPTER V

THE WORLD

(a) Its nature and Evolution:

The panorama of nature with different types of objects, both living and lifeless, caused awe and wonder in the minds of our primeval ancestors. They were captivated by the kaleidoscopic changes in nature and were curious to know how it was that those variegated objects were produced from time to time, and vanished when their time was over. Even in the primitive mind, the principle of causality was a necessary category of thought. It produced in our ancestors the desire to know the nature and origin of the external objects perceived by them. Mentally, they were like children and were ready to believe any thrilling story about the creation of the world and were satisfied with any explanation, however grotesque and absurd. Curiosity and credulity mixed together and strange theories of creation were propounded by the wise men amongst them. Crude ideas about cosmogony began to evolve in their minds. These ideas formed a part of their religious views as well as their speculative thinking. The problem of the world naturally fascinated the brooding thinkers of India. Well has James Strachan said in this connection -
"For ages, the east was plunged in thought and brought up a few pearls, with many empty shells, from depths."

In support of this categorical statement, we can quote references both from the scriptures as well as from different schools of Indian philosophy, to show that these pearls are of real value.

Our ancestors were realistic in their outlook and it was their conviction that the world is real. The vedic seers in their quest for the substratum of all changing things, looked upon water, air and other elements as the originators of the variety of objects in the world. Among the ancient Greeks, such theories were evolved in the early stages of their speculative thinking. Water was believed to develop into the world under the effects of time and warmth.

Prof. S.N. Das Gupta has classified the conceptions of cosmogony as found in the Vedas under two heads, mythological and philosophical. Under the first head two currents are noticeable according to Professor Macdonell. The one regards the world as the result of mechanical production, i.e. as a carpenter makes a piece of furniture, the other represents it as the result of natural generation. Heaven and earth were born of Aditi and Daksha.

Under this philosophical aspect, the supreme is said to be the whole universe. He is the Lord of Immortality
who has become diffused everywhere among all objects. All things have come out of Him. From His navel has come the atmosphere, from His head the sky, from His feet the earth, from His ears the four quarters. In some other hymn the sun is called the soul (Ātman) of all that is movable or immovable. The Supreme Being is also called the Lord of the World (The golden egg or Hiranyagarbha). We find in Rg-Veda the sublime Hymn of Creation with regard to the origin of the world.

In the Brāhmaṇas, we find that the cosmogonic view is generally based on the principles of both creation and evolution. While on the one hand, Prajāpati is sometimes spoken of as the Creator, on the other hand, the creator is said to have floated in the primeval water as a cosmic golden egg. In later stages, several gods like Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Viśvakarman, Vyū etc. are believed to be the authors of the universe. Varuṇa is praised as the maker of all things and Viśvakarman is thought to be the carpenter who makes the world out of wood. What this wood is we find mentioned in some Upanisads as the material out of which heaven and earth are made. We read in Manu that Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning from water that surrounded this world and made it out of chaos. It is rather significant to note that there

1. S.N. Das Gupta - A History of Indian Philosophy Page. 23.
2. Rg. Veda X - 129.
4. Manu. 1. 5. 8 - (Ibid)
was at least something out of which world was made. In some of the Vedic hymns we have been able to trace the existence of a real world. In this connection Radhakrishnan comments that "the world is not a purposeless phantasm, but is just the evolution of God."

It may also be noted that wherever the word, 'Mayā', occurs it only signifies 'might' or 'power' e.g. "Indra takes many shapes quickly by his māyā." It also means in certain contexts the will of the demons to obstruct the work of the gods. The main basis of all cosmological speculation in Rg-Veda seems to be mainly realistic.

The same realistic view of the universe we find in the Upaniṣads. In Taṭṭirīyā Upaniṣad the seer says, "He became all this whatsoever and therefore the sages declare that all this is true and real." Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad makes the clear pronouncement "that name and form are true and by them this prāṇa is covered." The Aitareya Upaniṣad presents a panoramic view of creation. It says, "This world was originally pāramātman. He had no rival. He thought of creating worlds. He

1. Radhakrishnan- Indian Philosophy Vol I. P. 103.
2. Rg-Veda VI 47. 18 - (Ibid).
created three types of worlds viz., the heavenly world, the terrestrial world and the underworld. After that He created divine beings to look after His creation. Thinking this He created purusa out of water, gave him form. Then He performed tapasya. Hiranyagarbha (the golden egg) was hatched from which the rishis trace all the members of the body, organs and senses. From it came out all the external material objects and living things." In the Mundaka Upanisad we find the significant sloka, "Paramesvara is all-knowing and his tapasya is based on knowledge. From Him the world, all names and forms and all food came into being." The power of Paramesvara in the matter of creation is further indicated in the same Upanisad. "The fact of the matter is that as thousands of sparks of the same essence as fire come out of the blazing fire, in the same way, from the eternal Brahman different objects, both concrete and abstract are produced out of Him and ultimately merge into Him."

In Taittiriya Upanisad, again, occurs the passage, "Certainly from Parmatman, ākāsa came into being, from ākāsa air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, from

1. Aitareya Upanisad I.1. 1-4
earth all herbs and plants, from plants food, from food the
body of man. This human body is most certainly the essence of
food. The human body is like the body of a bird. His head is
like the head of the bird, his arms are like the two wings;
his middle part of the body corresponds to the middle part
of the body of the bird. His two legs are the tail and the
talons of the bird." The Mundaka Upanisad gives the idea of
the magnificence of creation when it says, "Through tapasya
Brahman swells and also the material universe "annam" comes
into being".

From what the sages and seers so far have said, we
come to the conclusion that the world is real and that its
origin can be traced to creation as well as to evolution.

According to Jain thinkers the world is real. The
reality of the substance or ājānya has been recognised. In
this world of reality things seem to change on account of the
changes in their qualities.

In the Vaiśeṣika system of philosophy also, substance
lies at the root of its realism. They believe in nine
substances which form the corporeal and incorporeal things of

1. Tait Up. II. I.
the world. They are earth, water, light, air, ether, time, space, soul and mind. The atomic theory confirms the belief in the real world. All objects are formed by the combination of atoms under the supervision of adṛṣṭa. Though objects perish, the atoms of which they are made are imperishable. So, there will never come a time when there will be a complete annihilation of things. Some things new will go on being created out of some other old thing. Says Radhakrishnan, "Though the structures built are perishable, the stones of which they are built are eternal."

The Śaṅkhya system believes that prakṛti or primordial nature is as real as purusa. The unmanifested prakṛti (avyakta) is real as an ultimate principle. The visible world is thought of as a product of five gross elements, viz. earth, water, fire, air and ether. "The world is not a mere idea as Buddhists hold, but it is real," says the śūtra. It is wrong to say that real object becomes completely unreal. The interpreter of Śaṅkhya tattvakaumudi says, "Just as the knowledge we gain from the sense organs is real, so the objects of knowledge are also real." The Karikā says that

2. S.P.S. I 42.
4. Dr. Adya Prasad Misra Introduction to Śaṅkhya tattvakaumudi P. 56.
the products of prakṛti are real and similar in some respects to prakṛti. The terms used for them in the same Karika indicate their objective reality. Vācaspati Misra says in his commentary, "They are not mere ideas. When it is said that they are objective, it is clear that they are real." The realistic view of Saṅkhya can be confirmed by its theory of causation.

Yet, according to Saṅkhya, this real world, at the time of pralaya, disintegrates and its objects formed by the evolutes of prakṛti withdraw themselves systematically to the same avyakta from which they had emerged. Even in that state they can not be said to be non-existent. They have simply been absorbed into prakṛti and will reappear when the evolutionary process begins again. The theory of Saṅkhya seems to be novel but it interprets, in its own way, the phenomenon of change which is the characteristic feature of all the objects of the world.

The evolutionary process in Saṅkhya seems to lay stress on two fundamental characteristics of matter. The most important of the two is the inherent causality, that is, the

1. S.K. 11.
2. S.T.K. 11 - P. 89.
3. Dr. Adya Prasad Misra - Introduction to S.T.K. P. 56.
capacity for transforming into effect the same substance as was present in the cause. The principle of Satkāryavāda lies at the root of this notion of causality as we find in Sāmkhya philosophy. The second is its capacity of being changed as an effect to manifest itself in some other form.

Looking at the changing aspects of this real and matter-of-fact world we may maintain that its contents can be classified in different ways.

The first of these classifications seems to be evident even at the first sight of it. We can divide the contents of this world into stationary and mobile, i.e. 'sthāvara' and 'jangam'. In other words, there are the contents of the world which do not move, which are fixed in place like hills and plants but, on the other hand, moving beings also form an important aspect of this world.

From a different standpoint we can classify the contents of the world into the enjoyer and the enjoyed objects. It is, in other words, a distinction between inanimate and animate objects of the world.

These two types of classifications of the contents of the world may be brought under one broad distinction. We can say that the world has two sides—subjective and objective.
Its subjective side consists of psychical activities or states. They are feelings, desires, wills, along with their units. Its objective side consists of whatever is or can be objectively known. It may include even our bodies and their changing states.

Here, it may be pointed out that Sāmkhya thinkers will not have any objection to this classification of the contents of the world. For them, this physical universe is real which evolves out of a real cause or prakṛti. Even our subjective side, according to them, is also an outcome of prakṛti which is responsible for all this objective side of the cosmos. Both the subjective and the objective sides of the world may be traced to the twenty-four evolutes of prakṛti. All this goes to show that the world for Sāmkhya thinkers is not a mere fanciful creation of an individual person’s mind. It is there and is ultimately real.

The question now arises as to how this world came into being. There are various theories about it. The world, as we see around us, is not a homogeneous whole. It is constituted of heterogeneous elements. Viewed as separate entities, they are devoid of meaning or significance. We have to see whether these separate units come into being and tell their own story, or there is any relation among them; also whether they co-exist or are they derived from one another, and if derived how and in
what manner. Have they been created by the fiat of the supreme Dispenser or some supernatural power or else they have come into being haphazardly out of chaos. A little thinking in this matter will convince us that nature is not chaotic nor does it work in a fit of frenzy. It has a system of its own whether due to the operation of natural forces or to the intervention of the Lord of Creation.

No system of philosophy can fail to recognise that it is necessary to explain the world in which we live. Sāmkhya also as a well organised system of thought, has its own notions about the emergency of this world with all its manifold objects of different kinds. We shall now first consider what the notions are of different thinkers about the origin of cosmos. Thereafter we shall try to find out what view Sāmkhya has accepted to solve this problem and also whether its view is based on some old philosophy or it has some originality in it.

(b) Evolution as distinguished from creation.

Each of the two processes, namely, creation and evolution, indicates how this world of different kinds of objects and of various species of living things, came into being. Our inquisitive ancestors tried to probe into the mysteries of nature and to explain the cosmos by some formula which their ingenuity could devise.
Of the two processes, creation seemed to them rather easy to understand and their religious teachers also favoured this principle in order to glorify God. They discouraged discussions on philosophical lines, as one of the psalmists is reported to have told his audience, 'God is in Heaven and thou upon earth, therefore, let thy words be few.' When Augustine was asked what was God doing before He made Heaven and earth, he answered, 'Preparing Hell for the over-curious.' Seemingly, his argument in this connection was that creation was started simultaneous with the beginning of time, so the question of 'before' did not arise. Moreover, as he said, such questions should not be discussed.

We find that the theory of creation is based on four types of assumptions, viz., in the first place, God created the world, because He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He has the power to create the world. Secondly, the world, as created previously, has not been changed; thirdly, it was not created in different stages but all at once. Fourthly, the differences among objects are original and fundamental. All the four assumptions are based on God's power of creation about which there could arise no question and no dispute.

1. Radhakrishnam - Eastern Religion and Western Thought.
2. Ibid.
Three types of creation are generally recognised. The first theory presumes that the world was created out of matter which was pre-existent. God is merely the efficient cause while matter is the material cause. This theory is attributed to Plato in Greece, while in India Nyāya Vaiśeṣika is believed to have propounded it, on the assumption that all the objects of nature are composed of atoms in different combinations. Secondly, God created the world out of nothing, is the theory of St. Augustine. The third theory is that of Rāmānuja-chārya who believed that God created the world out of matter and spirit which are the limbs of His body.

The theory of creation found favour in India also. The hoary sages sang the Hymn of Creation from which we can gather the conception of creation as they had in their minds.

"There was not the non-existent, nor the existent, then, there was not the air, nor the heaven which is beyond. What did it contain? Where? In whose protection? Was there water unfathomable, and profound? There was not death or immortality, then. There was not the beacon of night nor of day. That one breathed windless by its own. Other than that, there was not anything beyond. Desire in the beginning came upon that. That was the first seed of mind. Sages seeking in their hearts with wisdom found out the bond of existent from the non-existent."

1. Macdonell’s translation of Rg-Veda X-129 quoted by Anima Sen Gupta in her book Evolution in the Sāṁkhya School of thought "P. 5."
From this hymn it appears that the sages believed in some spiritual teleological force behind creation, which was vested in the supreme Being or Brahman. But before He started the work of creation, the desire 'to procreate' was produced in Him. He thought of objects that He would produce, so the sense of self-hood arose in Him. Radhakrishnan comments on it, "Creation is preceded by a sense of self-hood." In the Rg-Veda the main idea is that some supreme power created the world. This creative power is assigned to Agni, Indra or Soma. Other gods also have been given this honour. One of the hymns of Rg-Veda says about some god, "He was indeed among the gods the cleverest workman, who produced the brilliant ones - heaven and earth - that gladden all things".

The Upanishadic seers are also not unaware of the idea of creation. In the Mundaka Upanisad occurs a passage which illustrates the principle of creation. The world came out from Brahman as the threads of a web come out of the body of the spider, as plants and herbs which are used for medicinal purposes come out of earth or as hair come out from the body of a living man, so everything originates in this world, from that eternal Brahman.

1. Chandogya Up. VI. 2.3.
3. Rg Veda I. 160. 4, quoted by Radhakrishnan in his Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, P. 76-77
Thus we can maintain that creationism, of whatever type it may be, takes for granted that there is one supreme being, call it God, Brahman or one who is responsible for the creation of this huge cosmos. Almost all the thinkers of east and west who hold creationism, maintain that such a being is of spiritual nature. They also attribute to Him the qualities like Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent, etc.

The theory of creation on account of the progress of science, has lost its glamour. It does not seem to be rationalistic. As nobody has seen the Creator, how could it be believed that such a huge cosmos could be created by One Being, howsoever strong and wise He may be? Moreover, it leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. The sceptic may ask, 'Who created God'? That 'God is the uncaused cause', is in itself contradictory. Also, it may be argued that if God is uncreated and beginningless why not this world? Why should we posit a God and make Him eternal? In the end, it may be argued that the purpose of creation also is not clear. If it is for play and entertainment, God should be considered frivolous. If He is perfect and sober He need not have created the world at all. If it may be assumed, for the sake of argument, that God relies on matter for creation, His power shall be reduced. Also, creation out of nothing does not seem to be a satisfactory theory, because it obviously violates the law of causation which is based on the theory 'that nothing can come out of nothing'. The theory of creationism, as propounded by Ramanuja, has also met with severe criticism. If the
world comes out of the limbs of God, He will not remain immutable but will change with the loss of limbs. Besides God will lose His purity by being defiled by such impurities of life as sins, sorrows and ignorance. If the evils come from matter, then why God chose it as material for His creation?

The theory of creation presupposes no change in the world. Things as they are created by God have the same form unless they are destroyed by their maker.

Creation does not imply development. Things once created either remain the same or are said to be destroyed, at once or gradually, and lose their significance for us. As thinkers mark changes in things, they lose their faith in the theory of creation. "You cannot cross the same river twice," is the proverbial truth put into the mouth of Heraclitus. Every thing is in a state of flux. This leads one to think of the phenomenon of evolution which only means change or development.

The theory of evolution, on the other hand, is based on scientific notions. Evolution is a continuous process having no gaps or breaks. We can trace three stages

1. Heraclitus.
in it, namely, integration, differentiation, and determination. We have integration when separate elements combine to form new objects; differentiation when the objects have their individual identity; and lastly, we perceive the objects in their definite and well-determined forms.

In Western Philosophy, we find the germs of evolution originating in Greece. Aristotle taught that the various forms of animals had come in due succession, the less perfect being replaced by more perfect forms. Plants came early in the succession. They had the powers of nourishment and reproduction but no feelings or sensibility. Later came the animals proper which had sensibility and the higher types of them possessed the power of thought. Highest of all is man, capable of abstract thinking. There is a struggle towards perfection. The result is a gradual evolution from the lower to the higher. At the back of the perfecting principle is the efficient cause — whether this efficient cause only gave an impulse and remained outside the process of nature or whether it is still at its work.

From such crude ideas of Aristotle arose the systematic theory of evolution propounded by such great thinkers as Lamarck, Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Alexander etc. Science has widened man's cosmic view. Due to the
phenomenal progress in such sciences as Biology, Astronomy
and Geology, man's vision has widened. New forms of evolution
in living organisms and in-organic matter have been discovered
by scientists. Aristotle's idea of a primeval chaos which we
find in the mythologies of almost all the countries of the
world has been suitably replaced by confidence in some
systematic order in the cosmos. Fixed laws operate in the
process of evolution. Things are born not out of nothing,
but out of something with their own peculiar characteristics.
Nature does not seem to be in a chaotic state. All differen-
tiations in matter obey fixed laws. Well has Dr. B.N. Seal
commented on this universal, ever-continuous process of
evolution. Says he,

"The process of evolution consists in the
development of the differentiated within the undifferentiated,
of the determinate within the indeterminate, of the coherent
within the incoherent. The order of succession is neither
from parts to whole nor from whole to the parts, but ever
from a relatively less differentiated, less determinate,
less coherent whole to a relatively more differentiated, more
determinate or more coherent whole."

The idea of evolution seems to us as a modern
discovery, but its principles were known to our ancestors
also. They knew that it is a continuous process. In one of
the Brahma Sūtras, a writer named Srinivas, has illustrated

Dr. B.N. Seal's Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus 1915
P. 7 as quoted by S.N. Das Gupta in his book 'History of
Indian Philosophy P. 246.
this principle as follows:

"Even as the rolled piece of cloth is not different from what it is when it is spread out, so is the effect not different from the cause. What is not manifest in the cause becomes manifest in the effect. The length and breadth of the rolled piece of cloth which were not manifest when the cloth was rolled up, became manifest when it is spread out. Similarly, a piece of cloth which was not manifest in the threads becomes manifest owing to the operative agents, such as the shuttle, the loom and the weaver."

This illustration of Srinivas is in clear contrast to the principle of creation, as stated above. Creation visualises coming into being of an absolutely new thing by the agency of an external force such as God or some benign deity, who has the power of destruction also. He may, in a moment, destroy "all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth" or let them remain as they are.

The idea of creation seems to be untenable. Everything is in a state of flux. Change is the law of nature. Nothing is completely destroyed, but undergoes a sea change, and appears in another form. Those who believe in creationism would say that God has created such huge mountains as the Himalayas, such deserts as the Sahara, such rivers as the

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Amazon or Mississippi, but it cannot be said that these creations have escaped the law of change. From the rocks of huge mountains, new hillocks are formed, new streams branch off from big rivers and the deserts are being turned into pasture lands. Similarly, species of animals, birds and human beings seem to have developed new forms. This is what we mean by evolution, which is based on the principle of the development of one thing from another, from one form of life into another more complex or belonging to a superior order. All this is attributed to the force of nature and not to any divine power.

Such an assumption of change prevailing over the whole of universe is not so simple an affair as we may suppose it to be. We have to face the implications of the problem of causation. The question arises as to whether an intelligent design is constantly operating in nature. If so, whether nature is under the operation of natural causes originally implanted by Intelligent Design or else, if not so, whether nature acts by chance, freak or fancy. Science has to answer these questions before we accept the principle of evolution.

It is gratifying to note that science has given a satisfactory answer to all the questions raised above.
Nature does not act by chance. There are certain laws of nature under which the evolutionary process goes on. In Indian philosophy, Samkhya is the system which has recognised the principle of evolution as its basis. It has answered the questions raised, in the above paragraph, by assuming an unconscious teleology behind the entire process of evolution. Things to come into the world are determined by a final purpose or end in view. It is postulated that the prakṛti or the sum-total of the gunas is so related with the purusas that all the entire structure of evolution moves for the sake of enjoyment, by the purusas of the purusas, of the multitudinous 'fruits' born of prakṛti and its evolutes. Ultimately when the purusa has experienced enough of the world, it comes to its senses. The right type of discriminatory knowledge arises in it, it feels that what it sees is not its own and thus is liberated from bondage.

It is a unique thing in Samkhya evolution that subjective and objective categories have been deduced from one principle. Moreover the categories have been logically deduced, from the general to the particular. It goes to the credit of Samkhya philosophy that it has enunciated a theory of evolution which is based on scientific principles.
It will indeed be both interesting and instructive to study in detail the working of its evolutionary process.

(c) The Purpose and Process of Evolution—According to Śāṅkhya:

Thus we find that in the history of Indian Philosophy before Śāṅkhya, both creationism and evolutionism go side by side. In Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature, the seeds of both can be found. The seers of the scriptures, sometimes seem to favour creationism and sometimes they talk of the evolution of the world. Whatever the case may be, our seers could not go beyond the spiritual explanation of the world. But Śāṅkhya system although it claims to be a staunch follower of scriptures, bids good-by to the spiritual explanation of the world and goes to favour evolutionism, which is based on the laws of nature.

We will like to discuss, now, in detail the purpose and process of evolution in Śāṅkhya Philosophy. Brifly stated, puruṣa come in close proximity to prakṛti, sees its reflection in buddhi, and owns through ahamkāra, the evolutes of prakṛti. It enjoys the fruits of its folly in the shape of pleasures and pains. This attachment to prakṛti remains, till, ultimately, the sense of discrimination or the right type of knowledge is produced in it and it realizes its ignorance. It is immediately liberated, but its bonds with the prakṛti are not broken asunder, and it remains in the body
in the form of Jiva or the empirical soul till death. This stage in the story of the purusa's relation to prakrti is called Jivan mukti. As we know, it is attained by many in old age, but there may be only a few young souls who have had the right type of wisdom in the prime of their life, and so could get themselves detached from the allurements of prakrti.

An important question arises as to why the prakrti produces the evolutes and their by-products for the sake of purusa? Prakrti, as has been stated, is unconscious, and it is difficult to imagine that it could have any design or purpose in evolving the world, but Samkhya thinkers attribute to it what they call unconscious teleology.

Teleology may be of two kinds, external and internal. According to the first type, God is supposed to be the creator and the mover of the world. He may move or give a push to the world and then stop and watch its progress. Lifeless matter, once moved by an external force, will continue moving, unless stopped by the same force. Newton, whose faith in the power of God was never shaken declared "that planets were hurled in space by the hand of God but moved according to the Laws of Gravitation without further need of divine intervention." External teleology may assume that the hand

of God may not hurl the planet into space once for all and then stop but some unseen power may be moving the matter constantly. This view seems to have been held by Vaisesika thinkers, who "trace the primal activities of the atoms and souls to the principle of adrsta."

Internal teleology on the other hand assumes that some immanent indwelling principle drives and controls everything. In Samkhya, there is neither God nor supernatural spirit moving the world from outside, nor is there any hidden spiritual force immanent in matter that could explain the evolution. The Samkhya thinkers hit upon the novel idea that the unconscious matter has inherent in it an unconscious purpose. This is what they call 'unconscious teleology' underlying the principle of evolution.

The question now arises as to how unconscious matter could be credited with purpose which is usually ascribed to conscious beings. We should however, not be overcritical because we know that Samkhya will tell us many more things all of which cannot be verified by experience.

The simile of the blind and the halt is intended to show that unconscious teleology exists and can explain the
the dynamic system of evolution of unconscious matter. "Prakṛti, though unintelligent, acts to realize the ends of the individual souls, even as milk flows from the udders of a cow for the nourishment of a calf. Prakṛti is not conscious of the ends, even as milk is unconscious of nourishment." Karikā No. 56 states that the whole evolution of prakṛti from mahaṭ down to the specific elements is for the sake of puruṣa, though it appears that the prakṛti is evolving for itself. It is also a matter of our daily experience that we do certain actions to satisfy desires which we give up when they are satisfied. In the same way, prakṛti evolves to satisfy the desires of puruṣa for the sake of its liberation. In one of the sutras it is said that just as a servant serves his master so prakṛti acts for puruṣa's sake unintelligently. Karikā 60 reinforces the idea of prakṛti's devotion to the ends of puruṣa. It says "Generous nature, endowed with attributes, brings about by manifold means, without benefit to itself, the good of the spirit which is devoid of attributes and confers no benefit in return." The twofold work of nature is also given in another

2. S.K. 56
5. Karikā 60 Jha's Translation.
Kārika. Nature binds itself by seven forms and liberates itself by one form for the emancipation of purusa.

Sāṃkhya thinkers believe that the instances like these can be multiplied to show the purpose of evolution in Sāṃkhya philosophy but we think these instances are sufficient and serve our purpose well. The sum and substance of all these kārikās quoted in the above passage, is that unconscious prakṛti evolves for the sake of conscious purusa. To a new reader it may seem something unreasonable but Sāṃkhya thinkers did not try to give any other purpose of evolution than these similies. Whether these similies do justice to Sāṃkhya point of view is a question which we shall consider in all its details in the pages to come.

Not only is prakṛti guided by the unconscious teleology but also its evolutes work in the same manner. Buddhi first imbibes purusa's experience and then discriminates the subtle difference between nature and spirit. The senses also act for purusa's sake. The same idea is also found in Sāṃkhya Sūtra. Even the subtle body also acts for purusa's

1. S.K. 63.
2. S.K. 37.
sake just as a dramatic actor takes different forms.

The whole evolutionary process is guided by the same purpose of ministering to the wishes of purusa. It may incidentally be mentioned here that evolution, not only begins for purusa’s sake but it also ends when its needs are fulfilled.

When the purpose of the purusa has been gained, just "as a dancing girl desists from dancing having exhibited herself to the audience, so does Primal Nature desist having exhibited herself to the spirit." In another Karika, the same purpose is given in a figurative form. When the prakrti knows that it has been seen by the purusa, it does not appear to the spirit. When the purpose of the evolution has been solved the evolutionary process ultimately comes to an end. When purusa is satisfied that it has seen prakrti with all its charms, it loses all interest in it, and prakrti also feels shy when it thinks that it has been seen. It withdraws and the evolutionary process ends.

The philosophy that underlies the principle of unconscious teleology sometimes does not appeal to our reason.

1. S.K. 42.
2. S.K. 59 Jha’s translation also in S.P.S. III. 69.
It may be assumed that nature seems to be endowed with some latent, unperceived purpose, which it fulfills by creating new objects every moment.

Not only the living organism but also all objects of nature are guided by final purpose. While man sets himself a task in a conscious manner, a purpose in nature is implemented unconsciously. Teleology holds that the principle of life and thought is rooted in the very basis of matter which consists not of dead atoms but of living monads. Teleology tries to explain the universal inter-connection of all natural phenomena under certain basic principles.

In the history of Indian philosophy Śaṅkhya seems to be the first school of thought to recognize, in all its implications, the principle of purposefulness in nature. The scheme of evolution has indeed a purpose in it, but to understand its nature we have to study in detail the entire evolutionary process.

In its elaborate form, the evolutionary process reveals that the macrocosm is to be studied in the light of what is experienced in the microcosm. In other words, it seems to think that the cosmic process can be rightly construed in the light of individual experience, that the world with all forms of objects can be comprehended by studying the facts relating to the life of the individual
from the day he is born to the day when he is laid to rest in the grave.

According to the Śāṅkhya system, as we have seen, prakṛti is the ultimate principle which is the matrix or source of origination of the entire cosmos. Prakṛti has the three constituents or gunas which, by their combination in different proportions, form different objects of the world and explain the nature of all things, living and without life. The gunas play an important part in the process of evolution.

The whole process consists of the working of twenty-five principles. Of these principles, the puruṣa is the monarch of all it surveys - a soul, lone and forlorn - neither the cause nor the effect of anything. The remaining twenty-four categories are prakṛti and its products and by-products.

Mahat or buddhi, the first evolute of prakṛti is generated by the preponderance of the satwā or Intelligence stuff. "This is indeed the earliest state from which the rest of the world has sprung forth." Buddhi is ascertainment.

1. S.K. 22, S.P.S. I-61
2. S.N. Das Gupta - History of Indian Philosophy P. 248
The term, buddhi, is generally used in its subjective or psychological sense, while the term, mahat, seems to be used mainly in a cosmic sense. This is also known as jagat bija i.e., "seed of the world," since the rest of the world emanates from this category. It is called mahat because it is great in space as well as in time. The significance of this term has also been expressed in Yukti-Dipikā. Vyāsa has described mahat in his Yoga Bhāṣya as an extensive, transparent stuff like the bright sky.

"In Sāṁkhya, stress is laid on the psychological aspect of mahat."

Vijnānabhikṣu says that buddhi is supreme among all the organs because it is the repository of all the samskāras of a person. Further on, he comments, "Though all the organs function for the sake of the purusa, yet intellect is most important, just as in a kingdom different officers perform their work but the minister is considered as the chief functionary of them all.

1. Anima Sen Gupta - The Evolution of the Sāṁkhya School of Thought, P. 34.
2. Yukti Dipikā P. 108 Sa/tu/deshmahatvāt Kālamahatvāt ca mahān.
3. Yoga Bhāṣya 1. 36.
4. Radhakrishnan Indian Philosophy Vol II P. 267.
5. SP. B. II 42.
6. Ibid II 47.
Vācaspati Misra corroborates the opinion of Vijnānabhikṣu regarding the functions performed by buddhi in the evolutionary process. He says, "Every man uses first his external sense, then he considers with the manas, after that he refers the various objects to his ego (ahamkāra) and lastly he decides with the buddhi what to do." There are eight manifestations of buddhi (i.e. four pairs of opposites) - Dharma and Adharma, Jñāna and Ajñāna; Vairāgya and Avairāgya, Āisvarīya and Anāisvarīya. The positive ones of these pairs are sāttvika and the negatives are tāmsika.

From mahat evolves ahamkāra. It is abhīmaññā which consists in the belief, 'I hear', 'I smell', 'I see', 'I taste', 'I touch'; 'I am rich' and powerful or else 'I am downtrodden and powerless." The Tattava Samāja explains that ahamkāra should be taken as an act of buddhi directed towards the perception of the nature of what is self (subjective) and not-self (objective) Vijnānabhikṣu comments on its function when he says "Agency belongs to it and not to the self or

3. S.K. 23, also S.P.S. II. 14 and 15.
5. Max muller- Indian Philosophy Vol III P. 35-36.
1. To the question how we know ahamkar, his answer is that we infer the existence of ahamkar from its effects.

Ahamkara is developed out of primordial matter after that matter has passed through buddhi. Buddhi cannot act without discriminating between the subject and object, between the ego and the non-ego, between un-conscious matter and the conscious spirit. "Each buddhi, with its own group of ahamkara and sense evolutes forms a microcosm separate from similar other bodies with their associated groups."

Three aspects of Ahamkara pertaining to the three gunas, have been recognised. The division seems to have been made with a view to explain the sixteen evolutes of ahamkara. There is difference of opinion between Vācaspati Misra and Vijñānabhidhu as to how the sixteen evolutes have come out of ahamkara.

Vācaspati Misra holds the view that from the first aspect, namely, the sattvika ahamkara, eleven organs emerge. They are the five organs of cognition, five of conation and manas. The ahāmkara in which tamas predominates produces the five subtle elements, called tanmatras in Śāmkhya. The taijasa

1. S.P.B. VI. 54.
2. S.P.S. I. 63.
3. S.N. Das Gupta - A History of Indian Philosophy, P. 250.
ahaṁkāra does not produce any evolute exclusively, but it stimulates the other two to function. Here, Vacaspati Misra seems to follow the scheme of the Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa.

Vijñānabhikṣu's view is slightly different in this connection. In his opinion mind alone springs forth from sattvika ahaṁkāra. The external organs are derived from rājas ahaṁkāra.

These two different interpretations of the evolutionary process from ahaṁkāra as given by Vacaspati Misra and Vijñānabhikṣu respectively show that all Śaṁkhya thinkers do not hold identical views as regards the order of evolution. Not only do these two distinguished scholars of Śaṁkhya philosophy hold different views but also certain ancient followers of Kapil have interpreted the evolutionary process some what differently. In Yuktiḍīpikā, Vindhyavāsin, a Śaṁkhya teacher, is said to have held the view that ahaṁkāra as well as five subtle elements evolve from mahaṭ. Vyāsa has also described the same view in his Yoga Bhāṣya. Elsewhere, in the same book we find Vyāsa describing the subtle elements to be the evolutes of ahaṁkāra.

2. S.K. 25.
4. Yukti Dīpikā P. 108/6-7
5. Yoga Bhāṣya II 19.
6. Ibid I 45.
The various stand-points about the evolutionary process of the cosmos indicate that Sāṃkhya thinkers reached the height of speculative thought and tried to give us a complete picture of the universe. It is indeed difficult for any one to associate oneself to any of the views stated above, but the fact remains that they cannot be dismissed merely as fairy tales.

In the evolutionary process the sense organs play an important role. They are the products of sattāvika ahamkāra. Among them, mind is the central organ. According to Sāṃkhya, it is both perceptive and active. It is not all-pervading since it is an instrument possessing both movement and action. In yoga-Vāsishṭha it is called "the nave of the world." "It is a pulsating and changing form of consciousness which partakes both in subjectivity and objectivity."

In Sāṃkhya system, the senses are not formed of the elements since the senses and elements both arise out of ahamkāra. The senses are not eternal since their rise and decay are seen. Each sense has got only one quality.

2. S.P.S. '73, 69-70. P. 26
3. B.L. Atraya - The Philosophy of Yoga-Vāsishṭha, P. 197.
4. B.L. Atreyā - The Philosophy of Yoga-Vāsishṭha, P. 198.
5. S.P.S. II. 20.
external sense organs are called 'doors' while the internal organs are called 'door-keepers'. Among them, the external senses act only at the present moment, while the internal senses act in all the three periods of time, namely, past, present and future.

Ahamkāra when dominated by tamas, generates the five subtle elements of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. They are called non-specific (aviśeṣa) as distinguished from gross elements which are specific (viśeṣa). There are differences among Śāmkhya teachers as regards the properties possessed by the tanmātras. In this connection two different views are mentioned in Yukti-dīpikā. Some thinkers hold that each tanmatra possesses only one property, while Vārsagānyā believes that each succeeding tanmatra possesses, besides its own property, also the properties of the preceding tanmātras. For example, in śabda tanmātra there is only sound, but in sparśa tanmātra there are both sound and touch. Finally in the gandh (smell) tanmātra there are all the five properties. Vyāsaḥas also accepted this view in Yoga Bhāṣya.

1. S.K. 35.
2. S.K. 33.
3. Yukti Dīpikā P. 108/8-9
From these subtle elements are produced the five gross elements. Prof. S.N. Das Gupta has given the basis of the classification of the gross elements. He says, "It is important in this connection to point out that the classification of all gross objects as ksiti, ap, tejas, mārut and vyoman, is not based upon a chemical analysis but from the point of view of the five senses through which knowledge of them could be brought home to us."

In Yuktī-dīpikā, some properties of these elements are mentioned. Earth has form, weight, extension etc., water has liquidity, weight, colour, extension etc. The properties of fire are upward movement, lightness, brilliance etc., wind has motion, dryness, coolness etc. Ether is pervasive, inter-penetrating, spreading in all space.

By virtue of the above-mentioned qualities, the elements serve the various purposes of human beings.

All the 24 principles enumerated above are called tattvas. They can be classified under two heads, namely prakṛti (evolvents) and Viśramti (evolutes). Among them, primal nature or prakṛti is not an evolute, the seven, namely, mahat, ahamkāra and five subtle elements are both evolutes and evolvents, but manas, the five sense organs, the five motor organs

2. Yuktī Dīpikā P. 141.
and the five gross elements are only evolutes.

When these tattvas are manifested by prakṛti we have a world of multitudinous objects. When these tattvas are absorbed in prakṛti, we have pralaya or dissolution—some wrongly call it destruction. It may be remembered that both prakṛti and puruṣa are eternal principles. They can never disappear. It is only the tattvas including even the gross elements are disintegrated, and absorbed by prakṛti.

In this evolutionary process we notice a system, a unity, a coherence which leads us for a moment to meditate over the destiny of man as an object of cosmos. The old rishis of the Upanisads traced all this variegated abundance of objects of the universe to a transcendental soul, which they called Brahman. The Śāmkhya thinkers noted the same unity and harmony but the categories of Śāmkhya, ingeniously devised by Kapil and his followers, did not allow them to admit the idea of a deity, and like the materialistic philosophers of the modern day, they referred all formal existences to primordial matter.

Though theoretically Śāmkhya is not materialistic, as it recognises, as co-equal to matter, a conscious principle in its plurality, yet the way in which puruṣa has been
relegated to a secondary place in the evolutionary process, will lead one to suppose that, after all, matter plays an important part and purusa only plays the second fiddle.

Says Damodaran, "Thus the mountain and the man, the star and the flame, our perceptions of them and our emotions about them, were all prakrti, although of different kinds."

The assumption that Samkhya has attached more importance to matter than to soul is borne out by a Samkhya text. Says the Sutra. While both nature and soul are antecedent to all products, since the one (soul) is devoid of this character of being a cause, it is applicable only to the other of the two (nature).

In fact, the propounders of earlier Samkhya never had seemingly any faith in God or supernatural powers. The only alternative left to them was to explain the cosmos in terms of nature. It is for the man that nature evolves, it is man, and not gods, who will carve out his destiny in the complex world. The truth has been fully recognised by Stcherbatsky, an authoritative writer on Buddhism, while making

2. Samkhya Pravacana Sutra 1-75.
comments on Śāṅkhya, "The idea of an eternal matter which is never at rest, always evolving from one into another is a very strong point of the system." Further on, the same writer says, "It does credit to the philosophers of that school, that at so early a date in the history of human thought they so clearly formulated the idea of an eternal matter which is never at rest."

It would not be far from truth that it was in the process of development of matter that the apparatus of thought was evolved which is capable of knowing the objective world.

The Śāṅkhya scheme of evolution is a chapter of great value in the whole range of Indian Philosophy.

From matter to God seems to be a big jump. However, as the two principles, God and matter, are antagonistic, one suggests the other by the law of Association.

(d) Śāṅkhya attitude towards God:

We have studied the cosmological problem in Śāṅkhya. The world has not been created by the supreme power of God but has evolved from prakṛti. Our mental structure, however, is so formed by the traditional belief in God that we try to find out whether the system, which we call Śāṅkhya, is theistic or


2. Ibid.
atheistic. Though Kapila is said to be propounder of the system, yet, it seems that it has evolved in the course of ages from ideas found in the Hindu scriptures.

It may also be noted that the Hindu scriptures are generally of a theistic nature. Wherever the Śāmkhya principles have been discussed in them, the supreme power of God has also been mentioned as associated with them or controlling them. A few references to the scriptures may be given here to show that the original conception of the Śāmkhya philosophy did not rule out the existence of God or His function as a creator.

Mythology says that there appeared on earth Narāyana, in the person of Kapila, as the author of the Śāmkhya system of thought for the purpose of annihilating the infinite sufferings of all jīvas or embodied souls. If Kapila be the incarnation of Narāyana, how could his philosophy be atheistic?

We find detailed references of the theistic Śāmkhya in the Upanisads. In the Śvetāsvatara Upanisad there is a sloka which says, "The supreme God produces from the seed of prakṛti the whole of universe." Prakṛti under the

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2. Śvetāsvatara Up. VI - 12.
influence of the supreme soul produces objects and living things. The prakṛti is trigunamayī or has three colours.

In Mahābhārata also we find that Saṁkhya categories have been associated with God. There are three principles, puruṣa, prakṛti and Purusottam. Purusottam is the highest reality. Puruṣa and prakṛti are not the phases of Purusottam but have their independent existence under Him. Bhiṣma in his exposition of sāṁkhya in the Mahābhārata speaks of Nārāyaṇa as the highest consummation; He is higher than the Prakṛti. He is eternal; He is the supreme soul.

We find in Mahābhārata three schools of Saṁkhya, the first with twenty-four categories, the second with twenty-five and the third with twenty-six. The last school is the exponent of the theistic Saṁkhya. The Mahābhārata denounces the first two schools and adheres to the third one which means that this epic advocates the theistic type of Saṁkhya.

The theistic nature of Saṁkhya can be traced in the Purāṇas also. The eternal and unborn God in some of

1. Śvetāsvatara Up IV - 5.
2. Śanti Parwa XII - 301
3. Ibid XII - 314 - 11 - 12
the purāṇas is either Viṣṇu or Maheśvar. Puruṣa, prakṛti and kāla are His different forms. Prakṛti and puruṣa are two independent principles, but through the intervention of kāla and by the will of the supreme being evolution starts. The dual principles of prakṛti and puruṣa seem to be the same as those of Sāṃkhya, and their association with the Supreme Being lends support to the belief that the purāṇas advocate the theistic nature of Sāṃkhya.

Some thinkers try to read theism in Sāṃkhya philosophy on the basis of an anecdote found in Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In this anecdote Kapila talks to his mother, Devahuti, and admits the existence of God while explaining his system to his mother. If we are, however, in a position to identify Kapila of Bhāgavata Purāṇa with the Kapila who is said to be the author of the Sāṃkhya Sūtras, then there is no harm in believing that Sāṃkhya system is theistic in nature. It seems that Pulin Behari Chakravarti, Curator of Calcutta Museum, in reading theism in Sāṃkhya philosophy on the basis of above cited anecdote, identifies Kapila of Bhāgavata Purāṇa with that of Sāṃkhya Sūtras.

We find the theistic interpretation of Sāṃkhya in some other books also. The Ahirbudhnya Sāṁhitā associates

some of the Śaṁkhya principles with the Supreme Creator Visnu. He is endowed with the creative power of Lakṣmi sakti, which manifests itself through the joint action of Avyakta, Kāla and Purusa. Avyakta has been indicated as the unevolved state of the three guṇas, which gradually manifest themselves from it. Prakṛti is the dynamic principle which explains itself in the ever-continuous process of evolution. Purusa is the unchangeable conscious principle which involves itself in this process, whereas time or kāla plays its own part by bringing together both purusa and prakṛti. Thus in this Śaṁhitā, the two basic principles of Śaṁkhya act under the supreme power of Visnu, the creator of the world.

In Ahirbudhnya - Śaṁhitā there is a mention of 2 Sastitantra a book supposed to have been written by Kapila. The Śaṁkhya of the Sastitantra referred to in this Śaṁhitā is of a theistic character resembling the doctrine of Panaṅkaratva Vaiṣṇavas. It is said in this book that Kapila's theory of 3 Śaṁkhya is a Vaiṣṇava one.

We have traced so far the theistic nature of some of the important Śaṁkhya principles as mentioned in the Hindu

1. Anima Sen Gupta - The Evolution of the Śaṁkhya School of Thought P. 104.
2. Ahirbudhnya -Śaṁhitā P. 108-10 quoted by S.N. Das Gupta in his History of Indian Philosophy.
3. S.N. Das Gupta - History of Indian Philosophy.
scriptures and other religious books such as the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas.

Now we shall consider the views of those interpreters who read theism in Śāmkhya even in interpreting the fundamental books on this philosophy viz. the Śāmkhya Kārīka and Śāmkhya Sūtras.

The first commentator to do this is Vijnānabhikṣu. While commenting on Śāmkhya Pravacana Sūtra he says that Sūtra 92 of the first chapter does not signify the non-existence of God (Iśvarabhāvat) but clearly states that God cannot be proved (Iśvarasiddeh). This, however, seems to be the contention of Vijnānabhikṣu and can hardly be attributed to the author of the Sūtras.

Of the modern thinkers Prof. Umesh Misra is inclined to read theism even in Śāmkhya Kārīka in which there is no mention of God at all. According to him a Kārīka between 16 and 17 is missing in which the scholar thinks that Śāmkhya writer must have given the concept of jīva purusa or universal soul. This hypothesis leads the author to say that Śāmkhya is theistic in nature.

1. S.P.B. I 92
2. Umesh Misra - Indian Philosophy P. 301.
Udaivir Sastri also believes that Śāmkhya philosophy is theistic in nature. According to him, God is the efficient cause of the world and not its material cause. He seems to hold this view on the interpretation of the four sūtras (57 to 60) of chapter one. In interpreting the sūtras 55, 56 and 57 of the third chapter of Śāmkhya Pravacana sūtra, Mr. Sastri has clearly propounded the view that the world evolves from prakṛti under the control of God or omnipotent lord.

The above mentioned are some of the renowned interpreters of Śāmkhya philosophy who not only advocate the view that Śāmkhya is not atheistic but are also of the firm conviction that some of the Śāmkhya texts accept the existence of God.

On the other hand, there are thinkers who have clearly maintained that Śāmkhya is an atheistic system of philosophy. Among such interpreters there are at least two who can be considered as pioneers. The first is Caraka who is noted as the writer of Caraka Samhita. Prof. S.N. Das Gupta says that this work attracted little notice but it contains the atheistic viewpoint of Caraka. According to Caraka, prakṛti and puruṣa both being unmanifested, form one category called

2. Udaivir Sastri - Śāmkhya Darshana P. 148-149.
avyakta. There is no mention of God in his account. Therefore, Anima Sen Gupta concludes that this Samhita is a clear and plain form of atheistic Samkhya. There is another Samkhya teacher, named Pancaśikha, who is mentioned in the Mahābhārata. Pancaśikha also recognises the same reality of a unified category of avyakta and purusa. These two thinkers have propounded their theories almost on the same atheistic lines.

The importance of the gradual change in Samkhya ideas from the theistic to their atheistic trend has been noted by authority on Samkhya. Says Anima Sen Gupta,

The atheistic teaching of Pancaśikha later on has found a more detailed and logical development in the Samkhya of Caraka and most probably this trend of thought by gradually gathering strength has ultimately developed into the traditional atheistic Samkhya of Isvarakṛṣṇa.

That Samkhya is an atheistic type of philosophy is borne out by the criticism of this school of thought by Śaṅkara. Commenting on Samkhya he points out that "beyond the pradhāna there exists, according to Samkhya, no external

principle which could either impel the pradhāna to activity or to restrain it from activity. The Śaṃkhyā soul (purusa), as we know, is indifferent (udāsin); it neither moves to, nor refrains from, activity. From his comments, it appears that the Śaṃkhyā philosophers looked upon non-sentient, primordial matter as the root cause of the world. Śaṃkar is opposed to the conception of natural laws acting independently of our consciousness. He states his position as follows:

"We must assume that just as clay and similar substances are seen to fashion themselves into various forms if worked upon by potters, so the pradhāna also when modifying itself into its effects should be ruled by some intelligent principle."

The Śaṃkhyā philosophers do not require the help of any spiritual principle to govern prakṛti or to cause movements or modifications.

Another commentator of Śaṃkhyā named Aniruddha also is of atheistic convictions. In his opinion, God cannot be an active agent with or without a body. So he cannot be the

1. B.S. II. 2.1
2. Ibid II. 2.2.
3. S.S.V. I 92 (Garbe's translation, P. 53.)
efficient cause of the world. If he creates the world we may very well ask whether he is bound or liberated? He cannot be proved either as bound or liberated. He cannot be like an individual soul which has attained liberation, since such a soul can never assume the powers of a creator. If He creates with the help of the law of karma, there is no need of God.

There are some modern commentators who interpret Sāṁkhya as an atheistic system of philosophy. S.N. Das Gupta says, "Sāṁkhya denies the existence of Iśvara or any other exterior influence. It holds that there is an inherent tendency in these reals which guides all their movements." The pithy remark of Radhakrishnan on this point is full of significance. He observes that "in its classical form it (Sāṁkhya) does not uphold theism." He further explains his attitude when he comments, "The Sāṁkhya is not atheistic in the sense that it establishes that there is no God. It only shows that there is no reason to suppose that there is one."

Another commentator who interprets Sāṁkhya as atheistic is Anima Sen Gupta. In her opinion, "the conception of Iśvara

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1. S.S.V. I 93 (Garbe's translation P. 53).
2. Ibid V 2 Ibid P. 179.
3. S.N. Das Gupta - History of Indian Philosophy P. 258.
5. Ibid P. 317.
generally carries with it the idea of a creator, as, otherwise it ceases to exist as an essential condition for creating the world." Her trenchant remark that "if the power of creation is taken away from God He loses all strength and significance," summarises her viewpoint on this issue. Not only Indian but some of the Western thinkers also interpret Śaṃkhya as an atheistic system of thought. Both Gough and Garbe have advocated the atheistic nature of Śaṃkhya philosophy. Garbe goes to the extent of saying that "the denial of God is the fundamental doctrine of genuine Śaṃkhya." Another Western writer, who has discussed world as matter in Śaṃkhya philosophy, has come to the following conclusion. "Here for the first time in Indian Metaphysics, there is no assumption or mention of a God or of a Creator of matter or of the universe."

We have so far discussed, in brief, the arguments, in favour of, and against, the acceptance of God, advanced by some distinguished writers on Śaṃkhya philosophy. We shall now like to form our own view on the basis of the fundamental works of Śaṃkhya system. Śaṃkhya Karika is definitely atheistic in the sense that nowhere in it has God been recognised as a

2. Ibid, P. 47.
3. Garbe -"Introduction to Vijñāhabhikṣuś Śaṃkhya Pracācana Bhāṣya" Preface, P. XIII.
creator. In the view of Anima Sen Gupta, The Sāṃkhya Karikā does not indulge in any such refutation of God, but simply remains silent over the problem.

Dualism rules out monism. The entire evolutionary process depends on prakṛti and puruṣa, no third power is needed. Knowledge and ignorance play an important part in making the souls free or keeping them in bondage. No divine mercy or wrath has any place in the affairs of men.

Hence it is very difficult to propound God's existence on the basis of the book which has not even once mentioned God in all the 72 kārikās and the reader who does see God in Sāṃkhya Karikā will read his own thought and not the actual contents of the book.

The Sāṃkhya sūtras have been the subject matter of controversy among the theistic and atheistic readers in Sāṃkhya philosophy. Writers like Udaivir Sastrī, as we have seen, have forcibly dragged God while interpreting 56th and 57th sūtras of the third chapter of the book. An impartial examination of the text suggests to us that to read theism in interpreting these sūtras is a fanciful creation of the author himself. The actual position of the sūtrakāra in these sūtras is to talk about liberated soul or the soul who has attained

2. Udaivir Sastrī - Sāṃkhya Darshana, P. 149.
Godhood and not God who is Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world. The scholars like Udaivir Āsatri seem to ignore the general spirit of the text. A synoptic view of the text will convince the reader that sūtrakāra does not see any necessity of God in explaining the world and its problem.

Still more clear is the atheistic trend of the Śāṁkha sutras in chapters I and V. The four sutras of chapter I give arguments to show that no proof of Īśvara can be given. The sacred texts which speak of Īśvara are either the glorifications of the free selves or homages paid to one made perfect by Yoga. Similarly the sutras of chapter V also disprove the existence of God.

Let us then sum up the entire position with regard to the attitude of Śāṁkha towards God. We shall not act as apologists to read in Śāṁkha texts our own cherished beliefs. Those who are by conviction believers in God may be tempted to interpret Śāṁkha as theistic. These interpreters are at great pains to furnish proofs of the utterly impossible thesis that the spirit of the Śāṁkha is not opposed to the doctrine of a personal God.

2. S.P.S. I. 95.
3. S.P.S. V. 2 - 12.
To give an example, Vijnānabhiṣku reads in the sūtras more than can be justified in their actual texts. Richard Garbe has exposed Vijnānabhiṣku's baseless interpretations when he says, "In order to bridge over chasm between the Sāṁkhya system and his own theism (which he is pleased to style Vedāntic) Vijnānabhiṣku adopts the strangest arguments to do away with the Sāṁkhya denial of God." Further, Vijnānabhiṣku adopts such reasoning to prove his thesis that it is difficult to carry conviction to an impartial student of Sāṁkhya philosophy. Vijnānabhiṣku says that the Sāṁkhya writers had yielded to the growing tendency of atheism among their contemporaries. So to please them they made the system look atheistic. Another argument seems to be more absurd. He says that the Sāṁkhya teachers preached atheism so that the stupid people may forever be damned and never enter heaven. Such an argument on the very face of it, is unconvincing. It can least be said of Kapila who is described by Lord Krishna as a muni among those who are liberated and have attained God.

1. Garbe - Introduction to Vijnānabhiṣkuś Sāṁkhya Pravacana Bhāṣya - Preface. P. XIII.
3. Ibid Papinam Jñānapratibandhārtham.
4. Bhagavadgītā X 26 (Siddhānām Kapilmuni).
Still more untenable is the view of Umesha Misra who says that the karika which is missing contained an indication to the existence of God. This is a mere hypothetical assumption. It is not based on sound proof. Such hypothesis cannot lead to any sound conclusion in philosophical reasoning.

Thus a critical study of the Samkhya texts will convince us that it is definitely an atheistic system, not in the sense that it has openly denounced the existence of God but that it does not see any necessity of God. The greatness of Kapila lies in the fact that his philosophical doctrines were essentially free from blind faith, dependence on destiny, supernatural beliefs and the interference of God in the affairs of men. The Samkhya has made a masterly attempt to develop its philosophy on rational grounds. Garbe has pointed out that it was in Kapila's doctrine that for the first time in the history of the world, the full freedom of the human mind was established and its faith in its own powers demonstrated.

Precisely for this reason, we can say that Samkhya philosophy has taught us to depend on our own powers, thought and will rather than place ourselves at the mercy of a Supreme Being. At a time when rites and rituals had completely undermined the spirit of true religion, Samkhya, by keeping silent over the

1. Garbe.
powers of God as creator and Dispenser of mercy, produced a new life in the decaying Hindu society. For ages the spirit of man had been crushed under the dead weight of false beliefs and conventions. Suddenly the giant arose from his slumber. A new light gleamed from the distant horizon revealing the hidden potentialities in man. Sāmkhya atheism was a deliverer from bondage of the spirit of man. It was the need of the hour that such a system should have evolved to meet the challenge of the times. The future of the humanity was on the cross road.

(e) The Importance of the Sāmkhya Account of Evolution in Indian Philosophy:

We have discussed Sāmkhya attitude towards God in the previous section, and have found that thinkers, generally, have supported the theory that Sāmkhya is atheistic in the sense that it has ignored God. The main function of God, by the supreme power that he possesses, is to create the world. If there is no God, or there is none whose existence can be proved the question arises as to how this world has come into being. This is a poser for the Sāmkhya thinkers to answer.

We have already noted that the problem of the world has been a subject of controversy from times immemorial. Much
water has flown under the bridge but no satisfactory solution has been found. We have been in search of some workable hypothesis on the basis of which the cosmological problem may be solved.

The seers in the Upanisads, as we have seen, believe in the one-ness of the world. We find in the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad the significant lines. "That created itself by itself" and again "He creates the world and then enters it." In the words of Radhakrishnan,

"Brahman is the sole and whole explanation of the world, its material and efficient cause."

The principle underlying the above-mentioned references is that of creationism. Some other systems of Indian philosophy have propounded their own schemes to explain the world, but the pre-eminence of Sāmkhya lies in its theory of evolution, which is unique and has been recognised as of a scientific nature.

The Buddhist theory of momentariness does not carry conviction. We cannot be certain that an entity will be

1. Brh. II. 1. 20
replaced by another after a moment has expired. What will happen if it is not replaced? Will it be the end of the world? There should be some relation between the entity that vanishes and the one that replaces it. Moreover, the successive cognitions of a certain object indicate its reality. Continued existence of an object disproves the theory of momentariness. Creation out of nothing may not be acceptable on the ground that the creator will have to produce matter out of Himself and so will not remain eternal and immutable which are its attributes. Also the theory of non-being has to be rejected on the ground that if there is non-being, there cannot be any aggregates, and so no objects can be formed.

The Nyāya system of philosophy, one of the oldest schools of thought in India, believed that there are certain things like atoms, ether, kāla and space which are neither produced nor destroyed. The world of nature is composed of eternal, unchangeable and causeless atoms, which exist in the universe, as imperceptible yet real entities. Objects are formed out of these atoms and have a definite shape to be designated as different types of things. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory recognises the determinateness of the world as accounted for by the diversity of atoms.

It may not be forgotten that mere external pressures and accidental meeting of atoms cannot satisfactorily explain
the determinate nature of the world. The gradual transmutation of matter, which seems to be the law of nature, is not possible, if we adhere to the theory of immutable atoms. The unsophisticated mind may view things as separate from one another, but a little thought over the matter will convince us that things, as they are, pass from one shape into another. The wind of change forever blows, and transmutes material objects from one shape into another. Nature is neither determinate, nor rigid. "There is," says Radhakrishnan, "such a thing as becoming, evolution or development. The truth of things is not a plurality of types but one universal nature."

Sāmkara refutes the theory of the Naiyāyikas that the objects of the world are composed of atoms. Is nature dead? Is a significant question that can be put to the propounders of such a theory. To all intents and purposes, nature is alive and animated from within. All particles of it are monads or centres of energy. Living things are not clods of clay, but within them burn the embers of the eternal fire which gives heat and light to the whole universe, the fire which is the symbol of the supreme spirit, which is immanent in nature and is also transcendental to it. In Brahma Sūtras we find the

essence of the Vedānta-philosophy. It is said there that "in
the world, no non-intelligent object without being guided by
an intelligence, brings forth from itself the products which
serve to further given aims of man." It stands to commonsense
that consciousness and activity are the features of the world
we inhabit. Chance, atoms, non-being and adṛṣṭa, cannot explain
the mystery of the real world which is governed by the eternal
spirit which both permeates and pervades it "So the omniscient,
all-powerful, eternal, all-pervading Ṛśvare is the cause of
the world."

In Śaṅkara's Vedānta, "Ṛśvare is said to be the
material as well as the efficient cause of the world." Some
thinkers have raised the objection that material causes do not
possess knowledge, to which Śaṅkara has replied that his theory
can be maintained on the authority of scriptures, and not on
experience which may be deceptive. Moreover, Ṛśvare and
the world have the common characteristic of being or Sattā. He
is able to transform himself into manifold effects by his
great powers.

1. S.B. ii. 2. 1.
2. S.B. ii. 1.22, IV. 1.23. P. 547
There is a great difficulty in accepting the theory of Śaṅkara that the world originates from God. Can a finite thing emerge from the infinite without affecting the nature of the latter? The infinite will not remain infinite, if a part of it becomes finite. Śaṅkara gets over this difficulty by saying that the world is not different from Brahman, and that it is his līlā or play. It is all māyā.

Rāmānuja protested against the theory of māyā. Our perceptive knowledge reveals real objects. All effects have a material cause. The effects of the world imply the existence of two entities, viz. souls and unevolved matter. Both are the modes of God.

Creation can start only at the bidding of the Lord. Subtle matter, which was imperceptible becomes gradually gross and the souls enter the bodies created by the will of God according to their karmas of the previous lives. Brahman, thus, is not now in its karaṇāvasthā, because the process of creation has started, but is in the effect condition. Rāmānuja further clarifies the position of God's supreme responsibility in the creation of the universe. In the words of this great philosopher God says, "I am the supporter of all beings, and yet there is no help to me from any of these beings."

1. Radhakrishnan Indian Philosophy Vol. II P. 700.
Philosophical ideas are never the last words on any disputed point. Madhava does not believe in the illusory theory of Śaṅkara. According to him, prakṛti is the material cause of the world. Lakṣmi, the consort of Viṣṇu, is the presiding deity over prakṛti. Isvara energises prakṛti and introduces order and system in the universe. When the prakṛti starts the work of evolution, we have the twenty-four products coming out of it. These existed in prakṛti in a subtle form before the evolution began.

Madhava explains the universe almost on the same lines as Śaṅkhyā did. May it not be presumed that Madhava borrowed ideas on the theory of evolution from Śaṅkhyā. A great thinker as Madhava was, it was open to him to propound a new theory of evolution independent of Śaṅkhyā. Madhava seems to have been so much influenced by Śaṅkhyā that he followed almost the same scheme of evolution as was propounded by Kapila. It appears that it appealed to him as a rationalistic system of philosophy.

Thus we can maintain that Śaṅkhyā philosophy drags cosmology out of its traditional myth. Although it is an orthodox system, it goes to maintain that there is no necessity of any supernatural power to explain the vast cosmos. Śaṅkhyā explanation may not be all sound, yet we find
a new approach, a more rationalistic outlook towards the man and his universe. Admitting the authority of the scriptures, Sāmkhya thinkers have tried to come out from those philosophical explanations of the cosmos about which certain western thinkers feel sore and go to the extent of maintaining that there is no philosophy in India. There are only religious and ethical discussions. The merits and demerits of Sāmkhya cosmology will be pointed out in the chapter to come. Here it may suffice to say that Sāmkhya explanation of the universe is of its own kind. Though it could not influence the common man, it may be called a noble effort of a noble rishi of India, named Kapila.