CHAPTER II

THEISM IN ŚĀMKHYA SYSTEM

Taking cue from the speculations contained in the Vedic literature different systems of Indian philosophy build up their own theories, and it is curious to note that while each system draws its inspiration from the tenets of the Vedic seers, the approach of each becomes different, and while one denies the existence of God, the other solemnly affirms that God not only exists, but controls the universe and plays the role of a saviour of the distressed mankind. This happens because the Vedas and the Upanisads represent mines of realised truths, and a superstructure constructed through permutation and combination of different truths gives rise to diverse and even conflicting doctrines. In the earlier chapter an attempt has been made to present the evolution of deities from the historical point of view. If an attempt is made to analyse the concept of God, as presented in the Vedas, from the philosophical point of view, it yields still more beautiful and splendid results. God is expressed by the Sanskrit term Deva, which is derived from the root 'div' 'To shine'. This very root signifies the sense of terrestrial
region, that is to say, that the firmament shining in the splendour of the light. As the Vedic seer considers it as one of his deities conducting the man from the fathoms of darkness to the splendour of the light and as he considers different deities as the agencies competent to lead the man from the depth of darkness to the glow of light, he chooses the expression "Deva" to signify the deity or God who possesses the power to effect the total transformation of the man. The essence of the Vedic God thus is represented by light, which manifests itself in the external atmosphere in the shape of the rays of the sun and in the internal region in the form of knowledge. Knowledge is identical with light, and knowledge and light combined together constitute the form of the Vedic God. It is not without reason, therefore, that in one of the legends introduced in the Rg Veda Vṛtra, the chief opponent of Indra, is described as deep ignorance covering the consciousness of man and preventing him from discharging his obligations to the society. In the strife between Vṛtra, the controlling agent of darkness and Indra, the deliverer of light and knowledge, Indra persistently wins, and thus the Vedic seer describes inconformity to his philosophy of conducting man from darkness to light, - nonexistence into existence, - mortality to immortality. All these conditions prompt
the philosopher to conceive of the supreme light sometimes as the swan in the interior lake of mind, sometimes as light in the terrestrial region, sometimes as the sacrificer in the sacrificial alter and sometimes as the revered guest in the cup of the exhilarating drink of Soma. The rituals recommended in the Brāhmaṇas want to attain this supreme light, while the Yoga system of philosophy also wants to attain the same entity through internal meditation and contemplation. The performance of dry rituals and inner contemplation are the means leading to the same end: both reveal the essence of the supranormal light, which is identical with knowledge par excellence and has for its another name God or Deva. All the Vedic Gods are different representatives of the same supramundane light or knowledge par excellence, and have received different names according to different approaches of the Vedic seers. That the underlying essence of all Vedic deities is one and the same, and is recognised in the Vedic ideas, and in a few glowing stanzas the Vedic seer gives expression to monotheistic ideas by recording the Vedic God as being represented by one Absolute Reality. In explaining this approach of the Vedic seers Kātyāyana says that this one Absolute is represented by the Sun, - the store house of light, the repository of all energy and the
originator of all knowledge. As a matter of fact this Sun constitutes the soul of all beings: it gives birth to the universe and sustains it. All other Gods are but diverse manifestations of the same Sun. ¹ It is not without reason, therefore, that the Vedic seers and their annotators put forward the expression Bṛhat as an equivalent of the term Deva meaning God, because they maintain that expansion constitutes the characteristic feature of God. God, whose essence is represented by supramundane light and energy, constantly expands and at the same time tries to expand the boundaries of the ego of the ordinary human being by lifting him into a higher plain of Consciousness. God Himself is without any limit: at the same time it tries to expand the self of the small man. The concept of God as presented in the Vedas, therefore, is comprised of two factors: the capacity to conduct the man from the land of unfathomable darkness to the region of splendid light and the competence to expand his ego boundaries.

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¹ ekī va hi māhān ātmā devatā.
sa sūrya ity ācaksate -
sūrya ātmā jagatastasthūṣas ca -Ṛg Veda 1.115.1d.
It is interesting to note that though the Rg Veda showers praise on a number of deities and enumerates their distinct characteristic features, an inquisitive mind is surely able to trace the affinities between the diverse Gods. And this is so because all the Gods are but manifestations of the same energy and light and that all these forms are based on the concepts of transformation and expansion. The Psalmist in the Rg Veda describes Indra as assuming different forms according to his sweet will and as taking the help of his power, which is nothing different from Illusion which he takes recourse to while approaching the devotee.\(^2\) This characteristic feature of Indra, namely the power to assume diverse forms and mislead the man relegates him to an inferior status and it is not without justification, therefore, that in the preceding chapter the towering personality of Varuṇa has been referred to as the greatest in the Vedic Pantheon. Yāska, the first commentator of the Rg Veda in his attempt to enumerate the qualities of God says that God is to bring prosperity to the devotee, and this prosperity certainly is not

2. \(\text{rūpāṁ rūpāṁ pratirūpo vabhūva} \)
   \(\text{tad asya rūpāṁ praticaksanāya /} \)
   \(\text{indro māyābhīḥ purūrūpa Īyate //} \)
   \(- \text{Rg Veda 6.47.18.}\)
represented by material greatness, but by moral and spiritual upliftment. God pulls the man from the dirt of ordinary thoughts and places him on the high pedestal of liberated consciousness, reaching which he realises his identity not only with the Absolute Reality but with other members of the association of the universe as well. The trend of monotheism, which reveals itself in some of the hymns of the Rg Veda continues throughout the book and in one of the hymns the seer proclaims "The sages represent one consciousness has assumed diverse forms and expressions made through different names". This one God sometimes appears as the Sun in the terrestrial region, sometimes as the burn of light in the earthly region and sometimes as the essence of consciousness in the mental region. In this way the Vedic Psalmists try to remove the apparent contradiction between polytheistic and monotheistic attitude expressed in the Vedas, and want to impress on the reader the idea that appears to be polytheism to the ordinary man reveals itself as monotheism on closer analysis. The Vedic texts never subscribe to the philosophy that existence of multitudes of God is incapable of being brought into

3. ekāṁ sad vipraḥ vaughdhaḥ vadanti /
    - Rg Veda 1.164. 46c.
harmony with the concept of existence of one God. On the other hand, it firmly believes that the one does not exist without many and that the multitude derives its sustenance from the one that constitutes the substratum of all. The Brāhmaṇas tried to support this attitude of the Vedic seers and a teacher of great stature like Vyājñavalkya himself asserts that though the number of God may be 3000 or 300 or 3 in reality there is only one God and he has for his essence, energy, knowledge and consciousness. This supreme God partakes of the nature of existence and knowledge and bliss, and finally appears in the form of combination of the three qualities of being, consciousness and bliss in the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The attempt of ancient India to effect a harmony between polytheism and monotheism, thus, expresses itself in a feeble form in the Rg Veda itself: it gathers momentum in the theological speculations of the Brāhmaṇas, and finally bursts forth into the mono­theistic observation of the Upaniṣads where the Absolute Reality is represented as characterised by Hindu.

4. katama eko deva iti, prāṇa iti,
    sa brahma tyad ty ācaksate.
    Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.9.
This concept of God as presented in the Vedic literature appears and reappears in diverse religious and philosophical texts in ancient India and subsequently receives full-bodied forms in different systems of Indian Philosophy. Even the apparently theistic religions of Buddhism and Jainism have not been able to resist the influence of Vedic thoughts so much so that they have denied the existence of the eternal God. They have been forced to recognise the existence of the omniscient and liberated man and to identify him with the supreme God, - the blessed one.

Among the diverse systems of Indian philosophy, which are based on the observations of the Vedas and which admit the authority of the Vedas by regarding it as manifestation of supreme knowledge the Yoga system, the Vedānta system, the Nyāya system and the Vaiśeṣika system admit the existence of God, while Saṃkhya and Mīmāṁsā systems are regarded as systems denying the existence of God. Kapila, the propounder of the Saṃkhya and Jaimini, the propagator of the Mīmāṁsā system have maintained silence on the concept of God, and this possibly has led the posterity to believe that both these philosophers do not recognise the existence of God. This proposition, however, does not seem to be deniable because both the Saṃkhya and the Mīmāṁsā systems do not recognise the Veda as creation of God and
consider those scriptures as authoritative which derive their inspiration from the Vedas. The Mīmāṃsā system of philosophy further considers the rituals prescribed in the Vedas as extremely fruitful and prescribes the process of offering oblation to the all-pervading Viṣṇu, who pervades the earthly, the terrestrial and heavenly region alike. All this makes the problem more confusing, and sometimes one is tempted to believe that though popularly the Sāṇkhya and Mīmāṃsā systems are regarded as systems characteristic of atheistic attitude, they are really theists and believe in the existence of God.

The Sāṇkhya literature is extremely limited and when we refer to this literature we understand the writings of the first propounder Kapila, and a commentary entitled Pravacanabhaṣya and the Sāṇkhya Karika. These original texts are supplemented by a few other commentaries. None of these original texts or commentaries demand the existence of God as the controlling agent of the universe and the deliverer of benefit to the suffering humanity. The authors of these texts and commentaries recognise the existence of twenty-five categories of which twenty-four are constituents of matter and one is represented by the conscious self, represented as "Puruṣa" in the language of the Sāṇkhya system. This conscious self is the individual and not God. Iśvara-kṛṣṇa in his attempt to substantiate his proposition of plurality of

5. Iśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṇkhya Karika, Sloka 3; Sāṇkhya Sūtra 1.61.
selves or Puruṣa refers to their birth or genesis, and says that as the individual is subject to birth and annihilation, the conscious Puruṣa of this system refers to the individual and not to God, who is recognised as birthless and deathless entity. Of the twin systems of Saṃkhya and Yoga, however, the Yoga system acknowledges the existence of God and in its attempt to enunciate a definition of this God says that God is consciousness par excellence and is untouched by the ordinary human qualities like religious merits and demerits and is not disturbed by the weight of impressions. The commentator of the Yoga Sūtras also refers to God as "perpetually liberated Self" and maintains that the characteristic features of this God are incapable of being traced in the individual. The individual is neither liberated nor the master of the entire universe. God is perpetually liberated and controls the entire system of the universe. The Yoga system of philosophy, thus, extends recognition to another category, which it identifies with the perpetually liberated conscious God competent to control the system of the universe.


7. klesākarmavipākā' sayair aparāmrśtaḥ puruṣaviśeṣa Īśvaraḥ. Y.S. 1.24.

In the existent texts of Śāṃkhyā system, God has not been recognised as a distinct category. Over and above this, the propounder of the Śāṃkhyā doctrine has put forward a number of arguments to deny the existence of God. Arguments advanced to arrive at the conclusion that God does not exist, are that God is neither the self free from the bondage of sufferings and distresses nor the bonded self. The liberated self is not in a position to usher in the existence of the universe since the liberated one is free from desire to create as well. Though on the other hand, he is regarded as the bonded self, that also does not cut much ice, since the bonded one does not have the capacity to create. These considerations prompt the Śāṃkhyā system to deny the existence of God as the creator of the universe. In its endeavour to justify the Vedic expressions containing the praises of the supreme God, the Śāṃkhyā system says that these are eulogies of the liberated self or eulogies of such transient Gods as Viṣṇu, Indra and the like.

9. Īśvarāsiddheś. Śāṃkhyā Sūtra 1.92.

10. vaddhamuktayor anyatarāḥ bhāvāḥ tathātāmī.  
    - Śāṃkhyā Sūtra, 1.93.

11. muktatve sati sraṣṭṛtvādyakṣamatvāḥ tatprayojakābhimā- 
    narāgādyabhāvāḥ. vaddhatve' pi muṇḍatvāḥ na sṛṣṭādik- 
    śamatvāḥ ity arthāḥ.  
    - Pravacanabhasya on Śāṃkhyā Sūtra, 1.94, page 134, 
      Calcutta edn.
who are but so many diverse created entities in the chain of creation. This proposition drawn by the Śūtras of the Sāṁkhya system and their commentaries gives an impression to the curious reader that the Sāṁkhya is atheistic in its approach. This has prompted the prolific writer Vācaspati Miśra to deny the existence of God in his famous commentary of the Sāṁkhya system.

This prolific writer poses this proposition that the creator engages himself in the process of creation for fulfilment of His objective or through grace and compassion for others. The theory that God engages Himself in the creation of the universe for fulfilment of an objective or for His personal gain, has no legs to stand upon, because God is a full and complete self, possessing all the

12. yathāyogam kācit śrutir muktāmanah kevalatmasāmānaya-sya jñeyatābhidhanāya sannidhimātrasvaryaṇa stutirūpā pravacanartha. kācio ca saṁkalpapurvaka-śṛtvardipratipādikā śrutih siddhasya brahmaviṣṇuha-rāder evā' ni tyesvarayā' bhimānādimo' pi gaunani-tyatvānittvānnyatvādy upāsapare' ty arthāḥ. - Pravacanabhāṣya on Sāṁkhya Sūtra 1.95, page 135, Cal edn.

13. prekśāvatpravṛtteḥ svārthakāraṇyābhyaḥ vyāptatvāt. Vācaspati’s Tattvakaumudi on Sāṁkhya Kārikā 57.
constituent feature of the supreme reality. In a similar manner the theory that God ushers in the creation of the universe through compassion for the created entities is equally unsound, because before the creation of the universe there does not exist any created entity, and consequently the desire of God to put an end to affliction to the created creatures out of compassion does not arise. The supporting arguments put forward by the champions of God that this spectacle of miseries of the created being in the previous creations infuses a desire in God to put an end to the continuance of the distress and permits Him to create the universe through compassion are equally unsound, since this entire proposition is vitiated by the fallacy of regressus ad infinitum. This proposition envisages the existence of a previous creation and presupposes the existence of other creations preceding that previous one, and thus fallacy of regressus ad infinitum arises. In continuing his argument the prolific writer Vācaśpati says that as there can be no compassion and desire to annihilate suffering prior to


15. *na'pi kārunyād asya sarge pravṛttiḥ. prāk sargaj jivānām indriyaśarīravisaśayānuttattau duḥkhābhāvena kasya prahāñcchākārūnyam?* - Tattvakaumudī on Sāmkhya Kārikā 57.
creation and as there can be no creation prior to this indication of this desire in the God, the fallacy of mutual dependence also appears to vitiate the entire proposition.\textsuperscript{16} Thus with strong emphasis at his command Vacaspati denies the existence of God by showing that the proposition of the existence of God is vitiated by the fallacies of regressus ad infinitum and mutual dependence. Continuing arguments in support of the Śāmkhya theory Vacaspati says that the creation could be brought into being even without existence of God in the shape of the creator, or in other words there can be this universe without God. The universe is brought into being through natural conglomeration of diverse matters, and it is the vision of the conscious and indicative self alone which energizes the matter and engages it in the process of creation.\textsuperscript{17} This argument of Vacaspati is taken from his great predecessors, who have tried to establish with punctilious care the agency of the unconscious matter in the process of the creation of the universe.

\textsuperscript{16} sargottarakālāṁ duḥkhino' valokyā kāruṇyābhyupagame
duruttaram itaretarāśrayatvāṁ kāruṇyena srṣṭiḥ srṣṭya
cā kāruṇyam iti. - Tattvakaumudi on Śāmkhya Kārikā 57.

\textsuperscript{17} pratipuruṣavimoksārtham svārtha iva parātha arāmbhaḥ -
Śāmkhya Kārikā 56ª.
This analysis of the stand of diverse texts belonging to the Sāmkhya Literature indicates that Īśvarakṛṣṇa, the author of the Sāmkhya Kārikās, has neither established the existence of God, nor has tried to demolish the doctrine of His existence, while Vācaspati Miśra in his great commentary has taken pains to controvert the thesis relating to the existence of God. Though the extant doctrine relating to the Sāmkhya system of Philosophy does not extend recognition to the existence of any such entity as God, it considers the Vedas as one not created by any agency, and as the upholders of this doctrine accept the authority of the Vedas, which are not regarded as creations of any external agency, they have received recognition as philosophers belonging to the atheistic schools.

It is interesting to note that though the theoreticians of the Sāmkhya system did not recognise an eternal, universal and one God, they admitted the existence of an entity, popularly known as the "Born God" or the "Created God". These theoreticians believed that cessation of sorrow takes place as the knowledge on discrimination

18. tac ca svatahpramanam. apauruseyavedavyajyanitavena sakaladosāsāmkāvinirmuktatvāṇa yuktam bhavati. — Tattvakaumudī on Sāmkhya Kārikā 5.
between the supernormal agency known as "Puruṣa" and the matter or "Prakṛti" takes place. A being that has not become aware of this distinction between "Puruṣa" and "Prakṛti" and at the same time has cultivated aversion to worldly objects finds himself ultimately absorbed in matter. But as such a being does not become conscious of the superdistinction between the two eternal categories, he does not have a taste of liberation. The Sāṃkhya theory states that the soul which attains a state of development through contemplation and meditation and ultimately gets itself absorbed in matter reappears as the "Born God" or the "Created God" in the next birth. The analogy is to be found in the appearance and reappearance of a man downed in a vast sheet of water.19 As this "Created God" is capable of effecting creation, sustenance and annihilation of universe through the powers accumulated by meditation, there could not be any bar in referring to him as the God. Kapila, the great exponent of the Sāṃkhya system of Philosophy, has propounded the doctrine of this "Created God" in two of these famous aphorisms,20

19. yathā jale magnah puruṣah punar uttiṣṭhati evam eva prakṛtiliṇāḥ puruṣāḥ Īśvarabhāvena punar āvir bhavanti. - Pravacanabhāṣya on Sāṃkhya Sūtra 3.54.

20. sa hi sarvavit sarvakartā - Sāṃkhya Sūtra 3.56; Īḍṛṣeśvārasiddhiḥ siddhā - Sāṃkhya Sūtra 3.57.
and his commentator in explaining this thesis has drawn upon the sources of Vedas and the Smrīti literature in his endeavour to establish this thesis on a sound footing. The Sāmkhya theorists think that this "Created God" is multiple in number, because there is no such entry that only one soul can attain the developed state of God and also because there is no such entry as to the continuance of the same being competent to create, sustain and annihilate the universe through all the ages. A parallelism is to be traced in the extant belief that through successful performance of one hundred horse sacrifices any number of beings can acquire competence to attain the exalted position of Indra. The Purāṇas also affirm that by acquiring special types of religious merits, the beings attain the status of the supreme creator Brahmā. The Yogāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa refers to an ant as having achieved the exalted position of Brahmā consecutively twice, but as having slipped to the state of ant through attachment, malice and avarice. It is equally interesting that while the scriptures and the Purāṇas describe a being as attaining the exalted position of Brahmā, the presiding deity over creation, they do not refer to a single instance of a being acquiring the status of Viṣṇu or Śiva, the presiding deities over the process of sustenance and cycle.
of annihilation. It is just possible that the scriptures believe in the principle that sustenance and annihilation are capable to be effected only by God, that is an eternal and unborn entity and is possessed of manifold powers including the faculties of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. Be that as it may be, extant works of the Sāmkhya system of Philosophy take the existence of a concept known as the concept of "Created God", and in explaining this doctrine assert that this concept is characterised by multiplicity.

This concept of 'Created God', however, does not find favour with the established norms and the familiar systems of Indian Philosophy. Firstly, the God which is admitted as an agent responsible for the cycle of creation is required to possess all the powers and responsibilities, which are not likely to appear in a created entity. Secondly, it is required for this God to be a liberated self, because the processes of creation, sustenance and annihilation are likely to be affected, if the agent leading to these

21. svayambhur eve' śvarah nitye śvarānaṅgākārāt. - Bhavagānēśa’s Tattvāyāthārthādīpakeśa, page 69, line 16-17, Chow, Skt. Series, No. 246, Fasciculus 1, June 1918.
processes is not a liberated and detached self. Thirdly, an agent who is himself not liberated is incapable of being described as leading to liberation or salvation of other beings. The scriptures and the famous dicta prevalent in almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy support the contention that a teacher who is not thoroughly conversant with the mysteries of the knowledge relating to the Self is not in a position to tender such advice through implementation of which salvation can be obtained. The proposition of the "Created God" suffers further from the lacuna of being vitiated by the fallacy of regressus ad infinitum and the fallacy vitiates the chain of argument in this way. It is asserted that aversion to worldly objects is the main factors responsible for contemplation and a state of perfect tranquility, known as "Samādhi" in the Indian Philosophy. A being who experiences this aversion to worldly objects is not in a position to effect creation of the universe, because it is fully aware of the inherent dangers of the creation and the troubles into which a man is landed by this seemingly charming world of existence. Thus the entire stand that the created God having a taste of liberation and savouring the

22. taj viṣṇu-nārtham sa guru evaḥ bhigacchet samitpāniḥ gṛotriyam brahmaniṣṭham. - Mundaka Upaniṣad 1.2.12.

23. tat paraṁ puruṣākhyātār guṇāvaitṛṣṇayam. Yoga Śūtra 1.15.
delight of complete tranquility in the soul ushers in the existence of the universe, is open to serious doubt and controversies. Even if it is admitted for argument's sake that such a being is capable of creating the world of existence, the cycle of production is incapable of being justified at different stages, because the existence of a number of beings savouring the delight of tranquility is sure to be a figment of imagination. The only way to get out of these difficulties is to recognise the existence of a number of beings possessed of all the qualities of God as responsible for creation of the world of existence at different stages. An attempt to remove this fallacy of regressus ad infinitum again is likely to vitiate the proposition by the fallacy of complexity, since the restatement of the proposition in the form that a number of "Created Gods" possessed of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence have allowed to creation of the world of existence at different stages is a complex proposition, particularly when the concept of one uncreated omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent God competent to effect creation of the universe is in a position to solve the problem. The former proposition is certainly more complex as it requires admission of a number of beings.

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24. na tasya kāryaṁ karanaṁ ca vidyate na tatsamaṁ ca' bhyadhikas' ca dṛṣṭyaṁ / paraṁ sya śaktir vividhai' va śṛuyaṁ svābhāvīṁ jñānavalakriya ca //

- Śvetāśvātara Upaniṣad 6.8
of entities, while the later is simple, since it explains the creation of the universe with the help of one supernormal supreme agency. The critics of the concepts of "Created God" thus try to find fault with the proposition and assert that this is neither approved by the scriptures nor is backed by logic.

In their endeavour to demolish the theory of "Created God" these theoreticians maintain that the proposition indicated in Nyātāvakaumudī suffers from a number of defects. The created agent known as God is an enlightened and liberated entity, and consequently is not in a position to do anything for its own benefit. Nor it is possible for such a being to create universe out of compassion, because the feeling of compassion is not likely to visit a liberated and enlightened soul. The tendency to effect annihilation of miseries of all bonded beings is possible only in a being, that has itself experienced this misery, and has suffered the agony of effecting liberation from the bonded state to which every beings are subjected to. Thus in order to explain the existence of the feeling of compassion one is required to accept the proposition that the world and the being existed before this, leading to emergence of two fallacies namely, the fallacy of regressus ad infinitum and the fallacy of mutual dependence. The critics of the concept of "Created God" thus affirm that the entire chain of argument propounded
by the supporters of this theory is vitiated by two fundamental defects of the process of reasoning. Moreover, the theory that the "Created God" is responsible for creation of the universe is not backed by the authority of any system whatsoever. The original texts on Śāmkhya system of Philosophy recognise matter as lying behind the creation of the world and assert that the unconscious matter leads to the creation of the world at the presence of the supreme being known as the "Puruṣa". These texts affirm that in the genesis of the world the "Puruṣa" has no role to play. It is because of this theory that the Śāmkhya system has been commonly described as an atheistic system not admitting the existence of God. This also explains the attempt made by Śaṅkara to demolish the views of the Śāmkhya system of Philosophy in his Magnum Opus of Vedānta system of Philosophy.

It is, therefore, evident that the attempt made by a section of Śāmkhya theorists to propound the doctrine of "Created God" and to explain the cycle of creation by putting forward

25. puruṣārtha eva hetur na kenacit kāryate karāṇam /  
    - Śāmkhya Karikā, Sloka 31.

26. niratiṣayā hy akartāraś cetana iti śāmkhya manyante,  
    tasmād acetanāṁ kāryakāraṇam. na ca kāṣṭha-iloṣṭādīnāṁ  
    cetana-tve kiñcīt pramānām asti. prasiddhaś ca' yaṁ  
    cetana-ācetanāvibhāgo loke. tasmād brahmavilakṣaṇatvān  
    ne' daṁ jagat tatprakṛtikān.  
    - Śaṅkara Bhāṣya oh Brahma Sūtra 2.1.4.
the supernormal agency is inconsistent with the Śāmkhya teaching established by Kapila, the greatest exponent of this system.

All these discussions explain as to why the Śāmkhya theoreticians are regarded as atheists in their approach. It is curious and hackneyed that Kapila, the original exponent of this system, has not recognised the existence of God, firmly accepted in Indian thought as the super human agency leading to creation, sustenance and annihilation of the universe. And this only takes us to the vexed question of ascertaining whether the extant theories are only compositions of Kapila and whether the extant Śāmkhya doctrine on fundamental issues relating to the riddle of the universe. The scriptures have referred to as many as three Kapilas as the seers of the Śāmkhya system of Philosophy. One such Kapila is described as the mental creation of Brahma27, the second as an incarnation of the Fire God28 and the third as an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, the son of the famous sage

27. iha bhagavān brahmasutaḥ kapilo nāma. tad yathā - "sanakaś ca sanandas' ca tritīyaś ca saṅkāraḥ / kapilas' cā' suris ca' va vāguḥ paṅgaśikhas tathā // ity ete brahmaṇaḥ putraḥ sapta prōkaḥ mahārasyaḥ"// - Gauḍapādabhaṣya on Śāmkhya Kārika 1, page 2, Bengal Theosophical Society's Publications; See also Mahābhārata XII, 340. 67, Rāmāyaṇa 1.40-41.

28. kapilaḥ paramaśākṣaḥ ca yaṁ prāhur yatayah sada / agniḥ sakapilo nāma śāmkhyayogaprauṛttaḥ // - Mahābhārata, 3.211.21; "The Kapila fire is the great seer whom the ascetics call Kapila, the founder of Śāmkhya and Yoga". - The Mahābhārata, page 644, University of Chicago Press; Śāmkhya pravacanabhaṣya on Śāmkhya Śūtra VI. 70.
popularly known as Kardama in extant religious texts\textsuperscript{29}. The Buddhist scriptures mention of a forth Kapila supposed to be born in the family of Gautamas and after whose name the Kapila City of Kapilavastu derives its nomenclature. According to most of the writers of Indian Philosophical system, Kapila, the son of Brahmarshi, happens to be the real originator of the Sāmkhya system and the small work entitled Tattvasamāsa consisting of 22 small aphorisms constitutes the genuine earliest work on the Sāmkhya system of philosophy. The observation of Viśnubhikṣu that the extant Sāmkhya system of Philosophy owes origin to Kapila, the incarnation of Nārāyaṇa,\textsuperscript{30} has made the position still confusing, though he has affirmed with all emphasis at his command that the collection of 22 aphorisms, which goes by the name of Tattvasamāsa constitutes the original Sāmkhya literature and has imanated from the pen of the grāmat Kapila of profound celebrity. The great Śaṅkara, it is evident from his works, has recognised Kapila, the exponent of the Sāmkhya system of Philosophy as a person different from Kapila, the incarnation of Nārāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{31} The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} See Bhāgavata 3.24.17-19; dadṛṣṭuḥ kapilam tatra vāsudevaṁ sanātanam / - Vālmīki Raṁāyana 1.40.25.
\item \textsuperscript{30} nārāyaṇaḥ kapilamūrttir aśeṣadhukhahāṁya jīvanivahasya namo' satu tasami. - Pravacanabhāṣya, benedictory verse 2, page 1, Cal. edn.
\item \textsuperscript{31} yā tu śrutih kapilasya jñānātisayaṁ pradarṣayantī na tgyā śrutivruddham api kapilaṁ matalṁ śraddhātuh śākyam, kapilam iti śrutiśāmānyatvāt, anyasya ca kapilasya sagara-putraṇāṁ prataptur vāsudevanāmaṁ śāmarāṇaṁ. - Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtra 2.1.1 page 435, Nīrṇayāsāgar edn.
\end{itemize}
statements and counter statements made by successive thinkers as to the identity of Kapila have made the position still worse, and the searching student is found with no other alternative but to solve the issue by finding out the common meeting ground among the conflicting statements and counter statements. In his preamble to the Sāmkhyapravacanabhāṣya, Viṣṇabhīkṣu has made it clear that though the Sāmkhya literature is nearly, extinct, he has tried to give a full-bodied form to it by composing aphorisms and expanding doctrines where ever necessary. 32

Had the aphorisms on Sāmkhya system been extant even before Viṣṇabhīkṣu then Iśvarakṛṣṇa, Śaṅkara, Vacāppati and other profound exponents of Indian Philosophy would have mentioned it in their own compositions. All this makes the position worse confounded and one is likely to conclude that the extant Sāmkhya literature which is regarded as the creation of Kapila, has not emanated from his pen, but has received numerous transformations at the hands of subsequent writers and has ultimately received its final and full-bodied form by going through several transformations and modifications. 33

32. kalārkabhāṣitaṁ sāmkhyasastraṁ sudhākaram /
    kalā vaśiṣṭhaḥ bhūyoś pūrayisye vaco mṛtaiḥ //
    - Pravacanabhāṣya, benedictory verse 5, page 11, Cal.edn.

33. pūrvacāryaṣūtrapravandhe ......
Himself staunch believer in the Yoga system of Philosophy, Vacaspati reveals a burning desire to maintain perpetuity in the tradition of the Samkhya system of Philosophy expounded by the great Kapila. This is substantiated further by the facts that if any of the treatises of Samkhya system is established as a work not emanating from the pen of Kapila, then its authority itself is likely to be contested hotly. It is equally curious to note that latest extant treatise of Samkhya system entitled Astititantra not only presents the main tenets of the system, but tries to demolish the contradictory views also. The Sāmkhyakārikā, however, does not expend its energy in demolishing the viewpoints of the opponents. This gives rise to the suspicion that the extant treatises on Samkhya system do not represent the original Samkhya theory. Thus though the extant treatises on Samkhya system do not make mention of God, it is difficult to accept the proposition that the original Samkhya theory is atheistic in its approach and outlook.

It may not be wrong to trace the origin of this theistic outlook from the popular Samkhya aphorism "Iśvarāsiddh" which is propounded with an intention to

34. S. Su. 1. 92.
demolish the proof of the existence of God. Had the proponent of the popular Sāṁkhya system an intention to disprove the existence of God, he could frame the aphorism as "Īśvarābhāvāt". This assumption may be confirmed by the observation of the great Udayana who with all emphasis at his command takes great pain to controvert the Sāṁkhya tenet that there are no proofs to establish God's existence.35 Vijñānabhikṣu, the celebrated author of Sāṁkhya-pravacanabhaṣya, rightly observes that the Sāṁkhya school of Indian thought does not categorically deny the existence of God, but holds that the reality of God cannot be established by logical proofs.36

In the third chapter of Bhāgavata, the author has made mention of the original Sāṁkhya system as expounded by Kapila, an incarnation of Nārāyaṇa. This Sāṁkhya system admitted in the Bhāgavata certainly different from the popular Sāṁkhya system represented by the extant works. The Bhāgavata in epitomising the main theory of Sāṁkhya system says that the divine being resides within all beings and

35. tattvādākapramaṇābhāvāt iti pāñcamavipratipattih.
   - Haridāsa's commentary on Nyāyakusumāṇjali 5.1.
36. Sāṁkhya-sūtra 5.12; 1.95; 3.54-6.
represents the heart of all hearts. It, however, tenders advice to humanity to cultivate devotion, which is possible only in a system which recognises deity as distinct from the devotee. The path of devotion, the Bhāgavata asserts, is the road leading to realisation of the supreme essence according to the tenets of the Sāmkhya system of Philosophy.37 In recording a dialogue between Kapila and Devahūti, the Bhāgavata asserts that the realisation of the all-pervading Supreme Being constitutes the knowledge of all knowledges and that when this Being is comprehended liberation is achieved.38 The Sāmkhya theory as recorded in the Bhāgavata, thus, is absolutely distinct from the Sāmkhya system epitomised in the extant works. Whereas the extant popular Sāmkhya system recognises 24 types of unconscious matters and one conscious self, the Sāmkhya theory as recorded in the Bhāgavata accepts 27 types of unconscious matters, the conscious self and the "Independent Concept of Time", which adds a new significance to all entities and actions.39 This Time is identical in essence with the Supreme Lord,

37. See Bhāgavata 3.24. 45-47.
38. See Bhāgavata 3.25. 40-44.
39. See Bhāgavata 3.26. 11,16.
even though it is usually represented as a function of the
divine Being. The great Kapila also asserts that the
divine Being resides in the heart of all beings as an
inherent entity and when it projects itself in the
external world, it assumes the form of Time. This
analysis clearly indicates that the original Śāmkhya theory
as recorded in the Bhāgavata admits very much the existence
of divine Being, and consequently its attitude and approach
are profoundly theistic in character. The divergence
between the doctrines propounded in the old theory and its
later developments seems to be astounding, and it is not
unrealistic to contribute this divergence to influence all
later thoughts peculiar to other systems. It is quite
possible that the popular Śāmkhya doctrine has absorbed
into its frame the thoughts and documents of other systems,
which are not known to the original Śāmkhya theory.

40. prākṛter guṇasāmyasya nirviśeṣasya mānavi /
ceṣṭā yataḥ sa bhagavān kāla ity upalakṣitā //

41. See Bhāgavata ṇ, 3.26.18.