

**PREFACE**

The Sāṅkhya philosophy is perhaps the oldest philosophical thought and discipline that has come down to us through various interpretations among all the schools of Indian philosophical tradition. There may be differences of opinions among the scholars regarding the sources and philosophy of Sāṅkhya but its antiquity is never disputed. That is why the exact time of it can not be determined. Kapila who himself is a controversial figure is accepted as the propounder of this system. Again, may be due its antiquity or some other reasons nothing is found about Kapila’s Sāṅkhya, as a result of which Īsvarakṛṣṇa’s *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* is accepted as the leading text of this particular system. Afterwards in Indian philosophical tradition Sāṅkhya came popularly to be known as Īsvarakṛṣṇa has interpreted it. Questions arise regarding the similarities or differences between Kapila’s original Sāṅkhya and Īsvarakṛṣṇa’s *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā*, how far Īsvarakṛṣṇa’s *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* is able to carry Kapila’s original Sāṅkhya or how far *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* is consistent with the system. The peculiarities of Sāṅkhya school is, here the propounder is not the author of its popular leading text. That is why; in this proposed research work an effort has been made to evaluate the philosophy of Sāṅkhya with taking care of the notions found in *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā*.

As an āstika system also Sāṅkhya is very much unique as it has started its philosophy from the problems of the practical world. Though it is a Vedic
system still it is not a blind follower of the Vedas; it has its own arguments. Īśvaraṅkṛṣṇa’s Sāṅkhya is popularly known as dualistic system which accepts puruṣa and prakṛti as two ultimate principles; it is not talking about the existence of God. Prakṛti evolves due to its contact with puruṣa. From the general understanding of Sāṅkhya it can be realised that Īśvaraṅkṛṣṇa has given more importance to prakṛti than to puruṣa in the process of evolution. In this proposed study this issue will be seriously taken care of as the title of the thesis itself suggests.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first introductory chapter is devoted to focus on our total approach to the problem. It covers the meaning of Sāṅkhya, place of Sāṅkhya in Indian philosophical heritage, views on Sāṅkhya by the epics and different contemporary thinkers, source materials of Sāṅkhya, chronology of texts and exponents etc. In the second chapter the basic concepts of Sāṅkhya-Kārikā are discussed including theistic and atheistic accounts of Sāṅkhya. The third chapter is a comparative study of Sāṅkhya-Kārikā with early Sāṅkhya elements, Buddhism and Brahma-Sūtra. Here efforts have been made to see how Īśvaraṅkṛṣṇa’s Sāṅkhya-Kārikā is related to early Sāṅkhya, whether Sāṅkhya can be placed in the same class with Buddhism, how far Sāṅkhya is in contrast with Vedānta philosophy etc. The fourth chapter consists of the key issues of this thesis. Here at the very beginning a critical evaluation is made on the Sāṅkhya-Kārikā and after this evaluation another effort has been made to see if the philosophy of Sāṅkhya somewhere comes closer to the Lokāyata darśana. As Sāṅkhya-Kārikā is
found to be very much inconsistent with some of its idealistic notions that is why an observation has been made to find out whether Sāṁkhyā can be a naturalistic system with scientific approach. The final chapter consists of concluding remarks and the résumé of the thesis. It is an extraction from the whole thesis where it is said Īśvarakṛṣṇa was very much rational in his approach which makes Sāṁkhyā ever relevant and innovative. He was able to bring new dimension even in the orthodox tradition by ignoring metaphysical principles or making it secondary in the process of world evolution and by giving first preference to the issues of the practical world.

In this work, the conventional method is followed in using diacritical marks in Sanskrit and other Indian words including the classical proper names. Following the convention again, the title of all books and texts with Sanskrit and other Indian words, except proper names, are italicised.

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