

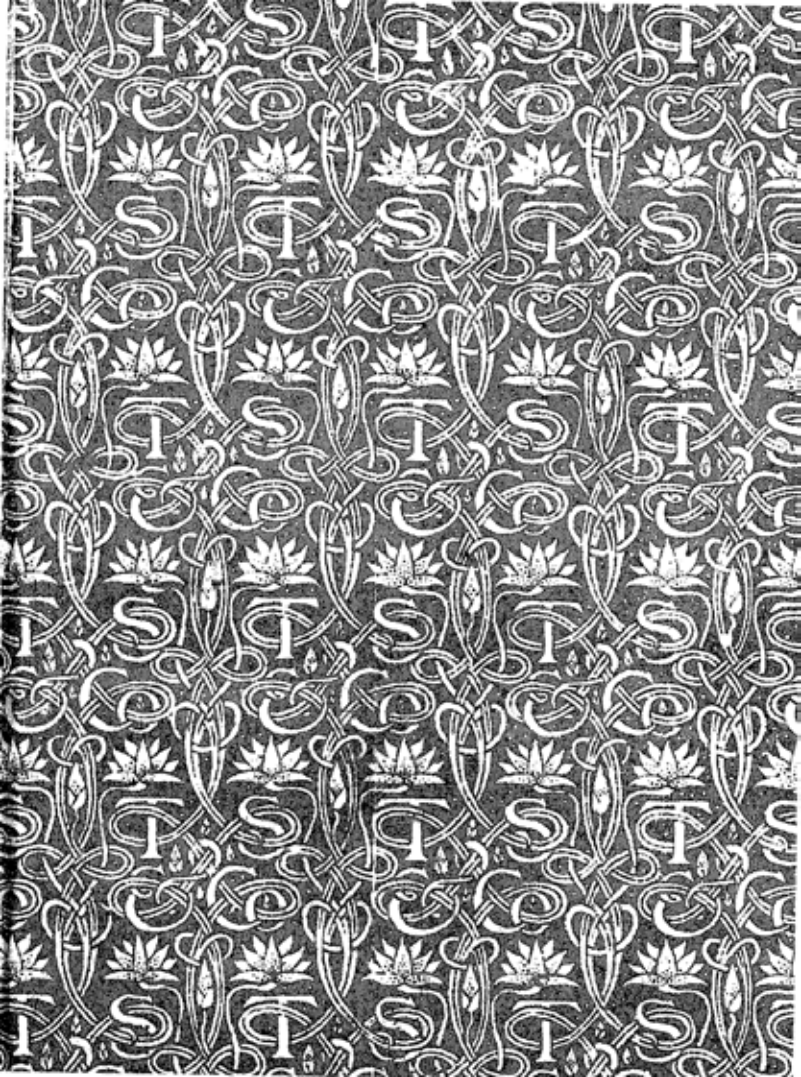
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A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
SĀNKHYA PHILOSOPHY
OF
KAPILA.

8809

By U. N. ROY,
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&c., &c.

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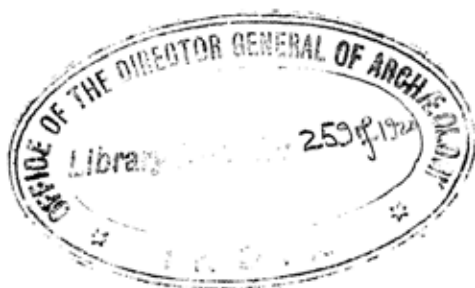
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PREFACE.

THIS Commentary does not require much introduction, I have only pointed out those parts which are not common with the Vedanta, most probably, I have committed many mistakes and shall be grateful to those who will kindly point them out to me.





A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY
OF
KAPILA.

Before I commence this essayette on the Sankhya system of philosophy, I presume it will not be out of place to describe, very concisely, a little about the state of India, during and before, the time of the Sankhya philosophy inaugurated by Kapila.

After the Aryans came and settled down in India, they were too busy during a certain era in conquering

and driving away the aborigines, at that period they did not bother themselves with higher thoughts, and were much engaged in cultivating their fields and worshipping the emblems of nature. Gradually they commenced to migrate from their original place of settlement, the Panjaub, into different parts of Northern India, where powerful kingdoms sprang up.

It is very difficult to ascertain the exact date when the Rig-Veda was compiled, but I guess that the Rig-Veda was originated during the reign of the great Emperor Sudas, which was about 1700 B.C.

The Rig-Veda deals on Dharma and Bramha, again many different ceremonies are advocated by the said Holy Scripture for the attainment of Dharma. People at that time were great believers in ceremonies. They thought that by the continual performance of ceremonies they would attain Dharma and go to heaven, where they would enjoy everlasting bliss.

As time passed on, people began to lose faith in the performance of ceremonies and atheism commenced slowly to steal into their minds, at this juncture the great thinker Kapila appeared, who was the founder

of the Sankhya philosophy. As I have already said that it is very difficult to ascertain any dates of that epoch, so I shall be obliged if any one of my readers will be kind enough to point out to me any mistake that I may commit regarding the dates.

As far as I can understand from different commentators on the Sankhya philosophy, I believe Kapila was born about 723 B.C. It is impossible to ascertain when he actually commenced the compilation of this system of philosophy.

I have already mentioned, that Kapila was the first thinker who

started the Sankhya philosophy, after his death many philosophers and commentators added to and commented a great deal upon the original. Among the different commentators and thinkers, the names of Ausuri, Panchashikhacharyya, and Iswar Krishna are most prominent.

Kapila was the first sage who described our soul as নিত্য—শুদ্ধ,—বুদ্ধ (i.e., True, Pure, and Free from everything). According to his opinion, when the soul attains its original condition বুদ্ধ, then only, it can be said to have attained salvation.



The Sankhya philosophy admits and divides the truth into three parts, *viz.* :—Seen, Imagined and Vedic Revelations, but some of its annotators and followers refused to admit the Vedic sayings as Truth, on the plea, that it is impossible to imagine and feel its teachings, therefore, they constantly dealt with subjects felt and seen by organs and imagined by our senses. In addition to the above facts they argued, that, as the Vedas advocate the attainment of Heaven by perpetual ceremonies where one enjoys, but it forgets to mention anything

about the freedom from incarnation, and as after enjoying in Heaven one is bound to incarnate, so they busied themselves in finding out a path which would save mankind from further incarnation.

The other different disciples of the then prevailing schools of philosophy upheld that this material bodies and world are unreal, only the Great Creator is the real object, but the Sankhyas dissented and argued that this is an impossibility, because, after death the elements of animal bodies convert themselves and are absorbed and transformed

into different elements and earth. They defined the destruction as a change of appearance and condition, when the original matter remains intact, it is only a question of changing the form and condition, and as nobody has ever seen the complete disappearance of a material object, then how can it be defined as unreal? When without seeing or being convinced of the existence of the Great Soul, He is defined by other schools of philosophy as the only real object, then the material world which is always present before us, is it not also a real object?

The Sankhyas were great believers in knowledge, they also said that without knowledge the conception of anything is an impossibility. According to their opinion, knowledge is derived from the following sources, *viz.* :—(1) from vision, (2) act of hearing, (3) smell, (4) touch, (5) taste, (6) mental thoughts, such as desires, &c., and (7) lastly, the moral senses. They also say that knowledge is not lasting, fresh knowledge is constantly coming and occupying our mind. Here I apprehend knowledge means thought, they have placed the sense of Aham or

self under the above-mentioned categories, the Buddhists also believe in this. They did not mention anything about the True knowledge or more minutely about the recurrence of this constant flow of knowledge or thought.

I have already said the Sankhyas believe in the reality of this material kingdom, they also described our soul as a real object, at the same time they have explained and upheld that each individual soul is different from the other, and thought to be the chief function of it, as the thoughts of one individual are apart from those

of another, hence they deduced that though the soul is real, yet one soul is different from another, so there are millions and millions of different souls, and because they believe in the existence of millions of different souls, therefore they are known as Sankhyas (derived from Sankhya or number). The followers of yoga are denominated as Sankhyas, they also believe in the reality of more than one object.

Though Kapila was a great thinker, yet it is most strange how he could believe and lay before the public the existence of millions of

different souls, without a creator, it is a most absurd theory and the worthlessness of its deduction is even comprehended by a child. The public can easily obviate whether my remarks are correct, and I cogitate that on account of its illogicalness and obscurity, it did not find such favour with great men as did the "Vedanta."

Anyhow, the explanation of the categories of thought by Kapila are far better and more instructive than the former ones, they placed earth, water, fire, air, space, time and soul, &c., under it.

They have divided the categories of thought or Padarthà under the following three headings :—

- (1) Baktya (Revealed),
- (2) Abaktya (Unrevealed),
- and (3) Jna (Soul).

To know the difference among them was one of their chief studies, this unrevealed object is described by them as Prakriti and Jna, as the millions of souls, and this revealed world is produced by the combination of millions of souls (Purush) and Prakriti, so they believe in one Prakriti and millions of

Purush. Here again the description and arguments put forth by Kapila become vague and obscure. He could not at all describe why Purush and Prakriti constantly combine and produce this world. In many different parts of his philosophy he has taken refuge in imagination, but unfortunately here his imaginative power even failed, he became dogmatic in his assertions and said that, what he believed, he advised others to follow, I think he completely forgot that ordinary men have their common senses also.

Kapila and his followers attributed desire, feelings, knowledge, &c., all to the soul, and explained that as after death desires, feelings, &c., can no longer remain in the gross body, so they must be a part and parcel of the soul. Another question then immediately arose whether the body is existing within the soul or the soul is existing within the body.

To that Kapila answered that as after death desires, &c., cannot remain in the gross body and as desires are a part and parcel of the soul, therefore, the soul must be existing within the body, but some of his

own followers could not put faith in it and described that our body is existing within the soul as like the great space which is surrounding us.

The Prakriti, according to them, is a combination of strand of activity, entity and ignorance, and they did not explain about Prakriti further than this.

They have divided our senses into two divisions: (1) senses derived from gross body; and (2) our internal senses. The sense of outward objects and external bodily senses are

known as the senses of the gross body and desires, &c., as our internal senses. By dividing our senses into two parts, Kapila has given a great deal of help to the logicians. In fact, by this division, commentation became facile and was a great help to the attainment of transcendental knowledge, in fact, by this division Kapila opened out a new era. Though there are many obscure and illogical portions in his compilation, and even if he did not write anything but the above-mentioned facts, in my humble opinion that alone has placed him as one of the foremost thinkers of his time.

Now we come to the important subject of creation. Creation, according to him, is that process which makes the individual soul conceive all revealed objects, also the different objects created by men, animals, and plants, are defined by him as secondary creation. It will be easier to understand if the secondary creation is explained by examples, as by Kapila.

Creation by Men.

With the help of our intelligence we create and manufacture pots from earth, guns, &c., from metal, ornaments, &c., from gold, gems, &c.

Creation by Animals.

Silk-thread created by the silk-worm, coral by coral insects, &c., &c.

Creation by Plants.

Cotton-wool produced from the cotton-plants, grains, &c., produced from various plants, &c., to the last example I take an exception, as both cotton and grains form parts of the plant.

The Sankhyas said that locomotion, action, &c., are produced by our soul and to uphold their opinion they explained in the following way, *viz.* :—

In a dead body one cannot perceive locomotion, action, intelligence, &c., and by death is meant the departure of the soul from this gross body, and if after the departure of the soul from this gross body, it be devoid of locomotion, &c., therefore, the soul must be the cause of everything.

They could not define, nor is it possible for human understanding to explain, why the soul is the source of locomotion, intelligence, &c. At the same time Kapila described that after the soul leaves this gross body, it may assume a

subtile form, but this a mere conjecture.

By the combination of the soul and Prakriti a great object known as Mahat is produced, and from this Mahat gradually Ahamkar, and from Ahamkar the Tanmatra, and the organs of senses are produced, and again by the combination of Mahat, Ahamkar, Tanmatra and the organs of senses, this revealed world comes into existence.

Explanation.

Mahat means the knowledge of revealment, and Ahamkar that of the

existence of self in connection with Mahat, again the complete knowledge of self is known as the Tanmatra. There is no necessity of my describing about the different organs of senses ; it is known to everyone.

Now I pass over to Maya or the Phenomenal emanation, other schools of Philosophy used and believed in Maya, but Kapila succinctly described and denied altogether about Maya, he used Baktya instead of Maya. The Vedantists believe that the great soul is behind Maya, whereas the Sankhyas ascertained and described that Prakriti is behind Baktya.

Of course, on this point I do not like to comment, it is very easy for everyone to perceive and conceive the absurdity of Kapila's assertion of the existence of Prakriti behind Baktya without a begetter of it. It seems to me that Kapila with a great edifying spirit went on describing about Baktya, Prakriti, &c., without mentioning a single word about their creator or describing at all in any way how and why they were created.

To uphold his own opinion Kapila delineated this Sansar imagined by us, as real and Kshanik, but the

Vedanta has all along said and proved the existence of every material object, thought, &c., as unreal, therefore it described this Sansar as Alik.

I leave my readers to judge whether this Sansar is Kshanik or Alik, and I am almost sanguine that if they exert themselves, it will be very easy to understand about their unreality.

Another question simultaneously arose whether Mahat, &c., are produced from Purush or from Prakriti. Iswar Krishna, the great commentator

and follower of Kapila, thought and described that Mahat is produced from Prakriti, but in my notion he was rather dogmatic in his deduction, and I cannot agree with him. Some of the Atheistic sages, such as Charvak, &c., went further than this, they neither believed in a Supreme Creator nor in Prakriti and Purush, they said that one piece of material object may not have any life and senses in it, yet when different material objects combine together they naturally produce life and senses, but, why and how, they did not or could not explain. Kapila himself

was an Atheist, and disbelieved in a Supreme Creator. He himself expressed in the following way :—

“প্রমাণভাবাৎ ন তৎসিদ্ধিঃ”

(As there is no proof, so there exists no God.) Though he asserted in the above way, yet he did not lose his senses to such an extent as to admit the opinions of Charvak, &c. My only object in quoting the views of Charvak is to show my readers about the then condition of India. Kapila tried to find out a way to prevent further incarnation of our soul, but unfortunately he could not

believe in God, without believing in God, trying to find out a way to prevent further incarnation, in my estimation, is an impossibility.

Now we pass over to knowledge, of course, everybody is bound to admit that knowledge is the source of all. I think it is better to term a man who denies above facts, as an imbecile. The Sankhyas have divided this knowledge into two parts :—

- (1) Kebala (knowledge which is not contaminated with the sense of self);

and (2) Bikriti (knowledge contaminated with the sense of self, *i.e.*, the worldly knowledge).

They also asserted that the more one thinks, the less one remains ignorant about soul, the less one cogitates the greater one stays in the dark. Everyone is guided in this life by Bikriti and Kebala knowledge.

The chief aim, Kapila described, in this life of everyone ought to be the attainment of satiety. He wrote in the following way :—

“অথত্রিবিধদুঃখাত্যন্তনিবৃত্তিরত্যন্তপুরুষার্থঃ”

(Trying to free oneself from all sorrow ought to be the object in

every life.) And to attain that object Kapila advised the practice of the Yoga, but how and why by the Yoga alone one frees oneself from sorrow is not at all explained.

Kapila attributed consciousness and knowledge to the soul, but he completely forgot to distinguish the difference between them. Some of his commentators tried, but their explanation and the distinction between the two is so vague that it is not worth mentioning.

Once for all, it is more edifying to perceive that Sankhyas have at last

elaborately chalked out the distinction between Sukh and Ananda. I shall concisely quote about them from the Sankhya philosophy. By Ananda they mean the continual uninterrupted enjoyment of pleasure, this can only be derived after freeing oneself from all the different three kinds of sorrow and troubles. Its attainment is most difficult. I have already mentioned that Sankhyas described that there is no other known way for reaching the above state except by the practice of Yoga.

It is also said by them that the commencement of the enjoyment of

Sukh is produced from the satisfaction one derives from the enjoyment of all objects and thoughts, this Sukh or pleasure is not everlasting like Ananda.

Some of the commentators of Kapila upheld that there is no difference between Ananda and Sukh, and Ananda cannot be a part of the soul, as admitted by Kapila, because one does not feel its existence constantly, as of the soul.

This is blowing hot and cold from the same mouth. The very commentators have described in different places that desires are a part of the

soul, it can just as well be brought forward that one does not feel always the existence of desires as of the soul, therefore it can be easily deduced that desires are not also part and parcel of our soul. They have also described Desh and Kaal as the originators of our sorrow. I am sorry I cannot agree with them. Kaal may be described as one of the causes, but what has Desh to do with sorrow ?

Now we come to the absurdest doctrine of Kapila, he described that our soul of awakened state is not the same as that of the sleeping state, he did not mention at all what happens

to the soul of the awakened state during sleep, the sense of self always remains the same either in sleeping or in the awakened states, here Kapila described that the sense of self during sleep is a bodily sense and during the awakened state it is a part of the soul. I need not describe and comment more on it, because the readers can easily conceive the complete fallacy of this proposition.

Before bringing this ideologic essay-kin to an end, I will only add a few more commentations. Some of my readers may ask why I have made this Commentary so very concise, to

that my answer is, that I have only pointed out those facts in which Kapila has diverged from other schools of philosophy, this essayette is not meant for a beginner, it is only for those who have read both the Sankhya and the Vedanta, there are many passages of Kapila's philosophy which bear resemblance to the Vedanta. I myself am a follower of the Vedanta, so I have only pointed out those propositions which are contrary to the Vedanta. I think, had Kapila been born a little earlier and commenced his philosophical compilations during the Rig-Vedic time,

it would have been far better and logical than what it turned out to be. He was influenced to a great extent by the opinions of the materialists that were predominant at the time, even Yoga, which Kapila advocated as the only means of saving oneself from miseries, upholds the thoughts and the material world, &c., as real. Patanjali wrote :—

“অতীতানাগতং সরূপভৌতস্যদ্ধভেদাকর্ষণাণাম্ ॥১২॥ ”

From which no doubt Kapila borrowed his ideal about the reality of everything. Though he was influenced by the materialistic views, yet he strove hard not to be guided by them,

to a certain extent he was successful. I deduce in the above way because of his determining about the difference of the soul from the gross body and its reality. Had Kapila admitted about the existence of a Supreme Creator, then the little absurdities of his thoughts would not have affected his system of philosophy much and Kapila's philosophy would have been as famous as its rival the Vedanta.

The aim of Kapila was indeed noble, he tried to find out a way which would have saved mankind from all the miseries and their souls from fur-

ther incarnation. I presume Kapila himself did not reach that state when he compiled his system of philosophy, because in that case he would have admitted certainly about the existence of a Supreme Creator. He might have attained that state after finishing his works on philosophy, perhaps then he did not bother himself or did not think it worth his while to add a little more to his works about the existence of God, of course this is a mere guess on my part, the strangest thing I perceive is that, while trying to elucidate Kapila's works, some of his disciples became so very over-zealous

to shine over their contemporaries, that instead of glorifying their leader, they made a muddle of everything, in fact, they have in many places disfigured the sayings of the great man to such an extent that Kapila himself, in his own sayings, became like the millionth dilution of a homœopathic medicine.

I tried my best to find out the real truth from Kapila's writings, but I am sure that I have not succeeded much and must have committed many blunders. I only request those great men who are versed in the Sankhya

philosophy to point out those mistakes which I have committed.

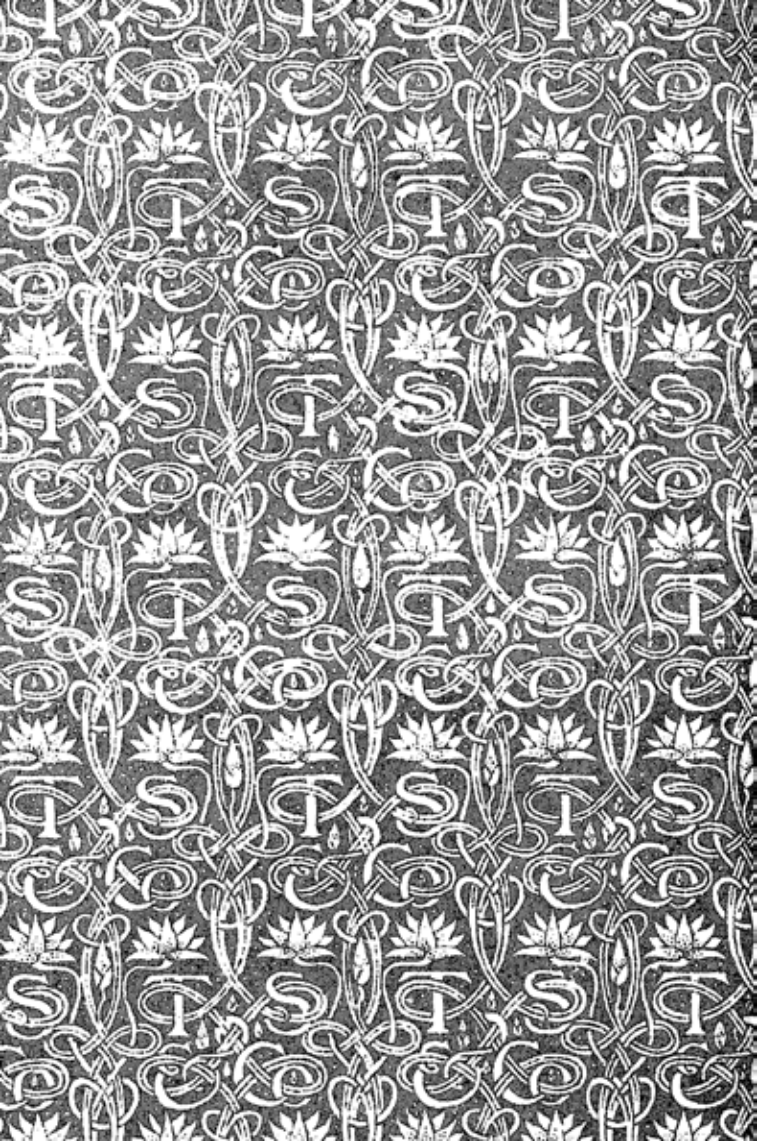
In conclusion, I request everyone to follow Kapila's great saying, *viz.* :—

“বহুশাস্ত্র গুরুপাসনেহপি সারাদানং ষট্‌পদবৎ॥”



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