

# Modern Evolutionist Naturalism And Śāṅkara's Arguments

## Contra Sāṅkhya

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### **Abstract**

*This comparative study aims at juxtaposition of modern Western naturalistic evolutionism and the mostly similar attitude in the classic Indian philosophy in the shape of Sāṅkhya's cosmology in the context of their corresponding critiques by contemporary creationists and Advaita-Vedānta. The long and pointed polemics with Sāṅkhya in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya by Śāṅkarācharya (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.) is in the focus of this investigation along with numerous references to the Sāṅkhya-kārikā by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) as the basic text of the philosophical school criticized by its most powerful opponent. Comparing Western and Indian evolutionism reveals some very important differences to such a degree that the Indian species of the genus would be, in the author's opinion, better identified as not evolutionism in the strict sense but as a "développisme" combining features of evolutionism with those of emanationism. As to Sāṅkhya's naturalism, it turns to be much more "sophisticated" than that, e.g., of Thomas Huxley or the so-called New Atheists because its "stuff" is more psychological than material. Nevertheless, crucial logical gaps remain the same in both cases (along with an antitheistic "faith" instead of rationalism), while their taking into account by opponents of naturalism offers a challenge for comparative philosophical theology.*

### **Keywords**

*naturalism, evolutionism, emanationism, atheism, theism, philosophical theology, Indian philosophy, Sāṅkhya, Advaita-Vedānta*

### **1. Naturalistic Evolutionism: Combining of Incompatibilities**

It is a well known fact that according to some statistics many more academic scientists today (especially those of higher positions) prefer to be regarded atheists rather than as theists or even as agnostics (Note 2), that some books of the so-called New Atheists are regularly enlisted among bestsellers and that evolutionists have greatly succeeded in supplanting creationists in almost all fields of education. It is also true that some notorious judgements about the relation between science and religion are being readily cited among scientists and still more among popular scientific thinkers with

the result that the latter is today accorded no right to exist (for enlightened minds at least) since the former has taken the upper hand. See, e.g., Peter Atkins's statement that "Science and religion cannot be reconciled, and humanity should begin to appreciate the power of its child, and to beat off all attempts at compromise. Religion has failed, and its failures should stand exposed. Science with its currently successful pursuit of universal competence through the identification of the minimal, the supreme delight of the intellect, should be acknowledged king" (Note 3). And according to Richard Dawkins, whereas 'scientific belief is based upon publicly checkable evidence, religious faith not only lacks evidence; its independence from evidence is its joy, shouted from the rooftops' (Note 4).

Nevertheless, some salient gaps in the reasonings of influential thinkers who speak on behalf of science are being detected by their opponents. To begin with, while insisting on their scientism and the purely scientific foundations of their theorizing, they cannot but acknowledge that the main mark of science which they emphasize, i.e., the experiential basis, is completely incapable of explaining of the origins of life, and, therefore, the most they can attain is to be regarded from the outside only as a world outlook and not of a world theory. Now, although declaring themselves outspoken adversaries of faith and partisans of knowledge, some of those partisans they in reality profess a quasi-religious attitude inasmuch as the most important links in their chainlet (that between inorganic matter and a living cell being the first one) are lacking, some those partisans frankly acknowledge that faith should provide those links (Note 5). To conclude, the core contradiction is built in their world outlook, which is not a scientific theory (see above) because on the one hand they insist that Contingency alone governs in the universe but, on the other hand, ascribe to Evolution, however blind it is, the divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and in some sense goodness together with a consistent agency in the setting of goals (Note 6). This blind goal-setting (what Dawkins himself entitled *The Blind Watchmaker*, 1986) is just what early medieval Indian idealism jostled with, and it seems provocative to compare today's arguments against it with ones developed thirteen centuries before in quite a different milieu. It seems that the project of comparative philosophical theology (which seems valuable) should be realized much more in concrete contexts than in those of "multiculturalist rhetoric".

## **2. Indian Naturalisms: The Widest Multiformity**

India has witnessed not one naturalistic trend of thought from the very beginning of the competition of philosophical sects and lines of traditions at the middle of the first millennium BCE which is designated sometimes as the Śramaṇic epoch (from the word *śramaṇa*, i.e., "an ascetic, hermit") of South-Asian civilization. It was then when numerous opponents of the sacred Vedic tradition offered their models of understanding the origins and development of the world as independent of the activity of any divine and, wider, immaterial agency. One of them was the teacher Ajita Kesakambala, popular in the milieu of aristocracy, who insisted that both the world and every being in it had proceeded from only four material elements (the earth, water, fire, wind) in their different combinations and what is called a human being is by no means an exception, and that is why there is no afterlife besides merging

of its temporarily combined elements into their “bodies” (Note 7). Some other thinkers did not profess such overt materialism but in truth were very close to it in insisting that all the world had developed according to the mere contingency, and such a view was similar to another one, viz. that all beings exist and live in accordance with their own nature alone (*svabhāva*), the sense being that to ask about the further agency behind their existence and ways of life would be irrelevant. Of much influence were views of the founder of the large ascetic group of the Ājīvikas, Makkhali Gosāla, who acknowledged not only the soul besides body and, therefore, its afterlife, but also a somewhat mechanic salvation of all living beings, but avowed that the universe develops in accordance with a beginningless necessity quite immanent to it (*niyatīvāda*) (Note 8). But none of these Śramaṇic naturalists has offered a view similar to something like any evolutionist gradualism in the description of the history of the world.

Only one philosophical tradition that had the Śramaṇic roots has done it, and, I believe, about a half of millennium later. It was proto-Sāṅkhya whose teacher Ārāḍa Kālāma, also the first teacher of the Buddha himself (judging by ascribing him both instruction in philosophy and meditation of the śramaṇa Gotama), lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE as other Śramaṇic teachers but was more tolerant to the Brāhmanic views and lore though sceptical concerning the truth and efficacy of Vedic ritualism. The teaching of the structure and existence of an individual in the specific terms of the early Sāṅkhya tradition is clearly ascribed to him (Note 9), but his calculations of the elements (and this is the foremost meaning of the very word *sāṅkhya*, i.e., “what is based on numbering”) were still “psychological” and not “cosmological”. Nevertheless, two main groupings of the principles ascribed to Ārāḍa are very telling, i.e., eight productive ones (*prakṛti*, plural) and sixteen modifications (*vikāra*) which, along with some archaic principles and the spirit, entitled as “the field-knower” (*kṣetrajña*), ontologically foreign to all of them, provide the whole being and existence of an individual.

Later, in the philosophical portions of the great epic *Mahābhārata* (book XII the *Śāntiparvan*) these calculations will provide the space for a very specific scheme of the evolution of the world-elements (*tattva*) including everything with the exception of the spiritual principle. There were different calculations of them but the future classical pattern could be described in the following way. We find here eight productive principles, of which seven are “manifest”. They are the “unmanifest one” (*avyakta*), “the great one” I (*mahat*, which is same as *buddhi*, “intelligence”, “intellect”), the “ego-principle” (*ahaṅkāra*) and the five gross elements (*bhūta*), i.e., the earth, water, fire, wind and air. And also sixteen “modifications” which include our five senses, their five objects (things heard, felt, seen, tasted, smelled), five organs of action (of grasping, locomotion, speaking, exertion and reproduction) and the thought organ, mind (*manas*). Together with the spiritual principle they make the classical scheme of twenty-five principles, mentioned in different contexts throughout the whole epic Sāṅkhya (Note 10). But it does not mean that the early Sāṅkhya was the same as classical Sāṅkhya, inasmuch as it left untouched numerous divergences between numerous Sāṅkhya schools of the first half of the first millennium of Common Era and could not as yet provide some important clamps to

attach some of the crucial components of the doctrine which, I believe, had been developed by these schools in parallel (Note 11).

It was Īśvarakṛṣṇa, “a brāhmaṇa from Kośala” (5<sup>th</sup> century AD), who has managed in a short treatise in verse entitled *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* to get both these things done. And it was he who has built a gradual evolutionary cosmology on the basis of a very specific dualistic ontology. All calculations of the principles were founded on the ultimate ontological gap between the spiritual principle (now called by the ancient name of *puruṣa*) and the three dynamic-cum-deepest constituents of all the other world called the *guṇa* (plural). Both *puruṣas* and *guṇas* are somewhat mysterious principles. The first ones because they are selves which perform no act, nor do they experience the consequences of any acts, pleasure, pain or even indifference. To say more, their mostly suitable identification as knowers (let’s remember “the knower of the field”) is a result of their contamination with the organs of intellect and thought which are of quite another “stuff”. So Sāṅkhya’s spiritual principle is something like a light and stranger in the universe, which only illumines all processes and events taking place in it and is somehow necessary for them to occur. As to the *guṇas*, this term is really untranslatable because the very notion is the same. Literally it means “attributes, qualities”, but in the world of Sāṅkhya they are just substrates and substances whose attributes and qualities are all things and events in the final analysis. The *guṇa sattva* provides all light-weight and illumination including intellectual clarity and creativeness; *rajas* yields all activity, moving, processes of changing and suffering; *tamas* has in keeping all inertia, heaviness, apathy and delusion. They are mutually antagonistic by their natures and oppress each other as well, but Īśvarakṛṣṇa compares them with the wick, oil and flame of a lamp which cooperate together for the purpose of illumination (verse 13), though he could not say who could lay down any goal to them inasmuch as they are unconscious by their very nature and the spiritual principle is absolutely “cut off” from everything.

But how can cosmic processes built on such grounds develop? In accordance with dynamic interrelations of the three *guṇas*. While being in mutually successive domination, support and activation they make the universe spread out, and that corresponds to the cosmic day, and while being tired they make it fold up, and it is the cosmic night. The latter regime of their interrelation is called their equilibrium, equated to the first productive principle (*prakṛti*) and “the unmanifest” (*avyakta*) of the ancient tradition (see above) to which Īśvarakṛṣṇa adds his own designation of “what is most important/essential part of anything” (*pradhāna*). All the three names of the same principle are of significance, the second designates its capacity to contain the whole world in itself (during the cosmic night) in the enfolded mode, just in accordance with the Sāṅkhya’s doctrine of causality which means preexistence of the effect in the cause in unmanifest state (verse 9). Now, the whole picture of the world’s development runs like this. From *prakṛti = avyakta = pradhāna* the intellect (“the great one”) arises, therefrom the ego-principle, therefrom, while it is predominated by *sattva*, the sense capacities and action capacities along with the mind, and from the same principle, dominated by *tamas*, the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*) (Note 12) and from the latter the five gross elements (verses 22-27, 38), and

it is emphasized that both capacities and their objects arise because of the particular manifestation of the same three guṇas (verse 27).

### 3. Advaita and Sāṅkhya: A Great Battle

Īśvarakṛṣṇa's exposition of the Sāṅkhya's doctrines proved so successful that we have got at least ten commentaries on it, and Indology continues to detect new ones. But it aroused very strong polemics of numerous opponents as well. It is true that every philosophical undertaking of any significance includes controversy with opponents, both real and imaginary; such has been the nature of that kind of theorizing which is called philosophy from its very origins in Greece, India and China (Note 13). But Indian philosophy was controversial par excellence. This is true to such a degree that not only the main genre of the philosophical (as of any theoretical) literature in this culture, i.e., commentaries to the basic texts, was built on polemics (the same was true also for the Western scholasticism), but even the Indian syllogism differs from the Aristotelean one in such "superfluous members" which express polemical intention (Note 14) and one of three definitions of what corresponds to "philosophy" (i.e., *ānvīkṣikī*) in Indian culture presents it as a dialogue between a proponent and opponent (Note 15). This makes it understandable why almost every doctrine of every Indian philosophical school contained implicitly and very often explicitly arguments against those of the others and the whole milieu was something like a common debating society. But controversy between Sāṅkhya and Vedānta had also some additional reasons behind it.

We have here two most influential Brāhmaṇic systems of the early medieval period from which the second with Śaṅkarācārya (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.), the founder of Advaita-Vedānta ("the Vedānta of non-duality", that is the absolutely monistic idealism) at its head embarked on the successful conquest of the Indian philosophical space while the first one began to surrender. While scrutinizing the controversial sections of Śaṅkara's magnum opus, the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (the oldest commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, dating from 3<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.), one can discern two theatres in this war, i.e., his attempts to disavow the Sāṅkhyas' (Note 16) demand both for some conceptual spaces of the Upaniṣads and for the logical coherency of their system. And this war had no scent of controversial game as many others in Indian philosophy did have (Note 17). The first theatre is not of great interest for us now (Note 18). But the second one is just what we need. Here we'll select polemics around specifically Sāṅkhya's evolutionism, and follow the controversial format of Indian philosophical commentary (see above) in the manner of a dialogue.

Brahmasūtrabhāṣya II.2.1. *Sāṅkhya*. As it is seen in the world that pots, plates, etc., which are transfused with clay, have clay as their common cause, so all these different things, both external or internal, which are transfused with the natures of delight, suffering and delusion, must have also the common causal origin constituted by delight, suffering and delusion. And it is Pradhāna, common for all and constituted by delight, suffering and delusion, i.e. by the three guṇas, and being insentient like

clay undergoes diverse transformations in accordance with its nature for serving goals of the consciousness, i.e., puruṣa (Note 19).

*Vedāntin.* If this is to be decided on the strength of analogies (just as you do), it is not seen in the world that something insentient and not governed by some sentient being could produce anything capable of serving any human purpose. For houses, palaces, beds, seats, recreation gardens, etc., are produced by intelligent craftsmen at the proper times for ensuring delight and avoiding human suffering. So how can all this universe -- seen from the outside—as constituted by the earth and other elements, be fitted for experiencing fruits of manifold actions and—from the inside—consisting of manifold bodies, broods etc. suitable for variegated experiences, skillfully selected for it and in many regards unattainable even for the most sophisticated minds be created by the insentient Pradhāna?! For nothing of the kind can be noticed in the case of other insentient things, like a lump of earth or stones, but what is noticed are utensils from clay etc. produced by potters and other craftsmen. Therefore Pradhāna needs the government of some consciousness (but your system does not reserve place for that) as well. It is not also the case that both inner and outward things are infused by delight, suffering and delusion inasmuch as delight etc. are perceived by inner feelings while sounds etc. as something of different nature.

II.2.2. But let leave design alone. The very activity necessary for the development of the universe and, therefore, for departure of sattva, rajas and tamas from their equilibrium and, correspondingly, for the attainment of the condition of their mutual superiority and inferiority is also unattainable for Pradhāna as a self-governed entity. Just as clays, chariots etc. which are themselves insentient cannot be led to any special activity by themselves without the guidance of potters, horses etc. But what is unseen has to be inferred from what is seen. Therefore the insentient principle (as an independent one) cannot to be inferred as the causal origin of the universe.

*Sāṅkhya.* But a mere sentient entity (in isolation) capable of action is not seen as well.

*Vedāntin.* That is true. But insentient chariots, etc., are seen to act when in association with a sentient being. To say the same more exactly, we don't say that activity cannot belong to an insentient being. Let it belong to it, but it is everywhere derived from the sentient one. Or, to give you another example, even though burning and emitting light are really present in the fuel, still they originate not from it but from fire itself inasmuch as they can be noticed only as a result of fuel's contact with it and are lacking when such a contact is lacking.

II.2.3. *Sāṅkhya.* Let it be. But given that insentient milk has a natural capability to serve for the nourishment of calves and insentient water to flow spontaneously for the benefit of people, what is in the way of the insentient Pradhāna to act by its own nature for fulfilling puruṣas' goals?

*Vedāntin.* Nevertheless, also in these cases these processes run also by intermediate guidance of sentient beings. The same says also the sacred lore, e.g., “Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, some rivers, o Gārgī, flow eastward” (Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad III.8.9).

II.2.6. So it is established that spontaneous activity of Pradhāna is impossible. But even if we concede to your faith (Note 20) and admit that it is possible, defects of your position will still persist. Why?

Because of the absence of a purpose. If you say that Pradhāna has a spontaneous activity which does not depend on anything, then, being quite independent of any support from the outside and any purpose, it sets to naught also the proposition that it acts to accomplish the purposes of puruṣas.

*Sāṅkhya*. But why may not one say that, even being independent of a support, it can realize a purpose?

*Vedāntin*. Then the very purpose of Pradhāna's activity should be scrutinized, whether it will be puruṣas' experience of delight and suffering, of liberation, or of both. If their experience be Pradhāna's motive, then what kind of experience can be provided for puruṣas, lacking any scope for increment of both delight and suffering? Besides, their liberation then would also be impossible. If their liberation be Pradhāna's purpose, then this liberation being already acquired before this activity (Note 21), the latter will be quite superfluous. And if both these purposes be admitted, then bearing in mind that Pradhāna's production of objects of experience is infinite, there will be no room for liberation. In addition this activity cannot be motivated by the satisfaction of any desire. For neither insentient Pradhāna nor pure and partless puruṣas can have any desire.

II.2.7. *Sāṅkhya*. But let it be that a man having the power of sight but, being lame, lacking that of movement, makes move another man who is bereft of the power of seeing and endowed by that of movement by riding on his shoulder (Note 22). Or, to give another example, a loadstone being immovable itself, makes a piece of iron move (Note 23). In the same way puruṣa can impel Pradhāna. Such is our objection relying on analogy (Note 24).

*Vedāntin*. But how can passive puruṣas impel Pradhāna? A lame man can guide a blind man by speech and other means, while puruṣas being actionless and attributeless have no means to induce action in anything. Nor would it be profitable for you to admit that they can stimulate Pradhāna by mere proximity to it inasmuch as their proximity being eternal, such movement on Pradhāna's part should also be endless (Note 25).

II.2.8. There is also an additional reason why no activity for Pradhāna is possible. When the mutual relation of predominance and, correspondingly, subordination of the three guṇas comes to the end, then the state of Pradhāna as a condition of their balance takes place. But since no external agent which could excite these three guṇas in this state is acknowledged in the Sāṅkhya system, there can be no emergence of Mahat (= *buddhi*) and other elements (wherfrom the world is made) (Note 26).

II.2.9. *Sāṅkhya*. But we don't admit that the guṇas are mutually independent and changeless. Their nature is postulated in accordance with their products. And it can be accepted that they are naturally unsteady. Therefore even during their equilibrium they can exist in some unsteadiness as well (that is why the emergence of the elements beginning with Mahat can take place).

*Vedāntin*. Even so, the faults mentioned above (impossibility to provide design etc.) persist as before inasmuch as Pradhāna is bereft of the power of intelligence. If you infer this causal power as well, you'll cease to be our opponents, for you should admit in such a case that Brahman, the single consciousness, is the material cause of the whole universe in all its diversity.

#### 4. Sāṅkhya's Sophisticated Dualistic Emanationism

This abstract of a long controversial dialogue in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* II.2.1-10 (Note 27), being a typical specimen of the debate of a living proponent (here Śāṅkara himself) with a generalized opponent in Indian commentaries to the basic texts of the relevant schools, reflects also features of real philosophical controversy. It is evidenced just by the last conversation piece where the head of Advaita-Vedānta had to acknowledge that Sāṅkhya could offer some reasonable partial defences of its doctrine in spite of its systematic flaws. In another conversation piece he himself managed to execute a good counterattack from the part of the opponent forcing Śāṅkara to have a swot at an answer (Note 28). I don't think that Śāṅkara's scrupulousness in presenting theoretically possible arguments on both sides (however important this motive also could have been) was the only reason for the unveiling of such turns of the debate. To be sure some real encounters could also have taken place. Still more valuable is the presented dialogue.

Let's return to the start of our reflections, that's the most persuasive creationist arguments against the "axioms" of naturalistic evolutionism. Before inserting Śāṅkara's argument against the Indian version of evolutionistic naturalism into a comparative context it would be reasonable to weigh out differences between Western and Eastern champions of two philosophical camps.

It is possible to identify Sāṅkhya's cosmological doctrine as naturalistic transformism, but with three important specifications. The first, the very origin of the world, Pradhāna or Prakṛti is not matter in our common understanding, as in Western naturalism, and even its usual designation in translations of Sanskrit literature as Primordial Matter needs comments. Its being the equilibrium of the three guṇas which are mostly the primordial psychological states and vectors of energies (Note 29) excludes understanding it as the material stuff wherefrom most subtle varieties of being could somehow be gradually derived. The second, this very Indian gradualism is precisely the opposite of the order of evolution promulgated by all Neo-Darwinists who as consistent naturalists are reductionists and think over the development of the universe only from beneath to above, in contradiction to such a basic law of rationality as the law of sufficient reason. Much more exactly one would call it emanationism, an account of cosmic development just in the opposite order, i.e. from above to beneath, similar to the Neoplatonic order of emanations from the One (Nous, the world-soul and the material world) in spite of such an essential difference as that the One was regarded as the Absolute and divinity. The third, Sāṅkhya's naturalism is rather exotic inasmuch as it is combined with not a less "excentric" dualism with such a spiritual principle which is very unlike the soul or even spirit as understood in the West (see above). However weird this naturalism-cum-dualism reserves room for soteriological aspirations, in the shape of Prakṛti providing liberation for puruṣas enfeathered by her, while any soteriology is nonsense for Western naturalistic evolutionism.

But why, in spite of all these reservations, could one call nevertheless call the doctrine of Sāṅkhya naturalism and in which sense? I believe because it makes the insentient entity constituted by the three insentient pre-entities not only the material but also the efficient cause of the universe ascribing to it



reasonable design and ruling out intelligent supernatural agents. All commentators on the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* emphasized that the doctrine of spontaneous purposeful activity of Prakṛti made belief in God or consciousness as causes of the world quite redundant because they are not of such a nature as it inasmuch as they are devoid of the three guṇas while the world and its cause should be of the same nature (Note 30). The three guṇas being of much more sophisticated nature than matter, still reductionism as a distinctive feature of naturalism takes place here as well. The whole mechanism of the world-process is thought of as the “inner matter” of the three guṇas and their transformations without permission for spiritual essences as passive ones to interfere into it. Therefore their existence cannot by definition influence this mechanics, and they are like children for whom their loving mother devotedly works hard but whom she doesn’t allow to help her.

### 5. Advaita’s Merits For Philosophical Theology

And Śaṅkara’s shots hit the center of the target. He was right that to ascribe to the same ontological principle both teleological activity and absolute unconsciousness (the same as belongs to clay) at the same time is a sheer contradiction. He was also right that to adduce examples with insentient milk and water fulfilling some purposeful function without going a step further and thinking about conditions of it is the same as to mix the material for design and design itself. More persuasive looks Sāṅkhya’s counterargument that the three constituents of Prakṛti as dynamic and mutually balancing “substances” are capable of coming to equilibrium somehow, but this “somehow” of insentient essences is quite insufficient for giving an account of a very skillfully pictured hierarchy of the emanations from Cosmic Intellect to the material elements (Note 31). This makes clear why engineering activity inside Prakṛti is from every side impossible, but Śaṅkara was also absolutely persuasive that it cannot be explained also from the outside inasmuch as spiritual essences accepted by the Sāṅkhyas are of little help for them in explaining this engineering. He showed conclusively that these essences cannot be either efficient causes of Prakṛti’s activity because of the lack of any activity from their side, or final causes inasmuch as they lack also any needs which could be satisfied by her activity (and, therefore, warrant this activity from Sāṅkhya’s point of view). He showed very persuasively that the parable of lame and blind men illustrates just the opposite of what it was invented for, inasmuch as “the lame one” in Sāṅkhya’s dualism has neither capacity of seeing without “the blind one” nor the very need to be carried on the latter’s shoulder. However keen in his criticisms, Śaṅkara did not offer a diagnosis of this “philosophical decease” of his opponents. To be sure their conflicts with rationality were not conditioned by their lack of logical reason or creativity. On the contrary, the Sāṅkhyas have made a good contribution to the development of Indian logic (Note 32) and their whole model of dualism has been one of the most uncommon investigations of the nature of the spiritual essence in the general history of philosophy. The main reason behind advancing a model of cosmology vulnerable for criticism was, undoubtably, their anti-theistic tune, at any rate a desire to exclude God from the sources of the universe (see above).

The last issue is: why Śaṅkara's dialogue with Sāṅkhya can be significant for comparative philosophical theology even today? I believe that there are several reasons. First off it substantiates the view that the most persuasive argument for the existence of God is from scents of Intelligent Design in the world (without paying special attention to how God as the spiritual Absolute is understood in different religious philosophies (Note 33)) with the method of *reductio ad absurdum* as applied to naturalistic world views. We see further that not only in a crude model of Neo-Darwinistic reductionist evolutionism (Note 34) but also in much more sophisticated versions of "développisme" (Note 35) theological criticism can disclose two scenarios, that is the scenario of the full development of the universe because of the mechanism of accidents (in contradiction to the laws of probability) and that of quite teleological activity on the part of absolutely insentient world-stuffs (in contradiction to the law of sufficient reason) which are both inseparable and mutually exclusive. At last we see that both types of naturalistic reductionism, crude and subtle ones, are motivated not so much by investigation of the nature and purely philosophical needs as by anti-theistic (be it *atheistic* or *a-theistic*) mood having as it is also quasi-religious "humors" (Note 36).

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## Notes

Note 1. This article was prepared in the frame of agreement № 075-15-2021-603 between Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Russia) and People's Friendship University of Russia, the project «Development of the New Methodology and Intellectual Base for the New-generation Research of Indian Philosophy in Correlation with the Main World Philosophical Traditions».

Note 2. In 1998 Edward Larsen and Larry Witham showed that, among top scientists in the National Academy of Sciences in the USA who responded to an inquiry 72.2 per cent identified themselves as atheists, 7 as believers in God and 20,8 as agnostics (Lennox 2007: 17).

Note 3. Atkins P. W. *The Limitless Power of Science // Nature's Imagination—the Frontiers of Scientific Vision*. Ed. by J. Cornwell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. P. 132.

Note 4. See: (Lennox 2007: 15).

Note 5. John Lennox very suitably refers to George Klein in this regard (Lennox 2007: 34), a well-known immunologist, who stated resolutely that his world outlook was not based on science. He said “I'm not an agnostic. I am an atheist. My attitude is not based on science, rather on faith... The absence of a Creator, the non-existence of God is my childhood faith, my adult belief, unshakable and holy” (Klein 1990: 203). Many could affix their signatures to these words today.

Note 6. As Michael Poole put it with regard to Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), one of the main champion of Darwinism (and more a Darwinist than Darwin himself) and predecessor of the “New Atheism, “in

this struggle, the concept of ‘Nature’ was spelt with a capital N and reified. Huxley, less scrupulous than Darwin in using the word, vested ‘Dame Nature’, as he called ‘her’, with attributes hitherto ascribed to God, a tactic eagerly copied by others since. The oddity of crediting nature (every physical thing there is) with planning and creating every physical thing there is, passed unnoticed. ‘Dame Nature’, like some ancient fertility goddess, had taken up residence, her maternal arms encompassing *Victorian scientific naturalism*” (Poole 1995: 125).

Note 7. See the description of his teaching in a good English translation in (Dīgha-Nikāya 1995: 95-96).

Note 8. See the description of his teaching in in a good English translation in (Dīgha-Nikāya 1995: 94-95).

Note 9. See: Aśvaghoṣa’s description of his theoretical teaching in Buddhacarita XII. 15-42. The best English translation is that of E. Johnston (Aśvaghoṣa 1936: 167-174).

Note 10. Mahābhārata XII.228, 291, 293, 294, 295, 296, 306. Good translations from these chapters of the *Śāntiparvan* are available from (Edgerton 1965).

Note 11. This whole period of almost unlimited pluralism in the history of Sāṅkhya was surveyed in (Shokhin 2004: 188-196).

Note 12. These principles were regarded as pure and “primordial” essences of the five kinds of what can be perceived, i.e. the pure forms of sounds, sights etc. The five elements could be regarded as their derivations because they also were considered by the Sāṅkhyas as combinations of what can be perceived and not as stuffs. Tanmātras were introduced still before Īśvarakṛṣṇa who only affirmed their status in the system.

Note 13. In all these homelands of philosophy as theorizing, an impetus for the critique of judgements and regimentation of concepts had come from experts in polemical dialectics and their pupils who studied the art of winning debates, be it the Sophists in Greece, Parivrajakas in India or the followers of the school of names in China. The main difference lies in the fact that in China the tradition of debates was put to end by the rulers early, while in India it was always held in the highest esteem, even with the rulers and the best “certificate” for a philosopher was the acknowledgement of his winnings in polemical encounters.

Note 14. This refers to examples used in the classical five-membered syllogism of the Nyāya school which contains implicitly elements of a dialogue in the presence of the audience. Ancient Indian syllogisms had sometimes even ten members, where arguments with examples (for persuasion of both an opponent and audience) were expressed explicitly.

Note 15. In Rājaśekhara’s *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* the discipline of *ānvīkṣikī* was identified as the opposition of those schools that deny the authority of the sacred Vedic tradition (i.e. nāstikas), viz., the Buddhists, Jains and Cārvākas, and those that defend it (i.e. āstikas), viz., the Sāṅkhyas, Nāyayikas and Vaiśeṣikas (I.2).

Note 16. The word *Sāṅkhyas* (in plural) means the followers of the *Sāṅkhya* system (see above).

Note 17. As Gerald Larson, one of the leading experts in the the Sāṅkhya philosophy, put it, “one has the impression in reading Śāṅkara’s *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* that the author is not specially vexed by the naïve realism and the neat, logical distinctions of Nyāya, or by the quaint atomism of Vaiśeṣika, or by the action-orientation of Mīmāṃsā, or by the harmless devotion of the theological *bhakti* enthusiasts. The genuine enemy is the pradhāna-kāraṇa-vāda (namely, the Sāṅkhya), because Sāṅkhya offers the alternative account of the role and function of philosophy on precisely the same ground and for precisely the same purpose (liberation) as does Vedānta. To allow Sāṅkhya to stand is to threaten the entire edifice of the received tradition” (Larson, Bhattacharya 1987: 30).

Note 18. One can state safely that the presence of the genuine Sāṅkhya’s concept (such as avyakta, pradhāna, the three guṇas, mahat etc.) is evidenced in the texts of the so-called middle (from the chronological point of view) and very authoritative for all schools of Vedānta Upaniṣads, such as the *Kaṭha-* and *Śvetāśvatāra-* saying nothing of the *Maitrī-upaniṣad.* of later origin.

Note 19. See: Sāṅkhya-kārikā 11, 56, 58, 60. Īśvarakṛṣṇa prefers the term Prakṛti (f.) meaning “She-Nature” and uses its “feminism” to emphasize that the feminine servitude to the man (this is the original meaning of the word *puruṣa*) is an authentic interpretation of this dualism.

Note 20. It is just this word used by Śāṅkara for unmasking Sāṅkhya’s claim at traditionalism stressing that its faith is of non-Vedic origin: Athāpi nāma bhavataḥ śraddhām anurudhyamānāḥ... (Śāṅkara 1934: 422).

Note 21. Because the spiritual principle is regarded by all the schools which acknowledge it (*Sāṅkhya* being included) free by its own nature.

Note 22. A representative of Sāṅkhya in this dialogue reproduces the keynote similarity in the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* (verse 21) whereby an attempt is made to explain the interrelation of the two ultimate principles of the universe as making its recurrent developments possible (verse.21).

Note 23. One cannot find this similarity in the texts of the classical Sāṅkhya.

Note 24. A special article dealing with similes in the whole Sāṅkhya tradition was published comparatively lately in one of the most notorious Indological journals. See: (Jacobsen 2006).

Note 25. I believe that Śāṅkara’s argument consists in the idea that, this proximity being endless, puruṣas’ liberation will never take place. This arrow has as its target *Sāṅkhya*’s tenet that Prakṛti has two goals, puruṣas’ experience and liberation discussed above.

Note 26. Śāṅkara exposes it as the basic inconsistency of his opponents on more than one occasion.

Note 27. The edition used is (Śāṅkara 1934: 412-429). Gerald Larson very diligently reproduces this dialogue but adds (as a sympathizer with Sāṅkhya) his comments containing possible counterarguments which in his opinion the Sāṅkhyas could have implemented for discussions with the Advaitists but did not (Larson 1979: 209-235).

Note 28. Sāṅkhya’s back-fire consisted in the question in II.2.10 to the Vedāntin as to how bondage and liberation of the self can be explained if what is to be liberated and what is that wherefrom liberation should be achieved are the same in the final analysis in accordance with Vedāntic absolute

monism. George Thibaut, the most authoritative translator of Śaṅkara's *magnum opus*, noted correctly that in answer to this objection the founder of Advaita did not repudiate his opponent but only recognized that their problems with the explanation of liberation were in some regards similar (Śaṅkara 1890: 380).

Note 29. Cf.: "The *guṇas* are defined [by K.S. Bhattacharya] as potentials of feelings and felt contents, "as the feelables that may not be actually felt", and as prior to the subject – object distinction they are "the absolute(s) of feeling and felt content" (Mohanty 1992: 211). The only reasonable addition to this very suitable definition by one of the most penetrating historian of Indian philosophy could be that in this sense the Sāṅkhya's *guṇas* are very similar to the Buddhist dharmas, and this cannot be accidental inasmuch as proto-Sāṅkhya's philosophizing was among the origins of early Buddhist philosophical reflection.

Note 30. Such was the main argument contra Indian proto-theism, already in the *Sāṅkhya-Vṛtti* regarded by some Indologists of authority to be the first commentary on the *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* (and dating most likely from the same 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.): *nirguṇas ceśvaraḥ nirguṇād īśvarāt saguṇānām lokānām utpattir ayuktā / tasmād akāraṇam īśvaraḥ* ("God is free from the *guṇas*; the origin of the world endowed with the *guṇas* from God who is not endowed with them is not suitable; therefore God is not [its] cause" (Sāṅkhya-Vṛtti 1973: 60). The same argument is offered also in the original of the commentary by Paramārtha called the *Suvarṇasaptati*, also ancient one and dating from the same age as the former, with only such specification that here is stated that causes and effects should be of the same nature in principle (Paramārtha 1904: 1051). The same is reproduced also in the next commentary of the old origin, i.e. the *Sāṅkhya-saptati-Vṛtti* and in Gauḍapāda's *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā-Bhāṣya* (circa the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), the latter being so authoritative and popular that it was it wherefrom the eminent Al-Biruni (973-1048 who could be called the first Indologist) derived his most substantial knowledge about the Sāṅkhya system (Gauḍapāda 1964:153). At last the most sophisticated commentary, the *Yuktidīpikā* (circa 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> A.D.), almost adjacent to Śaṅkara's text temporarily, specifies that God (Īśvara) cannot be the cause of the world inasmuch as he is, just like the self, pure awareness alone and, therefore, is bereft of the capability for action (Yuktidīpikā 1967: 70, cf. 27, 29, 40, 142). Johannes Bronkhorst in his very provocative paper tried to prove that Sāṅkhya's genuine attitude was not to deny the existence of God but only his creative activity (and that it has become "more atheistic" only thereafter (Bronkhorst 1983). His position could be defended inasmuch as Yoga, a system very close to Sāṅkhya acknowledges Īśvara as only the highest self and the teacher of the mankind but by no means the cause of the universe. Nevertheless, we have evidences of Buddhist and Jaina reasonings on this matter to the result that the denial of Īśvara's activity (or even of motives for that) was the argument against its existence as well because almost every school that acknowledged his existence attributed (quite naturally) to him also cosmic functions.

Note 31. The starts of every new development of universe according to Sāṅkhya are skillfully described by Amita Chatterj: "Before the beginning of creation or empirical manifestation of Ur-Nature, there is a

homogeneous transformation (*sadrśa-pariñāma*) of the principles, sattva transforms into sattva, rajas into rajas and tamas into tamas. At the time of world-manifestation the active principle, rajas, becomes predominant and activates the other two principles. The stability of Ur-Nature is disturbed due to its near proximity to the Self (*puruṣa*), an independent co-eternal reality, like a piece of iron in proximity of a magnet, and the process of heterogeneous transformation begins. The constituent principles of Ur-Nature combine with one another in different proportions and the manifold world comes into existence (Chatterji 2017). One has, however, bear in mind that the Sāṅkhyas themselves did not presented such a consistent picture and that, even in these terms it begs the question as to who or what (and how) could wake the guṇa *rajas* up and call to such an activity after its sleeping during the cosmic night.

Note 32. Suffice it to say that still before Īśvarakṛṣṇa they elaborated such an arrangement of logical inferences (inferences from causes to effects, from effects to causes and by analogy) that was used by many other schools of Indian philosophy later.

Note 33. It is well known that the main (and serious) differences between the Absolutes of classical theism and Advaita Vedānta lie in that the first is regarded as the Absolute Person while the second as Absolute Awareness and that their relations to the world are also not the same but that does not touch parallels in their teleological, reasonable and one could say also artistic creativity.

Note 34. One can refer in this regard to Francis Crick, a Nobel Prize-winning molecular biologist who declared already in 1966 that the ultimate aim of the modern biology is to explain all biology in terms of physics and chemistry. The same reductionism is being promoted by Richard Dawkins. This simple-minded way of reasoning goes back to the first positivism of Comte/Spencer line which is also responsible for today's naturalistic attempts at explanations of psychology by biology, sociology by biology and theology by sociology.

Note 35. A French neologism from the noun *développement* (English *development*) is here offered by me in order to reemphasize differences between two scenarios of the cosmic process.

Note 36. See Footnote 5. Prakṛti was also considered by the Sāṅkhyas as the Dame-Nature of the altruistic attitude (cf. Footnote 17) It makes understandable how naturally it could have been absorbed by the genuine religious trends of Hinduism (especially in Śaktism) as a concept of Mother-Goddess.