HINDUISM IV

Self, The World, Reality and Knowledge
Oldest of 6 orthodox darshanas

Central questions for Sankhya were:

- What is the relationship between the *atman (purusha)* and the non-*atman (prakriti)*?
- Is the relationship causal?
- What is causality?
- How can the *purusha* and *prakriti* causally effect each other given what they are and given the Sankhya description of causality?

Kapila was the founder of Sankhya philosophy. (8-6th Cent. B.C.E.)
Sankhya argued that there must be two sorts of reality: the ultimately real, never-changing, enduring soul (purusha/atman-brahman) and the ever-changing, finite material world of prakriti.

The relationship was established as that of subject and object with the true self - purusha as the subject and the experiencable self and world - prakriti as the object.

Purusha is defined by Koller as “a spiritual monad of pure consciousness.”

The prakriti is defined as the empirical or psycho-physical self. It is composed of gunas or tendencies much as is all of the experiencable world.
Sankhya philosophers speculated whether the *purusha* might in some way cause the *prakriti* to evolve in an orderly fashion.

However they needed to start with the nature of causality first in order to answer these questions regarding the nature of the relationship between *purusha* and *prakriti*.

The philosophers of the time debated two alternative explanations of causality:
- **Satkaryavada**: the effect is pre-existent in the cause and is not distinguishable from the cause.
- **Asatkaryavada**: the effect is something new and is distinguishable from its cause.

Sankhya argued for **Satkaryavada** which implied that “*causality is simply a matter of transforming a reality that already existed, although in a different form.*” (p.99) Their arguments follow on the next slide.
ARGUMENTS FOR SATKARYAVADA

Ishvara Krishna (p.99)

1. Because of the nonproductivity of non-being
2. Because of the need for an appropriate cause
3. Because of the impossibility of all things coming from all things
4. Because something can only produce what it is capable of producing

C) Because the effect is nondifferent from the cause

My Explanation

1. you can’t get something from nothing
2. if you want to make bricks then you need to start with clay
3. one cannot get gold from clay
4. whatever you start out with determines the nature of what you wind up with – if one starts with clay one will wind up only with things that clay can make

C) the potential for the effect must already be in the cause and essentially identical to it
Satkaryavada implies that the prakriti world – including all the objective material things that we see and sense must have evolved from one single material cause.

To explain the diversity and variety we find in this prakriti world, the Sankhya philosophers turned back to the gunas previously discussed and this time applied to the entire material objective world:

- **Guna**
  - **Characteristic Tendency**
  - **Sattva** * buoyant, shining, self-manifestation/self-maintenance*
  - **Rajas** * active, stimulating, energizing*
  - **Tamas** * heavy and enveloping, constancy and endurance*
But the Sankhya reasoned that if the gunas are evolving there must have been a time when they were at equilibrium. What causes the evolution of the prakriti? They argued that it must be some ultimate subject which disturbed the equilibrium of the prakriti - a prime mover - pure consciousness.
WHY MUST THE PURUSHA EXIST?

Ishvara Krishna (p.101)

1. Aggregations or combinations exist for another
2. This other must be apart or opposite from the three
3. This other must be a superintending power or control
4. There must be an enjoyer
5. There is functioning for the sake of isolation or freedom

My Explanation

1. The material world is purposeful and goal directed
2. The ultimate goal cannot be material – else one has an infinite regress.
3. In order to have cosmos there must be an orderer that is itself willful
4. Everything in prakriti is pleasure pain or indifference therefore there must be some ultimate experiencer to have these experiences.
5. Purusha must exist because of our desire for self transcendence.
ARE PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI CAUSALLY RELATED?

- So we know that both *purusha* and *prakriti* must exist – and we know that one comprises the material or guna world and the other is pure consciousness.

- Now we can ask about their relationship – can it be causal? The answer is NO!

- *Purusha* and *prakriti* are not the same - Given their opposing and mutually exclusive natures and given Satkaryavada as the accepted explanation of causality – they cannot be causally related. If the cause and effect cannot be materially different then *purusha* and *prakriti* cannot be causally related.
If one accepts the satkaryavada explanation of causality then the cause and effect are inherent in each other and one could never liberate the cause from its effects.

If purusha and prakriti were causally related then no liberation would be possible.

Given that the purusha and prakriti are not causally related this implies that liberation is possible!
There must be a relationship of some kind between *purusha* and *prakriti* otherwise we could do anything we want with our *prakriti*-self/bodies and it would have no effect on our ultimate liberation.

Sankhya maintain that the very presence of the *purusha* causes the *prakriti* to evolve. These aspects are not the same or even connected any more than an object is connected to a subject. *see reflection metaphor pp.102-3.*

It turns out that it is an illusory connection that binds our true selves to our not selves. This illusion is sustained through our own ignorance. The *prakriti* (here read the *prakriti* as ego) wants to be real and enduring – it wants what the *purusha* has.

Following are two metaphors to explain how an illusory connection might indirectly “cause” very real changes:
Ignorance of the true nature of reality gives rise to real changes in the experiencer.
The Wanna-be wants what the real object has – and thus is “caused” to evolve in an attempt to achieve it in the ignorant belief that such is possible.
We are constrained by five forces which limit our ability to discover the truth about the illusory relationship between the purusha and prakriti. They are:

- avidya - ignorance
- asmita - the ego
- raga - grasping & attachment
- abhinivesa - fear of death & desire for immortality
- dvesa - hatred & fear

Yoga is the means by which we release ourselves from the illusory connection between purusha and prakriti and transcend those limitations which cause us to suffer.
The Nyaya and Vaisheshika darshanas are two more of the six orthodox Hindu darshanas.

Central questions for Nyaya philosophy is one of epistemology - "What is our knowledge of reality like?" They wanted to know how an object can come to be known and how we can distinguish illusion from knowledge.

It is important to point out that this chapter is about objective knowledge (knowledge of the material objective world) and not about experiential or subjective knowledge of the ultimate Brahman.

Vaisheshika philosophy picked up from this point to develop an atomistic picture of reality.
NYAYA THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

- Analysis of knowledge involves 4 pieces:
  - knowing subject
  - object to be known
  - object as known
  - means by which object is known (Koller, p.110)
Knowledge is the process by which an object is revealed to the subject hence there are four possible sources of this revelation (listed in order of reliability):

- A) perception
- B) inference
- C) analogy
- D) testimony
Perception = “true and determinate knowledge when the senses are in contact with their proper objects” (Koller, p.110)

Two Categories of Perception:
- Indeterminate - raw sense data - the contact of the sense with its object - the immediate sensory experience as distinguished from actual “perceptual knowledge” - (no mistake possible at this first stage) with the sensory apparatus - hence indeterminate perception is literally the thing itself in our eyes, ears, nose, etc. [Note: this is not unlike Locke’s causal theory of perception.] Because no judgment has been made yet, no error is possible. Ignorance is possible however, as one might not see, hear, or otherwise be in receipt of the sense data itself through lack of access to the object itself or because one is blind, deaf, etc. and,

- Determinate - the identification of relations, qualities & attributes - to name the indeterminate data (illusion and error possible - e.g., snake vs. rope in the road) Determinate perception does involve judgment hence both ignorance and error are possible at this stage. Ignorance occurs if one is incapable of categorizing something and error occurs when one misidentifies the object perceived.
True perceptual knowledge is defined in terms of correspondence to reality and is known because it generates successful activity - i.e. is confirmed through other senses (e.g. Good food or bad food in the bowl) practice is required to test the correspondence.
Nyaya Theory of Knowledge: Perception

- 7 kinds of perception:
  - 1st 5 are indeterminate - sight, smell, sound, taste, touch
  - 6th - the stage of becoming aware of the sensory experience eg. to identify that sight as the sight of some thing
  - 7th - extra-ordinary perception - 3 kinds -
    - 1-to know something belongs to a certain class of objects,
    - 2-to relate the objects of one sense to that of another eg. ice "looks" cold or flowers "look" soft, food "smells" delicious (synesthesia)
    - 3-to perceive past or future objects, or things not normally accessible to naked senses - things hidden or very small (closest to our sense of esp)
Four Reasons why Perception is best source of information about the Objective World:

- It is our only point of direct contact with the objective world
- It’s foundation is error-free (only at the indeterminate level)
- It can be tested at the determinate level (a testable hypothesis is always preferable to one which cannot be tested – this is the modern scientific method!)
- It yields successful activity when applied properly. (this is pragmatic but remember, Hinduism is meant to be applied – if it cannot be applied then it is useless.)
Inference = producing knowledge that comes after other knowledge - or, in more modern terms, generalizations based on experience

- Two sorts of Inference:
  - The most reliable form of inference is when there is a causal connection between the observed phenomenon and the inference made. The causal connection is called the *hetu* or reason which supports the inference. The tighter the *hetu* the tighter the inference. Koller’s example of inferring that there is fire based on the rule, “Wherever there is smoke, there is fire,” and the observed smoke demonstrates the role of the *hetu*. The assumption here is that the *hetu* exists as a universal rule and not remarkable coincidence.
  - Less reliable form of inference is when one assumes a universal connection between observed phenomena/attributes and the nature of the object - i.e. counting crows and inferring that there is something about the nature of crow-ness which requires that they all be black - obviously it would only take one counter example to destroy inference – i.e. it could be remarkable coincidence and not a universal rule.
C) **Comparison** - the association of the name of an unknown object is made by the knower on the basis of experiencing the similarity of the unknown object with a known object - reasoning from the known to the unknown - is source for reliable knowledge when criteria for perception and inference are met.

![Bertrand](image1.jpg)

![Peter](image2.jpg)

Bertrand => Peter
- Testimony - the hearing (or reading) of another person's genuine knowledge claim - not opinion - est. 3 criteria for successful transferal of knowledge by testimony:
  1) the person speaking must be honest & reliable
  2) the person must have genuine knowledge
  3) the hearer must understand truly what is being said

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Seven Categories/Objects of Knowledge:

1) substance - includes earth, water, light, air, ether, time, space, self and, mind. Defined as that which exists independently of other kinds of things - is real in itself and is bearer of attributes (composite substance) which could not exist without it - each of the substances are the smallest elements beyond which they cannot be broken down into any further constituent parts – (atomistic concept of substance – both consistent for Vaisheshika))

2) quality - attributes of the substances - includes color, odor, contact, sound, number, measure, difference, connection, separation, long or short, far or near, knowledge, happiness, sorrow, volition, hatred, effort, heaviness, fluidity, potency, merit and demerit. (not exhaustive listing)

3) motion - upward, downward, contraction, expansion, and locomotion - motion accounts for change in substances

4) universal essences - think of as generality or classes of things - Plato's forms - that which things share in common

5) particularity - the distinction we make of one object from another - the perception of individuality

6) inherence - the collection of many perceived objects as belonging to a whole - eg. we receive perceptions of color, size, shape, sound, motion, particularity, etc and understand that these are all constituent parts belonging to a whole person

7) Nothingness - without which one could not make the claim that something was absent!