

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Week-11
Lecture 53: Samkhya Philosophy

Namaskar to all. Today I am going to discuss the Sāṁkhya philosophy, and in Sāṁkhya philosophy, today I will be discussing the notion of self from Sāṁkhya perspective, and the theory of knowledge. As I said in the last class that the self, the concept of self is important to understand the theory of evolution. So, we have in the last class, we discussed the theory of evolution where we have seen the prakṛti and it evolves where we have talked about a different tattva. We have talked about a different kind of thing for example, Ahaṁkāra, we have buddhi, manas, the five sense of this knowledge and then action, and then Tanmātra that is in five subtle essences.

Now, today I will discuss what is self in Sāṁkhya philosophy. We have discussed the concept of puruṣa, we have discussed concept of prakṛti. Now, when prakṛti is coming under the influence of Sāṁkhya, there is creation, and we have discussed well in detail how there are different elements of this creation or evolves. The question still remains the same that what is self. However, we have discussed in the last class how puruṣa which is many is not one, it is many and it because of Aviveka it reflects its consciousness where, in buddhi which is transparent and because of that it started believing that this is me. I have become an agent. In Ahaṁkāra stage it become an agent. Now, this agent is what started performing actions and then experiences of pleasure and pain and therefore there is a bondage. When through meditation when he removes this false in knowledge or purify the minds and realize his real nature then there is a liberation. So, the puruṣa is liberated already. So, this is just because of his false knowledge is where in this bondage. It also will remind you about Sankara philosophy, where we have discussed the self. The nature of self is what with atman is in a Brahman, and Brahman is a kind of light where darkness cannot conceal this light. Now, we are in bondage, because we believe this appearance, the false appearance as an ideal and perform set of acts or we recognize non-self as a self and then performing acts. So, this wrong knowledge leads to the saṁsara. However, Sāṁkhya philosophy is does not believe in the concept of God or God therefore he has a different way to explain this world and this reality. They believe that there is a concept of puruṣa, which we have discussed and so the puruṣa is because of Aviveka, wrong information, his consciousness reflects where in this buddhi and next he decided believe me that this is me, this is an agent. So, Sāṁkhya philosophy draws a distinction between the transcendental self and the empirical self. So, in most of the Indian philosophy, they have this idea of a transcendental self and an empirical self. They are going to talk about how this empirical self or Jiva, we are different from the transcendental self. So, we when I am saying I it is

not on a pure or ontological sense, it is in an empirical sense. So, the transcendental self is puruṣa in Sāṃkhya philosophy and the empirical self is Jiva in Sāṃkhya philosophy. The Sāṃkhya is eternal, immaterial, inactive, pure, conscious, and free. Free means liberated, there is a no bondage. He is devoid of all Gunas Sattva Rajas, Tamas which we have discussed in prakṛti and he puruṣa is devoid of these gunas. Again, puruṣa is not an agent but Jiva is an agent and enjoyer. So, this is the kind of a difference when we are talking about the transcendental self and then empirical self. So transcendental self is free, is liberated and Jiva is not free, is bounded and agent, he is an enjoyer. Enjoyer in the sense he is enjoying the experiences of pleasure and pain. Jiva is self determined by body and the sense organ endowed with power of enjoying and acting. So, that is Jiva. The self appears to be active on account of its proximity to buddhi in which it is reflected. The theory of evolution in detail where we have argued that how puruṣa is in consciousness is reflected in Buddhi, and then it became a self. So, the self is become an active agent. Jiva has a subtle body. So, the idea of there are two bodies, subtle body and gross body which also have discussed in Sankara philosophy and in detail that how subtle body and gross body works. So that is a very important part in Indian system or especially in the Orthodoxian school of thought because there is one thing is a concept of birth and death. So, for example there is a death it means that the soul is leaving this body with subtle body and time of birth is entering in the next body. So, death is leaving. Now, leaving is only atman and only self will not be leaving. If the pure atman is only leaving, that is in a pure form, and in that case, that is just an atman, a nirgun brahman. So therefore, whenever they are like leaving this body time of death, it also leaves with the subtle body. So, subtle body plays a very important role in perception or in experiences where the subtle body is basically experiencer of the pleasure and pain. So, the Jiva has the subtle body form of ten sense organs, this manas, buddhi, Ahaṃkāra and the five subtle essence is called subtle body in Sāṃkhya philosophy. So, concept of subtle body is consisting of the ten sense organs that is in our sense organ of knowledge and action that is ten. Five sense organ of knowledge which we have discussed in the last class and then five sense organs of action. So, ten manas and buddhi and Ahaṃkāra is what is made together a subtle body or it also includes the five subtle essences. So, this is what it is in a subtle body of a Jiva. Subtle body as I said is a medium of enjoyment. So when we are experiencing any pleasure or a set of pain it is a subtle body who is experiencing that. So, while discussing even in the Sāṃkhya philosophy, we have discussed how subtle body plays an important role. So, there is one object even in Sāṃkhya philosophy we have discussed that how one object and there are different experiences. So, one object is X and then Y is perceiving X differently. For example, a lovely woman is in a matter of attraction for husband, matter of jealous for the co-wife, and matter of neutral or is for the maybe a disappointed man or a maybe neighbor. So, the idea is there is one object and there are different kind of experience. So, this experience is because of the subtle body and subtle body is basically this experiencing the object. So, when you have a concept, when you have an idea, when you have an disposition

that is plays an important role. So, the epic person has a different way to experience and the subtle body it plays an important role in those experiences. The bondage of Jiva is due to the subtle body through which merit and demerit. So, when we started believing that this is me and then we are performing the right action and a wrong action and we have to be in this problem. So, which are modes of Buddhi or Ahaṁkāra are wrongly appropriated by the self of Sāṁkhya. So again, this is saying that the self and then puruṣa which is an ontological real, it become a Jiva because of the wrong information or avidya. Now, when it achieved through the meditation, discrimination, merit or demerit are destroyed and it attains liberation. So, when through the meditation when Jiva achieves this knowledge of discrimination, when you started believing that, started realizing that what is me, and who am I then the merit and demerit are destroyed and it attains liberation. Discrimination leads to the destruction of merit and demerit, which dissolve the subtle body. So, and annihilates empirical like and leads to the liberation. So, subtle body is the cause right and because there is a experience of pleasure and pain so when then you have the right knowledge, so it is discrimination knowledge where we have like understand what is puruṣa and what is what who am I and who am I not I then it is going to destruct all the merit and demerit and dissolve this subtle body. Dissolving the subtle body means you are free. Free means you are going to lead to the liberation. Now, they gave an example deep sleep right. Sāṁkhya philosophy argues that in dreamless sleep or deep sleep the self-sense of Ahaṁkāra is destroyed but it persists as in a substratum of disposition. So even in Sankara philosophy we have discussed how he has proved that there is no object because in dreamless sleep or in deep sleep we do not see any object and therefore it means there is no object in the world. Sāṁkhya philosophy also gives the same example of deep sleep and argues that in deep sleep self sense of Ahaṁkāra, that I is destroyed but it persists as in a substratum of dispositions. So, disposition is the vasana which is we are like a vritti which are continuously we are earning it through this access. Now, in the prakṛti and it evaluates at which we have discussed in the last class the theory of evolution where Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra, manas are three internal organs. Right now, we are talking about the self. So, self is where Buddhi and Ahaṁkāra and manas are three internal organ they are doorkeeper while external sense organ are the doors. So, anything which is coming through this to the mind so it will come to the door right so that is a sense organ where you are perceiving an object and then it is going to the your self. Self means the internal organ that buddhi and ahankar and manas.

Now, let us understand what is theory of knowledge and how Sāṁkhya believes that how we can perceive things how what is the what are the valid sources of valid knowledge. Before that I also would like to mention few things from the Sāṁkhya perspective. First, as we have been discussing that puruṣa falsely appears as the knower of the object. Ontologically a reality puruṣa is come to enact. So, the theory of knowledge the puruṣa falsely appears to the as a knower of the object. Now, in object knowledge the object is really related to Buddhi and is only seemingly related to puruṣa. So, this is not an actual

relation. This a concept is when puruṣa conscious reflects in the Buddhi and becomes this jīva, self. So, whenever we are perceiving an object, this is what it is a bim-b-pratibimb of which we are discussing in the buddhi but this is at a seemingly related to puruṣa because this puruṣa is a falsely appears as a knower of the object. So, this is a false this is a false appearance. Now, for Sāṃkhya philosophy there are four factors involved in knowledge that is in a very important. The knower first, the known, the means of knowledge and the result of knowing or valid knowledge. So, these four things are important for any kind of knowledge. So, self is the knower. The mode of Buddhi modified into form of the object is the means of knowledge. Reflection of mode of Buddhi with the form of the object in the self is valid knowledge. The object apprehended by mode of Buddhi reflected in the self is the known. These are the four factors of the knowledge. Now, let us take the valid sources of valid knowledge according to Sāṃkhya philosophy. So, Sāṃkhya philosophy argued for three valid sources for valid knowledge. So, the first valid source is perception. As we have discussed that all school of thought including Charvaka has accepted the perception is the valid source of knowledge. Now, perception arises only when there is a presentation of an object and the operation of a sense organ takes place. So, for example there is an object so it is there, in front of my sense organ and then there is no one function then operating its working. For example, so, there is an object, but my eyes are closed right. So, this perception will not take place. So, when my eyes are functioning and then operation and I am looking at this object it would be presented then I will be able to perceive as called perception. Now, perception is possible only upon some sort of sannikarṣa. Sannikarṣa is when it is coming to you like an object. So, perception is the cognition or mode of Buddhi which assumes the form of an object. So, for Sāṃkhya philosophy, Buddhi goes out through the sense organ to an object. After that, the intercourse of the sense organ with the object and is modified into its form. So, for self for Sāṃkhya philosophy so this is a self, when I am using the self or this is perceived as self as a knower this is a false appearance. In ontological level it is a liberated, it is completely inactive, but in empirical level it is in a self. Self, the subtle body and then gross body and then this is an outer organ, sense organ for example XYZ and this is object called X. Now, this Buddhi is what is basically going through this sense organ to this object because of the sannikarṣa taking the form of this object that is what is called this is consciousness of X. So when we are perceiving X, it becomes consciousness of X. Now, is taking this form of an object then this is how we get it. So, there is a beam and then pratibimb right. So, this is an object and then this is a reflection and this is how we get a knowledge of an object in Sāṃkhya philosophy. Now, perception there are two stages of perception first is indeterminate, nirvikalp, and the determinate the savikalp. So, there are two stages of perception. Indeterminate perception is immediate, apprehension of an object, pure and simple, devoid of relation between the qualified object and qualifications. So, for example suppose there is a kid or baby is in a there is an apprehension of an object. So, apprehension object we said immediately right we are not doing anything. This is a simple and pure perception. Now, determinate

perception is in a cognition of an object as a qualified by its generic and specific character and other properties. So, when it is present to the sense organ it is an object and it is passing to the next level. Now, the internal organ what through synthesis, through discrimination, analysis they are perceiving it, naming it, saying it right. So, this is what we call determinate perception. So, indeterminate perception and indeterminate perception. So, this is again a matter of discussion about determinate and indeterminate. But on a very basic level, what I would like to mention here for the Sāṃkhya philosophy when wherever you are perceiving an object what we do we are like getting a data. So, data is what it is, set of data through the sense organ, so we got an object. But what is an object is it all about right. It needs a proper process of analysis, discrimination, synthesis and so on. So, because of this we are naming it we are saying it oh this is X this is not X and so on. So, this is called determinate perception. So, it is indeterminate perception and determinate perception, nirvikalp and savikalp. As I said indeterminate perception is the function of external sense organ of knowledge. So, the external sense organ is perceiving that indeterminate perception and determinate perception is the function of internal organ Manas. The next valid source of knowledge from Sāṃkhya philosophy is inference. So, as we have discussed in Sāṃkhya philosophy we also have discussed in Buddhist philosophy that how they have taken inference as a valid source of knowledge. Similarly, Sāṃkhya philosophy also argues that inference is the valid source of knowledge. For Sāṃkhya philosophy, the inference has two kind the Vīta and Avīta. So, vīta is based on affirmative concomitants of all universal element in presence. For example, we have seen this fire and smoke relation as concomitants. So, there is a fire and then a smoke. So we have seen and this is an universal agreement of this smoke and fire. Now, when we see this is a smoke, we are saying there is a fire. So, this is based on the universal agreement. So, there are two things X and Y and relation of X and Y is a universal. Universal only means that whenever there is a Y we can think of the X, because this relation is this agreement is universal. This is beyond the time, personal, place. So, it was it is and it will be in the future. So, when we have this idea smoke and fire, fire and smoke is this relation and this is on a universal. So, past in present and future. So, this is I mean we have showed that okay this Vyāpti, this relation is universal. Now when we saw from this room in the window that there is a smoke and what we are saying I am saying oh there is a fire. Now, there is a fire is knowledge and the knowledge of the fire will not be possible through perception. So, what we are doing based on this universal relation XY we are affirming we are inferring that there is an X. So, there is a we saw Y and then we saw we were inferring that X. So, we saw a smoke and we are inferring that oh there is a fire. So the knowledge of fire is inference. Through the inference we got this knowledge that there is a fire. Now, Avīta is based upon negative concomitance or universal agreement in absence. So, for example we are saying that X is not Y. For example, we are saying that so the Avīta is based upon negative concomitance or universal agreement in absence. So, there is a for example non-difference of like for example cloth is straight it is cause and effect which we have discussed. So, the cause and

then effect, there is a cause and effect is then a same. So, this is we have talked about so the Avīta is based upon negative concomitance or universal agreement in absence. Now, the third one is Sabda, as a valid source of knowledge and Sāṃkhya believe that valid testimony is authoritative statement and it is true revelation. So, as we have discussed that for Indian philosophy the scriptures texts are reveals about the ontological reality. So, through the Saints perception it is a difficult to know the ontological reality and therefore the valid testimony is an authoritative statement. So, through this valid of testimony is only we are getting the information about the ontological reality, and Sāṃkhya philosophy believe that the Vedas are revelation of super sensible realities right. So, this is what we have discussed this Indian Sāṃkhya philosophy about theory of knowledge in very brief and in basic level just to know about just to give an idea about the concept of self in Sāṃkhya philosophy and the theory of knowledge. However, just I would like to mention that as we have discussed in introduction to Indian philosophy that Sāṃkhya philosophy and there is a Yoga philosophy. So, there is an argument that Sāṃkhya philosophy is a theoretical and then Yoga philosophy is a practical aspect of the same philosophy. So, yoga philosophy also has taken many things from adopts all the concept of from the Sāṃkhya philosophy but however he also included and some other thing added in this philosophy and talks about the practical aspect of the reality and practical how practically how to achieve the liberation. However, since that is not part of the course, so I am not going to discuss the yoga philosophy how but my intention is to tell you that Sāṃkhya philosophy and then yoga philosophy right. Similarly, we have the Nyaya philosophy and Vaisheshika philosophy right. So, this is what the Sāṃkhya philosophy and we are we have discussed a Sāṃkhya philosophy in a very basic level. We have talked about the cause and effect which is in a very significant concept in Sāṃkhya philosophy, and if you are aware of this cause-and-effect things it will be very easy to understand other concept of Sāṃkhya philosophy. Now later on we have discussed the idea of puruṣa then idea of Prakṛti in Sāṃkhya philosophy how they are ultimately really real. Then when prakṛti comes an influence to the puruṣa, then there is a creation. Creation is again you have talked about the self, and then we also have talked about the valid source of the knowledge. One thing you need to understand in Sāṃkhya philosophy that puruṣa because of Aviveka right not right knowledge it reflecting its consciousness where in the Buddhi. Buddhi is transparent. Now, it has two effects. First Buddhi become intelligent. Second, the puruṣa is started believing that this is me right and Ahaṃkāra at time this has become activated become experiences of this pleasure and pain. So, this is what a Sāṃkhya philosophy in a basic level. The Sāṃkhya philosophy is a part of our course because it gives a very different interpretation of this reality and that is the reason that I have said the Sāṃkhya philosophy is a very unique philosophy and this also is in a very old school of thought in Indian system so that also places this philosophy in important place. There is argument that there are many philosophers has taken many things from the Sāṃkhya philosophy. So, its influences you can see in other philosophy as well. So, idea of prakṛti in Sāṃkhya philosophy has talks in

explained in detail and later on many other philosophers has been influenced by the Sāṃkhya philosophy and you can while reading this other Indian school of thought you can see the influence of Sāṃkhya philosophy. That again makes this philosophy Sāṃkhya philosophy is an important. Again, Sāṃkhya philosophy is an important concept and if you read the Yoga philosophy that is in a practical aspect yoga philosophy presents the Sāṃkhya system with the idea of God right. So, classical Sāṃkhya was atheist become later for example as I said yoga philosophy of start talking about the God.

So, this is an introduction of this Sāṃkhya philosophy. Our intention is to present a different school of thought is to talk about a different type of or different kind of argument, so that you will be able to understand the one concept one reality from different aspect. So that is an all about main purpose of goal of this course. So, thank you so much in the next class discussing different school of thought from Orthodox school of thought or Heterodox school of thought. So, you have to see in the next class. This talk was based on the Indian philosophy from Jadunath Sinha basically and the classical Sāṃkhya a critical study by Amita Sen Gupta. And this another book also is important the classical Sāṃkhya an interpretation of its history and meaning by Larson. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.