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Acharya Kapila



Kapila was a Vedic sage credited as one of the founders of the Samkhya School of philosophy. He is prominent in the Bhagavata Purana, which features a theistic version of his Samkhya philosophy. Traditional Hindu sources describe him as a descendant of Manu, a grandson of Brahma. The Bhagavad Gita depicts Kapila as a yogi hermit with highly developed siddhis, or spiritual powers.

Many of the details about sage Kapila's life are described in Book 3 of the Bhagavata Purana, where it is mentioned that his parents were Kardama Muni and Devahuti. After his father left home, Kapila instructed his mother, Devahuti in the philosophy of yoga and devotional worship of Lord Vishnu, enabling her to achieve liberation (moksha). Kapila's Sankhya is also given by Krishna to Uddhava in Book 11 of the Bhagavata Purana, a passage also known as the "Uddhava Gita".

Kapila is also mentioned by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

"Of all trees I am the banyan tree, and of the sages among the demigods I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas I am Citraratha, and among perfected beings I am the sage Kapila."

Birth of the Ganges

Kapila is a major figure in the story associated with the descent of the Ganga (Ganges) river from heaven. King Sagara, an ancestor of Rama, had performed the Aswamedha yagna ninety-nine times. On the hundredth time the horse was sent around the earth Indra, the King of Heaven, grew jealous and kidnapped the horse, hiding it in the hermitage of Kapila. The 60,000 sons of Sagara found the horse, and believing Kapila to be the abductor assaulted him. Kapila turned his assailants to ashes. Anshuman, a grandson of King Sagara, came to Kapila begging him to redeem the souls of Sagara's 60,000 sons. Kapila replied that only if the Ganges descended from heaven and touched the ashes of the 60,000 would they be redeemed. The Ganges was eventually brought to earth, redeeming the sons of Sagara, through the tapasya of King Bhagiratha.

Samkhya

Samkhya, also Sankhya, Sankhya, or Sankhya is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy and classical Indian philosophy. Sage Kapila is traditionally considered as the founder of the Samkhya School. It is regarded as one of the oldest philosophical systems in India.

Samkhya is one of the six orthodox systems (Astika, those systems that recognize Vedic authority) of Hindu philosophy. The major text of this Vedic school is the extant Samkhya Karika circa 200 CE. This text identifies Samkhya as a Tantra and its philosophy was one of the main influences both on the rise of the Tantras as a body of literature, as well as Tantra sadhana. There are no purely Samkhya schools existing today in Hinduism, but its influence is felt in the Yoga and Vedanta schools.

Samkhya is an enumerationist philosophy that is strongly dualist. Samkhya denies the existence of Ishvara (God) or any other exterior influence. Samkhya philosophy regards the universe as consisting of two realities: Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (phenomenal realm of matter). They are the experiencer and the experienced, not unlike the *res cogitans* and *res extensa* of René Descartes. Prakriti further bifurcates into animate and inanimate realms. On the other hand, Purusha separates out into countless Jivas or individual units of consciousness as souls which fuse into the mind and body of the animate branch of Prakriti. There are differences between Samkhya and Western forms of dualism. In the West, the fundamental distinction is between mind and body. In Samkhya, however, it is between the self (as Purusha) and matter (Prakriti).

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