CHAPTER V
We come now to the epics which are held in very high esteem by the Hindus, next to the Vedas. Unlike the Vedas however, these works are full of interpolations, which were added to the original till very late. The original work however, seems to be of an early age, because we find that followers of certain Vedic Sākhās added stanzas to show that their sect too existed in times of Rāmāyaṇa. We have seen that the collation of Brahmaṇa works continued till the age of Mahābhārata; and if Rāmāyaṇa was held as sacred to seek support for Vedic sects, its composition should ante-date the Mahābhārata. The mention of Tathāgata etc. is clearly spurious and need not be seriously taken into consideration, though some scholars have given weight to it. Whatever that may be, accretions do not

1. Prof. Keith (J.R.A.S. 1915, pp. 318-321) opines that there is no reason to believe that the date of the original Rāmāyaṇa is later than 300 B.C.

2. रामायण अयोध्याकाण्ड २२.१५-१८

not much destroy the general unity of all major parts of the work. Additions and alterations seem to have continued even after Bhavabhūti, though not hampering the general tenor of the work. If therefore we take into consideration the whole work as representing a uniform ideology and culture, it will not be far from correct.

Religion and Philosophy that we find in the Rāmāyana is of a very high order. All sterling virtues of a human being are seem to have reached their climax in Rāma, Bharata, Laksmaṇa, Guha, Hanumat, Aṅgada, Bibhisana, Kumbhakarna, Sītā, Mandodarī and others; and even Rāvana, the foremost amongst Rāma's enemies, who is considered as the villain of the epic, is not devoid of brighter shades of character, which are inadvertently shown in Bibhīṣaṇa's lamentations. Nothing should refrain us therefore, from thinking that higher philosophical ideas were known to the people of Rāmāyanic times.

1. According to Prof. Grierson, Prof. Bohtlingk has shown that the consideration of grammatical peculiarities can in no way help to mark out accretions.

2. Rt. Hon. Sastrī says, "Rāvana belonged to a class in whom greatness does not coexist with goodness. But greatness has its own attraction." Lectures on the Ramayana, Publ. Madras Saṃskṛṭ Academy 1949, p. 331."
Mr. I. S. Peter has however restricted philo-
sophic development of this epic only to a few
doctrines, in view of the fact that Rāma accepted
his banishment as a decree of fate. In his note
he says, "This remark must be distinctly under-
stood as referring only to conditions in the epic.
Later, a theory of release was enunciated." As
this remark takes for granted the normally accepted
order of philosophical development in its chrono-
logical sequence, we need not subscribe to such
a view. The statement that the theory of release
was later enunciated cannot bear examination. In
the Aranyakānda we have a list of different
ascetics practising penance. Can the motive
behind the practice of penance be to revolve etern-
ally into the unending cycle of Karma? The sage
Sarabhaṅga by severe austerities is said to have
attained Brahmaloka, which cannot be reached by

2. Rāmāyana Aranyakānda 6.2-6
by those who have not undergone religious discipline. After conversation with Rāma, Sarabhaṅga is said to have shed his physical body and risen by successive stages, finally to Brahmāloka. King Daśaratha is said to have attained lustre that leads to Brahmāloka. To realise the Law of Karma philosophers had to toil long and hard, and that Law is stated clearly in the Rāmāyana:

गुणवोषषुः जन्म। स्वकर्मफळहेतुकम्।
श्यश्रस्वतवाध्याने पर्य प्रेत्य खुणावुः।

नियत: कारण लोके नियत: कर्मसाधनम्।
नियत: सर्वोत्तानां नियोगेष्चिष्ठ कारणम्।

1. Rāmāyana: Aranyakanda 5.28
2. Rāmāyana: Aranyakanda 5.49
3. Rāmāyana: Ayodhyakaṇḍa 105.33
4. Kishkindhakaṇḍa 21.2
5. Kishkindhakaṇḍa 26.4
Dr. Peter says, "In practice, such a doctrine leads to fatalism and despair." Now, the doctrine is a statement of fact, and fact however stern must be accepted as it is. If it leads to fatalism and despair, it is the weakness of man, which he should strive to shake off. And this precisely seems to be the attempt of the Ramayanic people. If present reverses are the results of past bad actions, they cannot be faced by sentiments provoked by occasion; for any unjust action prompted by sentiment would again bring another trouble in future. In such a situation, it would be wiser to defeat the power of bad actions by good action. That is the spirit behind action revealed in the Rāma. Dr. Peter says that preferred a life of contemplation to a life of action.\textsuperscript{3} While "Beowulf is a man of action."\textsuperscript{3} Dr. Peter here

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. दैवसंपाति वोषे मानुषेष नया जितः। युद्धकांड ११६५।

\textsuperscript{2} अयोध्याकांड १०५.२, १०९.२८

\textsuperscript{3} Beowulf and the Rāmāyana. PP.109,111.
here presupposes a divorce between contemplation and action. The tradition of Rāmāyaṇa would however hold that contemplation would bring forth wiser action.

The Law of Karma is nothing but the Law of Causation ethically applied. Happiness and misery, birth and death, creation and destruction, union and separation are all the duals raised by this law. A state unaffected by these must be beyond the power of this Law. Such a state is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa:

न त्वाय प्रत्ययेतु कुंसं प्रीतिवां न प्रहर्षितु।
बया मुत्स्तत्हा जीवन्यांसति तथा सति। २
यस्यैव बुद्धिवल्लामः स्वात्परित्यथेत केन सः॥

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1. युवधकांड ६.१५५.२ etc.
2. अयोध्याकांड १०६.१-४
This can easily be compared with the state of liberation while living—Jīvanmukti—described in later works. That there were people who had attained such a state is also quite clear. In view of this, it is immaterial whether the doctrine of liberation is elaborated or not in the Rāmāyaṇa.

The epic abounds more in poetic excellency and little of philosophy is to be found in it. Scholars have therefore not paid much attention to it from metaphysical point of view.

1. सुवर्कांड २६.४५-४६

2. Indian Philosophy by Dr. Radhakṛśnan Vol. I, p. 482.
   Intelligent Man's Guide to Indian Philosophy by Mr. Pandya, pp. 112, 113.
Let us therefore deal with some ideas of God, the Universe and the individual as depicted in this epic.

We find Vedic Gods mentioned, and some other deities are also added to the pantheon. These new additions such as Kubera, Kārtikya, Lāxmī, Gaṅgā need not be treated as non-Vedic or non-Āryan. It is found that the fundamental unity of all Gods was also recognised. The Ādityaḥṛdaya gives a vivid picture of these concepts. Sun is extolled as the Supreme God in this hymn. It is argued that the hymn is an interpolation, because it was neither the occasion nor the place for Rāma to meditate. This objection however cannot stand, for Indrajit is said to have performed sacrifice on the battlefield before he started fighting. Again charging of the arrows with spells always necessitated meditation. It is also probable that the recital

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1. "श्रीरामायणसमालोचना" महाराष्ट्रीय पु. २४९, २५०
recital of the hymn might have taken place in Rāma's camp near the field, for just before the occasion Rāvaṇa was vanquished and carried away from the battle in an unconscious state. The hymn thus seems to be a part of the original poem. The Sun here is said to be the Supreme God, all other Gods being his different manifestations:

रेखेमानो बेहेज तेजस्वी राशिप्राप्यः।

Himself He is Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Mahendra, Kubera, Yama, Varuṇa, etc. He manifests as the Vasus, Fathers, Fire, Wind, Life, Rains, etc. He is all-Viśva. He is Kavi - the Knower; He is the creator of all-Viśvakarma; He creates protects and destroys all this; He is awake within those who sleep, i.e. everconscious; He is the witness of all - Lokasāksī. He is the Agnihotra and

१. युध्यकांड १०६.६

२. युध्यकांड १०७.८
and all other sacrifices and He is their fruit also. He is all the activities in the world.
From this description we gather the following:

(a) God is one.
(b) He creates, sustains, and destroys the world.
(c) He pervades everything in the world.
(d) He is the world Himself.
(e) He is within all the changeful things.
(f) He is also beyond all these, the knower, the witness, unimpaired by the changes, the inmate of all creatures.
From these concepts the Advaitic conclusion about God and the creation are deducible:

आकाशप्रभवो ब्रह्म सांस्कारसंतो नित्य अवधयः।

1. अयोध्यकांड १६०.५
Brahma has manifested Himself from the Akasa, and He is eternal, imperishable. Rama thinks himself to be an ordinary mortal though at times he expresses Godly power. Brahma comes to the scene and remembers Rama of his real Divine nature:

शब्दे चावौ च मध्ये च दुःख्ये च परंतप ॥

शब्दे ब्रह्म सत्यं च मध्ये चावौ च रायव ॥

Here the commentator of Tilaka says:

यवश्वरं मध्ये चावौ चावौ च। सत्यप्रचुतमधृपं तरं यदु ब्रह्म तदवेव त्वमस्ति क्षेषः ॥

Other commentaries like Ramayana Simromani and Ramayanabhusana have explained the line more or less in the same way. Rama is then identified with Visnu or Brahman in whom he wishes to depart.

१. युध्व. ६. १२. २४ पत्वेभबहुले मोम मम वा द्रष्टव्यकथ्य वा।


३. ६. ११७. १४
depart from here:

- - - - - - प्रविशस्व स्विकां तत्स्म।
  बैष्णवों तां महाआजो वदु वाः कांस सनातनम् ॥

All this description of God as the fundamental
Reality is not different in spirit from that in the
former passage 6.105. Now if everything is God
and God is imperishable, whatever is perishable
and evanescent must be an appearance, and one must
not cling to it. This spirit is manifested in the
following:

श्रोऽऽचया श्रोऽऽचि कं श्रोऽऽच्यं दीनं दीनानुकम्पस।
कृधू कत्यानलोऽश्चैः स्तिस्तिस्मे हस्तिनं हुदृष्टया। ॥ २॥

शयामहे च निन्दता: पृथिवीस्मवर्जीविता:।
प्राप्त्यामो ब्रह्मलोकं हुष्ट्रापं च कुरूवतिमः। ॥ ७॥

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1. 6.90.6
2. कितिकंध २२.२
3. यूधकांड ६.६६.५
The individual indeed should aspire the attainment of Brahma-loka. Really speaking the self is not bound by individual limits. This fact is very clearly mentioned in the Rāmāyana:

हेविस्यः सर्वमूलामात्मा वेद दुस्मार्गम् । ३

The self is one. He resides within the heart of every creature. He is conscious. These facts are all implied in this line. The commentary has thus put them:

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१. २.१०५.१६
२. २.१०५.२७
३. किष्किंद्धा १८.१५
Such a Self can easily be identified with the Supreme Self, especially when we see that Rāma is himself conscious of his divine personality. The state of an individual going beyond all mutable pleasures and displeasures also supports the idea of the unity of Brahma and Ātman. If this much of philosophy is reflected in a record which is known primarily as a poem, it is not improbable that philosophical thinkers of those times had developed an Advaitic mode of thought.

1. Tilaka.
The Mahābhārata is known in India and abroad from very early times. Inspite of some portions that are said to be added some time in the Christian era, there are reasons to believe, that the bulk of the epic mostly as we have it did exist much earlier. As Weber has pointed out, "The earliest direct evidence of the epic, with the contents of the Mahābhārata, comes to us from the rhetor Dion Chrysostom, who flourished in the second half of the first century A.D., and it appears fairly probable that the information in question was then quite new and was derived from mariners........."\(^{1a}\) It is plain that the original epic was Bhārata with twenty-four-thousand verses. This is stated in the Anukramanikādhyāya stanza 101.

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1. Buhler and Kirste have to say, "It has been conclusively shown that the poem was recognised in A.D. 300...." "Contribution to the study of the Mahābhārata" (p. 481 Radhakrishna

1a "The History of Indian Literature" by Weber London 1878, p. 186.
It is wellknown that the epic passed through three recensions, the Jaya, the Bhārata and the Mahābhārata. The word Mahābhārata thus clearly points to the last stage of the epic. We have to see when this final stage was reached. That it was reached sometime before the Christian era can be understood from the evidence of Dion Chrysostom as has been pointed out above. Let us see if we can travel still back. The Āsvalāyana-grhyasūtra says:

1. प्राचीनान्वेदी सुमन्त्रेजीमनिवेदयनपायनपूर्वमांसनेत्र-भारतधर्माचार्यम् ।

Bodhāyana refers to a dialogue between Devayāni and Āravinda:

2. अधात्मयोजनसङ्ग्रह दुष्पर्वात्वः दुहित्रसंवादे गाथा-प्रवहितम्।

स्तुवतो दुहिता तवं केव याचत: प्रतिगृहत्।
अथाहं स्तुवयानस्य चवतोः प्रतिगृहणत्।
चवतोः प्रतिगृहणत् इति।

1. आसवलायनग्रहसूत्र ३.६.५
   by M.M.T. Ganapati Śastri Trivendrum 1923.
2. बोधायनग्रहसूत्र २.२.६७ । p. 143 Ed. by Činnaswāmi Śāstrī, Chowkhamba Benares, 1934.

Cf. महाभारत १.७८.१० and ३४ cf. also बोधायन III.६ and अनुवादनसन्तर ८८.११ ते १५
The mention of a person having the size of a thumb etc. speaks of the atmosphere of the Gītā. The date of Bodhāyana is considered with that of Āpastamba. M. M. P. V. Kāne assigns Āpastamba to some period between 600 and 300 B.C. Even if we accept the lower limit, we can say that Bodhāyana must have flourished earlier, for Āpastamba has controverted Bodhayana in many places along with others. M. M. Kāne gives the date of Bodhāyana as between 500 and 200 B.C. I feel that if Āpastamba cites Bodhayana, Bodhāyana must be placed earlier, and hence the earlier limit of Bodhāyana viz. 500 B.C. appears to be probable.

1. Cf. वौधा.व.सू. २.१२.१२ मण्डलगीता


The date of Bhāsa is about 500 B.C. at least not earlier than sixth century B.C. according to Dr. Pusalkar. For several plots of his dramas he draws profusely on the Ākhyānas of this epic. The epic thus with all its legends must be known to him. In his Karnabhāra he gives an echo of a statement of Bhagavadgītā 2:37:

हलोपि लभते स्वयम् जित्या तु लभते कषुः
Like the Viṣṇudharmottarāsaūtra, Vāsudeva-worship was known even to Pāṇini. His Śutra is thus:

1

This sutra occurs under the Adhikāra exercised by the Śutra Bhakti:

2

The Siddhānta Kaumudi says: “सोऽस्य हत्युतत्ति। मज्ञ्यते सेष्यतः इति मवित्: etc.

3

In times of Pāṇini thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa was worshipped as a God as He is recognised even in the Mahābhārata. From these sūtras it is also clear that devotion to Kṛṣṇa was an established sect as Dahlmann has pointed out. That Pāṇini knew the final recension of this

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1. पाणिनि ४.३.९८

2. पाणिनि ४.३.९९


4.
this epic can be proved from the fact that he mentions the Mahābhārata:

1.  

If Pāṇini knew Mahābhārata, which must have preceded him at least a few centuries, the composition of Jaya and Bhārāta must have been antiquated by that time. But what is the date of Pāṇini? It is known from recent researches in the field, that he must have immediately followed Buddha. His age is believed to be the middle of the fifth century B.C. The words Yavana and Śramaṇa are known to Pāṇini, and hence it is generally held that Pāṇini cannot be earlier than Buddha. In the dialogues of Buddha the word Śramaṇa-brahmana is repeated so many times.

The Siddhānta Kaumudi here says: महाभारते प्रकृत्या ब्रीषाविषु वचसु

Thus the word Mahābhārata is formed.


2. Dr. V. S. Agarwal.

3.
This clearly indicates the currency of the word before Buddha. It was natural for Buddha to use current words, for, after all he was an Indian. The word is found used in the Satapatha Brähmanas, and fortunately it has not been proved, that the portion of the Satapatha where it occurs is a late interpolation. The same is true about the word Yavana. The word is found in the Satapatha. The grounds are thus too frail to put Buddha before Pāṇini.

There is one more reason to think that the Mahabharata long preceded Buddha. Mr. A. J. Karandikar has given this argument in his book. Students of Buddhist India know, that in those times, Licchaviśis were known to eastern India. The Mahābhārata—and not merely Jaya or Bhārata—do not mention the Licchavis at all. If the Buddhist age was the age

1. नैसि. आ. २. ३. ०

2. रात्यवथ आ. ९. ६०. २. ३६

3. वासोराष ऊष्ठ बा by A. J. Karandikar मंगल साहित्य प्रकाशन, पुरे pp. 103, 104.

4. "कुंभकच्छ लाक्षण पूर्विकदुस्सारानां लिङ्खविवाच किती महात्म्य होते, हे कुंभकच्छ लाक्षण्य साङ्ग्य अभ्यासकाना माहित्य असेलेच, पण महाभारतांत त्यांचा नृसता नामविहैत्य कुंभ्वां शाहतेत नाही." -- ibid, p. 103.
age of decline for the Licchavīs, and if we make an allowance of two to three centuries for the rise, prime and decline of the Licchavīs, then the composition of this epic must be sometime in the 7th or 8th century B.C. Dahlmann’s opinion about the antiquity of the epic therefore should find support. Any additions in this work after Buddha are of little consequence, and need not be called as "extension of the epic."  

Different scholars have given different dates to the great war which formed the subject matter of the Mahābhārata. Mr. Wheeler and Lele ascribe it nearly to six thousand B.C.; Mr. Vaidya takes it to be nearly 3100 B.C.; Mr. Tilak, Karandikar and Satiscandra Vidyabhūṣaṇa hold it to be nearly between 1500 to 2000 B.C.; while Mr. Daftari of Nagpur proves it to be 1197 B.C. It is also amply clear that Vyāsa must have had first-hand knowledge of this great battle and he must have started the composition of the epic sometime after the Kauravas and Yādavas perished due to racial feuds and mutual animosities.

If we therefore accept 1500 B.C. to 2000 B.C. as the probable date of the battle we can say that the epic was undergoing recensions for nearly seven centuries.

In the domain of the Mahābhārata one is involved invariably in the controversy represented by Dahlmann and Hopkins. Whether the plan of study of the work is predominantly analytical or synthetical, it will not be disputed that "The Epic needs to be studied as a whole, if one is to understand the pre-conceived ideas into which the Hindu has been born." Prof. Hopkins has made his position clear in his preface to "The Great Epic of India". What Rev. Mr. Dahlmann regards as the original parts of the epics, Prof. Hopkins rejects as additions, because they clearly reflect Buddhist influence. This result obtained from the analytical study may also not be

1. The Mahābhārata, Analysis and Index, p. xii, Preface.
3. p. ix.
be always correct; for it is very difficult to mark out a purely Buddhist element, just because Buddha and his creed were products of Indian soil, which were bound to inherit - consciously or unconsciously - traits of Vedic culture and civilization. If Rev. Dahlmann emphasises the Smṛti element of the text, it may be agreed that writers as late as Saṅkarācārya too have referred to it as Smṛti. But that does not show that Saṅkara took it to be Smṛti in the strict sense of a law-book. In this vast repository of Hindu lore, we have law and philosophy, religion and customs, legends, episodes and discussions on several topics, seeking solutions of various problems of perennial interest to humanity. The plan of study of the lore therefore need not be one, merely to square with vocal formulae.

This must also be true as regards the ethics and philosophy of the Mahābhārata. Any uniform

1. Rānade and Belvalkar have rightly pointed out that, there should be no difficulty in accepting the general view-point of Dahlmann avoiding of course the extreme. Creative Period, pp. 426-427.

2. शाण्भास्मुत्तमवकाष्टद्रोष etc.
uniform verdict about the philosophy and ethics of this epic, as primitive or adolescent or ripe will not do justice to the text as it exists. It exhibits all shades of Indian development upto its time. That is why one reads in it about the practice of promiscuity, as well as the high ideal of burning on funeral pyre of a woman together with her deceased husband. Thus different and even conflicting philosophical ideas too, can find place in this huge record. A tendency to reconcile these ideas in a comprehensive vision is also not wanting. Dr. Rādhākrṣṇan rightly points out, "The Mahābhārata is able to accept different popular beliefs on account of its vaguely felt conviction, that they are all different ways of approaching the one truth." I may only add that, if the conviction is vividly felt even in the oldest Saṁhitās, it need not be vaguely felt in the Mahābhārata, for it is difficult to think of a "conviction" which can be vaguely felt!

1. शेतकेलुक्कणा आद्रिप्य १९३·५-१९
2. माश्री-कथा आद्रिप्य १९६·२५-३९
Looked in this light, certain attempts of assigning fixed notions to particular words and then proceed on to conclusions would not at all be convincing. It is remarked for instance, "There is at least no passage in the epic which says bluntly that Prakṛti is Māyā, as does Śvet. Up. IV, 19." With this notion in mind the author further states, ".... the avidyā of God is clearly an afterthought." It is obvious that the author is trying hard to prove that the word Māyā which originally had the sense only of delusive power, was later on given an additional sense of creative power is ascribed to Avidyā and not to Māyā according to the author. With the evidence of the Lord's song, let us examine this point. The seventh chapter, starts with the description of Prakṛti. This Prakṛti starts from God and hence its three-fold qualities too come from God:

वे चैव सारिवका भावा राजसात्स्तामसक्ष भे।
गत प्रवेति तानु विद्वधि न त्वमं तेषु ते मर्मित ॥

3. महाभारता ७.१२
Prakṛti is said to issue forth the three qualities.

विकारांतः गुणांश्चैव विदृधि प्रकृतिसमवान् ॥

It is then said that, by objects replete with these three qualities, the whole world is deluded from the Lord who is beyond them.

निर्मिर्ग्यमयमाध्येिरि: सर्वद्रिंि जगत्।
मोहितं नामिनामाति मामेष्य: परममयवम् ॥

Immediately after the stanza comes

देवी श्रेष्ठ गुणमयी मम माया दुरस्तथा।

"Inerutable indeed is this my Māyā which is divine and full of qualities."

By this Māyā made up of qualities, lowly people are led away:

1. भगवद्गीता १२.१६
2. भगवद्गीता ७.१२
3. भगवद्गीता ७.१४
Is not all this description tantamount to the statement, "Prakṛti is Māyā"? If there is "no passage in the epic which says bluntly that Prakṛti is Māyā," there are more than one which give no other meaning.

It would, therefore, be difficult to say that the whole of the epic philosophy belonged to a particular creed. It can easily be seen that throughout the epic, the exercise of Indian mind on philosophical problems countenances rather a harmonious blending of several ideas, than a motley crowd of schisms, each asserting itself. An exchange of terms among different ideologies seems to be carried on without any reservation, and it may be, that they were not applied with any sectarian significance. A passage characterising this feature will be fruitful here. It

1. भगवद्गीता ७.१५
2. माया श्रेष्ठ मया सुर्ष्टा चन्द्रमां पश्यसि नार्थां
सर्वसमुपेश्चर्वं नैव तवं शादुमोहिनि॥ शांति. ३ ३९.४४
2. Mr. C. V. Vaidya has given the account of all shades of speculation in the epic of श्रीम-महाभारताः
मराठी भुस भाषात या श्रेष्ठ उपसंहार -
pp. 454-486 (1918 Chipulkar Ed.)
also "Epic India" (Bombay Ed. 1907) pp. 371-407.
It occurs in the dialogue between Janaka Dharmadhvaja the ruler of Mithilā and Sulabhā, an ascetic lady with highly developed Yogic powers. Speaking to her about his pupilage, Janaka says:

यस्माचः केतन्मया प्राप्तं सांव वैशेषिकं पुरा ।
वस्तु नाम: प्रवक्ताः स्ति मोक्षे तत्मये मे श्रुतं ॥

सांव्यसाने तथा योगे महीपालविध्ये तथा ।
त्रिश्चि मोक्षं स्म्या निर्वतात्यथा निन्नंश्च: ॥

शान्देव च बैराग্যं जायते येन मुच्यते ॥
सेवं तारसिका ज्ञ्ञाति: प्राप्तं निर्वतं गया ॥

The terms Sāmkhya, Yoga, Vaiṣeṣika are used here to connote the same philosophical knowledge or system that leads to a state of non-duality - Nirdvandvata. What sort of Sāmkhya can this be a question which has been variously discussed by scholars. Commentators like Nilakaṇṭha interpret Sāmkhya passages in conformity

1. १२.३०८.२३, २५, २९, ३१
conformity with the Advaita, as Dr. Belvalkar has remarked. The remark is suggestive in view of his statement made elsewhere. Says he, "........ the dominating philosophy of the age of the Puranas was Sāmkhya, which was not only theistic, but even pantheistic after the manner of the Bhagavadgītā. This was in fact the "Vedānta" of the period........" This is an obvious attempt to specify the "Vedānta" of the Bhagavadgītā as having doctrinal difference with the Advaita Vedānta that we find in later works. It is acknowledged universally that the Sāmkhya believes in difference between the conscious and the unconscious. It will also be very clear to any student of Indian thought, that there were also thinkers who were not content with this difference as the final statement of speculation. Though this distinction was accepted up to a particular stage, there was always an attempt to seek out a common strata, wherein these contraries merge


merge away and their distinctions are dissolved. This attempt must have been in different ways, giving rise to different conclusions. That some conclusions did exist in the Mahābhārata and others like the Advaitic ones did not, is an opinion that needs closer examination.

Reluctance to accept the existence of the Advaita in the Mahābhārata is perhaps on the ground that the world-order is described abundantly after the manner of the Sāmkhya. But it must not be forgotten, that to a certain extent, Sāmkhya is an inseparable part of the Advaita ideology. It "..... resembles the Sāmkhya-Yoga in regard to its conception of the psychic apparatus." "As regards the nature of the conscious element also, the explanation is almost the same as in the Sāmkhya-Yoga........ The psychical element is viewed as wholly inactive. The activity it manifests only seemingly belongs to it... The element of consciousness is known as Sāksin, and corresponds to the Puruṣa of the Sāmkhya-Yoga."¹ Bearing this fact in mind, we can see that, in its wide implication the term "Pantheistic Sāmkhya" can include the Advaita also.

¹. Prof. Hiriyanna "Indian Philosophy", pp.341, 342, 343.
When it is said that the philosophy of the epic is of Bhedabheda type, there is again a good deal of confusion. Though the term is generally used to specify the thought preached by Bhartṛprapañca, Bhāskara or Nimbārka, it must be remembered that this specification came later. The term Bhedabheda can be applied to any philosophical attempt that wants to explain Bheda and Abheda. Bheda or difference is real in the realm of finite experience, while Abheda or non-difference is real in the realm of Absolute experience. Both are real in their respective fields. Thus unspecified Bhedabheda philosophy can easily include the Advaita, and it will be seen that this thought is not absent in the Mahābhārata. It need not be held, that the negative dialectics found in the Advaita is incompatible with the positive statements about creation, etc. nor is there any need of supposing any genuinely foreign influence, whenever such negative statements are found in the epic. As speculation must start within the realm of finite experience, it must have positivistic expression. But when final solutions could not be had only with that, and when experiences surpassed finitude, they could not be defined by the same terminology. Philo-
Philosophical arguments and expressions thus naturally took a negativistic turn, certainly to posit the Absolute final Reality. Thus the negativistic trend in the Advaita is merely a phase - a joining link - between two positive phases. If this negative element in the Advaita is considered thus, there will be no difficulty in realising that Buddhist thought had no scope to intrude in this scheme. It might be, that emphasis was laid on either of these two modes of expression as the necessity of a particular age demanded; but the positivistic treatment was not lost sight of; rather it was considered essential to posit the final Reality in the end. It was for this reason that a double treatment of the subject is found even in the Upanisads and the Samhitas and if the same is to be seen followed in the Mahabharata, it is but a continuation of the age-long practice. It can be seen that even interpolated chapters of the epic do not show any serious divergence from the general line of Vedic thinking.

From whatever has been said so far, it will be sufficiently clear that we shall not be far from truth, even if we include the so called interpolated
interpolated portions also as representing the general philosophical idea expressed in the Mahābhārata. We may therefore proceed to the Advaitic ideas that we find in this epic. The Supreme Reality or God is thus described:

1. यक्षां सर्वं तत: साधा लोकस्यात्माति कर्त्ते ।
   युं नाम नरस्वते न विनयात् ।
   तथा नित्य: शास्त्रतत्वां निगुणि: न नित्यस्तथा ॥
   अनाविनिधनो बैवस्तथा: भेयोऽयमः
   अश्चययत: हि तविं विव्यात्: शास्त्रतैसः याबहरः ठय: ॥

2. पप्रवर्त्ता गुणानां च संस्कृता मन्येत तथा ।

3. न स्त्रिय गुणान्वापि नर्पुंसकं च ।
   न सन्न चासत्सङ्गं ततः ।
   पशुन्ति यथा त्रृण ब्रह्मचारिको मनुष्या: ॥
   तद्वर्त न भवतीति विदूषि ॥

4. उपरतिःशुद्धिःश्रुतसां सनिपति: ।
   न उऽज्ज्वलसो परम: श्रीरी ॥

5. निगुणं प्रविशति ब्रह्म चाथ्यथम् ।

6. --------------

1. १२.३२६.२१-२२
2. १२.१७५.१२-१२ तथा १२.२१५.४८ / १२.२२४.११
3. १२.१८५.४०
4. १२.१७४.२४
5. १२.१६५.१५
God or Brahman according to these citations is One, eternal, formless, and transcendant. He is the knower of the variety originated by Gunas; the conscious principle. He is immutable, unmanifest, without a beginning or an end. He cannot be called a Being or a non-Being, both these words inadequate to describe Him. He is unknowable. He is neither a man nor a woman. He is unborn and deathless. He is not involved in the phenomena of creation, sustenance and destruction of the world; He is thus transcendant.

7. १२.२०२.२१ C/. १२.२०२.२२ / १२.२०२.१२
8. १२.२२४.४५
9. १२.२९२.३-४
10. १२.२९०.७५-७६
And yet He is the creator of the world. Though without qualities, He creates the world out of Himself with the help of qualities, even as a spider weaves out a web by issuing fibres from itself. Before creation the unchangeable aspect of the Brahman is thus described:

अनाधन्तमजं विद्यमजं धुममठयमृ।
अप्रतवर्यमविशेषं ब्रह्मांगे समक्तत॥

But this very Brahman somehow becomes the creator:

सुजते च महद्वृद्धं तस्मादू व्यक्तात्मं मनः
ब्रह्म तेजोमयं उक्रं यस्य चर्मपिंवं जगतः ॥
एकस्य मूर्त्तं मूर्तस्य द्वयं स्थावरसंगमम्।
अहं निते विद्वचः सनू सुजते विधया जगतः ॥
अभ्यं पव महामूर्तमात्र त्वस्यात्मं मनः ॥

| 1.  | १२.२२४.११  |
| 2.  | १२.२२४.२१-२५  |
God creates the cosmic mind, and that impelled by the desire of creation brings forth the world. From it come out evolutes like Ākāśa etc.

Himself unborn, He creates, Gods, Rshis, men etc.

The Lord creates and also pervades the whole Universe:

1. हि सर्वेणु भूतेषु जंगमेषु ध्वेषु च
2. भस्तनेन्द्रेण महानात्मा एन सर्वाधिक तत्तमः ॥
3. सर्वते पाणिपादान्तः सर्वतेश बिशिरणासमुक्तः ॥
4. तस्सते भुतिरिक्तोऽक्षरमेव तत्तवदेवोऽपि महात्मः ॥
5. तदन्नते सर्वत्वात श्रवे तिष्ठतेन दृढ़तेः ॥
6. तद्वेजीयं परं श्रवं तच्चस्वतमुत्तमम् ॥
7. एवं सर्वाधिक भूतानि श्रवे प्रतिसंवरः ॥

1. १२.२२४.४५
2. १२.२३१.२
3. १२.२३१.२९-३०
4. १२.२३५.१४
All objects of creation are noting but Brahman or God. There is nothing beyond Him. There are thus two aspects of the Supreme Reality, the unchangeable and the changeful. These are distinctly mentioned:

द्वावात्मानो च येदेव सिद्धान्तोष्वप्युढाहतो।
देव ब्रह्मणि वेचित्तवे। ......  

शबरं च शरं च येव भेरीमायोः भयात्मन।
शरं सर्वें बुद्धेयु विद्वं भर्तुतचर्म। ||

विद्यविवाचतत्त्वेन मयोक्तं ते विशेषत।।
शबरं च शरं च येव याबुकं तत्त्विवोधम शे।
उमाकेतौ शरावुकतौ उमाकेतौ च न वभर।
कारणं शु प्रवह्यायम यथा स्थातो शु तत्त्व।।

1. १२.२२८-३०
2. १२.२२६-६० / १२.२६२-१
3. १२.२३१.३१ Cf. १२.२३५.११
4. १२.२९५.१०-११
This is the echo of the Upaniṣadic doctrine etc. etc. But behind all the variety, all diversity, the supreme self, God remains hidden:

1. एवं सर्वेण भूतेषु गुड़क्षरतिः संबुज्यते।
   दृष्टे त्वं भ्रमणा बुद्धिः श्रुतमया तत्तवविरिमि॥

2. एवं सर्वेण भूतेषु गुडोऽस्तमा न प्रकाश्ते।
   दृष्टे त्वं भ्रमणा बुद्धिः श्रुतमया तत्तवविरिमि॥

Independent of God the world is spoken of thus:

3. यद्वै कर्मसंसर्गः कर्मणां च फलोऽयः।
   तदनावसानं मोघं विनाशिः चलमाण्यम्॥

4. दृष्टव्यमाने विनाशे च प्रत्येके लोकसायिने।

5. सवैः लोकश्रमन्तव्यं॥

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1. १२.१८०.२६
2. १२.२३४.५
3. १२.२१२.२१
4. १२.२११.२२
5. १२.२१७.५ also १२.२१९.५
सर्व काल: समावते ..... ।

आत्मना विप्रहीणानि काष्ठकुक्त्वत्समानि व ।
विनश्यति न सन्देहः केना इव महाध्वे ॥

अपि केनेऽपि लोकं विज्ञोमांशाश्वेतवृत्तम् ।
चिरमित्सितीकामं नलसारणनर्मकम् ॥
तम: स्वभावं हुष्टवा कश्चुदःसांत्निनम् ।
नाशप्रायं हुष्टादु हों नाशोवर्णवानम् ॥

जग्न्योहत्यं प्राहुरणवक्तं तत्वकसांतकम् ॥

सर्वं श्र्यान्ता निर्वचा: पतना: न्ता: भूष्णान्या: ।
संयोगा विप्रयोगान्ता मरणान्त्य हि जीवितम् ॥

The above passages want to assert that the world is darkness, full of ignorance. It is futile,
unstable, fleeting. It is enveloped by the Māyā of the Lord. It is evanescent, subject to death and destruction. It is like froth and bubble that would evaporate in no time. It appears temporarily on the screen of mind and vanishes. As related to God, the world is nothing but His creation living in and through Him. Beyond God there is nothing. Thus there are two standpoints. From a higher level it is said that the world is essenceless. All the objects, though seem to exist really do not exist.

The Supreme self has really no qualities. How then can objects, the outcome of Gunas, be issued from Him? Objects full of qualities really proceed from the Gunas, and they are again resolved into the Gunas. The objects thus proceed from objects, organs from organs, bodies from bodies, seed from seed.

1. १२-२३-३२-३३
न प्रणाशोऽस्ति जीवानां वस्त्रेऽ च कुतस्त्र्य च।  
याति वेहान्तं प्राणी शरीरं तु विशीर्ये। II

स्वतन्त्रयोगे वेशेवत्त्या पुष्चेद्विन्नृथसमागतः।  
वेहुभुध्युत्त्रृत्ये याति तथेवाचोऽपलब्धते॥

तत्स्वतं वेहेनित्त्याहुर्विष्णुसंस्त्रा० ऋष्ट्यमचिन्तङ्कः॥

All these show that the individual soul is separated from the body, though hidden in it, unobserved by ignorant people. He moves from body to body according to the fruition of his actions. By discrimination austerities, righteousness, etc. however, it is possible for this limited soul to shed his limits gradually and be one with the Supreme soul, the Absolute.

यथा यथा च पर्यन्ति लोकांतःसारकः।  
तथा तथा विरागोऽश्र जाते नात्र संख्यः॥
One gets dejected at the world when he finds it to be mere emptiness, and then he develops dispassion. There is a description of the life of a recluse in XII.185.3. By renunciation, concentration etc. one is to know that his soul is essentially the Supreme Self, who has pervaded all the sentient and insentient objects of the world.

स हि सर्वे भुवेऽद प्रवेशु भवेऽद
चरस्ये च महानात्मा चेन सर्वनिः लतमु "

This doctrine, it must be noted, is quite different from the subjective idealism of western philosophers. When an individual sees this all-pervading Supreme Ātmān in himself as well as in the objective world, he attains Brahman. He becomes immortal when he sees Ātmān, here, beyond and everywhere.

सर्वमृतेऽ चात्मां सर्वभूतानि चात्मानि।
यदा पश्यति भूतात्मा श्रृंग संपथते तदा "
याबानात्मानि चेयात्मा ताबानात्मा परात्मानि।
य एवं सत्तं वै वै श्रृंगश्वरवाय कहूः पे।

1. १२.२३१.२०
2. १२.२३१.२१-२२
This truth is unknown to ordinary mortals, and hence the trouble:

अनात्म्य सात्मनो मृत्युः कथेषे मृत्युर्जराम्यः।
आत्मानं मन्न्ते योहान्तलस्म्यक्षयं मतम्॥

ममत्वेनावृत्ते नित्यं तत्त्रैव परिवर्तते॥

Taking oneself to be a limited being an ordinary man runs after temporary enjoyments and goes on the eternal round of birth and death:

तृष्णावबृद्धं जगत् सर्वं चक्षुक्तिपरिवर्तिति्।

When one sheds good as well as evil and all such duals, he attains the end:

श्रीमे च पुण्ये विगते च पापे।
ततो निमित्ते च फले विनष्टे।
अलेपमाक्षमिनिंगमेवम्।
आस्थायं पश्यन्ति महो बसवतः॥

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1. १२.२१२.२३  2. १२.२९२.३८

3. १२.२१०.३२  4. १२.२१२.४६
यदा संहरते कामानु कृपामेंगानीस्वर्धसः ।
तत्वात्मन्योतिरत्तमा च शात्तमन्येव प्रसीछाः ॥
इमें सत्यातृत्वात्मक्तवा श्रोकान्ति भवायणेऽ।
प्रियार्घिये परित्यज्य प्रश्नात्तात्मा मविष्यसि ॥

By different methods aspirants are said to be able to reach the goal:

मनः प्राप्ये निर्गुणीयातु प्राप्यं प्रहुमणि धारयेतु ॥
निविर्यावेष्टन निवेषणे न च किंचिद निविर्यावेष्टत्रु।
सुभूने जै द्राहुमणो द्रहमस स जै तेनाविगुण्डति ॥

निर्हन्द्रा नित्यसत्तव्य विबुक्ता नित्यमाक्षिता: ॥
तत्र स्वाध्यायसत्तस्तमेकात्र धारणेनमः ॥

हुनेन तेन सुभूक्तो रस्यनिय ध्यानकर्मोऽि
गुण्डतिर वोरिनो हेषव निवेषण तन्निरामयम्बः ॥

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1. १२.१८४०.४२
2. १२.१८४२.१५-१६
3. १२.१८४२.४-५
4. १२.१८४८.२२
यत्तेकाशब्रह्मनानाद्वूपं प्रदृश्यते।  
शाश्वरिष्णुदे तस्मिन प्रतिपदो तदद्भवयम्॥

षड्विक्षोऽहमिति प्राणो शुभमाणोऽजरामरः।  
केवलेन केवलं समताय वात्यसंशययम्॥

यें पारमिकाबदृशः प्राप्तं निर्भन्दता मया।  
समयं भविति निर्भन्दो ब्रह्म संपन्ते तदा॥

This is the end of all philosophical quest  
according to the Advaita, and this is attained by dif-  
fferent methods under different circumstances, but there  
seems to be a conviction that all such methods should  
ultimately lead to right knowledge, which alone can  
bring about final liberation.

\[\begin{align*}
1. & \ 12.211.12 \\
2. & \ 12.216.16 \\
3. & \ 12.308.31 \\
4. & \ 12.312.36
\end{align*}\]
All the cardinal tenets of the Advaita philosophy are thus laid down here.

We proceed now to a universally famous portion of the epic, the Bhagavadgītā. This treatise of over seven hundred verses has engaged the attention of eminent people ancient and modern, belonging to varied walks of life. It would be impossible to recount even briefly, the huge mass of Gītā literature that has been produced in almost every principle language of the world. There is no want even of Advaitic writings on this book. As regards the Advaitic thought of this song, we may note the following.

It has been already referred to that the deductions of Sāmkhya are not recognised by the epic as

1. 12.306.1
2. 12.306.24
as the final verdict of speculation. On three issues, the Sāmkhya thread was picked up and carried further. (a) As pointed out above the Prakṛti of the Sāmkhya or its manifestation is held as the Māyā of the Lord, and (b) the Puruṣa or the individual percipient is essentially the non-qualified Absolute reality, to which creativity of the world etc. is relegated through ignorance. (c) Though the changeful aspect of the Supreme is found in the Gītā as well as in the epic, it is clearly told that the non-qualified Absolute nature is Its real nature. These indeed are the pronouncements of the Advaita also. Let us now see how they are enunciated in the Gītā:

शब्दक्रतादृ शब्दक्रतः सर्वं प्रमवन्त्यहरागमे।

विकारां सूचु गुणां सूचिविविधं प्रकृतिसंमयान।
कार्यकरणकर्तृतवेहैं प्रकृतिर्हन्ते।

So everything is issued out from Prakṛti.

But this Prakṛti is subservient to the Lord.

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1. गीता ८.१८
2. गीता १३.१९-२०
This Prakrti is the Mâyā of the Lord:

This Mâyā cheats the world:

With the help of Mâyā God manifests Himself:

Purusa the individual percipient is essentially God:

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1. Gītā 6.6
2. Gītā 6.14
3. Gītā 6.13
4. Gītā 4.6
5. Gītā 15.6
6. Gītā 13.21-22
The individual percipient is not everytime newly originated. It is essentially eternal.

This eternal principle in fact is the ultimate truth, from which the whole manifestation seems to proceed. The root principle however remains un-impaired:

This immortal principle which is beyond the Prakrti - the transcendent. Knowing it a person attains immortality:

1. गीता २.२४
2. गीता ८.२०
This transcendant principle is always remembered in the Gita in spite of its other aspects such as the pervader of Prakriti, or Jīva or the world, or the creator of all these. These agencies are relegated to God through ignorance. They really do not belong to Him. He seems to possess all these qualities though He is away from them:
An individual is asked to shed the limits of ignorance and know this principle the self of all:

It will be evident from the above that the individual soul is really the Supreme and to realise its Supreme nature is his goal. The nature of the Supreme and that of the individual clearly exhibit Advaitic conceptions. About the world we have seen, that it is erroneously supposed as the creation of God. So some element of error is responsible for the origination of the world. A significant description of creation by the analogy of an inverted Bo-tree is found in the fifteenth chapter. It is

1. गीता ८.३

2. गीता १३.१४-१६ Cf. गीता १५.१६-१७

3. गीता ६.२९
is advised that this tree must be cut root and branch, to go beyond the duals and attain the imperishable abode. The tree has no beginning and no end. It has no ground also:

न रूपस्येह तथा पल्लव्ये नान्तो न च चारिन्व च सम्प्रतिष्ठा।

If the tree has no ground to grow on, how really should it exist at all? Its existence should therefore be an illusion. The same point is hinted at, when it is said that there is nothing beyond the Lord while the Lord Himself is never born. Later thinkers seem to have categorised this thought by giving an appellation as Ajātivāda, but the thought is clear in the Gītā. The philosophical exposition of the Gītā and hence the Mahābhārata takes its stand on the dictum.

शविकारितम् सत्यं ... ... ... ... ॥

or

सत्यं नामाद्वयं नित्यविकारित तथैव च।

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1. Gītā 15.3
2. Gītā 12.15.6.3 B.O.R.I.
3. Gītā 12.15.6.10 B.O.R.I.
and explains everything else not as Absolute truth, but as something manifesting on it. If the Absolute Truth is thus unchanging and immutable, whatever is changeful and mutable must be not - Truth. Such is the world described in the Gītā with the analogy of a tree. The same analogy is repeated in the Anugītā:

\[\text{शष्ठ्यक्तयोजप्रमो बुधिदस्तःधमयो महान्} \]
\[\text{महाहार्कर्विप इन्द्रयांधुरकोटा} \]

\[\text{शष्ठ्यक्तयोनिप्रमो बुधिदस्तःधमयो महान्} \]
\[\text{महाहार्कर्विप इन्द्रयांधुरकोटा} \]

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1 In consideration whether Anugītā is an interpolation or not Mr. Telang observes, "I own that on balancing the probabilities on the one side and the other, my mind rather leans to the hypothesis of one author making a slip in the plexus of his own story within story, rather than the hypothesis of a deliberate interpolator forgetting the actual scheme of the original work into which he was about to foist is own additions." "......... the connexion of the several chapters of the Anugītā one with the other is not altogether a loose one, save at one or two places only, while they are linked on to the main body of the narrative...." "The Bhagavadgītā with the Sanatsujātiya and the Anugītā" S.B.E. Vol. VIII by K. T. Telang, 1898, pp. 205, 206.

2. अनुगीता आस्त्र्यनेशिकापर्यं ५५.२० चित्राङ्काला Ed.

2. आस्त्र्यनेशिक ४५.१२
What follows mostly resembles the description in
the Gītā. In another place the creation is compared
with an impenetrable forest :

संक्लपंदिशमंकं श्रोकर्ष्यं हिमातपम् ।
मोहा=धकारतिमिरं लोकध्वाधिरिप्रसमलपम् ॥
विषयाकात्याख्यातवांं कामक्रोधविरोधकम्।
तदत्तित्त यदां महावेन प्रविष्टों स्म महदू चनम् ॥

Mohāndhakāratimiram is a significant word to show that
the world is all blinded by ignorance. It is all
created by insurmountable ignorance :

क्रियासकारापं सुंदरकं रागचित्तारमातम्।
लोपयत्यापिरिविबोऽ विचिन्तासानंसोमवम् ॥

It is all bound up by mind and senses and
meets destruction in the end :

विधिसारं मनस्मृभविनन्दिण्यप्रातानव=चनम् ॥

\[1. \ \text{अश्वमेधिक} \ २६.१-२
2. \ \text{अश्वमेधिक} \ ४५.६
3. \ \text{अश्वमेधिक} \ ४५.१\]
It is knowledge alone that is eternal and one must attain that by which he would attain a state beyond death:

A Jñānin should look at the world not from the worldly standpoint, but as an emanation from the Supreme:

1. आश्वमेधिक ॥४४.२०-२१
2. आश्वमेधिक ॥४४.२१
3. आश्वमेधिक ॥४३.२३-२४
An ordinary Jiva does not know this, and hence he goes from body to body:

When one is not so deluded, and when he attains right knowledge, he becomes Brahman:

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1. _A postpone_  २८.२२
2. _A postpone_  १६.३४
3. _A postpone_  २५.१८/४७.५
4. _A postpone_  ३२.४२ This stanza agrees not only in spirit but _also_ in arrangement of words with _Gaudapadapadaparikā_ ॥
5. _A postpone_  ४६.७६-७८
Thus the individual becomes Brahman the eternal Reality, which is described almost in the same way as we have seen elsewhere in this epic:

About the Anugītā the Mahābhārata informs us

1. आध्वमेथिक ५१.३५  २. आध्वमेथिक १९.१४
2. आध्वमेथिक २६.८  ५. आध्वमेथिक १८.२६
3. आध्वमेथिक २५.१६  ६. आध्वमेथिक २८.२२
4. आध्वमेथिक ३४.७
us that it is the Gītā retold. We need not discuss the historicity of this legend, but it is true, that in account and in spirit it is very similar to the Bhagavadgītā. Though to a certain extent it accepts the Sāmkhya idea of the world-order in many chapters, it has not failed to lay down the Absolute Advaitic standpoint. I may refer to two more chapters from the epic, the following being one from the Vanaparva. The subject matter of this dialogue between Dharmavyādha and Kausika is the same as we have been discussing so far.

The Sāmkhya theory is partly enumerated in chapter 201 stanzas 15-20, and chapter 202 stanzas 2-5. The individual soul persists the destruction of the body:


न जीवनाशोभिस्ति हि देहेः

मिथ्यैतवाहुश्रियते सिमुः


1. Cf. Chapters 36 - 38, etc. Chapter 50.

2. वनपर्व २००.२६ B.O.R.I. Ed.
That an individual has to run these rounds is because he allows his mind to be led by the senses:

इन्द्रियाणि हि चरतां चन्मनोऽदुर्विद्योऽयते।
तदस्य हर्ते ब्रुद्ध्विन्दुः नायं वायुरिविवाप्तसि॥

So the senses are to be controlled just as a skilled charioteer would control the horses:

रथः शरीरं युक्तस्य इव त्याज्यं नियतन्त्रित्याणवाहं अहर्नान्।
तैराप्रमत्त: कुशली सत्यवेदान्ते: युस्म याति रघुव धोरः॥

By practising such a control of senses, and by righteous behaviour one is able to attain Brahmanhood:

इन्द्रियाणि निरोधे सत्येन च वरेन च।
ब्रह्मण: पवमाध्याति यत्तिरं बिज्जतम॥

The highest state is to be attained by bringing home to ourselves the truth that the creation is really non-existent:

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१. वनपर्व २०२.२४

२. वनपर्व २०२.२१

३. वनपर्व २००.५२
From the Absolute standpoint the world really does not exist. What really exists is hidden by the appearance. It can only be seen by men of penetrating sight:

This Atman is the final reality, the eternal Brahman, the Supreme Purusa:

When an individual attains Brahthood, he is never overtaken by evils:

1. वनपर्वः २०६.२५
2. वनपर्वः २०३.२४
3. वनपर्वः २०२.१६
4. वनपर्वः २०२.१६
Thus the attainment of Brahmanhood is through right knowledge, which eradicates the sense of duality from one's mind and makes him happy.

The Sanatsujātīya is a passage from the Udyoga-parvan of the Mahābhārata. Scholars are of opinion, "that the connexion of the Sanatsujātīya with the central story of that epic is very loose indeed; and that it might have been entirely omitted without occasioning any aesthetical or other defect." But as the handling of the subject is a manner similar to that of Bhagavatgītā, "the position of the Sanatsujātīya is...

1. वनपर्व २०२.१४
2. वनपर्व २०६.१९ Cf. २०२.५०
Sanatsujātiya in Sanskrit literature, seems to point to nearly the same period and place for it as for the Bhagavatgītā." The philosophy of this text is in strict conformity with that of the Upanisads. Mere rituals or Vedas are not enough to lift one from the tangle of Māyā. It is knowledge alone that would bring final release. Such is the statement of the Sanatsujāta:

न छंदांसि द्विजनात्तार्यन्ति ।
मायाविन मायया कर्तमानम् ॥

श्रद्धैव चिन्तास्तेन अम्बेति सर्वम्
नान्यः पन्था अवनाय विधते ॥

Knowledge is thus conducive in bringing the annihilation of Death. The Death of a learned man perishes within the sense-objects, even as a mortal perishes when he attains sense-pleasures:


2. तवोगपर्व ५.५२.१

3. ६.४४.१६
He indeed is a great seer who knows the Imperishable:

God is the Soul of all beings. He rises from His own Self.

The innermost of all, the Ātman transcends all:

And the universe is imperishable, therefore, sire, to those who know the essence of the universe.

Verse 1: 6.42.14 2. 6.43.29
Verse 2: 6.49.29 3. 6.49.26
न तारकाष्ठु न च विद्वानांगिन्म न चाश्रीषु हुस्यते रूपमस्य।
न चापि वायो न च पैदालि न तत्तन्मे हुस्यते नोत सुवें॥

न सादृश्येव तिष्ठति रूपमस्य - - - - २

On this Aksāra principle are seen the origination, sustenance and destruction of the creation. It is all a verbal modification:

सा प्रतिष्ठा तदनं लोकास्तदृश्रूस्तं तथा: ३
भूतानि जसीरे तस्मात् प्रवृत्तं यान्ति तत्र च॥

अनामिं तन्यहुदां यथा ।
वाचो विकारान्त्वक्तयो च वाचनि।
तत्स्मिज्जगतः सर्वमिं प्रतिष्ठितं।
ये तदु विद्वृत्तास्ते भवन्ति॥

1. ५.४४.२०
2. ५.४५.६
3. ५.४४.२३-२४
The world thus has no absolute existence. Indeed there is nothing beyond the infinite. Infinite creation proceeds from and sustained by the Infinite in the back-ground, and It remains unaffected even after the creation is dissolved.

This Infinite is beyond all duals, all limits. One must therefore strive to break these fetters for Its attainment.

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1. ५.७६.१०.
2. ५.७२.२१
3. ५.७४.४
It need not be reiterated after a perusal of these pages, that the Vedānta of the Mahābhārata did not exclude from its compass the Advaita Vedānta.