

Research Article

Meta Physics Of Samkhya-Yoga: An Analytical Study

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ABSTACT

The Samkhya system of Kapila is said to have been existing during the seventh century B.C.E. However, the earliest available text on this philosophy is the commentary by Isvara Krishna of the third century C.E. The system is most notable for its theory of evolution and for its reduction of the numerous categories of Nyāya and Vaisesika to two fundamental ones, namely, purusha and prakriti, the former being understood as Universal Awareness and the latter as Universal energy. Prakriti is often translated as “Nature.” However, it is clear from the writing that the wider and larger definition of creative energy is what is meant by Kapila when he uses it. For him, “Nature” is part of the Universal Energy.

KEY WORDS: samkhya-yoga, metaphysics, arguments, constituents.

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘Samkhya’ occurs in the Svetasvatara Upanishad and there it is stated that the Supreme Reality is to be achieved by Samkhya and Yoga. In the Mahabharata, Drona is said to breathe his last by having recourse to the Supreme Samkhya. From the context it appears that in both the places the term has been used in the sense of ‘Spiritual Discipline’. Sankaran in his commentary on the Vishnu Sahasranama quotes a verse from the Vyasa Smrti which defines Samkhya to be the knowledge of the true nature of the self. The term is derived from ‘Samkhya’ which usually means ‘Number’. Hence, some try to maintain that the system of Kapila is called ‘Samkhya’ as ‘Enumeration’ plays an important part in it; for in the history of Indian philosophical speculation the system of Kapila for the first time is found to enumerate its different categories. This view is based upon conjecture and we are not inclined to attach sufficient weight to it. The theory of number, as set forth by Pythagoras cannot throw any light upon this point which is discussed by Dr. Keith and others. Samkhya’ if derived from ‘Samkhya’ (number) would naturally mean something pertaining to number, and in this sense, it is used even in the Mahabhasya of Patanjali. The term thus derived may well serve its purpose in grammatical speculations. But it has very little to do with any philosophical enquiry. Apart from denoting ‘Number’, the term ‘Samkhya’ has got other meanings also. In the Sulabha Janaka episode of the Mahabharata, Samkhya is mentioned as one of the essential requisites of a sentence and Sulabha defines it as ‘the principle which establishes by proof the defect and merit of a particular aspect in a sentence Patanjali uses the term ‘Prasamkhyana’ in his ‘Yoga Sutra’ in the sense of ‘Supreme Knowledge’.

In the Yoga Sutra Bhasya also we find the same term used in the same sense. Kautilya in his Arthashastra mentions both ‘Samkhya’ and ‘Yoga’, and describes them to be the ‘Anviksiki’, i.e. the systems which try to establish defects and merits of something by means of reasoning. In the above-mentioned places Samkhya means one who is possessed of Samkhya i.e. ‘Perfect Knowledge’. In

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conclusion, we intend to maintain that 'Samkhya' which passes for a philosophical system is derived from 'Samkhya' that means knowledge, contemplation, examination, discussion, investigation, discrimination etc. The system of Kapila is called 'Samkhya' as it is more or less endowed with all these attributes. The system of Kapila was formulated at an age when the performance of the Vedic sacrifices was in full swing and the popular belief was that the correct performances of a sacrifice in accordance with the prescribed injunction would surely lead the performer to Heaven. To the Vedic priest, Heaven was the summum bonum of life. But Samkhya offers a challenge and comes forward to show that Heaven cannot be regarded as such and along with it points out the defects of the Vedic sacrifices. The Samkhya Karika bears testimony to this. In the Upanishadic speculations, the monistic tone is predominant and the central interest lies upon the 'Brahman' or the 'Atman'. The seers try to find out the Ultimate Reality in various ways and in their discussions, we meet with here and there such ideas as may be taken to be the four-runners of the Samkhya thought. The Bhagavad Gita, furnishes us here and there with some valuable information about the contemporary Samkhya. It speaks of the different types of the gunas and their functions. But the ethical interest is predominant everywhere. In good many instances, the Epic faithfully follows the traditional Samkhya. But the most serious deviation being in the case of the doctrine of Brahman as the one Universal soul which the ordinary Samkhya cannot approve at any rate, the doctrine of the twenty-sixth principle as found in the exposition of the philosophy of Vasistha and Yajnavalkya forms the part and parcel of the Samkhya Yoga School. Both Asuri and Pancasikha, who are held as reputed teachers of Samkhya even by the Orthodox School, are found to advocate the doctrine of Brahman as the one Universal Soul with whom the individual souls are united at the time of liberation.

The word 'Yoga' occurs in the Rg. Veda in association with the word 'ksema' signifying a polarity of meaning associated with it. For instance, seer Arti prays to Indra to provide him with nourishment in the state of ksema and be around him in the state of Yoga.⁹ Similarly, Gods, including particularly Varuna, have been prayed by Vasistha to become auspicious to seers in the state of Yoga and ksema.¹⁰ Being derived from the root 'ksi', 'to dwell', the word 'ksema' is related to the state of conservation and while being derived from 'yuj' 'to yoke', 'Yoga' signifies, 'yoking', 'movement' and dynamics'. Accordingly, in its other usages, the word 'Yoga' is intimately connected with 'yoking of horses to the chariot'. The widespread use of the word 'Yoga' in connection with the yoking of chariot in the Veda along with its nuances of meaning, inclining particularly to mind and its control, is sufficient to suggest that the accounts of yoking of the chariot and fighting etc., are not so much physical in their import as they are spiritual, relating particularly to the course of sadhana involved in the practice of Yoga, no matter of whatever variety but involving basically the idea of tending to and realizing the potentialities of the Self in all its ramifications.

OBJECTIVES: 1. To Gain the Knowledge on Samkhya Yoga Metaphysics

SAMKHYA-YOGA

The Samkhya and the Yoga are so much inter-related in the Sanskrit literature that whenever any occasion arises of explaining or referring to the tenets and doctrines of the Samkhya, those of the Yoga also are not generally overlooked. The two systems do not vary in their essentials. The Samkhya lays emphasis upon knowledge which is regarded as the only means for attaining to the Supreme Reality, whereas the Yoga gives its wholehearted support to meditation by which the mind is progressively stilled and thus gradually became fit for achieving the Supreme Stage. The former is specially, busy with the theoretical investigation whereas the latter deals with the practical side. Speaking briefly, the two systems are nothing but the concave and convex side of the same sphere. The main difference between the Samkhya and the Yoga, as it is generally known, lies in the fact that the former is regarded as atheistic while the latter is known to be theistic. The Mahabharata mentioned the Samkhya and the Yoga as two eternal systems of thought. But the most ancient works of the Yoga School like those of the Samkhya have not come down to us. It is interesting to observe that the Ahirbudhnya calls the vast treatise of Hiranyagarbha as 'Yoganusasanam' and Patanjali also begins

his work with the Sutra 'atha yoganusasanam'. Again, of the two works of Hiranyagarbha, as the Ahirbudhnya informs us, Patanjali also emphasizes. Neronha in the first chapter of his work; for he defines 'Yoga' as the suppression of the function of the mental modifications (yogascittavrtti-nirodhah). This is not all; but clear traces of some of the items of the Neronha Samhita with its twelve sections are also left in the Yoga Sutra. Remarkable dependence of the Yoga Sutra on the vast literature of Hiranyagarbha tends to suggest that Patanjali was an adherent of the Hiranyagarbha School of the Yoga. Though he had been highly influenced by the so-called treatise of Hiranyagarbha, yet his manner of treatment is unique in itself. Even in the midst of depicting the principles of the Yoga, he speaks of the fundamental principles of the Samkhya whenever any necessity arises and thus, we find that both the theory and practice find equal importance in his treatise.

The Yoga Bhasya sheds further light in this connection. It explains the aphoristic statements of Patanjali in a dignified manner and sets out the results of the theoretical discussions and practical discipline in such a way as speaks of its subtle power of observation. The theoretical discussions are so informative that the views of the particular School of the Samkhya which he represents therein would have otherwise remained almost unknown to us. Speaking briefly, Patanjali and specially the author of the Bhasya may be better regarded as the exponents of the Samkhya Yoga School. There are different varieties of Yoga, such as the Raja Yoga, Mantra Yoga and Hatha Yoga etc., and Patanjali emphasizes the Samadhi Yoga only and disapproves the rest. Discussions on the occult powers and the method of attending them find a prominent place in the literature of the so-called forms of the Yoga and philosophical interest is almost conspicuous by its absence therein. Kapila, the great sage, is regarded as the profounder of Samkhya. In the Samkhya tradition, he is held to be the first among the wise (adi-vidvan) and he appears at the beginning of each cycle of creation. Virtue, wisdom, dispassion and power are natural to him and he is the foremost of the siddhas. His perfection (siddhi) is regarded as an instance of what is called janma-siddhi i.e., he was endowed with perfection from the very moment of his birth. It is stated that out of compassion he imparted the knowledge of Samkhya to Asuri, his first disciple. In the hierarchy of the Samkhya teachers, Pancasikha comes next to Asuri from whom he is said to have obtained the knowledge of Samkhya. Like Kapila and Asuri he is also portrayed mythologically in the Puranas

SAMKHYA YOGA METAPHYSICS

Samkhya is a qualitative dualism of spirit and matter (purusa and prakriti). By matter, we should not understand the matter of contemporary Physics, but the Physics of the Greek thinkers, for whom it meant some primeval stuff or material, that is a becoming, and that constitutes everything from inorganic matter to mind, all of which constantly goes through change. Even our mind and reason (buddhi) are not above change. The world of change or transformation is one, not many, and is called prakriti. By itself it is absolutely unconscious. Opposed to it is the purusa, which is pure consciousness. We may say that the purusa is conscious or that it is consciousness which is also our existence; both mean the same for the Samkhya. Somehow, the purusa comes into contact with prakriti and throws the reflections of its consciousness into it. Although prakriti is one, the purusa are many and infinite in number.

Therefore, an infinite number of reflections are thrown into it. Prakriti begins to evolve the world. And since prakriti is the same and has its own structure, the objective world it evolves for all the purusas is the same. Thus, communication between one purusa and another is made possible through the identity of prakriti. Both dualism and atheism in clear and vivid forms are visible in the Classical Samkhya. The complete passivity and disinterestedness of purusa and the acceptance of trigunamayee prakriti as the independent cause of all inner and outer manifestations of the world are the important characteristics of the Classical Samkhya. In the original Theistic Samkhya, the dual principles of purusa and prakriti are recognized, but both of them are supposed to constitute parts or powers of the Supreme Spiritual Being. Non- recognition of this Ultimate Uniting Principle is an important feature of the Classical Samkhya which has developed on a purely atheistic line. Purusa of Samkhya is always

passive. It is never held to be the agent. All activities are attributed to prakrti which has got the three gunas as its constituents. Cause and effect are therefore nothing but the different modes of the gunas. Causality is explained by the doctrine of satkarya which is a distinctive feature of this system. Unlike the Buddhists and the Naiyayikas, the Samkhyans are of the opinion that the effect is real and it is always existent. It is not an entirely new production; it exists in its cause in a latent form even before its production.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE SAMKHYA YOGA METAPHYSICS

Every manifested entity presupposes a cause. From the Samkhya doctrine of causation (satkaryavada), it follows that the effect is more developed than the cause. Even an effect becomes a cause with respect to its further manifestation. For instance, the lump of clay is the effect of the gross element of earth while it becomes a cause with respect to the jar - its further manifestation. Similarly, the gross element of earth which is the cause of the lump of clay becomes an effect of the subtle element of earth and so on. If this series of cause and effect be minutely examined it is found that the effects beginning with the gross element of earth, and ending downwards into the jar are becoming more and more developed. In the series beginning from the lump of clay and ending upwards into the subtle elements of earth what happens is quite reverse of the former. Here in the ascending order, the degree of manifestation is gradually diminishing. In this way, if we continue to proceed upward with the causal series a stage will finally come when the cause will become totally unmanifested. The Samkhya teachers equate that stage with their prakrti. The pitcher has its cause in the shape of the lump of clay. It has got the gross element of earth as its cause and that again in its turn has got the subtle element of earth as such, and so on. Hence, in order to avoid a regressus ad infinitum the Samkhya teachers postulate the existence of prakrti which is held to be the uncaused cause of all entities, whether physical or psychical. It is the final substratum of all empirical realities.

In the Yukti Dipika, the problem is treated more philosophically. It states that the cause and effect are not ontologically different. What was subtle and undifferentiated is called effect when it becomes manifest and differentiated. But when the effect loses its differentiation and remains undivided and undistinguished, it is then looked upon as the cause. In pursuing this apparently unending chain of cause and effect the philosopher has got to cry halt and stop at a state in which all possible differentiation has become defunct, all change into diversity has become arrested and all its energies become quiescent and cease to operate in the teleological order as means end as subsidiary and supreme. This state of the causal matter cannot be characterized as existent or non-existent, because existence is ordinarily considered to be concomitant with teleological evolution, nor it is non-existent, for it cannot be absolutely rejected like the lotus in the sky. This state of absolute quiescence in which all movement and change are absolutely homogeneous and uniform is the final and ultimate reality than which nothing subtler¹⁴ can possibly be imagined. This ultimate state of causal matter is the primus of the whole physical, biological and psychical order of being. It is the uncaused cause, and is the first term in the causal series.

CONSTITUENTS

For Samkhya 'prakrti is the name given to the three gunas, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas in a state of equilibrium. The guna theory is the most distinguishing characteristic of the Samkhya system. According to this theory, all mental and material objects of this phenomenal world are combinations in different proportions of the three ultimate reals which are technically known as gunas. The conception of these gunas arose undoubtedly as a result of the analysis of phenomenal consciousness and its objects. Our worldly experience discloses that everything in the Universe possesses a three-fold aspect. The world presents the features of brightness or illumination, activity or change and inertia or enveloping nature. Brightness, change or activity and inertness are derived through the presence of the principles known respectively as sattva, rajas and tamas in prakrti. They are the constitutive elements of prakrti. They are not parts of prakrti, but identical with it, since the Samkhya holds that prakrti is opposite of anything constituted of parts. They are called gunas, literally subsidiary or

secondary, because they serve the purpose of the other (purusa) or because they are inter-twined like the three strands of a rope which binds purusa to the world. Thus, sattva, rajas and tamas are the three gunas which are responsible for all the experiences of purusa. They are objective, ultimate and the irreducible elements of experience. The sattva element makes objects intelligible, the rajas element enables objects to undergo changes, tamas enables the object to assume shape and resists its destruction through changes.

CONCLUSION

The term 'Yoga' according to Patanjali's definition means the 'final annihilation (nirodha) of all the mental states (citta-vrttis)' involving the preparatory stages in which the mind has to be habituated to being steadied into particular types of graduated mental states. This was actually practiced in India for a long time before Patanjali lived; and it is very probable that certain philosophical, psychological, and practical doctrines associated with it were also current long before Patanjali. The Yoga doctrines taught by Patanjali are regarded as the highest of all Yogas, Raja Yoga, as distinguished from other types of Yoga practices, such as Hatha Yoga or Mantra Yoga. Of these Hatha Yoga, consists largely a system of bodily exercises for warding off diseases, and making the body fit for calmly bearing all sorts of physical privations and physical strains. Mantra Yoga is a course of meditation on certain mystical syllables which leads to the audition of certain mystical sounds. In the present book an attempt has been made to study the METAPHYSICS OF SAMKHYA-YOGA.

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