

Philosophy of Samkhya-Yoga and the Bhavas: the Principles of Self-transformation

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Introduction

It is a challenge to present the complexities of any ancient philosophy. Especially, not allowing it to remain a mere intellectual study but introducing its principles as a practical application on the journey of life, enabling the avid seeker to live life fully, yet, remaining grounded in philosophic wisdom.

The position of a philosopher is precarious; between philosophy, its application, utilitarianism and today's world of science and research where empirical observation, logic, experimentation, analysis and validity play an important role. Intuition and the inner realm of subjective experiences which cannot be validated become mystical and something that cannot be spoken about with sanctity and surety. However, a synthesis of philosophical theory, its application and experiences, howsoever subjective, are imperative for wholeness.

The extent of Indian philosophy is vast, and delving within this immense body of knowledge is like leaping into the oceans of the world. Within the Indian philosophical milieu, *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, though an independent philosophy and considered to be one of the oldest, has its origins debatable and veiled in mystery. *Sāṃkhya* is a philosophical masterpiece, both intricate and complex and having new nuances in its seventy two verses by *Īśvara Kṛṣṇa* (340 ACE) and is quite different from the earliest version of Kapila [1]. These verses, though explaining cosmology, epistemology, teleology and ontology, go beyond to analyse the capacity of the mind-intellect complex. Though, a dualist philosophy, it is not a Cartesian dualism between mind and body but a dualism of the conscious principle termed '*Puruṣa*' and the material principle '*Prakṛiti*'.

The intention of this paper is to bring out certain traditions from closed jackets of an ancient jargon and present it in a new light. It understands the ancient language in the light of new socio-political-economic conditions and requirements to render it more suitable to the general reader and for the sincere seeker of practical philosophy who seeks to bring about transformations within him/her towards more aware states of consciousness.

Another dimension to ancient Indian philosophy is not merely to question but to begin from a point, accepting certain factors and experiences and working around them to resolve problems. There is, thus, not seeking solutions but seeking resolutions. Of course, in the process there will be mistakes that may emerge later or propositions

that will be overthrown for newer theories. Again, it is not about mere theories but, it is to look through different perspectives not negating any but becoming more tolerant and inclusive. Thus, what emerges through this paper is the wide scope of application of philosophy in realms of therapy such as pain relief, alleviation of illnesses and 'apparent' mysterious or currently un-explainable phenomena.

This paper will discuss the key concepts of the four *bhāvas* of *dharma*, *jñāna*, *virāga* and *aiśvarya*, which are the primary features of *Sāṃkhya* philosophy that enable the fulfilment of its dual goals; of transcending pains of life and to achieve self-awareness or realization and a purpose in life. The term *bhāva* represents the intrinsic and inherent nature of any entity, thing and object have the potential of undergoing transformation. This paper will elaborate on this transformative capacity which is possessed by the human intellect and how any individual can use this faculty to access higher states of awareness and in the process to realize a transformation of the personality.

Within the purview of this paper, besides its philosophical principles, it is the practical realm of discovering the methods of self-transformation. This process is often called as the process of 'intellectual evolution' of human beings. The main body of this paper is divided in three sections. Two verses from the seventy two have been chosen for this paper as they represent the essence of the philosophy as well as remain within the purview of the subject of removal and freedom from pains of life and to access the higher states of conscious living (with references to a few other verses to explain philosophical concepts).

Section 1: this section briefly introduces the vast complexity of Indian philosophy and the place of *Sāṃkhya* philosophy within its scheme.

Section 2: the concept of transformation and 'intellectual evolution' through the concepts of the four *bhāvas* will bring about how this philosophy explains managing everyday problems and how any person can transcend the ordinary life into a meaningful one.

Section 3: the application of this philosophy is the key feature of this paper. It makes no sense to talk big and present complex theories. Any philosophy must present itself to better the life of beings at all levels; physical, ethical-moral, psychological, intellectual and spiritual.

The conclusion to this paper is simple in its aim to encourage 'practice' of a philosophy rather than academic and scholarly deliberation alone.

Section 1

Background to the Development of *Sāṃkhya* Philosophical Thought: A philosophical system can be appreciated when understood in context with its background and historical growth. The development of Indian philosophy is intricate as well as complex. It is not only about one particular system that took shape and grew over time but its growth along with the overall development of a culture, a civilization and knowledge in diverse fields. A philosophy considers the development of the human potential and envelopes within its structure, the progress of its society and its sophistication.

Sāṃkhya is considered to be one of the oldest philosophical schools amongst the wide plethora of scriptures including the magnum opus of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. The word *Sāṃkhya* is formed of 'sam' and 'khyāti' where 'sam' refers to integration, equilibrium, harmony, unity, coherence, completeness and 'khyāti' represents knowledge or wisdom. *Sāṃkhya* is a holistic philosophy. It refers to discriminative wisdom. *Sāṃkhya* is the wisdom that considers the need of the innate nature of human beings to search for happiness and freedom from pain and suffering. It believes in removing the pains and anguish that form obstacles in experiencing peace. The means to remove these pains is not simply through worship, devotion, medicines, or religious rituals. It is through a proper understanding of distinction between the material world and the conscious self. This understanding and knowledge, coupled with practices to transform 'buddhī' (powers of intellection) is the medium of attaining freedom and liberation from pain. This transformation of the intellect is the essence of the practical application of *Sāṃkhya* principles.

There is a distinction between the cognitive faculties (*buddhī*) of human beings; of understanding, rationality, judgement, prudence, wisdom, problem solving and the conative faculties (*manas*) of emotions ruled by the sway of likes and dislikes. *Sāṃkhya* is a philosophy that considers the intellectual potential of human beings and its concepts of evolution are on intellectual evolution and progress. *Sāṃkhya* makes no scientific claims and clearly states that these are extremely subtle and subjective realms beyond purview of empirical verification.

Section 2

Within the seventy two verses or *kārikās*, the first verse of *Sāṃkhya* states that true happiness has been marred by pain and anguish of living in the physical world and world of people. The commonly known means to remove suffering are inadequate and temporary. The potential to remove that pain and to ensure freedom from pain yet to come through definite and sure means and not temporary methods is the subject matter under consideration.

The verse explains that when a keen desire of knowing the means to be free from the three-fold sufferings of the world arises then the existing methods to remove those maybe insufficient as there is absence of surety that they will ensure permanent removal of pain and also prevent their recurrence.

Commencing on a factual note, the first *kārikā* is direct and shakes us up to the reality of life. We begin life with a cry and undergo infinite changes. Changes are often marked with pain and *Īśvara Kṛṣṇa*

recognizes the deep anguish that every human being experiences during periods of suffering. Often, we ask the question 'why am I suffering'? 'Why should I suffer'? What is the cause and/or justification of suffering'? Is our suffering related to someone or something else or is it because of some accident, bad luck, destiny or the result of one's own actions?.

Another question that arises is about the existence of God and whether any transcendent deity has any role to play in our suffering or joy? In *Sāṃkhya* philosophy of *Īśvara Kṛṣṇa*, the main contention is that suffering is due to one's own actions (in thought, word or deed) and no one else, not even God can be responsible for it, as *Sāṃkhya* of *Īśvara Kṛṣṇa* is neutral to the concept of God. Of course there is joy and happiness in life but it is temporary and fleeting. Though, life has to be a joyful experience, our petty attachments, likes and dislikes become monstrous enemies and destroy whatever beauty that lies before us. Monotony, disturbances, physical suffering and mental unrest are the experiences of life that we brush away but are always lurking in the background. Often, it is said that the *kārikās* begin on a negative note and has sometimes been compared to the existential philosophy of the West, but a close examination reveals that the commencement is to shake us out of a stupor and inspire us to seek a lasting and permanent method of achieving peace rather than the known ways or remedies that may be quite temporary. *Sāṃkhya* postulates the 'immense potential' of human beings, according to which it is only at the human intellectual level that one could 'create' a new set of actions that could lead to an entirely different dimension of conscious awareness. Imagine, we are suffering from depression, or a physical ailment, the remedies of drugs makes us dependent on them and in the long run we tend to experience their side-effects and in case we cease their use, withdrawal symptoms may arise. These are temporary methods on the physiological level. The emotional trauma becomes more difficult to overcome.

The reference in the *kārikā* is to the triad of pains that we endure during the course of life

1. Adhibhoutika: these are those troubles that arise from other living entities such as insects, animals, other beings or the material world. For example, an illness arising out of external factors such as a mosquito bite resulting in malaria or chikungunya. Or, for instance, the hurt caused by people. It relates to the gross pains.

2. Ādhidaivika: These forms of painful experiences result from the unknown. Stressful and painful events which are beyond the purview of reason are considered. Natural calamities like an earthquake or floods or other such experiences are included which are beyond our control and relate to mental anguish experienced there from.

3. Ādhyātmika: the pains which are related to the body and mind are considered as well as the intellectual realm where despite our efforts we may be unable to gain a foothold in our spiritual quest. In this case we have to delve into our thought processes about how we handle life situations. Pain arises when we succumb to failures and inabilities rather than rising above them. For example, if we consider the reasons why we lack faith, tolerance and psychological endurance we realize an absence of a greater goal in our life such as developing an attitude of peace. Self-induced pain is the keynote of this kind of suffering.

We suffer because of our own idiosyncrasies, likes and dislikes and ego centeredness.

This *kārikā* is a statement of purpose. At the outset were told of the subject matter of our enquiry; which is to seek permanent ways to remove sufferings and achieve freedom from them. We must also remember there will be times when certain experiences, which may be traumatic, need to be experienced as there, may be no way out or were very necessary for our growth and maturity. The ultimate idea would be to go through them with understanding, grace, patience and forbearance rather than questioning 'why me'. This *kārikā* is of hope, of a positive determination to free ourselves, to seek beyond the ordinary means of decreasing and eliminating the troubles of life. Pain is a great teacher. It strengthens and empowers us providing an understanding of life. As far as we are living beings, pain is an integral part, but whether to understand it, rise above it and allow it to empower us or consider it as suffering, is up to us. It is to transform pain, which would normally make us bitter, into a personality that becomes better, experience rich and wiser! Most importantly, the *kārikā* signifies the eligibility, fitness, aptness and genuineness of the seeker. It is very clear that the instructions that follow are not for anyone but for the sincere seeker, the '*jijñāsu*', whose quest is intense, full of yearning and passion. With this understanding of the nature of the external world, it's hammering of disappointments and our intense desire to free ourselves from its clutches we proceed on the path of *Sāmkhya* Wisdom.

The *kārikās* impress the importance of the wisdom of *Sāmkhya* and explain that the traditional rituals, medicines and such prescriptions will have temporary effects and maybe insufficient to alleviate all kinds of pains, especially the psychological ones. The sanctity of human nature is upheld, not by rituals, but with wisdom and strength of character.

Another verse explains the causal relation between actions and their effects. All and any effect cannot be acquired from all and any cause. For example, an apple tree yields apples and a mango tree mangoes. Or, humans give birth to humans and not any other creature. Hence, a cause, as in the example of a mango tree, will yield only mangoes as its effects as that particular cause holds the potential of only that, as in this case the mango tree has the potential of only yielding mangoes and no other fruit. Thus, the effects that we see or know are of the same potentiality as the cause. In everyday life this understanding plays a great role in day to day actions. We usually expect a lot from situations, people and the world around us. However, neither situations, people nor the world behave the way we wish, as that is not their nature. For instance, a wife would expect her husband to behave in a certain way, or parents expect from their children without realizing that the other may not have the potential to fulfil their expectations. It is, for instance, if we expect a crow to shut up and stop crowing but sing like a nightingale, it is our foolishness as the crow does not possess the potential to sing. Similarly, if we expect people to change their behaviour it is our foolishness! So also, situations too cannot always be conducive to our expectations as it may not be the potential of that situation to manifest a certain result. For example, if there is an earthquake we cannot expect normalcy immediately as this is not probable. Or, if the nature of a person is always to be angry, we cannot expect that person to suddenly become docile. Thus, the *Sāmkhya* philosopher gives us clearly the relation between cause and effects, and the potential of the effect being latent in the cause. This theory is known as theory of '*satkāryavāda*', the effect (*kārya*) exists (in latent or

potential form) in the cause (*sat*) prior to its manifestation.

Further, *Sāmkhya* explains that there are two forces, one of pure consciousness called *Puruṣa*, who is inactive but is the eternal seer behind the phenomena of the ever-changing material force called *Prakṛti*. It sheds its luminescence on *Prakṛti* like the sun shedding its brilliance on the world, where, though the world becomes bright the sun still retains its identity and the world cannot say that it has become the sun. Also, without the sun the world would be dark inert and lifeless. Such is the *Puruṣa*. Being an 'experiencer' (*bhoktr*) of the world, its beauty, pleasures, joys and sadness is the characteristic of consciousness. It makes the world meaningful. It is consciousness that can aim for the ultimate goal of *Kaivalya*, freedom from bondages and attachments with the material world [2].

The other force is of *Prakṛti*, the material essence formed of a triad of characteristics ranging from the pure and subtle to the ever active and finally the gross forms. Thus, all matter is infused by this triad in infinite combinations.

These two forces of consciousness and matter have come together (through some unknown and unexplained reason) and becomes the main cause of all suffering as the conscious force begins to identify itself with the material force. This creates a multitude of attachments with things, people, situations and events. Thus, *Sāmkhya* cautions against identification of the *Puruṣa* with the body and the normal tides of the ups and downs of life. It clearly emphasises a goal that transcends the ordinary!

Section 3

The main focus of this paper is how the intelligent conscious being can begin and continue in the process of intellectual evolution. The twenty third verses explains the process; when buddhī (the intellect) is infused with *sattva* (the characteristic of purity) then *dharma*, *jñāna*, *virāga* and *aiśvarya* manifest within it and when it is infused with *tamas* (the gross/negative nature) the opposite of these four manifest.

The concepts are presented in a manner that introduces the notion of *bhāva*, the characteristic of *buddhī* representing the 'intrinsic potentiality' of all human beings. '*Buddhi*', from the Sanskrit root '*buddh*' means that which awakens or which has the 'potential to enable an awakening' represents the power of 'will' and is evident in rationality and decision making. These *bhāvas* are characteristics of '*buddhī*', the cognitive, retentive and co-native faculty of human beings as well as it is the faculty of intellection, problem solving, judgement and rationality. It considers influences from the deepest subconscious level encompassing one's innate nature and all actions stemming from the psychological and rational dimensions. This term is often translated as emotion or feeling. Philosophically, it means the inherent and intrinsic nature of a thing or entity: its 'potentiality' and 'predisposition'. For instance, the predisposition (*bhāva*) of glass is to break whereas the predisposition of metal is unbreakable. In the context of human behaviour, a person can be predisposed to, or possess, for example, the *bhāva* of love, anger, greed, meekness, incompetence, vanity and so on. The list would be long! For example, people are described as having *bhakti bhāva* (predisposition to devotion), *karuṇābhāva* (compassion), *bhāva* of revenge and an end less number of such states which may be contradictory too! The term *bhāva* has a deep significance. It considers one's innate nature, all its associated implications and extended nuances. An

important feature of *bhāva* is its capacity or potential to undergo transformation.

All individuals, at any stage in life possess certain characteristic qualities which may or may not be conducive to self-development. These form their basic nature, potentiality and predisposition or *bhāva*. The *kārikās* encourage the practice and development of the four *sāttvika* (positive) *bhāvas* of *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* (*virāga*) and *aiśvarya* which encourage an individual towards personal growth. The *bhāvas* enable one to recognize one's potential of positive growth as well as fallacies and take a two-fold mode of action. Such action is firstly to introduce the practice of the four positive *sāttvika bhāvas* and simultaneously to reduce and further negate the four negative *tāmasika* and opposite *bhāvas* of *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *rāga* and *anaīśvarya*.

The Four *Sāttvika* - Desirable and Constructive *Bhāvas* *Dharma Bhāva*

Since the concept of God/god or any transcendent deity is absent, the notion of *dharma* does not refer to religion or any belief systems as is the widespread understanding even among the intelligentsia. *Dharma*, in the ideology of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa is about the development of the potentials and capacities of *buddhī* in terms of goal-setting, discriminative capacities and self-direction and there is no reference to worship, belief in god or any associated rituals. Goal-setting is also not about material goals of the world but about loftier goals of attaining fullness of wisdom and equanimity. It is a potential of the intellect, the *buddhī*, as represented in the ideal of duty, which is the pinnacle of all practice. *Dharma bhāva* represents what one 'ought to do'. It is the 'foundational' predisposition or potential. The entire structure of human potential and development rests on *dharma bhāva*. It is multi-faceted and its fundamental being duty, a powerful, comprehensive and dynamic word which includes righteous conduct, developing equipoise and leading towards a spiritual goal. The first duty is towards oneself! It is not selfish but primary, as only a person fit of body and mind can perform positive actions of any kind. It involves devotion, dedication and faith leading to individual growth at all levels. *Dharma bhāva* involves taking responsibility of all of one's actions through self-discipline, self-motivation, self-direction, and self-commitment. All other *bhāvas* fall in step, such that without practice of *dharma* the other *bhāvas* become insignificant. This *bhāva* is productive, beneficial and positive, leading towards a fulfilling and enriching life. These qualities of *dharma bhāva* when practiced lead to inner understanding and personal ascent. *Dharma bhāva* rises above likes and dislikes and pettiness. It creates a balanced state of mind. Maintaining equipoise while doing any activity is *dharma*. All actions henceforth are not mere reactions but conscious knowledge-based actions, whether performed through body, speech or thought. It is that which establishes sense of purpose in life and reflects in personal goal setting. Thus, the word *dharma* is not to be confused as a synonym for 'religion' but as an independent notion undertaking the practice of an entire value system. It is the 'inner' principle of transformative behavioural and attitudinal dispositions.

Jñāna Bhāva

Through the practice of *dharma*, *jñāna* arises. Keen awareness and realization unfolds as one becomes more fine-tuned to one's own actions and relations to the world outside. The development that occurs through the practice of *dharma* ensures the development of '*jñāna*', a knowledge of one's body-mind-world relationship. Such knowledge in turn helps in understanding how to manage the

outside world through inner knowledge-based transformations. It is discriminative knowledge which allows us to make independent and informed choices. It is our abilities or potential to know anything in its various dimensions and to be able to cultivate a capacity of discrimination. *Jñāna* is to develop one-pointedness. It is increasing concentration and focus while doing any activity. It is through which mindfulness and self-awareness develops and such awareness transforms all activities in relation to the self and the world. This represents the predominant feature of the conscious mind. Thus, *jñāna* represents awareness and wisdom and not mere informative knowledge of the world.

Vairāgya (Virāga) Bhāva

Objectivity is the essence in the idea of *vairāgya*. Often misunderstood as renouncing of the activities and beauty of life it is more about a 'mind-state' that is beyond greed, personal attachments which bind one into endless misery. It is to refrain from accumulating a mountain of thoughts that form a formidable baggage. *Vairāgya* also inhibits excessive hoarding of material possessions. The essence in *vairāgya* is 'letting-go' of all the pettiness and useless cravings that persist in the mind. It is the principle of 'non-attachment' that accepts the world as it is, performs actions whenever and whatever is needed according to one's capacities. It allows a peaceful existence in the world without causing undue stress to oneself or others resulting in a larger perspective of life. Humility manifests as there is no arrogance of knowledge, power or position, rather it ensures an objective and impartial state of mind. The practice of one's own *dharma* ensures that *jñāna* arises which enables true *vairāgya* of the mind to be instated.

Aiśvarya Bhāva

It is only when one has sincerely practised *dharma bhāva*, which has given rise to *jñāna* and *vairāgya bhāvas* that there arises supreme faith, assurance, goodwill and decisiveness.

Aiśvarya bhāva is reflected in the determination, strength, courage, self-confidence and power of the 'will' of the individual which arises from perceptive wisdom. *Aiśvarya bhāva* brings forth humility and compassion as qualities that develop from a fullness of wisdom. It eradicates pride, vanity, arrogance and makes the individual a strong and powerful being who rises above the ordinary. *Aiśvarya bhāva* manifests as assertiveness devoid of arrogance!

Aiśvarya bhāva is revealed in clarity of thought and purpose. It is attainment of physical, mental and moral finesse and spiritual fineness.

The Four *Tāmasika*: Contrary and Undesirable *Bhāvas*

These four are the opposite of the previous four *bhāvas* and an understanding of them gives a perspective into misplaced actions and loyalties.

Adharma

A misunderstanding of what one's own true *dharma* is, results in a misplaced sense of satisfaction of practice of *dharma*. For instance, if one is unwell and yet fasts, under a notion of performing a cleansing act, one is actually harming oneself. This brings on ill-health and burdens the entire family. This is *himsā* or hurting oneself as well as others around. This is *adharma* as looking after one's health is the primary *dharma*, duty of all beings, as the body is the vehicle towards

spirituality. *Yoga* discourages fasting but encourages partaking a moderate *sāttvika* diet. It is here that we must understand the difference between *Sāmkhya*

Yoga practice and religious rituals. *Adharma*, occurs when harm is caused to oneself through non-performance of one's duties towards personal physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. For example, we know we must practice *asanas* daily, but so often we neglect our practices. Or we give in to our emotions and may tend to over-indulge in many things and lose self-control. *Adharma*, finally gets manifested in personal grudges, likes-dislikes, hatred, envy and similar characteristics. Thus, *adharma* represents lack of self-direction, self-commitment and self-motivation. *Adharma* is the entire opposite of *dharma* and results in stress, illness, chaos, cacophony, conflicts and confusions. Both the mind and the body become afflicted.

Ajñāna

When, instead of wisdom, arises the arrogance of knowledge, such knowledge is mere information and not perspective astuteness. It destroys one's character and makes one resort to pettiness. *Ajñāna* also gives rise to several vices and mental disturbances. There is lack of clarity which results in disorientation and confused states of mind. The individual is caught in the worldly frenzy, resulting in a meltdown. There is misunderstanding and misapprehension. It is the ignorance of not knowing the difference between the permanent and impermanent, pure and impure, painful and non-painful, real and unreal and the pure conscious self and materiality. This is further understood in the concept of *rāga* as it is an outcome of *ajñāna*.

Rāga

Rāga, attachment is the greatest vice. It is a senseless clinging on to things, people and even one's thoughts. It inhibits growth of oneself as well as others around. Deep attachments in different relationships create irresolvable conflicts. *Rāga* creates aversion when expectations are not met. For instance, in any relationship when attachments arise, it results in expectations and when they remain unfulfilled, disappointments set in. For example, when a couple decide to marry there is initial euphoria and love, creating attachment with each other. As time elapses there are expectations from each other for various things. When these expectations remain unfulfilled, dislike develops. This to and fro of likes and dislikes results in quarrels and disaster in the marriage is on the anvil. It is seen in parents uncontrollably attached to their children and overpowering their lives. It is visible between spouses who dominate and intimidate the other. Thus, extreme attachments are evident in all relationships as between parents and children, siblings, neighbours, spouses, in the work environment or friends and attachments can come in unrecognizable forms. In the interplay between the dualities as likes-dislikes, attachments-expectations, there develops fear, jealousy, personal grudges, hatred, greed and most important, insecurity. *Raga* has several facets which go unnoticed. For instance, to prove ourselves no matter what we succumb to peer pressures and societal norms. There is a craving to 'belong' to groups and being appreciated. It takes away individuality and makes one a conformist to the vagaries of society and peer pressure. We must remember that people have a habit of gossiping and it is useless to be attached to name and fame and position in society. The same society can elevate us or fling us out. According to *Sāmkhya*, *rāga* is based in *ajñāna* of the true essence of life. This happens when we are not confident about ourselves and are attached to what the

world thinks of us. Another aspect of *raga* is to remain attached to what we were before.

This has two dimensions. Firstly, it is when we are attached to the beautiful self we were when young or the name and position we held before. This may happen when one gets old, retires or loses money, position, power and self-esteem. It is actually the loss of power and position that creates a whole series of dejections and depressions as one clings onto these old images and position of oneself. Secondly, an important thing that we remain clung onto and then fear is the mistakes of our past. The memories of the past haunt and though we may have reformed completely those past mistakes create an unrest in the mind that lingers forever. In this case, we must understand that being human is to err and we are all not saints. We cannot hold on to the mistakes we made before as the past is irreversible but to sincerely atone for them accordingly, resolving never to commit them again and move on without regrets and grudges.

Rāga is also great attachment to material possessions despite the knowledge that we have to leave behind everything on the last passing moment and that things of the world will not last for ever. Finally, it is our thoughts, opinions and beliefs which we fanatically hold on to in such a way that we do not allow the other or ourselves any space of understanding and tolerance. This forms the crux of philosophy which continuously teaches us to let-go, rise above pettiness in order to eliminate the ceaseless chatter of the restless mind!

Anāśvarya

When *adharma*, *ajñāna* and *rāga* dominate one's mind and actions, there can be no peace.

There is fear, insecurity, lack of faith, low self-esteem resulting in depression. It is also characterized by self-dejection and hopelessness. It may manifest in the lack of humility. False pride, arrogance and overconfidence arise which lead to ruin. The eight *bhāvas* form the substratum of personal growth or downfall. The practice of *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya* lead to self-development and a positive transformation of personality, whereas the opposite *bhāvas* negate the beneficial effects leading to an endless migration towards chaos and disorder. The presence of a certain *bhāva* maybe more pronounced than the others. Thus, it may be that one *bhāva* is predominant while the other *bhāvas* play a subsidiary or supporting role.

The integrated practice of the four *sāttvika bhāvas* must encompass every action one performs in life, irrespective of how insignificant or how great the action maybe. And, further, the negative *bhāvas* must be reduced through constant practice of the techniques of the *Yoga Sūtras* [3].

Conclusion

Sāmkhya is a philosophy that people have known as apart of the *Bhagvat Gītā*, the *Bhāgvat Purāna*, have heard about it in connection with *Yoga* or never heard about at all! Its actual principles have never gained popularity as much as the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali. Whatever knowledge of *Sāmkhya* that is available is very academic or in a philosophical language not easily grasped by the common person. The internet is also like an 'omniscient being' having an extensive storehouse of information but what and how to access that becomes a mind-numbing task. The problem is to sift through the immense material and figure how to apply the principles has never been done.

Sāṃkhya has always remained a philosophy not for the common person and its vital essence has been obscured.

Today philosophers want to turn scientists and give scientific explanations for philosophical concepts. Scientists want to understand how metaphysical questions can have some correlate in science. However, this is quite an unachievable task (at least in the present scenario). Science and philosophy are very apart. Science needs empirical verification and philosophy poses and attempts to answer the metaphysical but a demystification of the subtle is difficult. Further, to enter the psychological realms and metaphysical questions by neuro-scientists and psychologists is nowhere near to the subjective experience based enquiry of the metaphysical philosopher. How can the questions of consciousness ever be answered through any scientific means? Their methodology and purpose is conflicting. So far even the locus of the mind and intellect in the body has not been ascertained by science.

It is the principles of the *bhāvas* in the mainstream of *Yoga* 'practice', including *asanas*, *prāṇāyāmas*, *kriyās*, *mudras* and meditation that enable to bring about a transformation within the entire persona. Therefore, this is about not getting into any philosophical, academic discussion but to 'practice' a philosophy. Thus, it is delving into subjective realms of experiences which are indescribable. For instance, we may ask questions as to how much pain a person is undergoing on a scale of one to ten and the person may answer a number. However, to exactly measure and quantify a qualitative experience is yet beyond the scope of science. Similarly all sensory experiences being qualitative cannot be quantified. This is where ancient practices involving the body-breath-mind-intellect, though often mysterious, are pertinent and research in these fields become the need of the day.

The body-mind-intellect composite forms a unique existential being who possesses the infinite potential to transform oneself. Thus, every activity, every moment of life comes within the purview of *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*. This potential of metamorphosis of the inner and outer being through the practice of the *bhāvas* is the inimitable contribution of *Sāṃkhya*, which is yet unexplored! The practice of *Sāṃkhya*, leads to an integrated personality. Such a personality; disciplined and ingrained with a superior value system follows the greater natural order of the universe, accepts the world and yet tries to live a full life through right actions which are unbiased and non-judgemental. Such a person has imbibed a spiritual quotient above any other world views. This is *dharma bhāva*. This individual is one-pointed, concentrated within, though experiencing the ups and downs of life. During these wayward moments of life, knowledge of the scriptures sustain the practice as this is not any blind following of rituals but a practice of complete awareness.

Thus, arises *jñāna bhāva*. Of knowing and understanding. It is this discriminative wisdom that allows one to rise above the ordinary experiences of the world. So often, one gets trapped in the frenzy of life. The pendulum of likes and dislikes become overpowering.

This leads to the most vital practice in life is 'letting-go'. To 'let-go' is the wisdom that few can achieve! We are so bound by our possessions, ideas, opinions and thoughts which lead (unknowingly) to a host of severe illnesses. Modern medicine treats the external body but this practice of letting-go treats the inner root cause of illness where we cannot let-go. This tightens and constricts every

cell in the body not allowing the free flow of vital energy. Here this supreme effort to release all stresses and useless attachments works wonders and it is to develop the attitude of *vairāgyabhāva*.

Finally, the power of 'will' emerges as *aiśvarya bhāva*. It is the blossoming of wisdom in its fullness. There is strength of the mind, a decisiveness and confidence that needs no validation but stands apart on its own authority. The practice of the *bhāvas* is to be undertaken as a living tradition. The aim would be to increase *sattva* within the entire personality and reduce the impact of *rajas* and *tamas* to a bare minimum where they merely support *sattva*.

This paper seeks to appeal to the inner intelligence of every being to undertake this exquisite journey of the practice, especially of the four *sāttvika bhāvas* for a richer and fuller life. This is the supreme essence of *Sāṃkhya* Wisdom [4-20].

Note 1: This paper contains excerpts from my book, 'The Essence of *Sāṃkhya Kārikās*', published by Zen Publications and available on Amazon. For detailed reading on this subject please refer to this book.

Note 2: A Sanskrit reading and pronunciation guide:

a: cup ṛ: lump (nasal)
ā: cart ṅ: sung (nasal)
c: chapter ṇ: heavy sound
ch: chha ṅ: sung (nasal sound)
d: softer 'd' sound ṛ: rush (heavy sound)
ḍ: heavy "d" sound ś: shape
e: eh (without emphasis on 'h') ṣ: shape (heavy sound)
g: gut t: soft sound of 't'
ḥ: ahjṅ - gnaw
i: eat, he u: loop
ī: eel (prolonged) ū: stoop (prolonged)

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