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How both the knowledge of the Samkhya and Practice of Yoga are essential for an aspirant who wants to attain liberation (*kaivalya*)

Dr. Sukanta Das

Asst. Prof, Dept of Philosophy, Dhruba Chand Halder College, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

We all know that the Sankhya and the Yoga are allied systems. The Yoga has admitted all the realities (*tattvas*) of the Sankhya. The highest goal of both the systems is liberation (*kaivalya*) but their ways are different. Where the Sankhya admits that an aspirant may attain *vivekakhyāti* which is summum-bonum of an aspirant through the study of Sankhya scripture and detachment through the *srabana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. An aspirant must think like 'I am not *prakriti*' continuously. As a result, in this manner, after a long days of thinking it he must attain *vivekakhyāti* (the discriminative knowledge between *prakriti* and *purusa*). When he will attain *vivekakhyāti*, will remain in the state of *jivanmukti*. At that time, *prakriti* will be detached from that particular *purusa*. On the other hand, yoga is the practical application of the Sankhya. According to the Yoga Philosophy, a yogi must attain *vivekakhyāti* through the sincere practice of eight steps of yoga and at last after enjoying the *prarabdha* karma he attains *videhakaivalya*. This article is attempted to show here that how the practice of eight-fold means of yoga and the different knowledge of Sankhya are very essential to an aspirant who wants to attain *kaivalya*; that is to say, without the knowledge of Sankhya and without sincere and regular practice of *astānga-yoga*, *kaivalya* (liberation) is not possible.

Keywords: *Kaivalya, vivekakhyāti, prārabdha karma, kāyabyuha, samprajñāta samādhi, asamprajñāta samādhi, jivanmukti, videhamukti.*

Introduction:

At first, I want to salute the founder of the Sankhya and the Yoga Philosophy Kapila muni and great sage Patanjali; because, without their grace it would not be possible for me to complete this paper. We know that India is a land of sages. We find many sages who had attained their main goal (*samādhi*) in this land. There we find many scriptures which lead

us to the way of our main goal (*moksa*) viz. The Vedas, Upanisads, the Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Besides these scriptures, the Sankhya-yoga also helps us to attain self-realization. Though the Sankhya is limited in the theory yet Yoga is its practical application. Hence, both the systems are called allied systems. The Yoga Philosophy has admitted all the realities (*tattvas*) of the Sankhya. In this context, a verse from the given below:

*"Sāṅkhyayogou prithagbāla pravādanti na paṇḍitāḥ,
Ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyagubhayorvindate phalaṁ".*

And

*"Yat Sāṅkhaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tadyogoiropi gamyate,
Ekam Sāṅkhyāṇca yoganca yāḥ paśyati sa paśyati".¹*

These above mentioned verses have proved that both the systems are complementary to each other.

I

The term 'Yoga' has been explained in various senses. Generally, the term 'yoga' means 'union' or 'conjunction'. It has been derived from the root 'yuj' which indicates 'to yoke' or 'to join'. In this regard, the term 'yoga' is used as 'the union between the individual self and the supreme self'. According to Patanjali, 'yoga is the arrestedness of mental modifications' (*Yogaścittavrittinirodhah*).² Vyasadeva (commentator of the *Yogasutra*) says, "*Yogah samādhou*". Bhojaraja, the author of the '*Rajamartandavritti*' defined the yoga as the separation between prakriti and puruṣa. Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the Gita that yoga is the cessation of suffering and equanimity.³ Again, in accordance with the '*Bhaktirasamritasindhu*', "Yoga is the union between Radha and Sri Krishna". The '*Jñānasankalinitantra*' holds, 'Yoga is freedom from all cares and anxieties on the total abandonment'. In this manner, we find various definitions, Patanjali's given definition is appropriate than others, because, in every case the nature of yoga is the arrestedness of mental modifications. Hence, Sri Krishna says,

*"Yatroparamate cittam niruddhvaṁ yogasevayā,
Yatra caivatmanatmanam paśyannatmani tasyati".⁴*

Till now, we have tried to see what the yoga is. Similarly, there a question will be arisen that what is the definition of a yogi or who is called a yogi? Following the definition of Patanjali we can say here that one whose mind has been arrested and remains in its own essence, he will be called a yogi. Sri Krishna says that anybody who becomes unperturbed in any feeling, fame-infame, pleasure-pain etc. Is called a yogi or *sthitaprajna*.⁵

Patanjali has admitted two types of *samādhi*-viz. *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta*. In the state of one-pointedness of mind, a yogi can attain the right knowledge of all the material realities i.e. from the intellect to five gross elements. Hence, it is called also *saṁjīva samādhi* or yoga. It is very necessary to mention here that the term 'yoga' and '*samādhi*' have been used in same sense; because, in both the cases, mind becomes arrested. If anyone's mind becomes arrested without any effort or consciousness, he will not be allowed as a yogi;

because, in this state he can not attain right-knowledge. The states may be *susupti*, catalepsy, hysteria, fainting fit etc.

However, till now, we have tried to understand what yoga is and who is a yogi. Let us see now the main aim of a yogi.

II

The term '*purusārtha*' has been used in Indian Philosophy. Generally, the term '*purusārtha*' means what the conscious self wants. In this regard, there we find four *purusārthas* viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksa*. Except the *moksa* other three are involved with the worldly affairs. It is known to all that any worldly thing is non-eternal and cannot provide us eternal pleasure without sorrow. *Artha*, *kāma* etc. Are also worldly things and cannot free us permanently from suffering. On the other side, religious works (*dharma*) i.e. Vedic sacrifices, pray to God, worship to deities etc. produce worldly happiness and heavenly pleasure. Like worldly happiness, heavenly pleasure also non-eternal. We know the name of king Nahusa in the Mahabharata that he had attained heaven by his acquiring virtue and after erosion of that virtue he had come back in the world again for enjoying suffering. Hence, It may be stated here that only *moksa* can free us from suffering eternally. In this context, a verse from the '*Samkhyakarika*' has been mentioned in the following:

“Driṣṭavadānuśravikah sahyavisuddhikṣayatiyuktah,
Tadviparitah śreyān vyaktavyaktajñāvijñānāt”.⁶

Sruti also says, “*Nālpe sukhamasti bhumaiva sukham*”.

We find in the '*Yogasutra*' that a yogi is able to attain various miraculous powers like *anima*, *laghima*, *mahima*, *garima*, *prapti* etc. except these powers a yogi can make similar many minds and bodies from his main mind and body.⁷ He also becomes disappeared from the general visual perception due to concentration on the spot of the body.⁸ But, any yogi should keep it in mind that these aforesaid powers are not desirable. Each and every yogi's aim must be the attainment of samadhi or the discriminative knowledge between *prakriti* and *purusa*. Hence, Vacaspati Misra says, “*Tadviparitah śreyān vyaktavyaktajñāvijñānāt*”.⁹

III

Let us try to see now that how an aspirant or a yogi may attain his main aim according to both the systems.

According to the Sankhya, *purusa* and *Prakriti* are eternal. *Purusa* is sentient *prakriti* is insentient. Though both are contradictory to each other yet due to their own necessities union and evolution becomes started. At the time of contact with *purusa*, *prakriti* becomes sentient like *purusa*. Similarly, *purusa* feels itself as a doer, knower and enjoyer etc. Though in nature *purusa* is ever pure, ever free, indifferent, non-relational etc. yet due to contact with *prakriti*, it forgets its own essence. This is called the bondage of *purusa*. *Purusa* is enjoyer and *prakriti* is enjoyable matter. *Prakriti* wants that *purusa* enjoys her and *purusa* becomes connected with *prakriti* for its apparent *kaivalya*.¹⁰ *Prakriti* provides more sorrow

than pleasure. As a result, once *purusa* must want to be free from threefold pains (*tāpatraya*). As the means for freedom from bondage of *purusa*, Sankhya has prescribed us eight kinds of *siddhis* viz. *Uha*, *śabda*, *adhyayana*, *duhkha* *vighātātaya*, *suhritprāpti* and *dāna*. An aspirant attains *vivekakhyati* through the continuous practice of eight steps of yoga with deep respect and firm belief.¹¹ But, a question may arise here that- is it true that *purusa* really becomes bound or free? In reply, we find a verse in the '*Sāṅkhyakārikā*' where it has been mentioned that the bondage and freedom of *purusa* is ascribed, not real (*vaḍhyate ca muchyate ca nānāśraya prakṛiti*).¹² Due to ignorance *purusa* feels itself as bound and free. In this context, we may note another quotation from the '*Matharavṛitti*': "*Tatra yah pumso vandhamoksasamsaranani vrute sa mudah*". (*Samkhayakarika*, verse no. 62). After practising above mentioned means that particular *purusa* attains the discriminative knowledge and remains in its own essence; that is to say, three ingredient *prakṛiti* becomes desisted from that particular *purusa* at that time which is called the attainment of *kaivalya* of *purusa*. The Sankhya has admitted two types of *muktis* viz. *Jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*. After the attainment of *vivekakhyati* an aspirant remains in the state of *jivanmukti* and when his *praravdha karmas* are dissolved through the enjoyment, he attains *videhamukti*.

The Yoga Philosophy prescribes us to attain yoga or samadhi. Like the Samkhya, the Yoga also has admitted that conjunction between *purusa* and *prakṛiti* is the root cause of heya (bondage and suffering). It may be mentioned as ignorance.¹³ According to Patanjali, yoga is the suppression of mental modifications. It will be possible through the practice of eight-fold means of yoga viz. *Yama*, *niyama*, *asana* etc. According to them, if we practice eight steps of yoga mentioned above must be able to attain pure *vivekakhyati*.¹⁴ *Samādhi* is divided into two classess viz. *Samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta*. In the state of *samprajñāta*, a yogi attains *vivekakhyāti* or *sattvapurusānyatāpratyaya*. This attaining knowledge is called *paravairāgya*. This is the highest state of knowledge. According to the definition of Patanjali though *samprajñāta* is called yoga, yet in this state there *sāttoika vṛitti* remains in the mind of that yogi. Hence, it is called *saṁjīva samādhi*. It may be stated here that if *sāttoika vṛitti* remains in the state of mind, that aspirant cannot be free from three ingredient *prakṛiti* completely. But, there will be no modifications and impression of knowledge in the state of *asamprajñāta samādhi*. As a result, ever free, ever pure self remains in its own essence.¹⁵ This is called the attainment of yoga or *kaivalya* of *purusa*. On the other side, it may be called that at that time *prakṛiti* becomes desisted from that particular liberated *purusa*. Hence, Patanjali says, "*Puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapratisthā vā citiśaktirīkṛti*", *Yogasutra*, verse no. 4/34.

The main difference between them is that the samkhya is limited in the theory where the yoga is its practice. An aspirant may attain his absolute goal through both of the views. Both of them have admitted that '*aviveka*' is the root cause of bondage and '*vivekakhyāti*' leads an aspirant to attain liberation which is called '*kaivalya*'. An aspirant may attain *vivekakhyāti* through the means of Samkhya but there is no guarantee that he must be able to attain *videhamukti* in his present life; because, *prāravdha karma* does not dissolve without enjoyment and though an aspirant may attain *jivanmukti* in this present life yet for the

enjoyment of *prāraṇḍha karmas* he may have to take rebirth, but a yogi can enjoy his *prāraṇḍha karmas* through the *kāyabyuha*.

IV

Here, we shall try to find how a yogi should attain the right-knowledge of the Samkhya and it may be attained through the practice of *astanga-yoga* of the Yoga Philosophy.

The main aim of both the systems is the attainment of *kaivalya*. It has been mentioned before that though *purusa* is essentially ever pure, ever free, non-relational etc. yet due to ignorance it feels itself as doer, enjoyer, knower etc. This type of conjunction between *purusa* and *prakriti* has been started from beginningless time. Of course, this relation is apparent, not real. According to the Samkhya, aspirant has to attain the knowledge of the revealed, the unrevealed and *purusa*. *Prakriti* is the equilibrium state of three ingredients (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The first transformation (*parināma*) of *prakriti* is intellect (*buddhi*). *Buddhi* is made by the three ingredients like *prakriti* but among these *sāttvika* and *tāmasika* is the cause of *vivekakhyāti*. An aspirant can attain four attributes viz. *dharma*, *jñāna*, *virāga* and *aiśvarya* where the attributes of *tamas* are completely contrary to *sāttvika dharmas* viz. *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya* and *anaiśvarya*. Though these *tāmasika gunas* are not the cause of *vivekakhyāti* yet for comparing each other these are needed to know. On the other side, the *rajaguna* takes the role of efficient cause. Here, the question is- what is the definition of *sāttvika dharma*? In reply, Vacaspati Misra says, “*Dharmah-abhyudayanisṛeṇya*”. The term ‘*abhyudaya*’ refers to worldly pleasure which is attainable through the performance of sacrifice, mundane etc. Again, the term ‘*nisṛeṇya*’ refers to ‘*kaivalya*’ or ‘eternal cessation of suffering’. It is attained through the constant practice of eight-steps of yoga viz. *Yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyama*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.¹⁶ As the nature of *sattva* is pleasure so when an aspirant performs sacrifice etc. and practice eight steps of yoga, he must feel pleasure in both of the cases. But, as the *kaivalya* is only eternal, so every yogins should attain it and it is possible only through the practice of yoga. Professor J. N. Sinha has mentioned that the practice of yoga are recognized by the Samkhya as subsidiary means to liberation.¹⁷

On the other hand, according to the Yoga Philosophy, the main goal of all yogins is the attainment of *vivekakhyāti* initially, but absolute aim is the attainment of realizing own essence. It becomes possible only through the sincere practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Like the Samkhya, the Yoga has also admitted that the conjunction between *prakriti* and *puruṣa* is bondage and their disjunction is called liberation. It becomes possible then when a yogi’s impurity of mind will be removed through the practice of yogic parts and except it there is no other way.¹⁸ *Vivekakhyāti* remains in *buddhi*, not *purusa*- thinking it that yogi must be indifferent to *vivekakhyāti* also. As a result, his all kinds of seeds of ignorance become vanished and attains *kaivalya*.¹⁹ In this manner, when that yogi’s all kinds of afflictions and actions become dissolved, his mind becomes arrested or in other words, it may be stated that at that time ‘only’ *puruṣa* remains. It is called the attainment of *kaivalya* of *puruṣa*.

V

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that though the Samkhya and the Yoga are allied systems yet we find some differences among them viz. A yogi can attain samadhi quickly by the grace of God but the Samkhya does not admit the existence of God. Again. We have found here that the Samkhya is limited in the theory where the Yoga leads us to attain *vivekakhyāti* through the practice of yoga. In the fourth chapter of this article we find that though Isvarakrishna does not mention the eight-fold means of yoga for attaining *vivekakhyāti* yet Vacaspati Misra has mentioned it in his commentary '*Samkhyatattvakaumudi*'. If an aspirant attains *vivekakhyāti* through the study of Samkhya Philosophy, that may not be easy to do; because, there another seed of impression may be arisen in his mind but if a yogi once attains *nirviṣa samādhi*, also attains *vivekakhyāti* then this type of attainment becomes eternal. Hence, we can say that for the attainment of *kaivalya* or liberation the means of yoga is better than that of the Samkhya to a yogi. Of course, it is true that the Samkhya is the basis of the Yoga. In this regard, a yogi should hold or maintain both the Samkhya and the Yoga for the attainment of his absolute goal (*kaivalya*).

Notes and References:

1. The '*Gītā*', verse no. 5/4 and 5/5.
2. The '*Yogasūtra*', verse no. 1/2.
3. The '*Gītā*', verse no. 2/48 and 6/23.
4. The '*Gītā*', verse no. 6/20.
5. The '*Gītā*', verse no. 2/53-61.
6. '*Sankhyakarika*', Isvarakrishna, verse no. 2
7. "*Nirmānachittanyasmitamātrāt*, '*Yogasutra*', verse no. 4/4 and "*Pravrittibhede prayojakam cittamekamanekesam*", Y. S., verse no. 4/5.
8. The '*Yogasutra*', verse no. 3/21.
9. Misra, Vacaspati, '*Samkhyatattvakaumudi*', verse no. 2
10. '*Sankhyakarika*', Isvarakrishna, "*Puruṣasya darśanārtham kaivalyārtham tathā pradhānasya*", verse no. 21.
11. Misra, Vacaspati, '*Samkhyatattvakaumudi*', verse no. 51.
12. "*Tasmānnavadhyatehaddhā na muchyate nāhapi samsarati caścīt*, *samsarati vadhyate muchyate ca nānāśrayā prakritih*", '*Sankhyakarika*', verse no. 62 and "*Prakritera syāt sasangatvāt paśuvat*", '*Sankhyasutra*', verse no. 51.
13. '*Yogasūtra*' verse no. 2/24.
14. '*Yogasūtra*' verse no. 2/28.
15. '*Yogasūtra*' verse no. 1/3.
16. "*Aṣṭāṅgayoganuṣṭhānajanitaśca nihśryesaḥetuh*", '*Samkhyatattvakaumudi*', verse no. 23.
17. Sinha, J. N. "*History of Indian Philosophy*", vol.2, New Central Book

Agency, Delhi, P. 86.

18. Vyasabhasya, on 'Yogasūtra', verse no. 2/28.

19. The 'Yogasūtra', verse no. 3/50.