INTRODUCTION

The Fundamentals of Sāṃkhya-yoga Consciousness and the Subject of my Enquiry

Sāṃkhya-yoga consciousness has a speciality of its own. Ordinary man is confined to the sensory, emotional and concrete mental states. But the yogins have easy approach to insight and creative thinking besides these ordinary levels of consciousness. The self or seer is the transcendental consciousness. The consciousness of the self is an expanded one and it depends on will and intuition for its arousal. This consciousness is indefinable, subtle and elusive. The brain also fails to register this type of consciousness. Yoga consists of cessation of all mental functions (citta vṛttā nirodha). There are five levels of mental functions (citta bhumi). (Kṣipta) dissipated, (mudha) stupified, (vīksipta) relatively pacified condition. Yoga is not possible in these states. The fourth and fifth are one pointed (Kāgra) and suspended (Nirudha). Yoga prescribes the (Āsanas) different bodily postures, (Prānāyāmas) breath control, (pratyāhāra) withdrawing of the senses, (Dhāranas) attention, (Dhyāna) meditation and (Samādhi) concentration as the processes to obtain the consciousness of the Pure self. God is accepted as the most perfect being and is the object of contemplation for concentration and self realisation.

Sāṃkhya admits two ultimate realities Purusa and Prakṛti. Purusa is conscious but inactive and Prakṛti is unconscious but active. Purusa is eternal and immutable
principle of consciousness. But when Purusa and Prakṛti come in contact with each other the three gunas of Prakṛti become agitated. And then evolution of Prakṛti starts. Evolutes of Prakṛti are twenty five in number. Manas, buddhi, shankāra, five organs of sense, five organs of action, five tanmātras, five great elements. The Purusa is the twenty sixth principle accepted in Sāmkhya. The reflection of consciousness of the Purusa on buddhi or intellect is the basis of all cognitive and other psychological functions.

Our life is no life if it becomes destitute of consciousness. The presence of consciousness is the index of our being. It is the consciousness which is the basis of our mental life. Our thinking, feeling, and willing become active through consciousness. Yoga tells us how to develop our consciousness from the material level to the super conscious level. The world is full of sorrows and sufferings. Every living being specially the human beings want to obtain happiness in the world. Sāmkhya tells us that the happiness comes through correct knowledge of things. The miseries of the world are three - Ādhyātmika, Ādhidvaitika and Ādhibhāstika. These miseries can no longer afflict the self when discriminative knowledge grows between the Purusa and Prakṛti. According to yoga through the realisation of Pure consciousness all miseries are brought to an end.

Now I propose to build up the concept of consciousness according to Sāmkhya-yoga school of thought and to describe its functions. The study will be a comparative one. The concept
of consciousness is to be picked up from the Slokas and their commentaries too. Sāmkhya epistemology and metaphysics have been taken up by the yoga thinkers. Therefore there are more points of similarity than that of difference between the two systems of thought. These points will be discussed in the relevant places in the chapters to follow.

I propose to set a limit to my enquiry in the following manner:

1. Physical basis of consciousness.
2. Levels of consciousness in yoga psychology.
3. Is it possible to have pure consciousness? If so how?
4. What is the relation of consciousness with knowledge?
5. What are psychological determinants of consciousness?
6. A brief discussion of abnormal forms of consciousness and its comparison with that of Sāmkhya-yoga.

In the preparation of my work I may take the help of some connected discussions which might be relevant in explaining my point clearly.

I, therefore, propose to discuss consciousness and its functions in Sāmkhya-yoga under the following chapters:

1. General observation of consciousness: (a) some western views, (b) some eastern views.
2. Consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.
3. Physical basis of consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.
4. Psychical determinants of consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.

5. Theory of knowledge according to Sāmkhya-yoga in connection with consciousness.

6. Purusa as pure consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.

7. Levels of consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.

8. Normal and abnormal forms of consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga.


10. Conclusion and personal observation.

I have consulted many works of different writers of east and west freely and without any hesitation. I take the opportunity to express my heart felt gratitude to them all. The names of the works and their respective authors have been mentioned at the end of my work.