Chapter II

CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS FUNCTION IN SĀMKHYA-YOGA

"Trirunnataṁ sthāpya samaṁ sarīram hṛdindriyāṁ
manasaḥ samānivesya
brahmodūpānena prataṛeta vidvān srotāṃsi sarvāṇi
bhaya-vahāni"¹

"Holding the body steady with the three (upper parts chest, neck, and head) erect, causing the senses and the mind to enter into the heart, the wise man should cross by the boat of Brahman all the streams which cause fear."

"Prthvyapayatejo 'nilakhe samutthite pañcātmakake
yoga gune pravṛtte
na tasya rogo na jarā na mṛtyuh prāptasya
yogāgni-mayam sarīram"²

"When the five-fold quality of yoga is produced as earth, water, fire, air and ether arise, then there is no longer sickness, no old age, no death to him who has obtained a body made of the fire of yoga."

The above slokas from the Svetāsvatara Upanisad praise the yoga practice. They have also revealed how through yoga practice a yogin can realise the consciousness. There is an element of allegory in 'boat of Brahman' and 'stream'. They have undoubtedly expressed the efficacy of yoga practice not

2. Ibid., Sl. 12
only to the yogin alone but to all men suffering from miseries in this world. Our concern is here to see what consciousness is in Sāmkhya-yoga Psychology. We shall try to examine how far the ideal expressed by them has bearings upon Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness and its functions. We may also try to have a notion of consciousness and its functions from some slokas of the Siva Samhitā.

"Caityanyāt sarvamutpannam jagadetat carācaram Tasmāt sarvam parityejya caityanye tu samāsrayet"

"Niruddhya mārutam yogi yadaiva kūrute bṛṣam Tadā tat kṣanam ātmānam jyotirupen ca pasyati."^3

The world of living beings has come out of consciousness and at the end of their lives they will shelter in the same consciousness.

Suspending the breath when the yogin intensifies the process of yoga the ātmā at once reveals itself to him in the form of a jyotā.

The slokas above have given us sufficient informations of consciousness and its functions in the yoga psychology. They have brought to us practical informations of how to practice yoga.

"Yo 'ntah sukho 'ntarārāmas tathā 'ntarjyotireva jaḥ Sa yogi brahmanirvānām brahma bhuto 'dhigaochati"
"Yat sāmkhyaih prāpyate sthānam
Tad yogairapi ganyate
Ekam sāmkhyāṃca yogaṇca
Yah pasyati sa pasyati." 4

"He who finds his happiness within, his joy within and likewise his light only within that yogin becomes divine and attains to the beatitude of God."

The place obtained by Sāmkhya is also arrived at by yoga. He who sees Sāmkhya and yoga identical sees the truth.

The Bhāgavad Gitā gave primary importance to Sāmkhya and yoga as processes for the realisation of consciousness. Gitā has considered both the systems as identical as regards self realisation and acquisition of knowledge. The realisation of consciousness has sufficient depth as hinted by the above quotation. We shall try to examine to what extent the view advocated by the Gitā has been utilised in the Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness and its functions.

The intrinsic power of consciousness can lift the human soul away from the world of existence and enables it to have direct communion with the spirit of the universe. But before trying to have a discussion of consciousness and its function in the Sāmkhya-yoga we should try to explain certain basic concepts of this psychology. Dr. K.C. Das in his thesis "The Concept of Personality in the Sāmkhya-yoga and the Gitā" 4

has remarked that Sāmkhya-yoga psychology is based on its metaphysics. The metaphysical position has direct relation to manas (mind), buddhi (intelligence), ātman (self) and other mental states and processes. So it is necessary to understand certain concepts like Antahkarana (internal organs), manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), Ahankāra (egoism) etc. These concepts are again dependent on the notion of subtle body (linga sarira) which is a very common term in Sāmkhya-yoga psychology.

Prakṛti is the ultimate cause of this world. It possesses the three attributes Sattva, Rajas and Tamas as the constituent elements. The evolution of Prakṛti starts due to the conjunction of Purusa and Prakṛti. The first evolute of Prakṛti is mahat (the great one). Consciousness of Purusa is reflected on it and it is made to appear conscious. The mahat is also called buddhi (intellect). Ahankāra emerges by further transformation of the intellect. With an excess of Sattva element from Ahankāra come out the five organs of knowledge (Jñānendriyas) the five organs of action (Karmendriyas) and mind (manas). With an excess of Tamas from Ahankāra evolve the five subtle elements (Tanaatras). From the Tanaatras come out the five great elements (Pañca mahābhutas). Thus including the Purusa Sāmkhya philosophy has accepted twenty ātma principle. A new meaning is attached to the term mind in Indian psychology. Soul or self is pure gnosis or consciousness. It is absolutely free from any activity or modification. The internal organs including the mind are all evolutes of Prakṛti. This is the peculiar conception of mind in Sāmkhya-yoga psychology. This peculiarity of the concept of mind acts as a
barrier to the western mind for understanding Indian psychology. Observing the functions of the mind it has been divided into ‘Daiva manas’ (spiritual mind) concerned with the function of knowledge and ‘Yaksa manas’ (active mind that controls and directs the organs of activity). But the mind is one though it may serve different purposes. Buddhhi is finite as it is confined to the individual. Buddhi is superior to the mind as it works under the influence of Sattva and controls the processes of the senses, mind and Ahankāra. Egoism (Ahankāra) comes out of Mahattatva (consciousness). It is the principle of the internal organ (antah kārana). I - feeling and individualising are brought into being by Egoism. The subtle body (suksma sarira) constitutes of five gross elements (Pañca mahābhutās) Mahattatva (consciousness), Ahankāra (I - feeling), Manas (mind) five organs of knowledge, five organs of action (jñānendriyas and karmendriyas) and five infra-atomic particles (Pañca tanmātṛāni). The subtle body is the migratory body and it carries the effects of karmas and samskāras of the past.  

Sāmkhya means by buddhindriyas, the determinate sensory psycho-physical impulses which go out to the external objects and receive impressions from them. Karmendriyas mean the determinate motor psycho-physical impulses that react upon the objects perceived. The sense organs are products of Ahankāra and are mental or psycho-physical. The mind presides over both the sensory and motor organs. The external senses receive the  

5. The Concept of Personality in the Sāmkhya-yoga and the Gita - Dr. K.C. Das - 45ff.
impressions of objects and these are synthesised by the mind. They are apperceived by Ahankāra. Buddhi determines them and sends them to the self. Buddhi and Ahankāra are subtle sense organs. On the other hand the five organs of cognition and the five organs of action and the mind are stthula (gross) sense organs. According to Vyāsa they are the determinate modifications of indeterminate egoism (asmitā).

The thirteen senses produce the psychic apparatus with which the Purusa is affected in the empirical state. They are psychic in the sense that they want to be lighted up by the Purusa. The mental functions are really mechanical processes of physical organs and assume a psychical character when illumined by the spirit. The modification of buddhi, viz., vṛtti is a characteristic of perception and all forms of consciousness. The psychic apparatus mediates between the Purusa and the outside world. The first impression of the sense is (ālocaṇa mātra) bare awareness. But when the mind interprets it, it becomes determinate (Sāvikaṃpaka). The subtle body is invisible but without it the gross body is useless. It forms the personality and causes the difference in characters of individuals. It is formed according to the results of past karmas. All rewards and punishments are attached to it.

7. Outlines of Indian Philosophy - M. Hiriyma - pp. 284-85
8. Six systems of Indian Philosophy - Maxmuller, pp. 301-302
"Prakāśa kriyāsthitīśilaṁ bhutendriyātmakam
bhoga-pavargārtham drṣyam" 9

The seen, the phenomenal universe whether visible to the eyes
or invisible is the result of the interaction of three forces,
motion, inertia and poise of rhythm. The interweaving of these
builds the elements and organs of nature which exist for the
sake of the spirit, Purusa and are the means of evolution of
consciousness."

"Antah karanasya tadujjvalatvallohabad adhīsthātṛtvām" 10

"The internal organ through its being enlightened thereby, i.e.,
by soul is the overruler as is the iron in respect of the
magnet."

The different organs act for the sake of the spirit.
The organs are the instruments for the arousal of consciousness.
The mechanism of consciousness in Sāmkhya-yoga is thus a peculiar
one.

"Cetano ādesāniyamah kānta kauksavat" 11

"The rule is with reference to one knowing just as escape from
a thorn."

Considering consciousness as a means of escape does
not clearly explain the nature of consciousness. A. Beresdal

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9. Yoga Sutra, Bk. II, S1. 18
10. Sāmkhya Aphorism of Kapila - Dr. F.R. Ballantyne - Bk. I, S1.99
11. Ibid., Bk. 2, S1. 9
Keith remarks "Spirit joins forces with nature in order that nature may be revealed to spirit and that may obtain freedom from its connection with nature." 12

"Tasmāt tat samyogād cetanaṃ cetanaṁiva lingam
Guna-karttrtve ca tathā kartteva bhavatyudāsīnah" 13

"Thus from this union the insentient evolute appears as if sentient and similarly from the activity belonging to the attributes, the spirit which is neutral as if it were active."

"Purusasya darsanārtham kārixalyārtham tathā pradhānasya
Paṅgavandhavadubhayoropī samyogastat kṛtah sargah" 14

"For the perception of nature by the spirit and for the isolation of the spirit there is union of both-like that of the halt and the blind and from this union proceeds evolution."

It is consciousness that helps the evolution of nature and the isolation of Purusa from Prakṛti. But from this the exact nature of consciousness is not clear.

"Kṣina vṛttṛ abhijātasyeva maner
Grahitṛ grahana grāhyesu tatstha
tadājanatā śamāpattih" 15

"When the modification of the mind have been stilled, consciousness like a pure crystal takes the colour of what it rests on, whether

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13. Tattva Kanmādi - Garganath Jha - Sl. 20
15. Yoga Sutra - M. N. Dvivedi - Bk. I, Sl. 41
that be the perceiver, the perceiving of the thing perceived." Geraldine Coster compared the internal organs to water in respects of their readiness to take the form of the objects they confront.16

"Tadā drastubh svarupe 'vasthānam"17

"Then the individual becomes aware of himself."

"Tatah punah svāntoditau tulya pratyayau Cittasyaikagrata parināmah"

"Taj jah samskāro 'nya-samskāro pratibandhi"18

"Then again the repressed and revived are equally (present in) consciousness, this is that condition of the mind which is known as concentration transformation."

"In the state of consciousness all ideas are gradually generalised into one, which is as a stationary spectacle before the spectator."

According to Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness is the essence of the self which is self-luminous. But the self cannot know its own nature so long as it is identified with the buddhi through ignorance. Buddhi goes out to the objects through the senses and assumes the form of the object. But buddhi itself cannot manifest the objects because it is unconscious. But when consciousness of Purusa is reflected on them, they are known or revealed.19

16. Yoga and Western Psychology - Coster - p. 108
17. Yoga Sutra, Bk. I, S1. 3
18. Ibid., Bk. III, S1. 12, Bk. I, S1. 50
"Citeh apratisaṅkramāyah tadakārāpattau
Svabuddhi samvedanam"20

"The identification of the consciousness with the self or seer brings awareness of the mind as an object."

The nature of consciousness in Sāṃkhya-yoga has a special status and dimension. The evolved world is unthinkable and the mental works are quite impossible in the absence of consciousness. "A deeper principle of consciousness must emerge if the fundamental intention of nature which has led to the development of matter, life, mind and intellectual consciousness is to be accomplished."21 Without accepting consciousness the explanation of the world process is never complete. In this connection we can accept the remarks made by Radhakrishnan:

"It is the ego consciousness which enjoys and suffers and it will continue to do so, so long as it is bound up with the use of life and body and is dependent on them for its knowledge and action. But the mind becomes free and disentangled and sinks into that secret serenity, when its consciousness becomes illumined."22

"Caitanya rupa prakāsatah caitanya siddhau"23

"Consciousness is proved through its manifestation in the form of consciousness.

"Draṣṭravādīrätmanah karanatvam indriyānām"24

20. Yoga Sutra, Bk. IV, Sū. 22
21. The Principal Upanisads - Radhakrishnan - p. 57
22. Bhāgavad Gītā - Radhakrishnan - p. 105
23. Sāṃkhya Apporism, Bk. VI, Sū. 47
24. Ibid., Bk. II, Sū. 29
"The being, the seer etc. belongs to the soul, the instrumentality belongs to the organs."

The soul is quiescent. But through all the organs of vision etc., He becomes the seer, speaker. The organs work through mere conjunction of Purusa.

"Jāda vyāvṛttau jādaṁ prakāsayati cidrupaḥ."

"This (soul) in the shape of thought discrepant from the non-intelligent reveals the non-intelligent."

The consciousness of Purusa reflects itself on the unconscious when the unconscious comes near to the Purusa. The unconscious would have remained for ever unconscious had there been no conscious Purusa to reflect its consciousness upon it. The Purusa as the self revealing principle reveals itself and in so doing it casts its consciousness on the unconscious. But the Purusa in Sāmkhya-yoga does not directly reflect its consciousness upon the unconscious. Purusa reflects its consciousness on buddhi that carries the reflection to the organs and makes the conscious process possible.

"Rangasya darsayitvā nivarttate narttaki yathā nṛtyat
Purusasya tathātmanam prakāsyā nivarttate prakṛtih."

"As an actress having exhibited herself to the spectators desists from the dance, so does Nature desist, having manifested herself to Soul."

25. Sāmkhya Aphorism, Bk. VI, Sl. 50
26. Tattva Kaumudi, Sl. 59
Purusa the conscious principle in the Sāmkhya-yoga knows or experiences. Prakṛti furnishes the materials for its knowledge. But once when Prakṛti manifests herself to a particular Purusa thenceforward she ceases her activity to that Purusa.

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"Niḥsange 'pya parāgo 'vivekāt"\(^{27}\)

"Though it (soul) be unassociated still there is a tinging (reflexionally) through non-discrimination."

The tinge is considered as a reflection by those who do not discriminate the soul from matter. According to Sāmkhya the reflection of the soul on material objects is due to the absence of the discriminating power. Those souls will not throw any reflection on matter which have obtained the power of discrimination between themselves and matter. Sāmkhya also tries to prove that consciousness does not exist in the material elements.

"Na bhuta caityayam pratyekādṛṣṭeḥ sāmhatye
   Ca sāmhatye 'pica"\(^{28}\)

"Thought does not belong to the elements for it is not found in them separately or moreover in the state of combination moreover in the state of combination."

Khyāti is cognition or empirical consciousness. Purusa is the inward light without which no knowledge is possible.

27. Sāmkhya Aphorism, Bk. VI, Sl. 27
28. Ibid., Bk. V, Sl. 129
Empirical consciousness is associated with pleasure or pain. It is coloured by the mental afflictions. According to Aurobinda "consciousness is the great underlying fact, the universal witness for which the world is a field." The phenomenal world consists of an observing consciousness and active objectivity. There is no possibility of action without the witness of Purusa-consciousness. Prakṛti remains active so long as it is not perceived by Purusa. It brings the idea that all our knowledge is subjective and the world exists for us in the form of knowledge only. "The Purusa becoming conscious of Prakṛti and all her works produces what is the only reality of which we have any conception, the phenomenal reality of a self conscious soul." Our feelings like 'I am old', 'I am lean and thin' etc. are the results of ignorance. Such feelings caused by the senses and the body are associated with the self. These feelings become natural through constant repetitions. But yoga has shown the way how to remove these long practised habits through meditation and other yoga accessories.

Through yoga practice a state of mind can be obtained when these feelings fail to produce pleasure or pain. But so long as the man remains ignorant he is bound to suffer.

29. Life divine - Aurobinda - p. 20
30. Six systems of Indian Philosophy - Maxmuller - p. 282
31. Ibid., p. 284
32. Sāmkhya Darsanam - Kalibar Vidyabagish - p. 181
Attainment of truth is the sum cum bonum of life. But it is a gradual process. Association grows from non-distinguished consciousness. Association leads to an endless conscious association and consciousness are endless like seed and plant. But they can be brought to end through the growth of discriminative knowledge.33

"Tejoc caitanya sadhāranam ca prakāsātvaṁ"34

Having light as the general property consciousness reveals itself.

There is a general consciousness that first informs and then illumines the energy at work. There is a faculty of consciousness which holds together the relations of objects. In consciousness there is a persistence of the subjective and objective relations.35 The element of intelligence is different from the content of knowledge. It is like a stationary light. It is the self that illuminates the changing objects of knowledge. It manifests itself in consciousness in the form of 'I'. Now the problem is how this element of light is related to knowledge. Again how knowledge takes it up and becomes conscious? This is an important question in Sāmkhya epistemology and metaphysics. The substance of knowledge takes the copy of the external world. This copy is intelligised by pure

34. Sāmkhya Pravacana Bhāṣya - Richard Garle - p. 44
35. Essays on the Gita - Aurobinda - p. 379
intelligence (Purusa). Then it appears conscious. The forming of the shape of knowledge by buddhi is the pramāṇa and the validity or invalidity of these shapes is criticised by the later shapes of knowledge and not by the external objects (svatah prāmāṇya and svatah apramāṇya). The rise of consciousness is both physical and transcendental. Consciousness is an entity which cannot be reduced to anything else but to itself. Consciousness is the necessary presupposition of proof and disproof and is beyond the reach of logical justification and refutations. It is self-established and pramāṇamirapeksa.

From the above discussion it has been clear that Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness is a quite independent entity. But the world process and the question of knowledge become quite inexplicable without consciousness. Sāmkhya-yoga has attempted to explain how consciousness remaining independent of Prakṛti can be knower and experimenter of the different emanations of Prakṛti.

"Purusārtha sunyāṇāṃ gunāṇāṃ pratiprasavāḥ
Kaivalyam svarupa pratisthā vā citi saktiḥ iti"

"When the qualities of nature (guna) having fulfilled their object, are reabsorbed, consciousness abides in its own essence, this is Kaivalya."

37. Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy - Saxsena - p.100
38. Ibid., p. 144
39. Yoga Sutra, Bk. IV, S1. 34
The principle of consciousness cannot be perceived separately from knowledge. Consciousness has no form, no motion, no quality, no impurity. Each item of knowledge is illuminated by consciousness and each item of knowledge carries with it the awakening or enlivening of consciousness. According to Śāmkhya the self, the pure cit is neither illusory nor an abstraction rather it is concrete but transcendent. When a composite of knowable things are presented to consciousness, it unifies them. It is with the help of consciousness that all things knowable are interpreted as systematic and coherent experience of a person. 40

"Samyoga yoga ityukto jivātmā paratmano riti" 41

The unification of the individual self with the universal soul is called yoga.

"Sāmadhiḥ samatāvasthā jivātmā paramātmanoḥ" 42

In Sāmadhi the jivātmā obtains the equal status with the Paramātmā.

The yogins can experience some supreme moments which are indescribable. Yogins try to actualise such moments in their self realisation. These moments are so high and so intense that common sense cannot understand them. According to Geraldine Coster the yoga sutras express the idea that the

41. Patanjala Darsanaa - Mahesh Ch. Pal - Sl. 25
42. Ibid., Sl. 28
self abides in its own nature and yet it is entangled in the world of phenomenal experience. "The seer is identifying himself with the sun. To disentangle the seer from the sun, the self from its personal experience is set forth as the goal of yoga." The attainment of true knowledge is the objective of Sāmkhya-yoga. There are two forms of citta the kārana citta and kārya citta. The kārana citta is all pervading and is infinite in number. Each of them is connected with a Purusa or soul. It is with this kārana citta that the yogin can have knowledge of all things at once. While kārya citta is one with which the conscious states are manifested. To the kārya citta the knower and the known are reflected. It comprehends the knower and the known in one state of consciousness. It is unconscious being a modification of Prakṛti but through the reflection of Purusa it appears as knower. The modification of the kārana citta into kārya citta is made by the Tamas and Rajas inherent in it. When the Tamas of the citta is overcome the yogin acquires omniscience. Then the citta becomes pure just like Purusa. The kārana citta is connected with Purusa and it appears contracted when the Purusa presides over the animal body. It appears expanded when Purusa presides over the human body. An unqualified pure consciousness is the reality of both the external and internal world of mind. It is called Visaya caitanya and Prāna caitanya respectively.

43. Yoga and Western Psychology - Coster - p. 98
44. Yoga as Philosophy and Religion - S.N. Das Gupta - p. 93
"Cittam punaryena visayoparaktam bhavati sa
visayo jñātah"\(^46\)

The mind knows that every object which attracts it.

In yoga practice the yogin obtains the opportunity to measure the activity of consciousness. He can also use the consciousness for serving him various purposes in his practice. This is the distinguishing mark of yoga practice. "Yoga Sāstra consists of four divisions; as those on medicine treat of disease, its cause, health and medicine, so the Yoga-sāstra also treats of phenomenal existence, its cause, liberation, and its cause. This existence of ours, full of pain, is what is to be escaped from; the connection of nature and the soul is the cause of our having to experience this existence the absolute abolition of this connection is the escape; and right in sight is the cause thereof."\(^47\)

In modern psychology consciousness means full awareness of things. When a man is conscious of a thing he is not conscious of other things at the same time. In the words of Woodworth "You are most conscious of your problem but you are somewhat conscious of the scene before your eyes and you are not wholly unconscious of sensations from the various parts of your body."\(^48\) In modern psychology consciousness is a psychological energy that is focussed on a particular object to have a clear

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\(^{46}\) Patanjala Darsanam - Mahesh Pal - Sl. 32

\(^{47}\) Sarva darsana Sangraha - E.B. Comell - p. 272

\(^{48}\) Psychology - Woodworth and Marguis - p. 397
understanding of the object. But in Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness is a different process. The conscious process starts with the via media of buddhi. The originally unconscious senses and manas etc. begin to perform the mental works for the benefit of Purusa. Purusa, as pure consciousness remains as witness.

From the above discussion of consciousness and its function in Sāmkhya-yoga an attempt is made here to draw conclusion on the topic. But the attempt is a difficult one because there is vast literature on the topic from the hands of experts on the subject. Further an assessment of Sāmkhya-yoga consciousness requires a first hand knowledge of Yoga practice. But this knowledge is beyond the reach of us the common men. So our attempt is not expected to arrive at a completely new truth. It is true that there is a peculiar mechanism for the conscious process in Sāmkhya-yoga. And this peculiarity is based on the Sāmkhya-yoga metaphysics and epistemology. Some want to say that the so-called realisation of consciousness in yoga practice is not at all a realisation rather it is a fiction of the yogins. Such unsympathetic statements against yoga-practice appears to be far fetched. Common man's ignorance of yogic consciousness cannot be the basis for its denial. Yoga claims to have a great contribution to the field of human knowledge. It is rather high time on the part of modern psychologists to find out the truths of such yoga claims. We cannot deny that yoga is the way to develop personal integrity, self discipline.