THE VIEWS OF SĀMKHYA - YOGA AND THE GĪTĀ REGARDING HEREDITY AND PERSONALITY-TYPES.
CHAPTER V.

The Views of Samkhya-Yoga and the Gita regarding Heredity and Personality Types.

We have already pointed out that according to Samkhya-Yoga, Personality is not confined to the limits of a particular life, but is constituted of a permanent principle persisting through infinity maintaining its unique unity in the midst of changes, nevertheless, retaining its identity amidst transformations throughout its own history. It is unique, in spite of changes and variations that come about in course of its development in its empirical aspect. In the process of its continual growth and development, personality in its essence extends to the past, subsists in the present and persists throughout the future. Personality is a self-conscious principle, and so the term is properly applicable only to the individual during its life-time. In its real essence, its organization endures beyond the bounds of space and time.

The question of heredity and environment did not so much interest the Indian writers of ancient times, nor did they seem to approach the problem in modern scientific manner. It is not easy to get a full picture of the problem from a single source. There are of course references and cursory remarks made on some aspects of the problem here and there. As Dr. B.N.Seal has observed that the question of heredity
was raised in the Brahmana, and was more thoroughly
discussed and interpreted by the writers on medical sciences
like Charaka and Susruta in their Samhitās particularly in
respect to the question of transmission of specific characters.
Some light was also thrown by Sankara in his Brahadrānyaka
Bhāṣya. References can be found here and there in Śrutī
literature and in the Mānū Samhitā pertaining to heredity.
It is said in the Śrutis - "Ātmā Vai jayate putrah" - the
self is born indeed as the son. That hereditary factors
were, however, believed to be potent in the life of men and
it has been proved by the fact that even in the question of
eligibility of students for particular study under the guru
(preceptor), in settling up marriage, in employment etc.,
and the facts of birth, lineage, parentage, family etc. were
held to be of great significance and carefully attended to.
This was because birth (Jāti) together with its other
accompaniments were considered to be of great importance
in determining the nature and potentialities of the individual.
So, in ancient India, contrary to the belief of the
environmentalists like the school of behaviourists, heredity
was thought to be more potent in the constitution and growth
of human personality. Many an interesting story is there
showing how even devoted and sincere students were refused
training by the Brāhmaṇa Gurus. The story of Ekalavya in the
Mahābhārata is an instance to the point.

Before giving the views of Śamkhya-Yoga on the problem
of nature and nurture, it is deemed necessary to discuss here
in brief the stand-point of medical sciences of Charaka and
Susruta on this problem. How are specific characters transmitted from the parents to the issue? What are the qualities and characters so transmitted? What are the agencies through which such transmission is possible? How are physical infirmities and other deformities inherited from the parents? In the chapters on physiology (sarirasthāna) of the Samhitās of both Charaka and Susruta, these questions were raised, discussed and answered to. As to the species, both Charaka and Susruta maintained that species (Yonayah) resemble moulds. Regarding the growth and development of the foetus or the fertilised ovum, both Charaka and Susruta upheld the theory propounded by Dvanvantari, which states that the foetus develops by the process of "palingenesis" and that the ovum contains the organs and tissues of the parents simultaneously in potentia, and the development takes place gradually leading to the full-grown organs and physique of the issue by process of maturation. As the sprouting bamboo contains in miniature all the parts of a fully developed bamboo, and as the mango-blossom contains the stone, pulp and the fibres of the ripe mango in their potential forms though not visible in the blossom on account of extreme minuteness, so also the fertilised ovum contains in potentia all the organs and tissues of the parental body in miniature and are visible only in their true stature in the process of unfoldment and growth by gradual process of maturation.(1).

(1) Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus.- Dr. B. N. Seal, p. 233ff.
The inheritance of specific characters has been accounted for and explained by Charaka on the basis of Germ-plasm or sperm-plasm theory propounded by Atreya. The Germ-plasm theory of Atreya was considered by Dr. Seal to be an advance on the conception of 'Gemmules' of Darwin and 'Ids' of Spencer.(2). Charaka maintains that the parental vija or germ plasm contains in potentia the whole organism and tissues of the male parent. The entire organism of the off-spring gradually grows and develops out of it in course of time (kalaprakarsat). Shankara on Vrihadāranyaka maintains almost the same view. The minute elements derived from the whole organism and tissues of the male parent constituting the sperm cell generate the fully developed organism of the off-spring.(3).

It is clear that according to Atreya's germ-plasm theory, the germ-plasm or the fertilized ovum carries with it in toto the organs and tissues in potentia from the body of

(1) Sarirasthāna - p.359-60, sl.32,Susruta Sam.
(2) Positive Sciences of Ancient Hindus-Dr.B.N.Seal.p.236.
(3) Charaka Samhitā -Chap.IV-7 p.333.
the male parent. Are then constitutional diseases, congenital deformities or infirmities of the parent invariably inherited by the issue? Are the children of the physically handicapped or imbeciles necessarily like the parents? 'Yadi ca mamasya mamasyaprabhavah kasmanajaddabhyyo yat{h}a pitribhyosadrsharupa bhavanti'. (1). In answering this question, Charaka observes that the issues of the imbeciles and others are not necessarily like the parent. The parental vija (sperm-plasm) is like the molten metals, such as, gold, silver, copper, lead etc. (Kanakarajatatratrampusisakani) and the yonis (species) resemble the moulds, which are responsible for giving birth to off-springs of the same species. The species are of four kinds- Jarayandasvedabhidah, (2) and the difference in shape and form is due to the species (yonih). In regard to the inheritance of physical defects, the constitutional diseases and other infirmities in the parents or parental body, it was stated by Charaka in reply that if the sperm-cells producing particular organs or limbs of the off-spring have already been affected or infected by the virus of the disease or any other parental defect, then and then alone, the particular limb or organ of the issue will be defective, otherwise not. The organs of all have their origin in the self, their production or non-production is a matter of chance (daivam), hence not in all cases, those born of imbecile parents (Jadadibhy) are like their parents.

The self is not knower even in spite of having the organs (of knowledge) nor ignorant for not having them, nor is there the self in the not-self, this special knowledge is derived only on account of a specific type of being.

(1) Charaka Samhitā - Chap. IV, 7, p. 331.
"Tattrochýate—Yasya yasya hyangavavasya vijë
vijabhāga upatapto bhavati tasya tasyāngavavasya
vikṛ̱ trupajāyate ... ... pitṛsadrarupa bhavanti.(1).

It is further stated that the agent cannot have
practical knowledge in absence of the appropriate organs,
the action that is present for those cannot exist without
them.(2). By rejecting the organs and controlling the
unsteady mind, the knower of the self remains settled on
its own self by getting into it,(3). Thus Charaka closed
his arguments by quoting Bharadwāja and stressing the need of
ātma-jñāna (knowledge of the self).

This clearly shows, as has been already pointed out,
that the medical sciences of Charaka and Susruta accepted
the meta-physical position of the Sāmkhya-Yoga in interpreting
the physiological and biological facts, and in clarification
of the facts pertaining to psychosomatic phenomena in
psychology. The statements will be corroborated by the
detailed accounts given by both Charaka and Susruta at the
beginning of the chapters on physiology.(4).

It further appears from their writings that they
believed in the effects of nutrition and mental states of
the parents on the off-spring. Food, nutrition, habits and
behaviour, mental state and outlook during the period of
gestation particularly of the mother may, to a great extent,
determine sex, complexion, colour, pigment, character and
general health of the off-spring.(5).

Are the parents then alone responsible for production
of the foetus or the fertilized ovum ? The question was

(1) Charaka Sam. ..Chap.III,p.331.
(2) Loc.Cit. Charaka Sam.
p.40ff.Śāñkhaśāsthranam.(5) Positive Sciences of the Ancient
Hindus-Seal,p.236-238.
raised both by Charaka and Susruta and was answered to.

Bharadwaja answered to the question in the negative. What is the cause? Neither the mother nor the father, nor the soul, nor things pertaining to the self (sātmyam) nor things eaten or drunk, or licked, give birth to the foetus, nor does the being coming from the other world get into the womb.

If the parents produced the fertilised ovum, then being desirous of children they would produce as many sons or daughters as they liked. They having resolved to produce children through mutual intercourse would produce sons or daughters, if so desire, but this is not the case, rather some produce sons, others daughters and still others totally barren nor would those without issue have the occasion to repent.

"Yadi hi mātāpitarau garbham janayetam .. na cāpatyakāmāh parideveraṃ."(1).

Which do then generate the fertilised ovum?

The fertilised ovum though placed and sustained in the mother's womb, and thought to be products of the parents, is really the joint-product of the collective agency (samādayat) of five kinds of contributing causes. These causes combine to produce the fertilised ovum as the joint product, and none of the causes or some of them alone can produce the fertilised ovum.(2).

What then about the question of transmission of specific characters? While estimating the views of Charaka and Susruta on this question, Dr. Seal concluded his discussion with the remarks: ".... it is expressly stated that the

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(2) Charaka Sam. Chap.III and Susruta Sam., p.360., p.349.
peculiar characters or idio-syneracies of the elements that combine to form the vija must be regarded as a matter of chance (Daiva), in other words, the truly congenital variations are accidental. (1). It is usually the belief of majority of modern writers that whatever is inherited structural or functional is generally derived from the parents. The specific characters are believed to be transmitted from the parents to the Off-spring. The modern upholders of the genetic theory believe that 'genes' are the physical media that transmit the hereditary characters from the parents to the Off-springs. But according to Sāmkhya-Yoga, the parents' contributions to the Off-spring are only physical and structural. But then in some cases, structural defects cause functional idiosyncracies. Similarly, temperamental differences, intelligence, adaptive reflexes etc. on the functional side of personality are, to a great extent, bound to the constitutional make-up of glands and nerve-structure on the structural aspect of personal inheritance. (2). Let us now examine Sāmkhya-Yoga view on this particular point regarding heredity. What are the specific contributions of the parents either to the structural or functional aspect of human personality?

According to the Sāmkhya view, the total human personality is made up of elements derived from three main sources.

"Sukṣma maṭāpitujāh saha prabhūtaistridhā viśesābhsvuh
Sukṣmāstesām niyatā maṭāpitṛja nivartante." (3).

The determinate (Vishesāh) are threefold - the subtle, derived

(1) Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus- Dr. Seal.
(2) Personality - Allport. P. 103-104.
(3) Sam. Sutra.
from parents with the great elements. Of these, the subtle are lasting, but those derived from parents go back (to their original sources). Thus it is clear that determinate elements comprising the human personality are threefold.

The subtle body is imagined, the parental body is made up of six cells or sheaths (sātkaushikāh). These six cells (Kosāh) comprising the physical body are hair (roma) i.e. the skin, blood (rakta) and flesh (mānsa), these three are derived from the mother, and sinews (snāyu), bones (asthi) and fat or marrow (mājja), these three are derived from the father (1). Thus the first determinate is one, the second is born of the parents and the third is the great natural elements (mahābhutānī) (2). Of these the subtle (suksma) ones are eternal (ṇiyata) inasmuch as they persist from the first creation till final release of the person. After death, the natural elements go back to the unmanifested grounds of their own. The gross body made up of six sheaths or cells derived from parents are destroyed on death either by being reduced to dust if buried, reduced to ashes if the body is burnt, or eaten up by worms, if thrown away (3). This shows the transitoriness of the gross body, which is significant only during the lifetime.

Karma means activities of the mind, of the organs of sense and action, as well as those of vital energies (prāna). These activities are of two kinds - automatic (bhogabhuta) and voluntary or free-willed (purusakāra). The fruition or effects of activities (Karma) are of three kinds - birth or attainment of species (jāti), the span of life or longevity (āyuh) and

experiencing of pleasure or pain (bhoga). The word bhoga (experiencing) is used in two senses - it may be involuntary or automatic activity performed without due consideration as a matter of course, or it may mean experiencing agreeable or disagreeable situations or states in life. But in free-willed or voluntary actions (purushakāra) in varying circumstances, the display of faculties may be accelerated, controlled in a different channels, in accordance with the choice of the agent. The animals and other creatures of the lower order are pre-eminently subject to the 'bhoga-bhūta' karmas (automatic or involuntary actions), inasmuch as they are ordinarily slaves to circumstances or organic urges, whereas human beings, by virtue of their superior intellect and conscience, are mostly the agents of voluntary actions (Purushakāra Karma). According to the Samkhya-Yoga, all sentient beings are endowed with consciousness, and it is never a question of difference in kind but only of degree or intensity. Man has only greater amount of consciousness in comparison with other beings of the lower kingdom. Hence no being can be or is beyond the influence of Karma.

In the life of man, activity or Karma is incessant through the exercise of four kinds of faculties - the mind, the organs of sense, the organs of action and the vital energies (Vāyus). Complete absence of activity is never possible and again in sound sleep (Susupti), some organs or senses may remain comparatively less active or dull, which is by no means inaction in toto, but sensations and activities differ only in degrees.
Thus beings or jivas being subject to the law or Karma are committed to a vicious circle. For, according to the Sāmkhya conception of causality, nothing can come out of nothing and nothing can go back into nothing. This principle is in accord with universal law of conservation of energy. The works done leave behind some traces in forms of impressions (Samskāras) giving rise to fresh dispositions or faculties forming at the same time the essential constituents or components of our character and personality. Activities repeated strengthen our habits, which become our second nature. That is why habitual activities require less energies both mental and physical, and they tend to repeat in similar circumstances.

On the other hand, the cosmic principles of Prakṛti e.g., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas ever remain at work. The three fundamental elements of mind—Cognition (Prakṛtya), Conation (Pravruttī) and feeling or emotion (Abhūtī) are merely the expressions of the three cosmic principles working in and through life. And whatever action is done, is done not only under the preponderance of one of them, but at the same time the effect of the action in return adds to the momentum of the Guna that is in ascendency at the moment. So, there is an incessant rotation (Samsāra) between the cause and effect, between the action and its Samskāra or latency.
Another point worth careful notice is that Samkhya-Yoga psychology went beyond the modern western psychoanalysts of the Freudian School by emphatically asserting the latencies of actions or Samskaras. According to Samkhya, the latencies in form of Karmasaya (active latency) and Vasana (Matrix latency) are not only affecting this life, but they are the perennial essence of life guiding unawares its course in the past, present and in all times to come. This shows that Karmic latencies make history and retain the life-history of all beings and personality. The difference between conscious, preconscious, subconscious and unconscious is only a matter of degree. Forgetfulness and total oblivion are against the Samkhya conception of causality, and the effects of all forms of actions cannot go into nothing or be completely out of existence. Thus, Samkhya, or latency of action (Karma) is in a way potential Karma trying to actuate itself, when similar circumstances arise with the aid of the Guna that predominated during the moment of its performance. Such a vicious cycle of karmic chain (Samsāra) can be effectively brought to an end only by means of Yoga (mental quietude), according to Samkhya-Yoga. Because yoga practices by virtue of their opposite influence render the seeds of Karma or latencies of Karma (Karmāsayas) ineffective and barren.

Thus with respect to the effects, Karmas or deeds are of three types according to Samkhya-Yoga - Fruit-bearing or those in progress (Prārabdha), Fresh or under performance (Kriyamāna) and Accumulated (Sancita). Activities performed before whose effects are being experienced by the agent are 'Prārabdha' or fruit-bearing, those that are being done in the present life are fresh (Kriyamāna) and those that are in store for the times to come are called Sancita or accumulated Karma.
The theory of Karma was upheld by different Indian Schools of Philosophy as well, although their basic principles might not concur. Once a thorn pierced into the foot of Lord Buddha and being asked by his disciples about the cause of the unhappy incident, Buddha told them: "Before ninety first birth from hence, a man was killed by my spear, and as an effect of that misdeed, Oh the devotees, I have been pierced at my foot". "Itah ekanavatikalpe shaktya me murusah hatah, tena karma vipākena pāde biddhesmi viksavāh". (1).

Mam also enjoined that a Brāhmin who refuses to bless one after being saluted is born afterwards as a tree in the crematory infested with crows and vultures. All such examples bear evidence to the fact that most of the Indian Schools of Philosophy in spite of their differences in the fundamental philosophical back-ground believed in the potency of Karma and Samskāra and the theory of reincarnation.

Hence we have Samkhya and Yoga-sutras embodying the Karma and Samskāra theory:

"Kleshamulah KarmEshayo drstādrstajama Vedaniyāḥ" (2)
"Satimule tadvipāke jatasyurbhogāḥ". (3)
"Nesvāradhisthite phalamāyātih Karmana tatsiddheḥ" (4).

The effect of Karma are not settled through the existence of God, but it is decided only through the instrumentality of Karma (activity).

(1) Karma Tatva - Page 78.
(2) Yoga Sutra - 2/12
(3) Yoga Sutra - 2/13
(4) Samkhya-Sutra.
This fact has been very clearly described by an eminent Indian thinker of the modern age in the following way:

"At death, the Hindu doctrine says, whatever character has been hammered out by the thoughts, deeds and repentances of the life that is closed continues to attach itself as the initial start for the soul in its next journey. As a result of our actions and thoughts and the attachments developed thereby, we come into being in a fresh birth with certain fixed tendencies. The doctrine of past and future lives and continuity of evolution through many lives is an extension of the law of cause and effect as we see it working every day. It is this extended application of the natural law that distinguishes Hinduism from most other religions."

"This, the most important doctrine in Hindu religion, is the applications in the moral sphere the law of conservation of energy. Indeed, both may be looked upon as parts of one law, Karma being the counterpart in the spiritual world of the truth that cause and effect are always equivalent. As death is only disintegration of the body and not of the soul, the law of cause and effect, so far as the soul is concerned, continues to operate beyond death. The death of the body does not operate as bankruptcy-discharge. The obligations, so to say, continue and are carried over to the new page in the account." (1)

Hence Sāmkhya-Yoga and the Gita do not accept the influence of heredity in the sense as accepted in modern Psychology. What the individual brings with him at birth is neither a gift from the parents nor bestowed on him per

(1) Hinduism, Doctrine and way of life -Rajagopalachari, page 72ff.
accidents, but these are rather his own acquisitions suited to the pre-existing conditions of the present life. What, then, about the environmental factors?

Every individual, as it were, is the centre of varied environmental circles. He is a member of a family, a community, a society, social and educational institutions, Social Culture, a resident of a State or territory and so on. This has been admitted by all systems of Hindu Philosophy. If environmental and circumstantial factors are ignored and left out of account, morality and moral code lose all meaning. But Hinduism and most systems of philosophy have laid great stress on social virtues and moral values. Morality and religion in Hinduism are unavoidable counterparts like the two sides of the same coin. The Yogāngas or the factors of Yoga like niyama, yama etc. and other cardinal virtues embodied in the teachings of the Gita are the ethical values and standards guiding personal activities for formation of character as well as the yardstick to measure the type of personality and human values. So, influences of environmental factors in the formation and measurement of personality have been evidently recognised by Samkhya-Yoga and the Gita. Ahimsā (non-violence and universal love), asteya (abstinence from theft), brahmacharya (Continence), Maitra (Sympathy or Friendship) etc. mentioned in Yoga-sutras distinctly refer to the influence and relation of society and environment with actions and development of personality. The whole of the Gita is, to a great extent, personality analysis of Arjuna, a duel between the conscious and the super-conscious under varying spheres of duty and
circumstances. The battle of Kuruskhetra is a battle of life, a process of integration of personality from the lower stage to a Supra-conscious state, a moral regeneration of the Ego under the guidance of super-Ego by regular discharge of allotted duties. The Socio-cultural relationship plays a great role in the development of personality and they form rather a very significant part of the entire environment. The Socio-cultural patterns exert great influence on the personality of man, while shaping its final destiny in a continual process of action and reaction between the individual and his Socio-cultural environment.

Man is indeed a social animal, and it is possible for man to establish social relationships, patterns of cultural and socio-ethical values, because of the fact that human individuals in spite of their plurality and differences are at base of the same staff and parts of one macrocosm. This has been well expressed by a celebrated writer and thinker in these words -"Interaction with individuals, knowledge of one another, and social relations with one another are possible because we all form parts of one system."(1).

Although an easy way of meditation prescribed on Yoga is seclusion, it does by no means support denial of human society and associations, for Yoga recommends in unequivocal terms to see the world in self and the self-same stuff in the world and to cultivate the highest cardinal virtues like truth, non-violence, kindness, equity, fraternity etc. These human values and virtues have no meaning to an individual who happens to lead a life away from society and without any interpersonal relationship like a Robinson Crusoe in a desolate island.

(1) Human Personality & its Destiny-Dr.S.Radhakrishnan,p.274.
Yoga, for instance, consists in bringing under control transformation of the antahkarana (thinking principles) e.g. "Chitta-Vrtti-Mirodhah". The outward flow of consciousness in thinking and willing should be turned inwards, the extraversion of the mind should be introverted, the influence of rajasika and tamasika principles of Nature requires to be subdued in order to affect greater release of the sattvika influence. The mind or the thinking principle should get rid of the environmental attachment in order to raise personality to its supra-sensual consciousness (Samādhi) for self-consciousness of atmājñāna (self-knowledge). Yoga prescribes detachment from the environment, seclusion in meditation and cessation of mental transformations. "The subjugation and control of the unconscious in man by his conscious will, and of the conscious socio-cultural ego by the superconscious in man, is the basic principle of these systems in contrast with the modern psychotherapy, psycho-analysis, psychology and education." (1). In Sāmkhya as well, which begins with nature of sorrows and distractions, environment has been enumerated as one of the sources of misery and sorrow - "Tattsaśadhābāutikam manuśapamapratirnastānīvarṇamanimittam" (2). Thus influences of environment in the sphere of activities, in formation of character and in evolution and integration of personality, have been clearly recognised in the Sāmkhya-Yoga system.

It is now to discuss the other aspect of the topic regarding the concept of personality types in Sāmkhya-Yoga and the Gita. According to Sāmkhya-Yoga, as we have seen

already, all states and processes of the mind are fundamentally due to the three Gunas or modes activity of Nature. All empirical or relative realities appear either in form of light or knowledge (Sattva), activity or energy (Rajas) or inertia or darkness (Tamas) or their combination. Besides these three, there can be nothing else to account for anything belonging to the mental or the external world. Cessation of these three Gunas can be possible only by non-attachment with anything other than the self. From the fundamental conception of Śāmkhya-Yoga, the conclusion that forces upon us is that whatever conduct, activities, characteristics etc. that an individual displays in course of life can be accounted for by means of the theory of the Gunas alone. 'Kāryate hiṣvāshah Karma sarvah prakrtijaimṛgunaih - the principles of activity of Nature (Gunas) get things done as a matter of course. In the Gītā, the chapter on "Guna-traya Vibhāge Yoga" describes clearly the characteristic modes of Nature (Prakṛti) and their various ways of expression in the empirical world. In the chapter of Moksha-Yoga, the Gītā elucidates very clearly the tripartite divisions based upon the natural principles or the Gunas in the spheres of knowledge, action and agent in consonance with Śāmkhya-Yoga. The Gītā explained all personality types and individuals peculiarities mental, ethical, biological etc. by means of the three fundamental cosmic principles (Prakṛti).

(1) Karma Tattva- R. Aranya, p.31.
(2) cf. Sl.16, Yoga.
(3) Gītā, III, Sl.5 and Sl.27.
Now the question is - Can these three Gunas of Prakrti be the basis of what is called personality type? Can the three principles of Nature as the cause of everything in the whole choir of heaven and furniture of the earth satisfactorily account for cardinal differences in personality? The Gita, as we have seen above, maintains such a view as is evident from what Lord Krishna told Arjuna in "Gunatraya vibhāga Yoga". According to the Gita, the three natural principles may regulate the entire life of the individual. Faith and reverence, taste for food, penance, dispositions and other qualities of head and heart are directly determined by the modes of activity of Nature (three Gunas). So, the Gita holds unequivocally that individual differences and chief types of personality are the results of varying combination of the three primary cosmic principles (Trigunatmika). There is nothing under the Sun, nor in heaven nor among the Gods, which is free from the Three Fundamental principles of Nature (Prakrti).(1). So, whatever dominant and fixed characteristics, modes of conduct, temperament and disposition, we find in the constitution of personality are, according to the Gita, the results of Prakrti or Nature and the peculiar combination of fundamental creative principles in different individuals.

According to Sāmkhya also, the pure self or ego is simply consciousness and is devoid of quality, and traits, dispositions etc. are the effects of Prakrti by virtue of its three Gunas with varying combinations. Besides the main text, the introduction to the Sāmkhya text in the Kaṇike,

(1) Gita,-Chapter XVIII, Sloka-40.
distinctly states in Slokas beginning with 15, that
attributes of personality, characteristics of individuals,
even the parts of the physique etc. are produced and
constituted by the arrangements of the three Gunes of
Prakrti. (1).

From what has been stated above, it is evident that
types of personality as used in the modern psychological
text were not in vogue in the past, but the idea of dominant
characteristics of personality and the personality-types was
used both in the Gita and Samkhya, from metaphysical and
spiritual points of view. So, the types of personality are
the effects of the three constitutive principles of Nature
(trigunatmika), according to Samkhya and the Gita, and
those can hardly fit into the ramifications of present-day
psychology. Nevertheless, the trigunatmika types of
personality as maintained by the Gita and Samkhya, have
some affinity with the Gestalt theory of personality as
upheld by the German School. The concepts of traits and
types of personality have been simplified into three broad
divisions in Samkhya-Yoga,- 1) Sattvika- wise, shining,
blissful etc., 2) Rajasikas - restless, yearning etc.,
Tamasika - dull, ignorant, lethargic, lazy etc. An Indian
writer has mentioned six types of personality by combining
the three modes of Prakrti - 1) Sattvika, 2) Rajasika,
3) Tamasika, 4) Sattvika-Rajasika, 5) Sattvika-Tamasika,
and 6) Rajasika-Tamasika. (2). R.B.Cattell has mentioned
three types of personality, according to the body-build -
1) Asthenic or Ectomorphic, 2) Athletic or Mesomorphic and

(1) Karika - introduction and main text, page 50 and page 66
(2) The Mysteries of Man, Mind and Mind Functions-Swami
Narayanananda, p.379.
3) Pyknic or Endomorphic. (1) But these classes or types of personality are explained on physiological consideration, while the types enumerated in Samkhya are of more spiritual. Again, according to Samkhya-Yoga, the physique and the person is relative, like the body and its garments, one must fit into the other.

The determination and naming of traits and types have long remained a disputed problem, and the types can never be mathematically or scientifically determined. The types in Samkhya-Yoga enumerated above are, however, metaphysically established and are meant for evaluation of human personalities socially, ethically and culturally. G.W. Allport, a leading psychologist of the day, has very aptly observed, "There remains the deeper metaphysical problem concerning the relation of any name to the unit-structures of nature. For centuries this problem has been disputed." And again he observes about the uncertainty of traits and insufficiency of the trait-names—"The nature of our problem forces us to seek out, to identify, dynamic mental structures and substructures, and to name them. And this is necessary even though the lexicon of any language is far from offering a perfect catalogue of the elements of mental life. To use trait-names, but to use them cautiously, is then our lot."(2). But we may note that we, in view of richness and variety of human personality, may hardly hope to do this even in future.

(2) Personality- G. W. Allport, p. 310-11.