RELEVANT CONCEPTS PERTAINING TO PERSONALITY IN SĀMKHYA - YOGA.
CHAPTER - VIII.

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According to Śākhyā-Yoga and the Gītā, Personality is made up of Nature (Prakṛti) and its products, and Spirit (Purusha) or consciousness. The mind and the body are the products of Nature and are the agents of activity, whereas the Spirit, as the ground-swell of consciousness and intelligence enables the mind to undergo its manifold processes. According to western psychology, the mind is immaterial, subtle and source of consciousness, but to Indian psychology, mind with its states of cognition, conation and feeling is product of Nature (Prakṛti), and derives its consciousness and intelligence by virtue of the presence of the self or Purusha, as the source of light and consciousness. The spirit is non-active, pure light or consciousness, although it remains within this mento-physical system, experiencing the results of their workings by virtue of its contact with it. The spirit is the lord of the system without activity, but the psycho-physical system subsists in and works for the future of the spirit. The body with its nervous system, organs of action, the mind with its states and processes and organs of knowledge together with the spiritual self constitutes the organized whole of personality.

Person or Purusha etymologically means that which is encased in a body (Puri shete iti). This encasement or embodiment not only means possessing a body alone, but also a mental envelope. There can be no personality without a body
and a mind with its intelligence, will and feeling. The entire organization of body and mind derives its system due to the presence of the ever-shining principle of consciousness, as a result of the law of karma. The self-conscious spirit is the lord and light of the entire system, whereas, the psycho-physical organism derives its unity, system and purpose due to the presence of the self-conscious principle, and serves its purpose. The feeling of self-identity is also derived from the Purusha or spiritual principle, which endures amidst the manifold changes and remains the self-same principle amidst the manifold changes and transformations that come about in the empirical life of the prativimba purusha or empirical ego. On waking up from a dreamless sleep (suhupti) in which the mind and the body remain at rest save vital functions, we link up the present with the past through the medium of the enduring consciousness, saying, "I slept a sound sleep." So, personality becomes devoid of meaning, if we exclude its spiritual basis and make it simply a "Psycho-physical organization". The self-conscious principle will be inactive without psycho-physical organization, which will in turn be a sum-total of blind mechanical forces of activity in the constitution of human personality. According to Mr. A.F. Majumder, Samkhya is idealistic and identical with Hegelian Idealism and vedantic Idealism of Ramanuja and Nimbarka School. He considers Purusha and Prakriti as modes of the ultimate reality, and in human personality these two principles are organically related. In his opinion, the world is a Pan-psychic system made up of three types of persons - Super-personal, Personal and Sub-personal. The essential characteristics of a
person are self consciousness and will. The person is a
self-conscious being, a systematic unity of self and not-self
of Purusha and Prakrti, he is the self eternally united with
Prakrti, the not-self; his concrete, real nature is the
organic synthesis of purusha and Prakrti. He equates purusha
in the following way - P(purusha) S(supreme purusha) + G(gunas).

The organization of personality and evolution of the world by
the conjunction of purusha and prakrti is purposive. The end
or aim is two-fold - for enjoyment or experience of purusha
and release from such a bondage( bhogāpavargah).

But it may be pointed out that Mr. Majumdar could not
reasonably explain the existence of God as cause of the world,
but only as a transcendental purusha. There is hardly any
cogent evidence in support of existence of God, as absolute
cause of the world in classical Sāmkhya.(2).

Sāmkhya gives the metaphysical basis and Yoga offers
the practical methods of integration and development of
personality for self-realization. Yoga-psychology explains
the methods of training of the physique and the will. This
clearly shows that Sāmkhya-Yoga maintains that personality is
constituted of a psycho-physical dynamic organization working
in conjunction with and for a self-conscious Intelligence
(Purushārtham). Sāmkhya does not seem to maintain S(supreme
purusha), as was maintained by Mr. Majumdar, who might be
correct in his assumption, if by Sāmkhya he meant Kapila's
theistic system of Sāmkhya. But Classical Sāmkhya does not
admit of a God either as a cause or Creator of the universe.

(1) The Sāmkhya Conception of Personality, Dr. A. K. Majumdar.
(2) The Evolution of Sāmkhya School of Thought, Dr. A. Bengupta.
In Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali, emphasis has been laid on the necessity of restraint of the mind-functions, control and postures of the body, concentration and strengthening of the Will. The mental and bodily energies are required to be controlled, regulated and directed for the development and integration of personality. These mento-physical energies belong to nature (Prakrti), whereas the self-conscious Intelligence, by virtue of its conjunction, determines the nature of the action-reaction patterns of this Psycho-physical dynamic organization in personality, in conformity with the law of Karma.

So, according to Sāmkhya-Yoga system, personality is a pattern of dynamic organization having a spiritual principle within the Psycho-physical constructs of Nature (Prakrti) with an inherent teleology, working in and responding to the environment in ways peculiar to its own for the experience (Bhoga) and realization (Apavarga) of that spiritual principle. The law of Karma is, however, neither rigid fatalism nor like the categorical imperatives of Kantian ethics. Action (Karma) is the expression of personality of an individual, and this again is the material that builds up character and determines the pattern of individual's personality. It is action or Karma that is the measuring-rod of personality. Every action is relative, and is the effect and cause at the same time. Every action of the moment is effect of and conforms to the prior actions as stored up as Psychic dispositions and mental impressions (Samskāras). The effects of Karma again in their turn get organised into the structure and fabrics of character.
and personality. The effects have to be experienced by the agent either at present or in future. The law and effects of Karma, therefore, not only guarantee human values, ethical, religious, social and personal, but also stress the magnitude of practical responsibility of the agent in the sphere of duty. Shri Aurobinda expressed the idea in the following way. The law of karma is the form and principle of activity of the universal Energy, which is called Avyakta in Samkhya. Both cause and effect are modes of working of that Energy." The moral significance is that all our existence is a pulling out of an energy, which is put forth as cause, so shall be that energy which returns as effect, that is the Universal law and nothing in the world can, being of and in our world, escape from its governing incidence. That is the philosophical reality of the theory of Karma, and too is the way of seeing which has been developed by physical Science". (1).

The second aspect of concept of personality in the Samkhya-Yoga system is either ignored by Western psychology heretofore or not as yet properly stressed upon. The organization of personality is dynamic and creative by virtue of its being derived from and based upon the law of Karma or principle of activity, which is perennial and beginningless. Personality has its origin in, subsists in and through the principle of activity or law of Karma. The activities of human personality as distinct from other living organisms are meaningful, purposive, self-initiated and value-making. These activities are purushakara (voluntary, rational and creative)

(1) The Problem of Rebirth—Shri Aurobinda, Ashram, Pandicherry—page 85-86.
unlike instinctive or reflex actions (bhogabhuta). We do as we are, and we become by what we do. We live by doing, and we do as we want to become. This may, in other words, be stated that purushakāra activities of human persons create values, moral, ethical or religious. That is why the deeds of human personality admit of moral, ethical, religious and other axiological values, unlike the activities of creatures of lower status or beings of superior order. For according to Samkhya-Yoga psychology, only the human personality is endowed with body capable of performing rational and voluntary actions (Purushakāra), and therefore, the human body is called Karma-sharira (active body). The pattern of dynamic organization of psycho-physical constructs of a human personality is modifiable in conformity with the law of Karma, or the governing principle of activity. Hence neither character nor the traits the personality can be immutable or rigid in any human personality. His activities are always self-initiated, free, self-chosen and purely voluntary, and conform to dominating pattern and objectives of the personality itself.

We must bear in mind that Samkhya-Yoga and the Jīta unanimously hold that purusha is pure consciousness (Cetana), inactive seer, beyond time and space, whereas nature or Prakṛti, is active, manifest, unconscious and seen, and its effects like the mind, body, egoism, intelligence etc. partake of the nature of their cause. Devoid of the spiritual principle the psycho-physical organism with the organs of knowledge and action would have been blind and mechanical, and harmony, purpose and organization would have been an impossibility. Prakṛti or Nature is only a form of energy
manifesting itself in three modes of activity (Trigunatmikā), through the agency of which, the whole universe in its physical and mental aspects has come into being. This is yet to be appreciated by western psychology and philosophy, although modern mathematics, Thermo-dynamics, quantum theory and theory of Relativity in the West seem to lend support to similar conclusions. Matter, mind, body, space, time etc., the old concepts which blinded Scientists and philosophers in search of the heart of Truth and Reality, are disappearing by and by. The Gita emphatically asserts that all actions in the Universe are of Nature, by virtue of its three principles (Gunas) of activity, but one befooled by self-conceit regards oneself to be the agent of the deed. (1). The Sāmkhya asserts the existence of conscious principle or the spiritual principle (Purusha) in the organization of personality. (2).

The unconscious things like the three forms of energy of Nature, which are themselves unconscious and mechanical, cannot organize themselves and work purposively, unless there is a conscious principle to furnish the Goal and teleology (Parārthavāt). As Prakṛti and its evolutes are made up of three principles of activity of Nature, there must be something opposite to those (Viparyayāt). Things which are active, blind and unconscious need a guide (Adhisthānāt). In the mental world, consciousness in forms of feelings (attachment, detachment, indifference etc.) and experiences require a conscious principle to experience or own them (Bhoktrbhavāt). Feeling oneself as distinct from and owning them at the same

(1) The Gita -III, Sloka 27 and Sloka 41 -XVIII.
(2) Sloka-17, Sāmkhya Sutra.
time, and indomitable inclination of everyone to release oneself from the associations of physical and mental processes will be meaningless, unless there is a principle-conscious, pure, free and superior to them all (Kaivalyārtham) (1).

This principle is pure consciousness (suddha cetana) and devoid of activity (niskriya), unlike all the manifests (vyakta), which are active and unconscious (Sakriya and acetana). Many western Psychologists also admit that spiritual principle is an important aspect in the constitution of personality.

W. McDougall observes: "This truth, that what we call spiritual in man is the highest part of his nature, is reached by way of a judgment of value. Such judgments are intuitive; unlike the hypotheses of Science, their affirmations cannot be tested, proved or verified by any observation or experiment. They have no place in the process of scientific discovery; they belong to a different sphere; and yet this particular judgment stands firmly established by the universal assent of mankind." (2).

Samkhya and the Gītā, emphatically point that spiritual principle as the Lord and light of the constitution of personality, without which personality will lose organization, harmony and teleology. It is evident from the above, that human personality like other things and beings is evolved from the same source and has the same constituents.

Now, how can we account for individual differences?

The psycho-physical constituents are all made up of Prakṛti with its three principles (Gunas) of activity. Prakṛti as such is active and blind, but Purusha as pure conscious principle is inactive and conscious, and furnishes the law and regulative

(1) The Mind and its Body—Charles Fox—page 293f.
(2) Psycho-analysis and its derivatives—Quoted by H.C. Miller, page 188–189.
principle of the inner and outer world. As such, individuals deriving their beings and laws from the common sources should have been same and similar. Sāmkhya gives cogent reasons for individual differences. Every individual thing and being of this Universe in spite of their coming out of the same cause and embodying the same principles, remain, nevertheless, clearly distinct and unique by virtue of their peculiar characteristics and individual differences. Such individual differences have been accounted for by Sāmkhya by difference in working of the principles of activity of Nature (Prakṛti), owing to the difference of its fields (Khetra) of activity. (1). The unmanifest (Āvykta) becomes manifest due to its being embodiment and combination of the three cosmic principles (three gunas). Modern sciences recognize instead inertia or mass, momentum or acceleration and reaction or stress. (2). Again their fields of action being different, variety arose as a result of transformations and modifications of the modes of activity. This can be appreciated by means of illustrations given by Sāmkhya (like water, salilavat). Same water coming down in form of rains assumes variety and peculiarity in different objects. The trees by virtue of their own nature and constitution absorb same rain-water, but still the milk of the coconut is sweet, the lemon juice is sour and so on. Similarly, the three principles of nature (three gunas), due to the inherent nature and constitution of individuals work differently giving rise to the manifest individual differences. This is true of human individuals as well. Although the same principles of nature (prakṛti) work in all, yet the inherent

(1) Sāmkhya Sutra - 16.
(2) The Sāmkhya Kārikā of Isvarakrsna-
Dr. R. Phookan, p. 21ff.
nature and peculiarities make them work in such a way as to give rise to the so-called individual differences in personality. The same water flows down and gives rise to numerous rivers all over the world, but none is exactly alike with others in any respect, and therefore, each bears a distinct name and form. In similar manner, every individual in spite of springing out of a common stock, and being subject to the principles of Nature, bears the stamp of individuality and remains distinct from the rest.

"Guna-parinama-vishesah-nahatvam Vahyabhedahas" (1).

The variety and differences both mental and external are the results of the workings of Gunas or modes of Prakrti. The principle of activity of the Gunas is strange and peculiar, and though unconscious (achetana) are capable of working in conformity with their preordained laws. Such strange principle of activity of the Gunas is called in Sāmkhya Nature (Svabhāva) and Maya (illusion) in Vedānta. So, according to Sāmkhya, individual differences in personality are the results of the working of the principles of Nature in consonance with the inherent nature (linga or bhāva) of the individual concerned.

According to Sāmkhya theory of causality, the potency (bhāva) or the form of past impressions (linga deha) is the cause of birth. The form (bhāva) is the cause, and the body assumed is the effect. The nature and constitution of the body is, therefore, determined by the form (linga) of the past impressions (samskaras). These impressions are of two kinds - Sāmsiddhi-kāshocchavān prakrtikā vaikrtikāshca. (2). Some

(1) Sāmkhya Sutra - Sloka 27.
(2) Sāmkhya Sutra - Sloka 43.
forms are innate, so far as they were accumulated from past lives. Others are acquired during this present life in course of education and training, social laws and customs, moral and religious training etc. The innate forms and the acquired impressions are reciprocal and relative. Knowledge cannot be acquired without the past impressions (samskaras), and the innate impressions are again modified by the newly acquired impressions. This, according to Samkhya, is the law of birth and growth. Samkhya-Yoga psychology thus gives full recognition to both the factors of personality, the innate that are inherited impressions from the past, and the acquired from the environmental factors, like education, training, culture, social laws and customs, religious training, moral code etc. Personality is, therefore, the joint product of the past and the present, the innate and the acquired. We can never ignore the past nor leave the present out of account.

In the same manner, the inner or mental world and the world outside mutually influence each other. As the external world is subject to the principles of nature, so also the inner world as the states of thinking, feeling and willing work in obedience to these three principles, and the inner and outer are thus closely related.

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