



AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE AS TAUGHT BY THE SANKHYA TRADITION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO AYURVEDA

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Article Received on 21/09/2020

Article Revised on 11/10/2020

Article Accepted on 01/11/2020

ABSTRACT

Does Universe has a creator? There are two schools of thought, yes (*Aastik*), no (*Nastik*). This *Aastik* and *Nastik* form a view point called *Darshan* (philosophy). *Aastik Darshan Shastra* (6) are a key to creation of universe by creator. Learning about the creator and its properties *Guna* lead to the development of the universe. Each *Darshan* had different way of looking resulting into diversity of thought as well as confusion. *Yog* professes only one *Guna*. *Sankhya* says 3 (*Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam*), *Vaisheshik* says 24 *Guna* and *Nyaaya* says 16 *Guna*, *Mimansa* is application of *Guna* (development of subjects like *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and *Arthashastra*) and *Vedant* says everything is a *Guna*. *Sankhya Darshan* professes how many are holding the universe and its reasons of approach - Why? This gives the theory of *Sat* being causal body or *Kaaran Sharir*, *Raj* being *Sukshma Sharir* or subtle body and *Tam* being *Sthool Sharir* or gross body and each body is with 5 elements as स(ञ) त म र ज. These three *Guna* of divine were often misunderstood or misinterpreted. One area of the application of *Darshan* leads to the development of *Ayurveda*. A logical structure is presented in the form of 3 *Sharir* represented by *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam* professed by *Sankhya Darshan* and its application to *Ayurveda*. The study endeavours at the application of *Sankhya yog* on *Ayurveda* and opens the doors for further study in relation to *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and *Arthashastra*.

INTRODUCTION

The canvas of Indian culture is quite specific, still general in nature. It starts from the creator (unknown) and it ends at the creator (unknown). During the journey from unknown to unknown for some period of time it expresses itself as known universe. The Hindu philosophy revolves around this known universe and its creator, whereas no other includes the creator. The Hindu philosophy further takes four principal purposes of life activity *Purushartha*; *Moksha*, *Kaam*, *Artha* and *Dharma*. This forms the foundation stone of a culture most ancient in times believed to be divine for millions of years.

The divine culture is multifaceted and having prominent pillars like the *Dharma*.^[1] having 5 parts.

Varna, *Ashram*, *Varnashram*, *Prayashchit* and *Guna*. As per *Tantra Vartik*,^[2] the basic aim of this *Dev sanskriti* (divine culture) was to educate people of all *Ashram* and *Varna* for transformation of the human being into super human (having higher level of humanity) and to become a perfect soul engulf in divinity. *Darshan*,^[3] are primarily 6 in number *Yoga*, *Sankhya*, *Vaisheshik*, *Nyaaya*, *Mimansa* and *Vedaant*. *Darshan* is *Darsh*^[4] the time when sun (cause of light) and moon (reflection of light)

are seen. Simultaneously *Na* meaning no, so combining the two gives the information as to preexistence of the source of light. Is there a creator of this universe? If yes we call them the *Astika* (theistic) but those who rejected the domain of creator have been called *Nastika* (atheist). *Nastika* philosophies include Buddhism, Jainism, *Charvaka*, *Ajivika*, and others.

Major confusion arose because of commentaries of *Nastik* experts on *Astik Darshan* e.g., Buddha saying *Sankhya darshan* doesn't believe in the creator. So technically speaking no atheist can comment upon any theist philosophy. But in last 2000 years it has been observed that this was not kept under strict governance. As a result of which confusion prevailed everywhere in complete Sanskrit text and resulted in unclear definitions leading to a non-meaningful uninterested structure. Our attempt is to highlight the difference and present a meaningful integrated structure which interests everyone on being *Astik*.

The *Yoga* and *Sankhya* are inseparable hence discussed here to highlight the concept of *Sat Raj* and *Tam* from *Sankhya* and its application in other domains. Sequentially *Astik darshan* starts from yoga: **Yoga**: The

meaning of *Yoga* philosophy is highlighted by 1/4th *Shlok* of *Srimadbhagwatgeeta* "*Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam*"^[5] - Who is holding the universe - it is the dexterity of the *Karma* (purpose *Uddeshyapurna kriya*) of each particle of the universe, which is holding the universe together, central idea being *Paramatma*. It is whose purpose the whole universe is moving- divine (unknown) purpose *Ekoham Bahusyam* as the beholder of the universe. One who prudently practices the science of effort with sense of purpose and its integration *Yog* which is holding the universe skilfully (in proper consciousness), whose purpose is the divine himself.

The word '*Yoga*' is derived from the verb root '*Yujir Yoge*'.^[6] meaning to join or to unite. In *Ayurveda* it means only a combination of more than one medicine with one purpose. It is also used to mean correct application of any therapy. Yet another common usage of the term in *Ayurveda* is to mean 'contact- "*Kalarthakarmanam yogo hin-mithyatimatrah*"^[7] The proper line of treatment for mental disorders, as given in *Charak Samhita* is to take recourse to spiritual and scriptural knowledge, patience, memory and *Samadhi*. The term *Samadhi* used in the said context is one of the major components of *Yoga* philosophy. The mind and body are the seats for manifestation of happiness and miseries. *Yoga* is the right treatment to avoid these. According to *Atreya*, this '*Yoga*' is the '*Atmashe manasi sthire*' (condition where the mind is concentrated and focused in the soul). *Atreya* admits that this is the science of *yoga*, as dictated by the sages of *yoga* and not by him. Without naming them *Charaka* has actually narrated the technique of *Yoga* in *Charak Samhita*. *Cittavrtti* - *Nidra* (sleep), *Smrti* (memory) and *Svapna* (dreams) are described with reference to health and disease.^[8]

Samkhya considers the visible world to be *Prakriti-Purush* oriented. *Purush Prakriti* is the name of the equilibrium of these three *Gunas- Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*.^[9] *Udayveer Shastri* in his book titled "*History of Sankhya Philosophy*" quoting *Sridhar Swami's* explanation on *Bhagwat 3-25-1* in the *Sankhya Shashtra* being propounded by *Kapil* has written as follows- explaining the last verse. The interpreter has clearly written- *Tatvam* number numerology calculator: *Sankhya-pravarak ityarth*. In these also the first element, which he named "*Pra+kriti*" or "*Pra+dhan*", was proved to be the origin of the remaining twenty-three. *Samkhya* philosophy includes a theory of *Gunas*.^[10] (qualities, innate tendencies, psyche). In the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Kapil Muni* is considered as an incarnation, then in the *Gita*, *Krishna* says- I am *Kapil* among the *Siddhas*. The philosophy of *Rajayoga* is based upon the *Sankhya* system of philosophy of *Kapila*. It is called the *Sankhyasystem*,^[11] because it describes twenty-five categories or principles of the whole universe The word '*Sankhya*' originates from Sanskrit, which means 'number', and sometimes it is called the 'philosophy of numbers'. But there is a further meaning to this word, and it means right discrimination between the true nature

of things and the apparent nature as well as discrimination between the natural and the spiritual, and hence it is called the *Sankhya* system, i.e., the system which describes the proper discrimination and right knowledge of things. It gives the names of twenty-five principles of the universe, and describes the methods, by which we can know and analyze these principles and their nature. By scientific investigation, *Kapila* came to the conclusion that something can never come out of nothing. And so, though he discovered that *Prakriti* is the cause of evolution, yet he found that *Purusha*, the shining intelligence is really the cause behind the dead and inert *Prakriti*, and finally concluded that the unintelligent *Prakriti*, coming in contact with the intelligent *Purusha*, becomes the cause of evolution of the phenomenal universe. In fact, *Kapila* discovered that when the unintelligent inert (*Jada*) i.e., unconscious *Prakriti* comes in contact with the intelligent conscious *Purusha*, evolution of the phenomenal universe begins. He said that *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are conjoined together like lame and blind (*Pangu-andhavat*) men, and when the insentient *Prakriti* comes in contact with the sentient *Purusha*, the universe evolves. The insentient *Prakriti* itself is inactive, and so action or vibration of evolution begins in *Prakriti*, when it is associated with the intelligent *Purusha*. Another important or essential point, which was arrived at by *Kapila*, is that cause lies in the effect, and effect also lies in the cause, and the manifestation of the subtle and material forms (effect) existed in the potential form in the cause. Therefore *Kapila* arrived at the conclusion that destruction of a thing in the sense of annihilation is impossible, as destruction of a thing means reversal to the causal state. We say that, effect is destroyed, when it goes back to its causal state (*Nasha karana layah*). So anything in this universe is not destroyed, but matter and force which constitute the form, appear in another form. When the gross body is destroyed, it is not annihilated, but it goes back to its causal elements or causal state. *Kapila* discovered that the laws of nature are uniform throughout and if we study one thing of the universe, we are able to discover everything in this universe.^[12] In fact, *Kapila* came to the conclusion that evolution means the unfolding of the cause or *Prakriti*.

"Where is the beginning?", you are in that state of vibration, and your thought is included in that state. That is, it includes mind and ego and all other objects of sense powers, and everything which we can think of. All things are included in that one substance of *Purusha-Prakriti* combined. All these different forces are latent, and when they are called into action, there is manifestation (causal body). When the *Prakriti* is disturbed, then it begins to be set into motion, and produces a state which possesses all the potentialities of self-consciousness (subtle body). That is, it (*Prakriti*) is illumined by a spiritual light, and when it is illumined by a spiritual light of the *Purusha*, it becomes conscious, and that state is described as *Mahat*, the first state before the evolution of the phenomenal objects. To make it more explicit, it can be said that the

moment the *Prakriti* is illumined by the spiritual light of the *Purusha*, it is possessed of selfconsciousness, and then begins the evolution (gross body). Kapila said that *Prakriti* is the combination of the three qualities, *Sattva* (causal body), *Rajas* (subtle body) and *Tamas* (gross body), and when these qualities remain in a balancing state, the *Prakriti* remains in its own form, and there begins no evolution or creation; but as soon as that balance is disturbed (*Gunakshobha*- divine wish), evolution begins and the subtle and material (gross) things begin to manifest.

Kapila analyzed it scientifically, and discovered the secret that there is an unchangeable something behind the changing things, and it is the source of all changes, and that unchangeable something is the *Purusha*. He said that he *Purusha* (*Chetana*) contacts (divine wish) the *Prakriti* (*Jada*), the pure, consciousness of the *Purusha* is transformed into *Buddhitattva* or the state of mind. The atoms are on the subject side, and on the other side would be the mind as well as the power of hearing, seeing, smelling, etc (subtle). Kapila also analyzed the method of perception (*Pratyaksha-gyaan*). As, for example, he said that we see some colours and the things and there must also be something which produces the sight. We are possessed of five senses, and we cannot perceive more objects than our five senses allow. We feel, see, hear, smell, and touch. As there are five senses for perception, so whatever we would perceive with any of these senses, would be the combination of these five. We can see hundreds of colours, but the sense of colour is in itself. It is called in Sanskrit the *Tanmatra*. It is not differentiated and is not seen with our eyes. We also find that there may be great varieties of sound, but the essence of sound is one. In this way, we see the relation between the external objects and the subjective state and also the condition of the object through which sense objects are perceived or sensed. The power of seeing, the object of sight and the organ of vision, are only the different states of that something which possesses the sense of colour, or sight, or potentiality of perception, and the potentiality of perception exists in that primordial substance,^[13] known as the *Prakriti*. So the whole universe can be summed up in this way (*Sat Raj* and *Tam*), making the study of manifestation of the substance and the universe very simple.

There are twenty-four states of evolution.^[14] It has been said that there is a primordial state of evolution, i.e., the state where the primordial substance is illumined by the spiritual light. Then comes the bifurcation of the subject and the object; then comes the essence of things; then come the mind, the sense organs, and the organs of action, such as moving power and power of speech, and, last of all come the gross forms of different things. But these twenty-four states or principles (*Tattvas*) are changeable, and that which knows these twenty-four states or principles, is unchangeable, and that is called the *Purusha*, or the real self. It may be called immortal, and it gives the life to

that which evolves. It is the source of activity, but it is not our soul. Our body may move, but how can we say that our soul is moving? If we go from here to any other city, do we think that our soul is moving with us? If that spirit moves with us, where is the seat of that spirit?

The power of seeing may exist in relation to me, but I am not the power of seeing. I never had any eyesight, and never have had, but, for the time being, I have come in contact with the instrument (*Tam*) which is the power of eyesight (*Raj*). If it changes, I call myself blind, because something has happened in the instrument, and I think that I am blind. If the body grows (*Tam*), I say that I am stout (*Tam*), and if I do not grow stout, I say that I am thin (*Tam*), but the knower is beyond all space relations (*Sat*). Such is the difference, when we have the perception of our true nature (*Sat*).

Sankhya and Ayurveda

Health of a person is its body's ability to protect itself from the clutches of death. Duration of protection is known as *Aayu*. The study of its protection and deterioration is known as Ayurveda.

Death is inherently connected with creation of human body (whatever is born will die one day). Creation of human body is connected with creation of universe.

The search for an answer is common both for philosophy and Ayurveda albeit with reference to universe in the first case and with reference to human life with reference to the second.

The following are the points which show the influence of *Sankhyadarsana* on Ayurveda.

a) Description of *Pramana*: *Sankhyadarsana* accepts and describes three *Pramanas* namely *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana*, *Aptopadesha* which are the means to acquire complete, relevant knowledge of an object.^[15] Acharya Charaka in *Vimansthan* 4th chapter has explained *Trividhrogi-pariksha* and those were *Pratyaksha*, *Aptopadesha* and *Anumana*.^[16]

b) *Prayojana Samatwa*: *Sankhya Darsana* describes three varieties of miseries viz. (i) *Adhyatmika*- (*Suksham sharir- Raj*) (ii) *Adhidaivika* (*Karan Sharir-Sat*) (iii) *Adhibhoutika* (*Sthool Sharir- Tam*). The main purpose of *Sankhyadarsana* is that a person attains *Moksha* (gets rid of taking birth again and again- due to attainment of purpose of life); if he is completely relieved from the above miseries. *Sankhya* states the techniques of relieving from the above miseries and techniques for attaining *Moksha*. Similarly, the main purpose of Ayurveda is also *Moksha* (getting rid of *Doshas*- turning wants and desires to Purpose). Ayurveda classifies disease into three types viz., *Adhyatmika* disease, *Adhidaivika* disease and *Adhibhoutika* disease. Ayurveda states that by relieving from three types of diseases, one can attain *Moksha*.

Thus main purpose or object of Ayurveda and *Sankhya Darsana* is identical

(c) Satkarya Vaad: *Sankhya Darsana* states that there is no difference between *Karana* (cause) and *Karya* (action). In *Sankhya's* view the *Karya*, which is manifested, did exist in *Karana* (causal body- *Sat*) in an unmanifested invisible state prior to its manifestation. If *Karya* had not existed in *Karana* in invisible state, the *Karya* would never be manifested from that *Karana*.^[17]

Both Ayurveda and *Sankhya Darsana* state that *sat* (causal body) is produced from *Sat* (principal cause). In Ayurveda also it is stated that *Jwara* is manifested from *Jwara Nidan* only. In the same way all the diseases are manifested from their respective *Nidan* only.^[18]

d) Triguna: *Satwa* (causal body), *Raja* (subtle body) and *Tamas* (gross body) are said to be the three components of *Prakriti*, the same is transformed into its products. That is from *Prakriti* at the top till *Panchamahabhuta* at the bottom all possess those three *Gunas*. In the 1st chapter of *Sushrut Samhita* we also find the mention of these three *Gunas* in the *Sristiutpati* from *Ahamkara* till formation of *Panchtanmatras*.

Fundamental principles of Ayurveda are based on *Sankhya* philosophy of creation of universe, according to which man is microcosm of universe within himself. He is a miniature creation of the cosmic forces of the external environment the Macrocosm.^[19] As per *Sankhya* cause (*Sat*) leads to action (*Raj*). This energy leads to 5 elements of cause (*Sat*), 5 elements of subtle (*Raj*) and 5 elements of gross (*Tam*). Combining these 15 elements of these 3 *Gunna* with *Mann*, *Aatma*,

Kaal, *Disha*, *Aakash*, *Vaayu*, *Agni*, *Jal*, *Prithvi* leads to 24 properties. These 5 elements of subtle body having 5 senses *Gyanendriya* and 5 senses *Karmendriya*. These 5 elements constitutes the human body as well as all living and non-living elements in the universe. The concept of 5 elements also lies at the heart of Ayurveda. They are understood by biodynamic properties or attributes called *Gunas*. Ayurveda *Chikitsa* is totally based on *Tridosha* theory.^[20] all universal creatures and *Tridoshas* are made of *Trigunas* (omni substances). *Tridoshas* have been related to *Triguna* respectively as *Vata dosha* is much of causal body- *Satva Guna*, *Pitta Dosha* is much of *Tamo* (gross body) *Tamo Guna* and *Kapha* is much of *Raja* (subtle body) *Guna*.^[21]

Sankhya and Arthashastra

Anvikshaki (cause-*Sat*), the triple *Vedas* (Cause-*Sat*) (*Trayi*), *Varta* (subtle- *Raj*) (agriculture, cattlebreeding and trade), and *Danda- Niti* (gross- *Tam*) (science of government) are what are called the four sciences. *Kautilya* holds that four and only four are the sciences; wherefore it is from these sciences that all that concerns righteousness and wealth is learnt, therefore they are so called. *Anvikshaki* comprises the Philosophy of *Sankhya*,

Yoga, and *Lokayata* (Atheism?). Righteous and unrighteous acts (*Dharmadharmau*) are learnt from the triple *Vedas*; wealth and non-wealth from *Varta*; the expedient and the inexpedient (*Nayanayau*), as well as potency and impotency (*Balabale*) from the science of government. When seen in the light of these sciences, the science of *Anvikshaki* is most beneficial to the world, keeps the mind steady and firm in weal and woe alike, and bestows excellence of foresight, speech and action. Light to all kinds of knowledge, easy means to accomplish all kinds of acts and receptacle of all kinds of virtues, is the Science of *Anvikshaki*.^[22] ever held to be. *Kautilya's* three formulations on the attributes of political power or *Shaktis*- that is, the three powers or *Shaktis* operate in state with their priorities of *Mantrashakti* (cause-*Sat*) (power of counsel and diplomacy), *Prabhavashakti* (subtle- *Raj*) (power of army and treasury) and *Utsahashakti* (gross- *Tam*) (power, personal energy). The very name of the doctrine, derived from.

Samkhya which means *Buddhi*, indicates that it is based on reflection rather than on authority.”^[23] The normative setting of *Kautilya's Arthashastra* is the political unification of a common cultural Indian subcontinent. The aim of *Arthashastra* is twofold. First, it seeks to show how the ruler should protect his territory. This protection (*Palana*) refers principally to the administration of the state. Second, it shows how territory should be acquired. The end which the *Arthashastra* has in view is *Yogakshema* (protection of what is acquired) and *Rakshana* (protection of subjects). The application of power is emphasized across the text by way of its three variations: viz., *Mantrashakti* (power of counsel and diplomacy), *Prabhavashakti* (power of army and treasury) and *Utsahashakti* (power, personal energy).

Sankhya in Srimadbhagwatgeeta

The second chapter in the *Bhagavadgita* is known as “*Sankhya Yoga*”. The word *Sankhya* can be understood in two ways: one as ‘number’ and the other as the ‘knowledge’. This divine knowledge pertains to the knowledge of body and soul. The word *Yoga* observing body it is 3 *Sharir* coexistence - *Karan Sharir* (*Sat*), *Suksham sharir* (*Raj*) and *Sthool sharir* (*Tam*).

This *Yoga* gives us the union of numbers or knowledge. The numbers are with regard to the number of realities (*Tattvas*) that are present in its existence. *Sankhya yoga* deals with the combination of the hidden realities which manifest the existential reality. *Sankhya yoga* basically deals with these finite and infinite realities of existence and tries to explain how this perceptible worlds manifests through effects that are already hidden in their causes. According to them, it is just as the seed transformed into plant in favourable environment with right conditions presented themselves. It seems that the *Sankhya* system shifted (because of Buddhist commentaries) from the *Upanishadic* thought in its

earlier days. Later, again the essential doctrine and many of its concepts, beliefs, are seems to be found in Vedic tradition and thus united with the theistic beliefs of present day Hinduism.

Kapila is mentioned by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita as the greatest of all perfected beings Siddha. Of all trees I am the Banayan tree, and of the sages among the demigods I am *Narada*. Of the *Gandharvas* I am *Citraratha*, and among perfected beings I am the Sage *Kapila* (Bhagavadgita 10.26). Each chapter of *Gita* is a yoga which helps us to connect all chapters and critically analyze the true picture. In Karma yoga 3 terms *Naam* (gross- *Tam*), *Roop* (subtle *Raj*) and *Karma* (cause- *Sat*). *Karma* is purposeful action-universe is whose purpose - answer is divine.

Functional relation between *Tridosha* and *Triguna*: Lord Krishna said that- *Sattva*.^[24] is light and illuminating, *Rajas* is initiating and unstable and *Tamas* is heavy. These three *Gun*as work each other with relatively combination like oil, pot and candle combined works to illuminate a light.

DISCUSSION

Impact of Sankhya on other philosophies

Yog Darshan professes who is holding the whole of Universe. *Sankhya Darshan* professes how many are holding and why? This gives the theory of *Sat* being causal body or *Kaaran Sharir*, *Raj* being *Sukshma Sharir* or subtle body & *Tam* being *Suksham Sharir* or Gross body and each body is with 5 elements as स(ष) त म र ज. These 3 *Guna sharir* laid the basis of *Vaisheshik Darshan* and thus *Nav Dravya*, 24 *Guna*, 5 *Karma* and 3 *Sambandh- Samanya*, *Vishesh* and *Samvaaya* (cause and effect) came into existence. Justification of each *Guna* became the very basis of *Nyaaya Darshan* and *Praman Prameya* etc., became the 16 *Guna* of *Nyaaya Darshan*. Post these justifications the applications, analysis, comprehension, evaluation became the very basis of *Mimamsa Darshan*. These *Mimamsa* thus became the very basis of *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and *Arthashastra*. Finally compilation of all created an awesome structure of divine where every path leads to universal consciousness of the supreme, which became the very basis of *Vedaant Darshan*. Thus *Shad Darshan* leads to *Shad Vedaanga* and *Shad Padartha*. Vedic scripture adores the *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam*. The trio had distinct features, virtues and prospects. With the time frame the trio were mingled together and resulted into a sheer confusion and it is hard to distinguish the boundaries of them. The present paper is a comparative study of *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam* with a small input on their basic features, distinction with two others and at last their relevancy in the modern scenario.

CONCLUSION

Sat is causal body understood as *Karan sharir*, *Raj* is subtle body understood as *Suksham sharir* and *Tam* is understood as gross body in *Sankhya* is understood as

Sthool sharir in *Ayurveda*. The symmetry gets validated from most sources referred and considered above and the logical conclusions to be derived. It is well documented that the gross body is made up of 5 elements but the material as to 5 elements constituting the causal body and the subtle body is scant. However, considering the nature of the causal body and the subtle body and the 24 *Gun*as constituting the entire gamut of existence, the 5 elements constituting causal body appear to be *Aakash*, *Disha*, *Kaal*, *Aatma* and *Mann* and the 5 elements constituting the subtle body appear to be *Kaal*, *Disha*, *Aakash*, *Vaayu* and *Agni* by process of reasoning and elimination. Further studies of the impact of *Sankhya Darshan* on other branches of knowledge and practice apart from *Ayurveda* are well deserved. Though 24 elemental properties are observed in *Sankhya* as well as *Vaisheshik darshan* and mixed definition of properties associated with each *Dravya* or object.

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