Yoga Philosophy

Patanjali is the traditional founder of Yoga system. The word yoga literally means union i.e., spiritual union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul. According to Patanjali, yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind, and through right discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti.

Yoga is intimately allied to Sankhya. The Gita calls them one. Yoga means spiritual action and Sankhya means knowledge. Sankhya is theory; Yoga is practice. Sankhya and Yoga may be treated as the theoretical and practical sides of the same system. But Yoga believes in God as the highest Self distinct from other selves. Hence it is sometimes called 'Seshvara Sankhya' or theistic Sankhya.[1]

1. Methaphysics are same between Sankhya and Yoga.

Metaphysics of Sankhya and Yoga is same except the name of the two immortal names. Drishta of Yoga philosophy stands for Purusa of Sankhya and Drishya of Yoga philosophy stands for Prakrti.of Sankhya philosophy.

2. Chitta

Chitta means three internal organs—buddhi or intellect, ahankara or ego, and manas or mind. Chitta is the first evolute of drishya and has the predominance of Sattva. It is in itself unconscious. But being finest and nearest to Drishta, it has the power to reflect the Drishta and therefore appears as if it is conscious. When it gets related to any object, it assumes the 'form' of that object. His form is called Vrtti or modification. The light of consciousness which comes from the drishta and illuminates this form is called Jnana. Drishta is essentially pure consciousness and is free from the limitations of Drishya. But it wrongly identifies itself with its reflection in the Chitta and appears to be undergoing change and modification.

It is Chitta which is phenomenal ego or jiva which is subject to birth and death and transmigration and to all painful or pleasurable experiences, and which imagines itself as the agent and the enjoyer..

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[1] Sharma Chandradhar, A critical survey of Indian philosophy p169

3. Cause of sufferings(Panch Klesha)

While freedom is brought about by knowledge which results from the practice of virtue, yoga etc., bondage is traced to wrong knowledge. And this wrong knowledge includes not only avidya (ignorance), but also asmita (egoism), raga (desire), dvesa (hatred), and abhinivesa (fear). (PYS 2/3)[2]

These Kleshas need to be thoroughly up-rooted, because they act as forceful Karma-potencies giving rise to corresponding actions and experiences. Both merit and demerit(dharma and adharma) of actions arise from these afflictions in the form of desire, greed, delusion and anger and produce pleasures and pains. So long they are not removed both virtuous and vicious actions must ripen and give their fruit.[3]

4.

Patanjali recommends gradual diminuition of vicious actions and corresponding afflictive potencies. Initially all vicious thoughts and its latencies are to be replaced by cultivation of positive virtues and thereby ensuring good habits of thought.

First stage is reducing the afflictive propensities by intensifying renunciation. Preliminary discipline is the practice of Kriya Yoga for the sake of weakening the Kleshas. The subtle afflictions are destroyed by the cessation of the activity of the mind. But it is not enough to kill the manifestations of the afflicted states

It lie dormant in the form of Vasanas(desire) and Karmasayas(aggregate of work done). One must get rid of these root and branch, and destroy the possibility of their sprouting up. Wrong cognition (Avidya) is described as the breeding ground for other afflictions.(PYS 2/4)

5. 4 kinds of karmas

Samskara needs to express so he needs body. This is birth. After birth it needs different types of Karma according to Samskara.

Patanjali divides karma into four classes according as its fruits are pleasurable or painful. They are (a) shukla---good(white) (b) Krishna--bad (black) (c) shuklakrishna--- good and bad(grey) (d) neither good nor bad

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[2] Indian philosophy (R.K.) p.309

[3] Deepti Dutta, Samskara, A Prologue to Yoga,p.204

----ashuklaakrishna (PYS 4/7)[4]

White , black and grey actions produce fruits and chain reactions. Black actions produce tamasic, grey actions rajasic, and white sattvic effects. White actions result in virtue, black in vice. Grey actions result in a mixture of effects, and of positive and negative actions.

The unmixed actions of the yogi are beyond sattva, rajas and tamas. They produce no positive or negative actions in consciousness and hence are free from duality. This fourth type of action is auspicious. This is the real 'skill in action' of the yogi (Gita 2/50)

An average person is full of ambition. He desires rewards for his deeds, but forgets that they carry the seeds of pain. If his ambition is transformed into spiritual aspiration, he loses interest in rewards and comes to understand sadhana for the sake of sadhana, or action for the sake of Action. He becomes refined ; his mind and consciousness become clear and his actions clean.

6. Karma yoga

When the yogi is getting karma done through the agency of a nirmana-citta kaya complex, he has neither any further expectations nor desire for any sort of phala. These karmas are neither shukla nor Krishna, since he is neither expecting a pleasant nor a painful phala. [5]

The well recognized theory as to how this nishkamatva(=desirelessness) in the karma results into naiskarma i.e., non-karmaness i.e., a condition where an action, even when actually done, does not become a karma. That means there is no storage and preservation of the after-effect of that karma in the form of samskara, which in its due time i.e., after its period of maturation produces the phala, which itself is or leads to another karma. If this samskara—preservation and phala—production is there, then the

[4] Deepti Dutta, Sankhya, a prologue to Yoga p191
[5] Kaivalyadhama PYS p.518

unending cycle of of karma—samskara□phala (another karma)□samskara□phala (=karma)….ad infinitum, conrinues. In other words the chain of birth—life—experience---birth also continues endlessly)[6]

The karma of common man in most cases will be an mixture of shukla and krishna.

The unmixed actions of yogi, ashuklaakrishna are beyond sattva, rajas and tamas. Thus produce no positive or negative actions in consciousness and hence are free from duality. This fourth type of action is auspicious. This is the literal meaning of ‘ Yoga karmasu kausalam’, skill of yogic action.(BG 2/50).

4. Conclusion

To an unsympathetic critic the Yoga may appear to be not so much system of philosophy as a school of mysticism and magic. But the yoga system of Patanjali should not be confused with magic and tantra and self-hypnotization. It is a great system of spiritual discipline and has found favour with all schools of Indian Philosophy except Charvaka. It is founded on the metaphysics of Sankhya and gives us a practical path of purification and self control in order to realize the true nature of man.[7]

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[6] Kaivalyadharma PYS p.519

[7] same book p.174