

Sāṃkhya Karikā embeded in Yoga Sutras

Empirical analysis from Sāṃkhya Kārikā ideas in Yoga Sutras, chapter 2, verses 15 to 26

1. Introduction

It is well known by all the *yoga* students that *yoga* philosophy is based on the *sāṃkhya* doctrine, an older point of view (*darśana*) of the world's analyses about human being, its suffering and liberation from rebirth. The main text about *yoga*, the *yoga sutras* of Patanjali, has many references to the main text about *sāṃkhya*, *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa. In particular in the *Yoga Sutras*, chapter 2, the verses 15 to 26 gives a succinct presentation of *sāṃkhya* main aspects that are a very good approach to a person who study *yoga* but never really got into *sāṃkhya*. This small essay pretends to match the refered *sutras* to some of the verses from *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* and in that way show how close are *yoga* and *sāṃkhya* philosophy. As resource I use a small character, Luke, that with his doubts, inquiries and suffering will lead us in this small trip.

2. Compared analyses between Yoga Sutras (YS) and Sāṃkhya Kārikā (SK)

Tired of hanging around the world, Luke decided one the that he needed a break. A break is a cut in a middle of something, a separation, to put a space in between two things. So he sat in silence. In that silence he started to see this separation happening.

***Vic*, which means to separate, is the root word for *viveka*, discrimination. Yogis use the term *viveka jñanam* as discriminating knowledge, the one necessary to see the truth.**

Luke felt that this tiredness was in fact a realization that all he was doing in his life was somehow dissatisfactory, which is the same to say that frustration and suffering were taking over himself.

***Sarvaṃ duḥkham*, “all is suffering” is the first noble truth of the Buddhist teachings. *Duḥkham eva sarvaṃ* is the YS.II.15 statement on the same truth. *Duḥkhatrayā* is in SK, verse 1, pointing to the three types of suffering and the arising of the desire to eliminate them. This impulse also appears in the YS.II.16: future suffering is to be avoid.**

That's it, now he knows why he needs a break. There must be a way of ending this frustration. “Does everybody feels the way I do?”. He could see the world as if the world was something different from himself. Friends use to say to him: “You are part of the world, so you are the world. Don't be so philosophical.” Sometimes he felt that way, but most of times he felt the opposite: I'm not from this world. So!!... Who am I?

Yoga Sutras clearly state (YS.II.17) that the cause (*hetuḥ*) of the conjunction (*saṃyogaḥ*) between the self (*draṣṭṛ*) and the world (*dṛśya*) is to be avoid (*heya*). Simplifying, there is a mean through which we can put a end to suffering. The true self (*puruṣa*) must not mix up with the material world (*prakṛti*). The challenge is to realize that this principles are in fact two and not one was most of us perceive it. This confusion is stated in SK, verse 20: due to the conjunction (*saṃyogaḥ*) the matter seems conscience and the conscience seems to act. *Puruṣa* is conscience and inactive (SK 19), *prakṛti* is active and unconscious (SK 11). Somehow they are opposites and need each other, like the blind and a lame (SK 21) but ultimately they will abandon each other when their purpose is fulfilled (and suffering ends).

Luke used to walk around the city alone. Walking, thinking and watching. We saw the trees and the birds, the cars and the buildings, people and animals. They were all different but there was something in common in all of them. If what he saw was a painting everything would be a mix of colors like the color pallet in the computer where the three primary colors are the bases of all the

colors and tonalities in the world. We are talking about millions of possibilities out of three colors. Amazing!

The material world is seen in most Hindu philosophy as a conjunction of three attributes (*gunas*) that constitute all that exists. This idea is seen in SK, verses 12, 13 y 14, but also in all the 14th chapter of *Baghavat Gita*. YS refers it quit often without defining it which leads to the assumption that it was an already very known idea. YS II.18 presents the characteristics of the material world (*drśya*) and three *gunas* appears as luminous (*prakāśa*), activity (*kriyā*) and stability (*sthiti*) that obviously stands for *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

“All the colors produce all the things.” It's a nice metaphor, thought Luke. The more he walked the more he thought. Maybe i should not think so much. Just enjoy the world, smell the flowers, taste the nectars, listen to Beethoven. Suddenly all this pleasure gave him more stuff to think. How it would be a world without flowers, nectars or Beethoven?

Human beings perceived the world (*bhūta*, the 5 elements) through the sense organs (*buddhi indriya*) and act upon it with the organs of action (*karma indriya*) that are managed by the so called mind (*manas*) that is just one aspect of our “mental stuff” (*citta*). This *manas* is also considered a perception instrument only more subtler than the *indriyas*. This function is described in SK 26, 27 and 28. This is what means *bhūtendriyātmakam* from YS.II.18. The perceived world consists of the senses and the elements (which nature are from the 3 *gunas* has seen above).

Horrifying thoughts came into is mind. It is the end of world. Or perhaps is the beginning of new one. Could this world full of contrasts have any sense? Luke loved the good things of this life. But what sense does it make all the violence and wars? What is suppose to teach us? Good makes sense when compared to evil. Somehow Luke new this world is to be lived and to learn from it.

The world as an object exists mainly to serve the purpose of liberation (*apavarga*) but for that we need to be in it, enjoyed it (*bhoga*) in the technical sense of the word. The idea that the purpose of *prakṛti* is enjoyment and liberation (*bhogāpavargārtham* Y.S.II.18) is widely spread through out SK. (i.e. SK 17, *kaivalya artham*). Although the verse 21 presents the purposes of existence with the famous metaphor of the lame and the blind. The lame (*puruṣa*) needs the legs of the blind (*prakṛti*) in order to enjoy the world and the the blind needs the the eyes of the lame in order to see the world as it is (liberation). When both came to meet the end they separate (as told in the dancer metaphor in SK, verses 59, 60 and 61). In verses 31, 42, 63, 69, the expression *puruṣa artham* (for the sake of consciousness) repeats itself giving more assertion to the fact that *Sāṃkhya* is a soteriological doctrine (toward liberation).

Albeit his, sometimes, negative and apocalyptic thoughts, Luke was quit aware of the diversification of the world. We also knew that the “most important was invisible to the eyes” (like Little Prince said in the world famous fairy tail from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry). Love and hunger, knowledge and ignorance, virtue and vice are things we cannot see. Sometimes we can explain it and others we can't. So things can be in many different forms and ways. Recognizing this reality was like a ray of light right into Luke's heart. Like a baby when he sees his mother for the first time: “There you are. So you are the one who have been taking care of me!”.

The world evolves from *mula-prakṛti* due to the proximity of *puruṣa*. (SK .21), which is to say, when the blind gets close to the lame an association (conjunction) between the two starts. Then the *gunas*, dormant in this primordial state start to interact and the world comes into existence. This manifested world is manifold. Same of this layers are more subtle then others and Patanjali categorizes them (YS.II.19) in a certain way that matches the 24 *tattvas*

(principles), so say the commentators. (1) *ālīṅgā*, indistinctive (*Mula-prakṛti*) (2) *liṅga*, distinctive (*Mahat* or *Buddhi*) (3) *viśeṣa*, unparticularized (5 *tanmatras* plus *ahaṅkāra*) (4) *viśeṣa*, particularized (5 *bhūtas*, 5 *jñāna indriya*, 5 *karma indriya* and *manas*). This distinction is present in SK 3 and gets deeper from the verse 22 to 27. For *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* philosophy, what's of interest in the world is from the human point of view in order to end suffering. This means that which is not in this division is explained as an evolution of itself. Bottom line, the world in its totality is made of a miscellaneous of subtle to gross objects that can fit into these categories.

Luke loved cinema. These stories produced in him feelings that he enjoyed very much. He laughed and cried very easily. Sometimes he felt as if he was one of the characters himself. At the end there was this mixed feeling of fulfillment and emptiness. On the other hand he also felt that he could somehow watch all these feelings and emotions coming in and out of him. Tears coming, anger going, excitement is arriving, etc. His self could witness the worst of the murders unshakable and be indifferent to the greatest love of all times. He found all this rather funny.

The subject of the experience is many times called the seer (*draṣṭṛ*) which stands for *puruṣa* or pure consciousness. Calling *puruṣa* the seer is a way of acknowledging that its functionality is pure witnessing. YS.II.20 literally says: The seer is pure seeing, and although is pure, it can grasp mental content. The seer is the spectator of the world play and watches it without ever being touched by it. SK 11 says *puruṣa* exists was opposed to the unmanifested world (*avyakta*) and from this we can infer some of what it is (SK 19): (1) witness (*sākṣitvam*), (2), singular (*kaivalyam*), (3) neutral (*mādhyasthyam*), (4) spectator (*draṣṭatvam*) and (5) passive (*akartṛbhāvaḥ*).

The movies have the purpose to entertain the spectator. All forms of arts want to catch people's attention and most of them intend to change the receptor of the work of art. The purpose of art is not for itself but for others. Their beauty and message reached Luke's heart and left an imprint in his being. Although sometimes we asked himself: Can I really change whatever I am?

Like a bed serves the purpose of the sleeper, so the *prakṛti*'s only purpose is to serve *puruṣa* (YS.II.21), either for enjoyment or liberation. So *puruṣa* is a spectator (*draṣṭatvam*) that lives in isolation (*kaivalya*) and doesn't really take any preference whatsoever over what's happening in the stage. SK 60 states that *Prakṛti* as loyal servant (*upakāriṇī*), puts all its efforts to benefit *puruṣa* that instead gives nothing in return (*anupakāriṇī*). This benefit is not to change their own true nature, is more a recognition of what already is. Remember that the conjunction between the seer and the seen makes one seem what is not (SK 20).

One good thing about cinema is that, even though, many characters die in action, they all come back to life when we see the movie again. If you never see that movie again then it will come back to life to someone else. A good movie, a classical, by definition has always something to tell. For that we keep coming back to it over and over again.

Sāṃkhya recognizes a plurality of *puruṣas* (SK 18) and only one *prakṛti* that can be enjoyed by all the *puruṣas*. So when liberation happens in one *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* remains there to be enjoyed. It is the realistic side of *yoga* and *sāṃkhya*: the world exists as it is. A liberated soul that accomplished his purpose (*kṛtārtham*) does not need the world (*dhṛta śarīrah*). Although the world stays there (*anaṣṭam*) because it is common ground (*sādhāraṇatvāt*) for other (*anya*) non-liberated souls (YS.II.22). SK, verse 67, says that a liberated soul is not anymore under the rules of the cause-effect law (*akāraṇa prāptau*) but remains incarnated (*dhṛta śarīrah*) due to the latent impressions (*saṃskāraśāt*) like a potter's wheel that keeps on spinning for a while even after its last push. YS says that the world remains there while there is still one soul that

is not yet liberated and SK states that the world do not disappear only because on soul is liberated. The ideas are pretty close to each other: the world remains there.

Lately, Luke was very metaphysical. What are we doing here? Why do we came to life? Many times he felt satisfied with the modern theories of Big Bang and the Evolutionary Theory: mother nature works this way. Sometimes he simply could not understand this mixed feeling between living your life and trying to understand it.

The word *samyogaḥ* is used in Sanskrit as a conjunction. Proximity is another translation for *samyogaḥ*. Samkhya Karika, verse 20 states that this proximity between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* makes one seems the other. *Puruṣa* seems active and *prakṛti* seems conscious. This happens so that *prakṛti* can be seen and *puruṣa* be able to attain liberation. YS go back to this idea of enjoyment and liberation saying that both parts start this relation so they can understand the real nature of their powers. (YS.II.23).

He felt confused. His friends said many times is head was a mess. What does exactly mean confusion? asked Luke. That day Luke was even more confused. Because of same unknown reason he could not see clearly.

The cause of this conjunction is ignorance or misapprehension (*avidya*) (YS.II.24) The problem here is if *avidya* causes the relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and *avidya* do not exist when *prakṛti* is unmanifested what is the trigger event for the evolution/creation? *Sāṃkhya* doesn't really care for the beginning of creation. Commentators says this cycle is beginningless. Proximity is the main cause (again SK 20) but no more reason is given for the evolution of the world that leads to a life of suffering. When *puruṣa* experiments suffering recognizes it as the true nature of all actions and experiences (SK 55).

Luke's father use to say to him when he gets mad about something that now he had a extra problem: stop being mad. Stop the confusion in his head can be a easy thing to say but definitely was not a easy thing to achieve.

The important is that there is a solution for this suffering. What causes bondage now is *avidya* and that is to be removed (YS.II.25). If *avidya* causes suffering its removal leads to liberation or *Kaivalya*. Many times is translated as solitude or isolation in a way that *puruṣa* disengages from his relation/conjunction with *prakṛti* and remains in his own changeless and eternal true nature. This disengagement is called in SK 21 as *kaivalya artham puruṣasya*. *Puruṣa* liberation is always associated with the idea of separateness. Maybe autonomous or independent could have a less negative connotation in today's world.

In one of his existential crises same friend said that he needed professional help. Luke didn't really know what kind of help he might need but one thing is for sure, he needed means to achieve whatever was needed to achieve. His mind was a like a kid jumping with a rope, on and on and on.

YS refers the discriminative understanding (*viveka khyātir*) as the means to liberation (YS.II.26) and later adds a more practical component (*ashtanga yoga*) that should be embedded with the former. Even *asanas* should be done with this type of awareness, the one that can discern from what is right for what is wrong, what is pure and impure, permanent and transitory. Although *Viveka khyātir* is an approach that comes from *sāṃkhya*. This type of inquiry is established in a much more extended way in the final verses of SK (verses 63-68) where the studying and understanding of all principles (*tattva*) leads to the complete, free from mistakes, pure and unique knowledge (SK 64).

3. Conclusion

It is quite direct the relation between the two *darśanas*. If we assume the dating of the referred manuscripts in this essay, *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* is the oldest (even more if you realize that the last verses point it as summary of a older manuscript, *ṣaṣṭitantra*) and so *Yoga Sūtras* must be the influenced work. In the analyzed part we can clearly see the idea of yoga as separation (the avoid of the conjunction as *Sāṃkhya* deliberates) that goes against the more accepted (and popular) version of yoga as union. The difference from the two main principles (consciousness and matter), their purpose, relationship and means of separation are also present in both works in an irrefutable way.

4. Bibliography

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