

YOGA AS A FOUNDATION OF MORAL BALANCE

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Abstract:

The present essay deals with the concept of yoga with special reference to Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. In this paper an effort has been made to present this view in a clarified way so that some problems arising on the way of understanding can be removed easily, which is, of course, followed by some evaluative remarks. The term yoga may also be translated as meditation or deep connection or addition, which is taken to be an essential factor in each and every action as found in Śrīmadbhagavadgītā- ‘yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam’. In a very simple manner, it may be described as ‘one-pointed concentration’, which is a pre-condition of any type of scientific, literary and philosophical discovery. The proof for the existence of yogic perception is nothing but the excellence in the vision of the yogins. From our experience it is known that ordinary human being feels the necessity of having light to perceive an object situated in proximity to the eye, but a cat can perceive the same object in deep darkness. Without such connection the question of morality, values, forgiveness, broadness, benevolence, sacrifice etc. do not arise at all. Erosion of values which we are experiencing now-a-days are due to the lack of connection which is otherwise called the sense of belonging or owning. If we want to protect our civilization, we must restore human values which, in return, gives protection to environmental values, social values etc. Yoga is an ideal and only method for this. Our inner pollution like excessive greed, violence etc. are the causes of outer pollutions if Buddhists view-point is concerned.

Key-words: Pratibhā, samavadhāna, samatva, surplus, vipassana

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I

The present essay deals with the concept of yoga with special reference to Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika Philosophy. In this paper an effort has been made to present this view in a clarified way so that some problems arising on the way of understanding can be removed easily, which is, of course, followed by some evaluative remarks.

Let me start this essay with a fact. In the inaugural session the Principal of the College who belongs to the discipline of Mathematics told that he was not in a position to talk about yoga as he is a man of Mathematics. When my turn came, I tried to refute the statement of the principal with the following arguments. When our learning of Mathematics begins in the childhood, it starts with *yoga* first followed by *viyoga*, etc, which means ‘addition’ first followed by ‘subtraction’ etc. Hence, initially *yoga* is properly understood by the Mathematicians. The term *yoga* may also be translated as meditation or deep connection or addition, which is taken to be an essential factor in each and every action as found in Śrīmadbhagavadgītā- ‘*yogaḥ*

karmasu kauśalam’.¹ In a very simple manner, it may be described as ‘one-pointed concentration’, which is a pre-condition of any type of scientific, literary and philosophical discovery. It is admitted by Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka* that a man can gather tremendous power from one-pointed concentration so quickly that he cannot believe his sudden original poetic creation. That is why, such type incident is described by them as the blessings of the Goddess of learning (*Sarasvatī*).² In fact, there is nothing such Divine interference; it is simply the grace of meditation. Such type of result is also available in the music therapy providing mental solace to many patients and curing them, which is also the result of *tanmayatā* (absorption) to the music. In fact, any type of absorption or *tanmayatā* towards music, drama, dance etc. makes a man psychologically balance due to his prominence of *sattva*-quality as admitted by Abhinavagupta. Just as the flow of the water of a river becomes more forceful if other outlets are closed and only one is opened, our intellect becomes more forceful and creative if it is used in one single purpose after restraining it from other directions. Just as water overflows automatically when a jar is filled in water, a

poet's heart, if filled with aesthetic relishment through his contemplation, spontaneously to appropriate language, metaphor etc for a creative This is the miracle of meditation. In normal condition our eye etc can reveal those that are in proximity to them. But the same sense organs can reveal those that are in the womb of the future or past if they are conjoined with the concentrated power generated through *yoga*.³

II

It has been pointed out that there are many things in the world that are not capable of being known through ordinary sense organs. The inadequacy of the intellectual power points to the existence of the world, which is beyond the reach of our sense organs. Hence, it leads us to the conclusion that there is some faculty in a man that is capable of revealing that world. This faculty is known as *pratibhā*. This point will find justification in the fact that there are many things like God, self-etc. that cannot be known through sense-organs, but the existence of them is already accepted in Indian tradition. The Indian scholars have propounded the nature of them and found out the extraordinary means of realizing them. These can be known by super sensual power or vision or

yoga, which does not come from the ordinary mental platform, but it comes from some kind of yogic power called *pratibhā*. It cannot be argued that the objects which cannot be revealed by sense-organs actually do not exist in this world, for, the usages of the terms like normal perception, *prākṛta*, sensual etc. prove that there are corresponding opposite concepts like supernormal perception, *atipākṛta*, super sensual etc. If there were no possibilities of being supernormal perception, the usages like normal perception etc. would have been meaningless and hence, these particular usages presuppose the existence of the opposite concepts that can be known through *pratibhā* alone arising out of yogic power. *Pratibhā* is otherwise called as inner power 'revealing an object in a new and newer way' (*navanavomeṣa-śālinī*), which is possible only through *yoga*.⁴ The same type of explanation is given by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *Nyāyamañjarī*. To him *Pratibhā* reveals there where there is a sudden flash in the life of an individual at some rare moments. The extra-ordinary power of *Pratibhā* distinguishes it from ordinary knowledge. Such *yoga* has been considered as a *pratyāsatti* or extra-ordinary contact through which the entire

objective world may be comprehended in a single moment.

Jayanta thinks that sometimes intuitive cognition about some future incident occurs in our mind well in advance. When an individual thinks intuitively that his brother has surely come and seen his brother's actual presence in actual world, it is due to his *Prātibha* cognition arising out of *yoga*. The external sense organs can grasp the objects that are proximate to them as per the principle-*sambaddham ca grhyate cakṣurādīnā*. But mental perception can go to any extent. The proof of such yogic perception remains on the fact of excellence in knowing the power of various things (*darsnātīśaya eva pramāṇam*). In other words, the proof for the existence of yogic perception is nothing but the excellence in the vision of the yogins⁵ From our experience it is known that ordinary human being feels the necessity of having light to perceive an object situated in proximity to the eye, but a cat can perceive the same object in deep darkness. The Naiyayikas believe the natural variations in the power of sense organs. A cat can see something in deep darkness while a vulture can perceive an object staying far away from the ground. In a normal situation our sense organs can

reveal the object if it remains in the normal range of the eye, but subtle kind of perception is possible through the same eye if its quality is developed. Those who reach the highest power of the sense organs like eye etc are called seers (*rṣis-s*). From this it is proved that here is a variation in the degree of vision. We realize the most excellent perception when the excess potential of the sense organ called *atīśaya* is revealed. Under this situation only we can perceive an object which is subtle and remains in past, present and future⁶

Such excess power of the sense organ called *atīśaya* is described by Rabindranath as the Angel of Surplus. According to him, an individual being is called called *dwija* or twice-born just like a bird. A bird is called twice-born as it is born first from the mother's womb as an egg which is nothing but cell and next time it is born from the egg or cell. When it is within the cell, it has no liberty at all due to having confinement within a cell. Once it is out of the cell, it achieves freedom in the unbound sky. Such is the case with a human being. First, he is confined within his physical body. Afterwards, he can turn his physical body to multi-cellular one through the arousal of the surplus within him. This achievement of surplus is the result of his

yogic power through he can turn from normal man to Universal Man.⁷ It is said by Rabindranath that in our body there is a man who, after surpassing individual man, turns into Universal Man through his attraction. Universal Manhood appears in our thought and action. To Rabindranath- “From the time of the emergence of the first living cell to first appearances of man evolution had been on the physical level. It is a mechanical process of cells multiplying themselves by aggregation, adjustment and co-operation. When a man appears in the earth, the course of evolution takes a turn from determinism to freedom. He believed that this change from determinism to the freedom in the evolutionary process with the emergence man is because of speciality in man- the surplus in him, which is the capacity of going beyond oneself. He is not satisfied with what he is in natural limitations, he irresistibly feels something beyond the evident fact of himself which could give him worth. Unlike the animals, man stands erect, his hands too are free to manipulate and do all sorts of things, which cannot be imagined with regard to animal. His physical constitution and ability to stand on two legs gives his eyes a privileged position, they occupy a height and man’s vision becomes far-reaching. Thus, man’s

physical actions are indicative of his ‘surplus’, his freedom to. Man is truly represented in something which exceeds himself. This excess or surplus, as he calls it, man’s creativity, and goes beyond man’s biological and economic needs.”⁸

The meaning of the term ‘freedom to’ is the attainment of good (*śreyaprāpti*). The surplus in man gives us ‘freedom to’ which means the attainment of good and provides us creativity which means freedom and urge to go beyond the immediate necessities of living beings of this world. The grace of such creativity has been shown by Tagore in his *Vālmikīpratibhā*. The leader of the thieves (*dasyudalapati*) who is illiterate transcends himself to the level of creativity through the surplus power. He had an impersonal pain after seeing the death of one of the curlew couples, which leads him to write a Sanskrit *śloka* spontaneously which is evidence of having yogic power (surplus) remaining in him. Hence it is said by Ānandavardhana- ‘*krauñca-dvanda-viyogotthaḥ śokaḥ ślokatvamāgataḥ*’.⁹ He had intense feeling of pathos in which he had lost himself. Due to the complete loss of personality, he had lost himself. The complete loss of personality leads him to attain the sense of joy out of grief. This joyous experience of

pathos provides him with the power of creating *śloka* spontaneously. Vālmīki's grief was not this-worldly and hence it is called impersonal. If it were so, he would have some humanly sympathy with the bird from which the creation of a verse would not be possible ('*na tu muneh śoka iti vaktavyam. Evam hi sati tadduḥkhena so 'pi duḥkhita iti kṛtvā rasasyātmateṭi niravakāśam bhavet*')¹⁰. This-worldly grief makes a man crippled. When a poet's vision becomes very deep and clear, he surely gets an inspiration in the form of energy from within. From this the materials for writing a piece of literature (like characterization, plot etc.) follow automatically just as water overflows automatically from the jar already filled in water. From this the spontaneity of art is admitted by Abhinavagupta. First, the poet has experienced the abiding emotion (*sthāyibhāva*) called pathos (*śoka*) arising out of the separation of the one of the curlew couples. Secondly, he realizes the aesthetic enjoyment called *karuṇa* (*karuṇa-rasa*), which is different from this-worldly enjoyment. Thirdly, such enjoyment is possible due to the melting of his own mind (*pramāṭṛ-bhāva-vigalana*) and due to his total engrossment (*ekātmata*) with the content through the communication of heart

(*sahṛdayatā*).¹¹ So, poet's genius depends on the absorption of the aesthetic enjoyment and this absorption is endowed with capacity of creating a literary piece spontaneously. If a poet's heart is filled with emotion, it (emotion) finds a spontaneous outlet. In the case of a poet, this feeling, if stirred up by an emotion, will find an outlet of appropriate words, metres, similes etc. spontaneously. This spontaneity comes when there are no barriers (like personal interest etc.) for the realization of aesthetic pleasure. The spontaneous outlet of poetry from a man who was idle before having aesthetic absorption proves again the creative character of aesthetic pleasure. In order to highlight the spontaneity of an art-object Abhinavagupta has taken the metaphor of filled in pitcher. Just as a pitcher which is filled in water overflows automatically, a poet's heart filled in aesthetic enjoyment (*āveśa*) gives rise spontaneous materials for writing poetry. This theory goes in favour of spontaneity of aesthetic communication as against the theory of gradual practice (*anuśilana*) In the like manner, it can be justified that gradual practice or *anuśilana* can provide an individual energy to him which can lead him to the world of creativity. One's energy, if invested

properly, can change his future actions. Herein lies his freedom of choice.¹²

It is said in the Kenopaniṣad-
Śrotrasya śrotram manaso mano yad/vāco
*ha vācam sa u prāṇasya prāṇaḥ//*¹³ i.e.,
Brahman is the ear of the ear, mind of the
mind, speech of the speech and vitality of
the vital sense organ. Apparently, it seems
tautology as there a kind of repetition. From
the standpoint of *yoga*, the *mantra* can be
explained that inner power of eye, inner
mind, inner speech and inner power of vital
organ are ear, mind, speech and vital organ
respectively. This inner power of the sense
organ is the surplus arising out of
meditation or yogic power. A measurable
human being may turn into an
unmeasurable one if such surplus within
him is aroused (*‘āmāre tumi aśeṣ korechho*
emani līlā tava’). For this reason,
meditation or one-pointed concentration is
called *yoga* (*yogastu samavadhānam*).
Through such concentration we find
creativity not only in case of literature alone
but in the fields of dance, music, paintings,
moral consciousness etc. also. Yoga in the
sense of one-pointed concentration is found
in the works of jewellers, makers of an
arrow, mechanics and painters etc. Many
apples have been fallen down in heads of
many people, but no one-pointed

concentration was undertaken by others
except Newton. Newton first had raised the
question why the apple had fallen down
instead of going up. The result of
concentration on this results in discovering
the law of gravitation. Sunray cannot burn
but sunray concentrated through heavy
magnifying glass can acquire the power of
burning. In ancient time the fire was
kindled in the alter of sacrifice by the
sunlight concentrated in a magnifying
glass. If power is concentrated, it acquires
greater burning property. In the same way,
when water is accumulated in a dam, and if
a small hole is made in it, water flows more
forcefully due to power in the accumulated
water. In winter frogs and snakes become
like a lump of clay without having any
hunger and thirst. But in other times they
have hunger and thirst in a normal way.
Human beings can also control their inner
urge for the time being to get the heavier
power from the sense organs. There is a
well-known saying -“*nāśnanti dardurāḥ*
śīte phaṇinaḥ pavanāśanāḥ/ kūrmaśca
svagoptāro dr̥ṣṭānto yogino matāḥ//”. That
is, in winter frogs and snakes do not take
anything. At this time the turtles hide
themselves within their body. The yogins
are also of the same type. If there is the
restriction of food in an individual, it is true

that his body becomes lean and thin, but he bears a different type of loveliness. An individual's eye is the indicator of whether he is *yogin*, or enjoyer (*bhogī*) or diseased (*rogī*) (*'yogiko bhogiko rogiko jān. ānkhmei niśān aur ānkhse pachhān*).

Lastly, it is said in the Bhagavadgītā- '*samatvam yoga ucyate*',¹⁴ i.e., the consideration of all people as equal is also an effect of such yogic power which has got a social and moral value.¹⁴ The whole world is covered by one Reality i.e., Brahman. If we can connect ourself with this Brahman, it is a real connection or *yoga* on account of which we cannot make discrimination among human beings or cannot exploit other by snatching their properties, but we can have enjoyment through renunciation. It is endorsed by Īsopaniṣad- '*Īśāvāsamidam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat/ tena tyktena bhuñjīthāḥ mā grdhaḥ kasyacid dhanam//*'.¹⁵ The same type connection or *yoga* has been prescribed by Rabindranath Tagore when he says- '*Viśva sāthe yoge yethāi bihāro. Sei khāne yog tomār sāthe āmāro//*'. Without such connection the question of morality, values, forgiveness, broadness, benevolence, sacrifice etc. do not arise at all. Erosion of values which we are experiencing now-a-days are due to the

lack of connection which is otherwise called the sense of belonging or owning. If we want to protect our civilization, we must restore human values which, in return, gives protection to environmental values, social values etc. *Yoga* is an ideal and only method for this.

III

Buddhism in general represents the way of compassion. The Buddha is an embodiment of compassion and hence he is regarded as the compassionate protector of all beings. To him the individuals following his path should practice loving kindness, which implies not to harm the life of all beings. It is advised always to protect mankind as well as animals and vegetations. It is his wisdom through which he can see all human beings in the universe as equal in nature. The well-being of human being and animal is inter-related and mutual.

To ignore such instructions is to invite our social crisis. In the modern time we find that human beings have misused their power and destroyed the animals, forests and mountains resulting in environmental crisis. The greedy minds of mankind lead to such changes and

destructions of the ecological balance doing harm to human being and society as such.

The external environment is seriously polluted because of the pollution of the internal environment in the mind. The excessive greed is one of the reasons for the internal pollution. This disease may be eradicated if an individual finds some satisfaction and contentment through the meditation to Buddha or his teachings. That the external pollution is related to our internal one is evidenced in the Dhammapada. It is said that just as the maker of an arrow makes the end of it straight, so an individual should simplify his mind, which is wavering, fickle, uncontrolled and unprotected.¹⁶

The contentment in the context of Buddhism does not mean the eradication of all desires but to live in harmony with all social beings and nature. Those who believe in the teaching of the Buddhism will control their desire and live-in harmony with society. It is rightly mentioned in the Dhammapada that one who sees only the apparent beauty, who is not self-restraint in enjoying consumable things, who is lazy and weak is always attacked by one's enemies just like a weak tree. On the other hand, an individual refraining from seeing apparent beauty becomes self-controlled

and respectful and hence he is not overpowered by the enemies just like a firm and stony mountain.¹⁷

The historical account of Buddhism shows that for thousand years the Buddhist monasteries have developed a harmonious living with nature and hence they are established in the mountains and forests. The calm and cool atmosphere of the forest and mountain helps the Buddhist practitioners to develop their inner mind, which ultimately makes them 'feel' for the society and the protection of animals.

The consideration for other individuals as a matter of moral obligation is not limited to other human beings alone but to other species. Buddhism seeks to transform in the way through which an individual conceives himself. The ethics in Buddhism is not totally a matter of identifying and securing rights, but it is a matter of undertaking a practice of affirming and realizing the trans-human potential for enlightenment as an effect. The deeper insight in an individual is generated through the cultivation of it in human and trans-human species and hence it can become potential for enlightenment. This can express itself as a compassionate environmental sustaining altruism. Such an

idea has been expressed by Śāntideva in the following manner:

“Just as the body which is constituted with hands and other limbs should be protected as a single entity, the whole world divided into so many parts should be treated as undivided one so far as its nature is concerned. If it is taken as divided, it would suffer no doubt. I should remove suffering of others because it is suffering like my own. I should help others too because they exist as I exist.” Śāntideva adds that if someone is reluctant to remove sufferings of others, it would like refusing to use one’s hand to remove the thorn of one’s foot, because the pain of the foot is not the pain of the hand.¹⁸

Though the Buddhism talks about the protection of the society and environment, it gives emphasis on the three-fold training of human mind and seven factors of the enlightenment, which are the basis ethical sensibility to the environment. The Mahāparinibbānasutta of the Dīghanikāya discusses about the three-fold course of training like cultivation of ethical conduct (śīla) meditation (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). These three are interconnected in the sense that the first is left behind when the second is undertaken. When the ethical conduct is firmly

established, the meditation becomes effective. Through effect of meditation the transformative power of wisdom becomes possible.¹⁹

The above-mentioned three-fold practice has a tremendous influence on the Buddha’s doctrine of seven factors of enlightenment viz., mindfulness (*sati*), discrimination of principles (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy in pursuit of the food (*vīrya*), rapture (*piiti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). It is mentioned in the Samyuttanikāya that these seven are essential for any kind of social or moral development. When a monk remaining secluded recollects and reasons about the doctrine, he adheres to the mindfulness factor of enlightenment, which is followed by other steps. After mindfulness he can discriminate, reflect on and investigate the doctrine with understanding. In this way he can reach to the path of perfection, which includes rapture (*piiti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The latter four are connected with the phenomenon of meditation, which is available through the cognitive and affective refinement.²⁰

An individual having such moral qualities would be able to have sensitivity

towards our social beings. It is rightly mentioned in the Tanhabaggo chapter of the Dhammapada that the thirst for enjoyable object makes a man blind of his own future and hence he can go to any extent for his enjoyment adopting injury to human and non-human beings including environment. This thirsty person is compared to a monkey desiring fruits (*so pravati hurāhuraṃ phalamicchāṃ vā vanasming vānaro*). It is so dangerous that it is metaphorized as poison (*visattikā*). Hence it is advisable to eradicate the root of such thirst through the weapon of wisdom (*paññā chindatha*), which is dependent on the paths mentioned above.²¹

An individual having such freedom can have ‘real sympathy’ towards nature, environment, human and non-human beings. An individual possessing such a mental state cannot do harm to others. If he cuts trees, injures animals etc. he will be condemned as found in the Vinayapitaka. It has also mentioned in the Bhaisajya-skandhaka that how different trees serve us as medicines in our everyday life.²²

The Buddhists believe also in *Vipāssanā* type of meditation which is also taken as a tool to reach the level of transformation through concentration. *Vipāssanā* (Pali) or *Vipāśyanā* (Sanskrit) is

a technical term which means ‘without seeing’ (‘vi’ means ‘without’ and *pāssanā* means ‘seeing’). It is otherwise called ‘insight’ (*paññā*) in Buddhism. The Buddhists believes in two levels of mind-developed (*bhāvanā*) and *samathā* (calming). Reality is the essence of Buddhism. According to them, an individual is a Buddhist in the true sense of the term if he has got the real nature of reality or transformed to Reality called *Tathāgata*. This transformation needs clear vision or special seeing which this type of meditation provides. *Samathā* is, as told earlier, concentration or tranquillity in which situation mind comes to a complete rest called *viśrānti* by Abhinavagupta and can focus on one item after removing extraneous factors from the mind. In this situation his mind and body become calm and cool giving rise to tranquillity. In the initial stage *samathā* or concentration is possible through some media like prayer, chanting, lighting candle, any religious image etc. It gives the meditator some type of satisfaction of temporary nature. As soon as the meditation which is otherwise delightful, ends, satisfaction ends there. At the last stage of meditation of *Vipāssanā* nature this *samathā* or concentration is taken as an instrument of breaking the wall

of illusion which veils the Reality. This is the process which may continue for several years to unveil the illusion and ultimately one fine morning he will be able to see the presence of the light of transformation which is equivalent to *Nirvāṇa*.²³

IV

From the above discussion we may draw the following conclusions. Only advice to protect society and social beings or to adopt *ahimsā* will fall flat upon others until and unless they are enlightened with wisdom. The true solution of the social crisis will be neither technological nor legal. It must be stereological. It must involve the evolution of a significant number of human beings to a higher level of awareness, to a higher ethical sensibility. It does not mean that the technological and legal efforts to safeguard the society are pointless, but we think there is at least a stopgap measure but not the ultimate solution. To Buddhism there is a potentiality in human being to evolve into a higher ethical sensibility. This will happen through the concerted practice and discipline. The whole Buddhist tradition consists precisely in a sustained effort to devise effective methods for undertaking this transformation. The tradition says that we have our own resources though the task

is very difficult. If we can master over the method, the energy in pursuit of the good, patience, the living kindness, the concentration and the wisdom to bring these substantial resources to bear evolve automatically in a man. With this inner tranquillity alone outer tranquillity, free from pollution, may come into being.

In modern time the suffering of mankind is found in the global level due to the violence in mind, body and speech. All individual beings have become disintegrated because they are suffering from afflictions of this- worldliness (*bhavaroga*) due to the absence of right vision (*samyagdr̥ṣṭi*) regarding the status of the objects. If the nature of an object is known as impermanent (*anitya*), having unique character (*svalakṣaṇa*) or void (*śūnya*), a man becomes free from the wrong notion of an object. The detachment towards an enjoyable object is possible for a man if he realizes the true nature of the object i.e. its impermanent, relative character etc. The ignorance of the true nature of an object leads us to the path of suffering. Morality is possible only through the change of attitude towards the objects of enjoyment. All other ways like right resolve (*samyag samkalpa*) right speech (*samyag vāk*), right conduct (*samyak karmānta*),

right livelihood (*samyag ājīva*), right effort (*samyag vyāyāma*), right attention (*samyak smṛti*) and right concentration (*samyak samādhi*) follow from the right knowledge of the object. A human can adopt the vow of *maitrī*, *karuṇā* etc at this stage and herein lies the *arthakriyākāritva* of a human being.²⁴

In the present-day society, the drug-addicted and pain-tormented people are being treated through the help of meditation and proper counselling. Through this process such persons can regain their own lost nature. This is possible through restraining the modification of mind by way of controlling our desire etc., which is evidenced in the *Yogasūtra* also (*‘Yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ’*- 1.1.2.). It has been clearly stated that, when this method adopted, one can remain in one’s true form (*‘Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe’vasthānam’*-Ibid, 1.1.3.).

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