

## IS PARAMA—SĀMYA POSSIBLE ?

The Sāṃkhya-system, as we know, is a very old system and has evolved into a systematic school, popularly known as the Classical-Sāṃkhya, from Upaniṣads through various stages. The doctrine of Guṇas also underwent a development of its various interpretations through different stages.<sup>1</sup> We, in the present paper, are concerned mainly with their metaphysical nature with reference to the state of equilibrium as discussed by the scholars of the Classical-Sāṃkhya.

Guṇas are not attributes of Prakṛti in Spinozian sense. Vijñāna-bhikṣu, while commenting on Sāṃkhya-sūtra says that, "Sattvam Rajas Tama iti eṣaiva Prakṛtiḥ smṛtā"<sup>2</sup> i. e. Guṇas themselves are Prakṛti. Just as heat is burning power of fire likewise Guṇas are inseparable and internal threefold functional forces of Prakṛti. Prakṛti operates in infinite ways through proportional combination combined in innumerable ways of its threefold functional forces. Sattva-force is the principle of beingness or manifestation, Rajas-force is responsible for all sorts of change or motion and Tamas-force resists or inhibits all kinds of activity of former forces. These are not mutually exclusive forces but are co-operant and constitute one ubiquitous reality. Prakṛti, however, should not be viewed as underlying substance of these, though functionally diversified but internally integrated, forces. Sattva itself is Prakṛti. Rajas, itself is Prakṛti and Tamas itself is Prakṛti.

Though all the three forces are inseparable and unified these are distinguishable in the sense that sattva as the principle of beingness is distinct from Rajas which is the principle of motion and from Tamas which is the principle of resistance. Ontologically these form one, unified, ubiquitous reality but when viewed from their functional point of view, these are three divergent forces each having its own function. During operation they also seek the co-operation of each other without which operation becomes impossible and even if there is operation in such condition it would be disintegrated and haphazardly. Sattva while manifesting itself requires the help of Rajas-force for mobility and of Tamas to resist unwanted or excess motion released by Rajas-force.

Rajas, while releasing motion, seeks the co-operation of sattva-force for manifesting itself and also requires the help of resisting force i. e. Tamas to prevent its own excess motion. Since Tamas is a resisting force it could justify its function only when there is something to resist i. e. motion. Tamas, for its very beingness depends on sattva. In this manner all three forces, though functionally of divergent nature, are interdependent, co-operative and constitute one ubiquitous reality. Parmārtha has rightly compared Triguna with tripod.

Forces are never at rest but remain active all the while. The change of Guṇas or forces is of two kinds viz. homogeneous change and heterogeneous change. Homogeneity or *ṣāmyāvasthā* is the original form of Prakṛti in which, though Guṇas are changing, there is no production of any effect. The inactivity of Prakṛti as opposed to Vikṛti, described in the tenth Kārikā of Sāṃkhya-Kārikā, should be interpreted in context of non-production of any effect whatsoever and not as non-activity or unchangingness. Besides it, in homogeneity, the change of Guṇas does not make any significant difference in the state of affairs. Moreover no temporal and spatial change can be ascribed to omnipresent and eternal Prakṛti. Prakṛti, then, is inactive only in this particular context. Prakṛti, on the contrary, is energetic and changing incessantly. The view that Prakṛti is ever-changing can be corroborated by the use of words *Trigunataḥ* and *Samudayāt* which denote homogeneous and heterogeneous change respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Vācaspati, commenting on sixteenth Kārikā emphatically declares that Guṇas or forces, which are, by their vary nature, changing, cannot be static or unchanging at any moment. At the time of dissolution every Guṇa changes into itself without disturbing the original structure of Prakṛti. Sattva changes into Sattva, Rajas changes into Rajas and Tamas changes into Tamas. The word *Trigunataḥ* stands for this sort of homogeneous change.<sup>4</sup> The word *Samudaya* stands for heterogeneous change of Guṇas. At the time of creation Guṇas interact, overlap, subdue each other. *Abhibhāvya-bhibhāvaka* tendency gives rise to heterogeneous change or *Vaiṣamyā*. *Vijñānabhikṣu* also distinguishes between homogeneous change and heterogeneous change. According to him disequilibrium of Guṇas produces heterogeneity and the absence of such disequilibrium in Guṇas is nothing but the state of homogeneity<sup>5</sup>

Yuktidipikākāra too recognises such distinction and interprets Trigunataḥ as homogeneous change and Samudayāt as heterogeneous change (Trigutayavyapade Svarupānām.....-samudayādityena parasparapekṣā nāmārambhaśaktimavadyotayati.<sup>6</sup>)

In fact the distinction of these two states is logical presupposition to explain the two states of Prakṛti viz. dissolution and creation rather involution and evolution.

The state of equilibrium of Prakṛti then is a well balanced and homogeneous state of functional forces or Guṇas. Though all the forces, from the point of view of their function, are opposite to each other, these remain in such a state of harmonious fusion that no force predominates others. Each force, seeking the co-operation of others, changes into itself without disturbing the harmonious fusion of the state. Sattva-force with the co-operation, but without subjugation, of Rajas and Tamas forces change into Sattva itself. So also change Rajas and Tamas forces. Forces have four kind of tendencies viz. subjugation, production, interdependence and to form pairs. In the state of absolute homogeneity the tendencies of subjugation and production remain suspended. No Guṇa or force is either preponderant or subjugated. In the absence of pre-ponderance of any force the tendency of production of any effect whatsoever is also not there.<sup>7</sup>

Thus there is no-pre-ponderance of any force; consequently Prakṛti remains in the state of Paramasāmya or absolute homogeneity producing no effect whatsoever. The quantitative (the strength of force) and qualitative (the original structure of Prakṛti) balance of Guṇas or forces remains unaltered.

Here we are faced with a perplexing but interesting question that is such a state of absolute homogeneity or Paramasāmya, in which no force is preponderant, possible at all? On accepting the operational potentialities of Triguna or forces as depicted by the Sāṃkhya-system we would have to rule out emphatically any such possibility. Sattva, as we know, is endowed with the potency of manifestation or Prakāśakatva, Rajas is endowed with the potency of mobility or Calatva and Tamas is endowed with the potency of resistance or Varṇakatva. Now it can be admitted legitimately that both manifesting force and the force of mobility ( Sattva and Rajas ) remain in homogeneous or balanced

state i. e. not letting themselves out of their limit since the *Sāmyāvasthā* is the state of unmanifestation (*Avyaktāvasthā*) and dissolution. The characteristic features of evolutionary state or *Visadr̥śāpariṇāma* are manifestation and spatio-temporal change. *Sattva* and *Rajas* are comparatively more active than *Tamas* in *Visadr̥śā-pariṇāma*. Ofcourse *Tamas* too becomes preponderant occasionally in the course of evolution but that preponderance, instead of making hinderance, enhances the evolutionary process by directing it towards desired direction. In this particular sense *Sattva* and *Rajas* forces are more active than *Tamas* in *Visadr̥śā-apariṇāma*. But with regard to the state of dissolution, the situation is very much different from that of evolution. The characteristic feature of dissolution is resistance or inhibition of overt activity. If we stick to the doctrine of absolute homogeneity and regard that no force is preponderant at all, then we would have to postulate an extraneous force to inhibit the natural flow of manifestation and mobility of *Sattva* and *Rajas*. But no such extraneous principle of resistance has been accepted in the *Sāṃkhya* system. It is true that an extraneous agent (*Puruṣa*) does initiate *Rajas* to break the state of inhibition but there is no provision for any such external principle which can be accounted for the act of inhibition in the state of homogeneity. Moreover why should *Prakṛti*, which is not only an independent entity but is also equipped with the forces of manifestation and mobility alongwith the force of inhibition, need of any outer principle to be controlled. As a matter of fact *Tamas*, which is an internal inhibitive force of *Prakṛti* can alone be accounted for the inhibition of act of manifestation and mobility rightly. For that purpose we would have to accept the preponderance of *Tamas* even at the time of dissolution without which it would not be able to check *Sattva* and *Rajas* forces. It is interesting enough to note that after preponderance of *Tamas* there remains no more a state of absolute homogeneity or *paramasāmya*. It seems curious and somewhat paradoxical that in order to explain homogeneity we are abolishing it, but there can no other better explanation be given in place of it. Though, after preponderance of *Tamas*, *Triguṇa* cease to be in the state of absolute homogeneity, the *Prakṛti* could become able to preserve its homogeneity in the sense that it produces no effect and remains in the state of dissolution. When *Tamas* force becomes preponderant there would be neither manifestation nor would occur

any spatio-temporal change in Prakṛti, consequently there is no evolution, no production of effects. Prakṛti would be able to maintain the state of dissolution till the Puruṣa, by its proximity, stimulates its mobile force and initiates the evolutionary process.

We can now conclude rightly that the state of absolute homogeneity or Paramasāmya is not possible at all. The sāmyāvasthā can be maintained by the preponderance of Tamas force alone, It would be more appropriate if we call this state as 'Avyaktāvasthā' instead of Sāmyāvasthā.

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#### NOTES

1. The earliest mention of Guṇas, in a cryptic way, can be found in Chāndogyaopaniṣada ( VI, 4 ) where three colours viz. white, red and black have been considered as primary colours and all other things are constituted out of them. Occurrence of Trivṛta in Svetāśvata Up. ( 1, 4 ) may also be understood with reference to Guṇas. Mahābhārata interprets Guṇas in, more or less, psychological and moral sense.
2. Sāṅkhya-pravacan-bhāṣya P. 155, edited by R. Garbe, Harvard Oriental Series Vol. 2, 1943.
3. " Kāraṇamastyavyaktaṁ pravartate triguṇataḥ samudayacca " Sāṅkhya Kārikā 16.
4. " Pratisargāvasthāyām sattvaṁ rajastamāśca sadṛśparpariṇāmāni bhavanti. Pariṇāmasvabhāvā hi guṇā nāparimayya kṣaṇamāpyavatiṣṭhante. Tasmāt sattvaṁ sattvarūpatayā, rajo rajorūpatayā, tamastamorūpatayā pratisargāvasthāyamapi pravartate. Taddidamuktam—" Trigūṇataḥ " iti. Tattvakaumudi Trans by Dr Ramashankar Bhattacharya P. 79, Motilal Banarsidas 1967.
5. Sattvādi-guṇa-trayaṁ pradhānam; teṣāṁca vāiṣamyāṁ nyūnātrikta bhāven saṁhananam; tad-abhāvaḥ sāmyam." Sāṅkhya Pravacan Bhāṣya VI-42 p.156
6. Yuktidipikā ed. R. C. Pandey. P. 74, Motilal Banarsidas 1967. ( It is interesting to note that Nārāyana Tirtha and Parmārtha have overlooked such distinction of two states of Parakṛti. Chandrika describes the word Trigūṇataḥ in the sense of production of effect. Parmārtha however, gives a new interpretation of these two terms. According to him there are two kinds of production; one is transformation of cause ( milk ) into

its effect (curd) but in the second kind of production the cause is not transformed into effect like above manner but it is a production like parents giving birth to a child. Prakṛti, unlike second kind of production, transforms into Vekṛti).

7. In this context it is important to note that Anyonyajanavṛtti or the tendency of mutual production has been interpreted differently by different commentators. Vācaspati interprets the term in the sense of homogeneous change (Jananaṁ ca parināmaḥ, sa ca guṇānaṁ sadṛśa rūpaḥ). Here mutual production means mutual assistance. When Sattva changes into Sattva itself it is assisted by Rajas and Tamas. But this sense of mutual assistance is already present in Anyonyāśraya-vṛtti. To interpret Anyonyajananaḥ in the sense of mutual assistance is merely useless repetition of Anyonyāśraya vṛtti. Moreover an independent term Trigūnataḥ has been used for Sadṛśa-parināmataḥ seems no need to coin new term for it. Parmārtha, however, presents the term in question in different manner. According to him joy, which is a psychological effect of Sattva, sometimes produces misery, the effect of Rajas, and indifference, the psychological effect of Tamas (Sāṁkhya Kārikā P. 17 Trans. by S. S. Suryanarayan Sastri Madras 1933). But Anyonyajanana-vṛtti, taken in this sense, is at work only at the time of evolution or Visadṛśaparināma and remains suspended in Sadṛśapariṇāma as we have mentioned above. According to other interpretation it means that three Guṇas jointly produce effects or things which becomes also possible in heterogeneous change. There is no point in interpreting it in the sense of mutual production of Guṇas or forces which are nothing but uncaused and eternal Prakṛti.