

REVIEWS

Concept of Personality in Sāṃkhya Yoga and the Gītā: Kali Charan Das, Professor of Philosophy, Gauhati University: Published by the Registrar, Gauhati University. First Edition August 1975. Price Rs. 25/-, pp. i-viii + 220.

The work under review is a doctoral thesis submitted by Prof. K. C. Das and approved by the University of Gauhati for the D.Phil. Degree a few years ago. It is now published in a book form with suitable changes. At the end of the foreword to the book the author expresses his deep concern for restoring ancient Indian Wisdom and promoting peace and progress of humanity. He feels an urge to study Indian Philosophical concepts in the light of modern scientific developments and to examine their relevance to modern life. With this general attitude in mind and with a background of specialisation in Modern Western Psychology, the author has presented in this book his research in the ancient Indian concept of personality with special reference to the Sāṃkhya Yoga and the Gītā. He certainly deserves our compliments for this work. The work has inevitably led the author into areas of comparative study of ancient Indian Philosophy of Mind or what he prefers to call Hindu psychology and modern western psychology. The general trend of the work is to show that ancient Indian Philosophy contains significant concepts and doctrines about human personality, and if they are fully explored and adequately re-stated they may go a long way in solving many of our fundamental problems, theoretical and practical, concerning human personality. It is a part of the author's argument to suggest that the conceptual framework, methodological pre-suppositions, contentual coverage of facts, and preventive psycho-somatic medicine as well as curative therapeutics of ancient Indian psychology are, although of a complex character, more sound and useful.

The work consists of a brief introduction, the exposition of the theme in ten chapters and the eleventh chapter giving summary and conclusion. A title-wise general biblio-

graphy is given at the end. However, there is neither an index at the end nor an analytical table of contents at the beginning.

The brief introduction (pages v to viii) contains a general listing of some aspects of studies in the psychology of personality the author wishes to explore and more or less a re-statement of the chapter headings to indicate the area covered by the present study.

For purposes of this comparative study the author, although vaguely aware of their internal differences, considers the system of Sāṃkhya, Yoga and the Gītā together as containing a common basic theory of personality and follows this approach throughout the work. The definition of personality, the structural components of personality, the problem of mind-body relation, the concept of self, the meaning and function of unconscious, the problem of heredity vs. environment in personality differences, the problem of traits and types of personality are some of the problems the author has dealt with in details in the main body of the work. As can be easily seen, this broad spectrum of study does not allow the author to enter into any analysis in depth of most of these problems; and the reader has to remain content with the general presentation of issues and views.

The first chapter is intended to acquaint readers with the standpoint of Indian psychology in general and that of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga in particular. With regard to the methods of inquiry adopted in ancient Indian psychology the author seems to vacillate between two different views: Indian methods of inquiry are typically un-modern (p. 1 and p. 146) and Indian methods of inquiry have great affinity with modern science (p. i). In the absence of required elaborations and justification of these statements, the reader is left in doubt. The same may be said about the author's view that Indian psychology is neither empirical, nor is it introspective, rather it is more experiential (p. 5) and 'it might be competent to lay at rest many a burning problems in modern psychology and philosophy' (p. 16).

The seventh chapter deals with some peculiarities in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga psychology, and the eighth chapter deals with relevant concepts pertaining to personality in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system. These two small chapters cover more or less the familiar outline of the Sāṅkhya view of Buddhi, Ahaṅkāra and Manas, and of the fundamental difference between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. One feels that they might as well have been placed immediately after the first chapter for a more coherent account.

The second chapter contains an exposition of the ancient Indian view of the physical basis of personality. This exposition is mainly based upon the Haṭha-yogic works like the Śiva Samhitā and the Gheraṇḍa Samhitā and B. N. Seal's 'The positive sciences of the ancient Hindus'. It brings out the Haṭha-Yoga view of Cakras or plexuses and the spinal sympathetic system. The Yoga methods of control (Saṁnyama) are shown to be comprehensive and efficacious for an integrated personality, a unique mind-body complex. The account is mainly informative and no point is taken up at a philosophical level either for clarification or for discussion.

The concept of unconscious in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Gītā, and its role in the make-up of personality are the two important topics discussed at great length in the third chapter. The Sāṅkhya view of the Sūkṣma Śarīra is carefully differentiated from the Western Psychological view of the unconscious found in Freud or Jung or Adler. "The Sūkṣma Śarīra not only transmigrates but it is the perennial carrier of the effects, vestiges or saṁskaras of past actions, which furnish the propensities, potencies and other materials constituting the unconscious' (p. 53). In this way the concept of the unconscious acquires a comprehensive form and extent in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga view. The Citta and its modification (vṛttis) constitute the personal unconscious for each individual. The author argues that the Yoga is a process of psycho-synthesis for the integration of personality, the raw materials of which are in the unconscious.

This interesting and provocative comparison is extended in the fourth chapter where the author discusses the concepts of instincts, sentiments and character in relation to personality. The Sāṅkhya view of *guṇas*, the Yoga view of *Kleśas* and the Gītā view of different *Mārgas* for self-realisation are shown to be integral aspects of the Indian Psycho-synthetic prescription.

The questions of heredity and personality types are taken up for discussion in the fifth chapter. The author shows that the ancient Indian view of heredity is bound up with the theory of Karma and other related concepts and hence heredity is a more comprehensive psycho-physical set of pre-existing conditions which is uniquely personal for each individual. Basic difficulties in the theory of traits and types are pointed out to conclude that although the Indian psychology makes use of the concepts of *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*, it is after all an over simplification of a complex problem.

The meaning and definition of personality occupies the author's attention in the sixth chapter where a general survey of contemporary psychological theories of personality is given. The author is in general agreement with Professor G. W. Allport's definition and account of personality. Where he differs from Allport, he is however far from convincing, and more often he seems to be not taking the points either is sufficient depth or at length.

A conceptual analysis of personality is attempted in the tenth chapter under the title 'Metaphysical Study of Personality : A Comparative Review'. It gives very brief accounts of the views of William James, J. Royce, F. H. Bradley, Pringle-Pattison etc. without any perspective comments; and these accounts are not properly linked with the discussion of the Indian views of personality. If the author is in full agreement with the criticism of the Sāṅkhya concept of *Puruṣa* by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as he seems to do so (p. 396), then his earlier discussions generally approving the Sāṅkhya dualism of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* lose all force, and one wonders whether without separating out

the conceptual differences between the Sāṅkhya, the Yoga and the Gītā views on personality it would be possible to make the whole study more cogent, convincing and meaningful. For this reason this chapter appears to be rather a weak link in an otherwise interesting and stimulating study in the Indian Philosophy of mind with focus on the concept of personality.

Uniform method of giving references in the footnotes; classified, authorwise bibliography; names and subject indexes; and more careful proof-reading at the next edition will certainly increase the readability and utility of this work for advanced and research students of the subject.

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