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Moksha Dharma Parva
Yoga versus Sankhya
Shānti Parva
Chapters 289-290



Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

युधिष्ठिर उवाच
Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

साङ्ख्ये योगे च मे तात

O Bhishma, between sankhya and yoga
sāṅkhye yogē ca me tāta

विशेषं वक्तुमर्हसि ।

please tell me what is the difference.
viśeṣaṁ vaktum arhasi

तव सर्वज्ञ सर्वं हि

For you, everything indeed
tava sarvajña sarvaṁ hi

विदितं कुरुसत्तम ॥

is known, O Bhishma.
viditaṁ kurusattama (289.1)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhishma said,
bhīṣma uvāca

साङ्ख्याः साङ्ख्यं प्रशंसन्ति

The followers of sankhya praise sankhya,
sāṅkhyāḥ sāṅkhyam praśamsanti

योगा योगं द्विजातयः |

and the excellent followers of yoga praise yoga.
yogā yogam dvijātayaḥ

वदन्ति कारणैः श्रेष्ठं

They each give reasons that their system is best
vadanti kāraṇaiḥ śraiṣṭhyam

स्वपक्षोद्भावनाय वै ||

to establish its superiority.
svapakṣodbhāvanāya vai (289.2)

प्रत्यक्षहेतवो योगाः

Follower of yoga depend on experience.
pratyakṣa-hetavo yogāḥ

साङ्ख्याः शास्त्रविनिश्चयाः |

Followers of sankhya depend on scripture.
sāṅkhyāḥ śāstra-viniścayāḥ

उभे चैते मते तत्त्वे

Both of these systems
ubhe caite mate tattve

मम तात युधिष्ठिर ||

I accept as true, O Yudhishtira.
mama tāta yudhiṣṭhira (289.7)

रागं मोहं तथा स्नेहं

Passion, delusion, attachment,
rāgam moham tathā sneham

कामं क्रोधं च केवलम् |

desire and anger - only by
kāmam krodham ca kevalam

योगाच्छित्त्वादितो दोषान्

first removing these five defects through yoga
yogāc chittvādito doṣān

पञ्चैतान्प्राप्नुवन्ति तत् ||

can one gain liberation.
pañcāitān prāpnuvanti tat (289.11)

लोभजानि तथा राजन्

O Yudhishtira, born of desire are
lobhajāni tathā rājan

बन्धनानि बलान्विताः |

these strong bindings.
bandhanāni balānvitāḥ

छित्त्वा योगाः परं मार्गं

Removing them, yogis reach the supreme goal,
chittvā yogāḥ param mārgam

गच्छन्ति विमलाः शिवम् ||

pure and auspicious.
gacchanti vimalāḥ śivam (289.14)

दुर्बलश्च यथा राजन्

O Yudhishtira, just as a weak
durbalaś ca yathā rājan

स्रोतसा ह्रियते नरः ।

person is carried away by a current,
srotasā hriyate naraḥ

बलहीनस्तथा योगो

so too, weak yogis
bala-hīnas tathā yogo

विषयैर्ह्रियतेऽवशः ॥

are helplessly carried away by sense objects.
viṣayair hriyate 'vaśaḥ (289.22)

तदेव च यथा स्रोतो

But just as that current -
tad eva ca yathā sroto

विष्टम्भयति वारणः ।

an elephant can withstand,
viṣṭambhayati vāraṇaḥ

तद्वद्योगबलं लब्ध्वा

so too, with the strength of yoga,
tadvad yoga-balaṁ labdhvā

व्यूहते विषयान्बहून् ॥

one can reject all sense objects.
vyūhate viṣayān bahūn (289.23)

अप्रमत्तो यथा धन्वी

Just as an unfailing archer
apramatto yathā dhanvī

लक्ष्यं हन्ति समाहितः ।

with concentration hits the target,
lakṣyaṁ hanti samāhitaḥ

युक्तः सम्यक्तथा योगी

so too, an accomplished yogi
yuktaḥ samyak tathā yogī

मोक्षं प्राप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥

gains liberation, without doubt.
mokṣaṁ prāpnoty asaṁśayam (289.31)

आवेश्यात्मनि चात्मानं

Having merged his mind into atma,
āveśyātmani cātmānaṁ

योगी तिष्ठति योऽचलः ।

a yogi who remains still
yogī tiṣṭhati yo 'calaḥ

आत्मना सूक्ष्ममात्मानं

merges the subtle body with atma
ātmanā sūkṣmam ātmānaṁ

युक्ते सम्यग्विशां पते ॥

completely, O Yudhishtira.
yuñkte samyag viśāṁ pate (289.38,40)

दुर्गस्त्वेष मतः पन्था

This difficult spiritual path
durgas tveṣa mataḥ panthā

ब्राह्मणानां विपश्चिताम् |

of the enlightened brahmanas -
brāhmaṇānām vipaścitām

न कश्चिद्व्रजति ह्यस्मिन्

no one can travel on this path
na kaścid vrajati hy asmin

क्षेमेण भरतर्षभ ||

with ease, O Yudhishthira.

kṣemeṇa bharatarṣabha (289.50)

यथा कश्चिद्वनं घोरं

(That path) is like a frightening forest,
yathā kaścid vanaṁ ghoram

बहुसर्पसरीसृपम् |

with snakes and creeping animals,
bahu-sarpa-sarīsr̥pam

श्वभ्रवत्तोयहीनं च

with deep holes, without water,
śvabhavat toya-hīnam ca

दुर्गमं बहुकण्टकम् ||

difficult to escape, full of thorns.

durgamaṁ bahu-kaṅṭakam (289.51)

सुस्थेयं क्षुरधारासु

It is easy to remain on the
sustheyam kṣura-dhārāsu

निशितासु महीपते |

sharp edge of a razor, O Yudhishthira,
niśitāsu mahīpate

धारणासु तु योगस्य

for a yogi in deep meditation.
dhāraṇāsu tu yogasya

दुःस्थेयमकृतात्मभिः ||

But it is difficult for those who are not accomplished.

duḥstheyam akṛtātmabhiḥ (289.54)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishthira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

सम्यक्तयायं नृपते

O Bhisma, this yoga you have properly
samyak tvayāyaṁ nṛpate

वर्णितः शिष्टसंमतः |

described, just as the wise describe it.
varṇitaḥ śiṣṭa-saṁmataḥ

साङ्ख्ये त्विदानीं कात्स्न्येन

Now, about sankhya, completely
sāṅkhye tvidānīm kārtsnyena

विधिं प्रब्रूहि पृच्छते ||

describe it's method, being asked.
vidhiṁ prabrūhi pṛcchate (290.1,2)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhisma said,
bhīṣma uvāca

शृणु मे त्वमिदं शुद्धं

Listen to me. This pure truth
śṛṇu me tvam idaṁ śuddhaṁ

साङ्ख्यानं विदितात्मनाम् |

of enlightened followers of sankhya
sāṅkhyānāṁ veditātmanām

विहितं यतिभिर्बुद्धैः

was taught by enlightened sages,
vihitaṁ yatibhir buddhaiḥ

कपिलादिभिरीश्वरैः ||

masters like Kapila.
kapilādibhir īśvaraiḥ (290.3)

ज्ञात्वा सत्त्वयुतं देहं

First, understand the body, endowed with mind,
jñātvā sattva-yutaṁ dehaṁ

वृतं षोडशभिर्गुणैः |

having sixteen qualities.
vrtaṁ ṣoḍaśabhir guṇaiḥ

स्वभावं चेतनां चैव

Also, understand consciousness, one's own nature,
svabhāvaṁ cetanām caiva

ज्ञात्वा वै देहमाश्रिते ||

abiding in the body.
jñātvā vai deham āśrite (290.24)

मध्यस्थमेकमात्मानं

(Understand) the one atma dwelling within
madhyastham ekam ātmānaṁ

पापं यस्मिन्न विद्यते |

in which there are no defects.
pāpaṁ yasmin na vidyate

द्वितीयं कर्म विज्ञाय

Secondly, understand the behavior
dvitīyaṁ karma vijñāya

नृपते विषयैषिणाम् ||

of those who desire objects, O Yudhishtira.
nṛpate viṣayaiṣiṇām (290.25)

देहदोषांस्तथा ज्ञात्वा

Understand the problems of the body
deha-doṣāṁs tathā jñātvā

तेषां दुःखं च तत्त्वतः |

and the suffering they cause.
teṣāṁ duḥkhaṁ ca tattvataḥ

आत्मदोषांश्च विज्ञाय

Understand truly all the problems
ātma-doṣāṁś ca vijñāya

सर्वानात्मनि संश्रितान् ||

that are associated with atma.
sarvān ātmani saṁśritān (290.50,51)

गतासूनां च कौन्तेय

O Yudhishtira, of the dead,
gatāsūnāṁ ca kaunteya

देहान्दृष्ट्वा तथाशुभान् |

see their inauspicious bodies.
dehān dr̥ṣṭvā tathāśubhān

वासं कुलेषु जन्तूनां

Of the family members,
vāsaṁ kuleṣu jantūnāṁ

दुःखं विज्ञाय भारत ||

understand their sorrow, O Yudhishtira.
duḥkhaṁ vijñāya bhārata (290.41)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

कान्स्वगात्रोद्भवान्दोषान्

What are those problems born of one's body
kān svagātrodbhavān doṣān

पश्यस्यमितविक्रम |

that you see, O Bhishma.
paśyasy amita-vikrama

एतन्मे संशयं कृत्स्नं

All my doubts about this
etan me saṁśayaṁ kṛtsnaṁ

वक्तुमर्हसि तत्त्वतः ||

you should dispel with the truth.
vaktum arhasi tattvataḥ (290.52)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhishma said,
bhīṣma uvāca

पञ्च दोषान्प्रभो देहे

O Yudhishtira, five problems in the body
pañca doṣān prabho dehe

प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः |

are described by the wise
pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ

मार्गज्ञाः कापिलाः साङ्ख्याः

knowers of the path, followers of Kapila's sankhya.
mārga-jñāḥ kāpilāḥ sāṅkhyāḥ

शृणु तानरिसूदन ||

Listen to them, O Yudhishtira.
śṛṇu tān ari-sūdana (290.53)

कामक्रोधौ भयं निद्रा

Desire, anger, fear, sleep,
kāma-krodhau bhayaṁ nidrā

पञ्चमः श्वास उच्यते |

and breath, the fifth, it is called.
pañcamaḥ śvāsa ucyate

एते दोषाः शरीरेषु

These problems, in the bodies
ete doṣāḥ śarīreṣu

दृश्यन्ते सर्वदेहिनाम् ||

of all people are seen.
dṛśyante sarva-dehinām (290.54)

साङ्ख्या राजन्महाप्राज्ञास्

O Yudhishtira, the wise follower of sankhya
sāṅkhyā rājan mahā-prājñās

त्यक्त्वा देहं प्रजाकृतम् |

reject the body, the personal form,
tyaktvā dehaṁ prajākṛtam

छित्त्वाशु ज्ञानशस्त्रेण

quickly severing it with the sword of knowledge
chitvāśu jñāna-śastreṇa

तपोदण्डेन भारत ||

and the stick of austerities, O Yudhishtira.
tapo-daṇḍena bhārata (290.59,60)

शोकतृष्णामहावर्तं

...with a big whirlpool of sorrow and desire,
śoka-trṣṇā-mahāvartam

तीक्ष्णव्याधिमहागजम् |

with a bit elephant of intense pain,
tīkṣṇa-vyādhi-mahā-gajam

तमःकूर्मं रजोमीनं

with turtles of lethargy, with fish of passion --
tamaḥ-kūrmaṁ rajo-mīnaṁ

प्रज्ञया सन्तरन्त्युत ||

by means of wisdom, one can escape it.
prajñayā santaranty uta (290.64,62)

ततो दुःखोदकं घोरं

In this way, the waters of terrible suffering
tato duḥkhodakam ghoraṁ

चिन्ताशोकमहाहृदम् |

in the big lake of worry and sadness,
cintā-śoka-mahā-hradam

व्याधिमृत्युमहाग्राहं

with big crocodiles of illness and death,
vyādhi-mṛtyu-mahā-grāhaṁ

महाभयमहोरगम् ||

with big snakes of great fear ...
mahā-bhaya-mahoragam (290.61)

तरन्ति मुनयः सिद्धा

Accomplished sages escape it
taranti munayaḥ siddhā

ज्ञानयोगेन भारत |

by gaining spiritual wisdom, O Yudhishtira.
jñāna-yogena bhārata

तीर्त्वा च दुस्तरं जन्म

Escaping the entrapment of this life,
tīrtvā ca dustaram janma

विशन्ति विमलं नभः ||

they enter the pure space (of liberation).
viśanti vimalam nabhaḥ (290.69)

साङ्ख्या राजन्महाप्राज्ञा

O Yudhishtira, the wise followers of sankhya
sāṅkhyā rājan mahā-prājñā

गच्छन्ति परमां गतिम् ।

reach the supreme goal
gacchanti paramāṁ gatim

ज्ञानेनानेन कौन्तेय

through this knowledge, O Yudhishtira.
jñānenānena kaunteya

तुल्यं ज्ञानं न विद्यते ॥

There is knowledge equal to this.
tulyaṁ jñānaṁ na vidyate (290.95)