

FOREWORD

It is a matter of no small satisfaction to me to see an English rendering of the Pātañjala Yogadarśana or the Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali as presented by my revered Āchārya, the late Sāṃkhya-Yogāchārya Śrīmat Swāmi Hariharānanda Āraṇya. It was an object of great regret with him that in the later years of his life he could not arrange for this great task for which he was getting repeated requests. His exposition of the subject in Bengali bears remarkable impress of his genius as well as evidence of realisation of the subtle principles which constitute the basis of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy. This philosophy, propounded at an age when writing had not been invented, and when sacred learning was orally transmitted from master to pupil, was naturally very concise and depended for its clear exposition on the mental conception of those to whom it was communicated. A good deal thus depended on the comprehension of the principles enunciated in the form of aphorisms, to achieve which intense study and strict habits of life were essential. With the passage of time, these became scarce and so the ancient lore would have become extinct had it not been kept alive by the commentaries of subsequent thinkers. With the advent of modern age, such thinkers also became few and far between, except for the rare appearance of a savant who would go into voluntary exile and devote his life to assimilate those ancient doctrines leading to the transcendental goal.

The treatise on Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy as framed by Patañjali, is divided into four parts : (i) On concentration, (ii) On Practice, (iii) On Supernormal Powers, and (iv) On Isolation. Although extremely condensed and appearing as detached, there is an underlying logical continuity through the aphorisms and the four different parts, which makes them a complete and broadbased structure. That is why this philosophy has successfully withstood the onslaught of time and still continues to infuse spiritual inspiration and show the unerring path of salvation.

Though it is called Yoga Philosophy the terms Darśana and philosophy are not exactly synonymous. Yoga Darśana is not a general theoretical dissertation on mental science, like what is meant by philosophy. Its theme is to ascertain the aim of life by finding out the *ultima thule* of human desires, to discover the root cause of all sorts of afflictions and then to prescribe the supreme remedy. It is noticeable how that has been done in a perfectly scientific way thus making it