

SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ANCIENT INDIA

Dr. Surabhi Verma
Assistant Professor
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
National Institute of Technology
Rourkela, Odisha.
8054151391, 9161164203
vermasurabhi33@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

Consciousness¹ is the subject about which whatever can be said or explored, will remain fractions of achievement from the point of view of sciences. Today although a lot of researches are going on to understand more & more about Consciousness still Consciousness is as mystical as the nature of electron. Actually the methodology of investigation in science which was focused on the pure empirical method in which the observer was separated from the complete procedure of investigation, now is becoming changed, and it has been accepted to consider the participation and effect of the observer in the investigation because it is “*Consciousness*”. Nothing can be visualized or understood until the observer to observe is not present. Thus observer² has its effect and the only thing which can justify the phenomenon is the original nature of observer which is “Consciousness”. That is the main reason why electron changes its nature according to the experimental setup.

India has been a landmark in the field of achievements not only in the field of spirituality and ethical values but also in sciences, medicine and ancient technological variants like *Vimānaśāstra* etc. Indian Seers have laid the most important principle “*Yat pinde tat brahmāṇde*”, which establishes that whatever constitutes our body, the same constituents create the universe. So our own body is the laboratory to investigate the mystical aspects of creation. Thus they established all the knowledge process in a single exploration of “*knowing thyself*”. This knowing of oneself through one’s own body as a means or instrument and laboratory, is the process of Yoga. The Consciousness in gross body channelizes the energy to focus on more subtle and subtler aspects through yoga. In this process one comes to realize that his/her appearance is just a manifestation of Consciousness and through yoga this manifestation becomes reversed. The gross body of all the creatures is the manifestation and representation of Consciousness. Through yoga, Consciousness in gross forms traverses back journey towards Pure Consciousness to realize its own nature.

A. UPANIṢADIC CONCEPT:

In *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣada*³, Consciousness has been elaborately described as having 'four' steps with representation of the 'three' deviations. The third step and first deviation is the state of Deep Sleep (*Suṣupti*), the second step as well as deviation is Dreaming State (*Svapna*) and the first step; third deviation is Wakened State (*Jāgrata*). The *fourth* step is Consciousness itself in its "pure form" which has been denoted as 'Turīya' or 'Caturtha'.

B. CONCEPT OF PĀTAÑJALA YOGA :

Yoga Philosophy supports *tattvamimāmsa* of *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy. *Sāṃkhya* system is a dualistic school of Indian philosophy which categorizes 25 elements of creation among which two are principle elements known as *Prakṛti* (primordial, un-manifested matter) and *Puruṣa* (Consciousness). *Puruṣa* is conscious, inactive and attribute less (*nirguṇa*). In contrast *Prakṛti* is devoid of consciousness. *Prakṛti* is the un-manifested primordial matter - the evolvent of all that is manifested and evolved. The first evolute of *Prakṛti* is *Mahat* or *Buddhi*. Its product is *ahaṃkāra*. The five sense organs, five action organs and *manas* are produced from *ahaṃkāra* when *sattva* is dominant. The five *tanmātrās* are also produced from *ahaṃkāra* when *tamas* is dominant. The five gross states of matter are produced from *tanmātrās*, each subtle state gives rise to each gross state. Yoga philosophy considers the same two principal elements in the name of *Citi* (*puruṣa*) and *Citta* (*prakṛti*). Although yoga accepts the metaphysics of *Sāṃkhya* but unlike *Sāṃkhya*, it accepts the concept of 'Īśvara'. This dualistic system of Indian philosophy considers *citi* as Pure Consciousness. Acc. to this system, *Citi*⁴ is changeless, passive, viewer of the objects, pure (devoid of the three kinds of *guṇas*), and without limits. *Citta* is trigonic in nature i.e. composed of three principle elements *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. (*cittaṃ hi prakhyāpravṛttisthitiślatvāt triṅgaṃ -Pātañjalayogadarśanam, pg. 9*). *Sattva* is *prakāśaka* and *laghu* responsible for lightening the objects. *Rajas* is responsible for all the actions. *Tamas* is responsible for stability and heaviness. Scientifically *Sattva* can be compared as harmony in the particles, *Rajas* as mobility & *Tamas* as inertia but can't be superimposed. The *citta* is constantly modifiable, unless restrained, whereas *citi* is ever unmodifiable. *Citta* functions under the effect of its constituents i.e. the three *guṇas*-*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Because of being devoid of consciousness, *buddhi* cannot catch the shape of the objects. When the pure consciousness gets reflected in the non conscious *citta* (*buddhi*), *citta* serves as the mirror and pure consciousness forms its image, this image is said to be as Reflected consciousness (*pratibimbita caitanya*) and the phenomenon is known as of "Reflection" (*pratibimbana*). Reflected consciousness is not the same as the pure consciousness because it

becomes changed due to the properties of the mirror i.e. *citta*. Along with that the mirror also gets changed. It starts behaving like conscious one. The functioning of *citta* is responsible for the functioning of reflected consciousness because reflected consciousness is strongly attached with *citta* and they are inseparable from each other. *Pātañjala yoga sūtra* describes this relationship between *citta* and *Reflected consciousness* by stating that the reflected consciousness gets attached strongly to *citta* same as that of iron and magnet. The reason⁵ behind this kind of attachment is the eternal relationship of *puruṣa* to the mental modifications (*citta vṛtti*). This Reflected Consciousness strongly entangled with the *citta* performs all the internal and external activities. In the effect of *Tamas*, *Citta* becomes attracted towards *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairagya* and *anaiśvarya*. At this time there is suppression of *Sattva* and excess of *Tamas*. In the effect of *Rajas*, *Citta* becomes attracted towards *dharmā*, *jñāna*, *vairagya* and *aiśvarya*. At this time *Sattva* shows its effect but hindered by *Rajas*. In the effect of *Sattva*, (*Prakhyarūpa*) Lightened *Citta* becomes attracted towards achievements & external objects. In this phase there is priority of *Sattva* while *Rajas* & *Tamas* reside in equal proportions.

▪ SEQUENTIAL DISSOLUTION OF GROSSNESS

The reflected consciousness present in all the gross forms transcends back to the Pure Consciousness step by step. This journey is just the reversal of manifestation. Yoga becomes the means of journey because in yoga, each aspect of the gross form gets trained in different stages of yoga. The word ‘yoga’ comes from ‘*yuj*’; that means “*yujir yogē: to add*” and “*yuj samadhaū: Samadhi*.” The main purpose of yoga is to stop the fluctuations of mind. Yoga is well known as “*Astāṅga Yoga*” of *Patañjali*. This category of *yoga* has been described for the third cadre of common people who are restricted in the *vṛtti* cycle strongly. *Patañjali* has described a second category of yoga also which is of “*Kriyā Yoga*”. This second category is helpful for the persons of second cadre while he states that the first kind or *uttam koti* persons are able to overcome the bonds by birth. *Astāṅga Yoga* consists of eight parts among which *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Praṇāyāma*, and *Pratyahāra* are *five* External Parts and *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* are *three* Internal Parts. But this externality and internality is relative. All the parts are External to *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* (Supra-conscious ecstasy) because of the absence of all of them at that level. So the realization of Pure Consciousness is the complete purpose of *yoga*. At the peak, the reflected consciousness reaches the point of no return i.e. liberation from the cycle of actions and all the three types of sufferings. The reflected consciousness abides in perfect “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) which is a trans-mental state of Pure Awareness.

“*Kevalibhāva eva kaivalyam*”.

In the state of *Samādhi*, the flow of Energy becomes bi-directional i.e. *yogī* reaches in a state of submerging with that Pure consciousness. At this level all the knowable becomes known, all understandable becomes understood and all the achievements got achieved. Thus the journey of Reflected Consciousness comes to an end and it achieves its Goal.

C. CONCEPT OF KĀŚMĪRA ŚAIVISM:

Kāśmīra Śaivism considers 36 principle elements, three and five fundamental infinite powers of *Parama Śiva*⁶, three *malas*, *Pañcakañcukas of Māyā* (the 6-th principle element), three *upāyas* etc to describe the complete creation as well as for the recognition. Here Pure Consciousness or *Parama Śiva* is described as *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa*, *Prakāśa* form is self luminous and illuminates everything while *Vimarśa* form is differential form of different manifestations. *Parama Śiva* manifests every gross and subtle form within himself at his own will and becomes trapped into the sheath of binding constituents to become delimited reflection. Five *Kañcukas of Māyā* and three *malas* delimit three and five fundamental infinite powers of *Parama Śiva*, thus Pure Consciousness (*Parama Śiva*) who is the holder of *Sarvakartṛtva*, *Sarvijnātṛtva*, *Pūrṇatṛptitva*, *Nityatva* and *Svātantraya śakti* becomes converted into “*Kincita*” or delimited “*Samśāri*”. So each and every possible subtlest particle is also a manifestation of Pure Consciousness. A so called non living or a dead material is also a manifested form of Pure One with maximally delimited existence. Acc. to this philosophy, the 36 *tattvas* or fundamental principles out of which the whole creation has evolved are divided into three main groups:

1. *Śuddha-tattva*,
2. *Śuddha-aśuddha-tattva*
3. *Aśuddha-tattva*.

<p>➤ The <i>Śuddha-tattvas</i> (pure principles) are five:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Śiva-tattva</i>, 2. <i>Śakti-tattva</i>, 3. <i>SadaŚiva-tattva</i>, 4. <i>Īvara-tattva</i> 5. <i>Śuddha-vidyā-tattva</i>. 	<p>➤ The <i>Śuddha-aśuddha-tattvas</i> are six:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Māyā</i> 2. <i>Kāla</i> 3. <i>Niyati</i> 4. <i>Rāga</i> 5. <i>Vidyā</i> 6. <i>Kalā</i> 	<p>➤ The <i>Aśuddha-tattvas</i> are twenty-five :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Puruṣa-tattva</i> 2. <i>Prakṛti-tattva</i> 3. <i>Buddhi</i> 4. <i>Ahaṃkāra</i> 5. <i>Manas</i> 6. <i>Five jñanendriyās</i> 7. <i>Five karmendriyās</i>
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		8. <i>Five tanmātrās</i> 9. <i>Five bhūtas.</i>
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Tantrāloka has explained five levels of manifestation of Consciousness primarily (*“Jāgrata svapnaḥ suṣuptaṃ ca turyaṃ ca tadatītakaṃ, Iti pañca padānyābuh ekasmin vedake sati.”* -*Tantrāloka* 10/228) -

- a) Jāgrata
- b) Svapna
- c) Suṣupti
- d) Turīya
- e) Turīyātīta

Tantrāloka also describes six Secondary Stages of Consciousness.

- a) Bhrānti
- b) Mada
- c) Murchā
- d) Unmāda
- e) Ardha Murchā
- f) Surādika Pāna Janya

Spandakārikā states that the same Pure Consciousness flows in all the states of manifestation (*“Jāgradādivibhedeṣpi tasabhinne prasarpati, Nivartate nijānnaiva svabhāvādupalabdhṛtaḥ.”* .3.)

Spandakārikāvivṛtti states that despite of different stages of manifestation, the manifestor or Pure Consciousness remains the same and it is the self-experience of all of us. The difference of I-ness is due to Binding Constituents of Māyā. It is not in manifestation’s realness (*tātvika*).

(*“Avasthābhedeṣpi upalabdhṛlakṣaṇasya avasthātuḥ abhedah, iti sarvasya atra svānubhavaḥ pramāṇam”* -

Spandakārikāvivṛtti of *vRāmakaṇṭhācārya*). *Vijñānabhairava* suggests yogi to maintain the attitude of

feeling the same flow of Pure Consciousness in self and all others to achieve ‘Śivahood’.

(*“Svavadanyaśarireṣpi samvittimanubhāvayet, apekṣām svaśarīrasya tyaktva vyāpi dinairbhavet.”* 107).

▪ THE THEORY OF REFLECTION

The principle doctrines of Kāśmīra Śaivism are *Abhāsavaāda*, *Svātantryavāda* and *Bimba-Pratibimbavāda*. Śaiva philosophy considers that *parama śiva* reflects the whole universe from within himself on his own wall at his own will through his *svāntrya śakti*. In *Pratyabhijñā* School,

this theory is called as “*Bimba Pratibimbavāda*” and can be roughly translated as Reflection Theory. The reflection or image always appears as different from its object. This Reflection or Image is devoid of self power and it appears admixed with the particles of the medium like water, glass etc. The mirror gives its properties to the image. So the image never has the same properties as the object. This is the main reason why the image of the sun in the water becomes soothing to the eyes while the sun is not. Existence of the image is dependent upon the object. For the reflection phenomenon the presence of the object is considerable but the root cause of the reflection is the source of light. Thus in the context of śaiva philosophy consciousness is self powered for the reflection of consciousness in itself and the object is not necessary condition for reflection rather it can be considered that Consciousness is the mirror, consciousness is the object and consciousness is the image (reflection) itself.

▪ **THE FIVE KAÑCUKAS AND THREE MALAS:**

Acc. to śaiva ontology, Māyā, the sixth element in the creation has five coverings of limiting constituents. These five limiting constituents are Kalā, Vidyā, Rāga, Niyati and Kāla. These constituents are responsible for the limitation of powers of *Parama Śiva* and to create *jīva* or *saṃsārī*. These can be defined as:

i. **Kalā:**

Kalā⁷ is the first creation of Māyā. The word kalā comes from the root “*kala*” which means *gamana, kṣepaṇa, jñāna, gaṇanā, ākalana, prāpti* etc. Thus the power of *kalana* is known as Kalā. Māyā delimits the Pure Consciousness and *Kalā* provides a limited range of “Doer-ship” to the Pure Consciousness. *Kalā* is related with Consciousness just like a sponsor rather than a means because it transcends the reflected consciousness from the bonds of Māyā where reflected consciousness gets released from the bonds and reaches at the state of *Vijñānakala*.

“*Seyaṃ kalā na karaṇaṃ mukhyaṃ vidyādikam yathā,*

Punsi kartari sā kartri prayojakatayā yataḥ.” (*Tantrāloka*, ch. 6, pg 183)

Kalā is of five types:

1. **Nivṛtti Kalā:** It is the lowest *Kalā*. It occupies 16 *bhuvana*. It consists of *Ṗṛthavi* constituent. From this level *kalyitrī śakti* stops and reverses back because the creation stops further, so, it is known as *Nivṛtti Kalā*.

2. **Pratiṣṭhā Kalā:** It contains 23 constituents from *Prakṛti to Jala* (5 senses, 5 actions, 5 *tanmātrās*, 5 *mahābhūtas*, *mahat*, *ahaṃkāra* and *Prakṛti*). It occupies 56 *bhuvans*. It has two main properties – one is *āpyāyana* and the other is *pūraṇa*. This *kalā* fulfils the emptiness (*abhāva*) and gives rise to differentiation.

3. **Vidyā Kalā:** It contains 7 constituents from *Puruṣa to Māyā* (*Puruṣa*, *Mayā*, *kalā*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *niyati*, *kāla*). It occupies 28 *bhuvans*. It is termed as *Vidyā kalā* because it is the knower of delimitation. Here the dissolution of knowable occurs. *Jagat* is knowable. When this world becomes dissolved, the luminosity of pure consciousness is more but impurity still remains.

4. **Śāntā Kalā:** It contains 3 constituents- *Śuddha Vidyā*, *Īśvara* and *Sadāśiva*. It occupies 18 *bhuvans*.

5. **Śāntātīta Kalā:** It contains 2 constituents – *Śiva* and *Śakti*. It does not have any *bhuvana*.

ii. Vidyā:

Due to the delimitation of *Māyā*, the omniscience of the Pure Consciousness becomes delimited. So the sheath of *vidyā*⁸ provides the limited science to the Consciousness. Thus reflected consciousness becomes occupied with limited knowledge.

iii. Rāga:

The Pure Consciousness has complete satisfaction so there is no attachment. But once *Māyā* over shields the consciousness, it becomes delimited to the lack of satisfaction. So *Rāga*⁹ becomes the cause to create luring of worldly pleasures and things and increasing appetite for more and more belongings as well as it creates attachments to the conserved and accumulated things and this tendency leads the consciousness to be entrapped into the bonds of *Māyā* more strongly due to rotating cycle of karma.

iv. Niyati:

*Niyati*¹⁰ creates the delimitation of “*Svātantraya śakti*” of pure consciousness. This creates the sense of having a very limited degree of freedom in performing and achieving the things. So the reflected consciousness becomes a performer of limited freedom.

v. Kāla:

Kāla is delimited eternality of Pure Consciousness. Because of this binding constituent each and every reflected consciousness forgets its real nature of “eternal ship” and makes the time sects of life and death. Once the pure consciousness becomes bind into the sheath of *Kāla*, it forgets its omnipresence. The reflected consciousness joins and understands everything related with the

mass or the gross body which dies and takes birth. This constituent is responsible for the sectorial divisions in which the consciousness travels or we can say that it appears to the consciousness that it travels but in Pure Consciousness these sects are nothing. This constituent must be understood deeply to understand the phenomenon of precognition because the consciousness which is in its real nature is omnipresent and can know each and everything. There becomes no question of whether it can have vision of past, present and future, or not because in Pure Consciousness these sects are totally assumptions of delimited form of consciousness.

Three *malas* are *Āṇava*, *Kārma* and *Māyīya*. *Āṇava mala* delimits *Icchā śakti*, *Kārma mala* delimits *kriyā śakti* and *Māyīya mala* delimits *Jñāna śakti*. Thus Reflected Consciousness becomes holder of delimited *Icchā*, *Jñāna* and *kriyā*.

▪ THE THEORY OF LIMITATION AND RECOGNITION:

The theory of limitation explains how Pure Consciousness of infinite attributes becomes Reflected Consciousness of finite ones and the theory of Recognition explains how this limited reflected Consciousness recognizes its own real form of infinite attributes. Kāśmīra Śaivism explains that Pure Consciousness and Reflected Consciousness both possess same fundamental functions of *Sriṣṭi*, *sthitī*, *saṃghāra*, *anugrah* and *tirobbhāva*, and both perform them continuously because these are their *Svabhāva*. This *Svabhāva* becomes the base for the realization and recognition for the reflected consciousness to “*know thyself*”. Kāśmīra Śaivism establishes that the means of cognition or *pramānas* are not sufficient to know the real nature of supreme one because no-one can cross one’s own shadow by one’s own feet. All the possible *pramānas* are not sufficient for complete process of Recognition. So *Kāśmīra Śaivism* describes three *upāyas* i.e. *Āṇava*, *Śākta* and *Śāmbhava* for Yogic practices to achieve ultimate goal.

CONCLUSION:

Consciousness has been dealt in Indian Philosophy as the highest and lowest, grossest and subtlest, in all the possible orientations. *Kāśmīra Śaivism* explains the holistic view of consciousness and provides answers to all the questions of existence, life or death very beautifully. Yoga Philosophy has given us an indication of marvelous path of yoga to realize, recognize and attain the infinite through the use of finite. All the knowledge treasures from *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Darśana* have established that the Pure form is beyond the descriptive language and is only a subject of self realization and recognition. (“*anubhavastu antyaṃ pramāṇam.*”). This is the reason that Indian system and culture totally channelizes the mind to the path of self realization in all its practices whether they are *pūja*, *japa*, *dāna* or *tapa*; and these

are incarnated deeply in the life of common people in the form of different festivals and practices. The path of this is as much as followed by the Indian mass, none other so called materialistic instrumental methodologies will be able to investigate or direct. The only need is to understand the heights of knowledge hidden inside of them; perhaps then we will be able to acknowledge the wonderful mystics of consciousness in our own self.

REFERENCES:

¹ Consciousness is the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has been defined as: subjectivity, awareness, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind. At macroscopic scale, the Consciousness is the whole Energy of the universe, that was explained by Einstein in his $E=mc^2$; while at a microscopic level it is the energy (e) present in each and every creature whether it is living object or a dead particle.

-Yoga: A Journey of Reflected Consciousness Towards Pure Consciousness, By Surabhi Verma, Pub: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, ISSN: 2277-7881, Vol. 1, Issue 6, Dec. 2012, pg. no. 192.

² Einstein once said, "Intellect limits us to the immediate perception of an external reality, imagination embraces the whole cosmos, and intuition links the human feelings with life forces." As a whole, total existence is Pure Consciousness, it is the product of summation of Human consciousness and rest of all. An observation is not complete unless our consciousness has participated in it.

"The moon does not shine if there is no one to watch it."

-Yoga: A Journey of Reflected Consciousness Towards Pure Consciousness, By Surabhi Verma, Pub: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, ISSN: 2277-7881, Vol. 1, Issue 6, Dec. 2012, pg. no. 195.

³ *'Sarvam hi etat brahma ayamātmā brahma .1.
so Śyamātmā catuṣyāt .2.
jāgaritasthāno bahiṣprajñāḥ saptāṅgaekonaviṃśatimukhaḥ sthūlabhugvaiśvānaraḥ prathamāḥ pādaḥ .3.
svapnaprasthāno ṣṭaḥprajñāḥ saptāṅgaekonaviṃśatimukhaḥ praviviktabhuk taijasa dvitīyāḥ pādaḥ .4.
yat supto na kancana kāmam kāmāyate na kancana svapanam paśyati tatsusuptam.
susuptasthāna ekībhūtaḥ prajñānaghana evānandamayo hṛyānandabhuk cetomukhaḥ prājñastṛtīyāḥ pādaḥ .5.'*

⁴ *"citiśaktiraparināminyapratīsamkramā darśitaviśayā śuddhā cānantā ca."*

⁵ *"cittamayaskāntamaṇikalpaṃ sannidhimātropkāri dṛśyatvena svaṃ bhavati puruṣasya svāmināḥ. Tasmāt cittavṛttibodhe puruṣasya anādisambandho hetuḥ. 4. (Pātañjalayogasūtra)"*

⁶ *"yadā svasmin hṛdayaprakāśasvarūpa eva ātmani tiṣṭhati, tadā vimrśaḥ śuddho vimarśaḥ eva ityevaṃ vyavhṛiyate, yadā tu vikalpopleṣaṇa lakṣaṇa kṣobhamanubhavati, tadā viśva vistāraḥ prapañcasphuraṇavaicitrayātmā vimarśa iti."*
(Mahārtha mañjari, pg. 34)

"Sṛjantī bahirviśvamantaśca samvit parā devtāhaṃ parāmarśarūpā." (Rahasyapañcadaśikā, pg. 25)

"Ābhātameva bijāderābhāsāddhetuvastunaḥ." (Iśvarapratyabhijñā, 1.1.8)

"Jñānam vimarśānuprāṇitam vimarśa eva ca kriyati." (Iśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī, 2. pg.215)

⁷ *"Mayātatvāt kalā jātā kincit kartṛtva lakṣaṇā" (Tantrāloka, ch. 6, pg 176)*

⁸ *"Asya śūnyāderjadasya vidyā kincitjñātvonmilanarūpā buddhidarpaṇasankrāntabhāvarāśim nīlasukhādiṃ vivinakti."*

(Iśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī, 2. pg.237)

⁹ *"Ityarāthe-bhiṣvangerūpā pramātarī dehādu prameye ca guṇādyāropaṇamāya eva rāgo vyāpriyate."*

(Iśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī, 2. pg.238)

¹⁰ "Niyatirniyojanāṃ dhatte viśiṣṭe kāryamaṇḍale."

(Tantrāloka, ch. 6, pg 160)

"Atraiva kasmādabhiṣvaṅga ityayamartho niyatyā niyamyate iti."

(Iśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī, 2. pg.238)

"Yasya Svātantryākhyā śaktiḥ saṃkocaśālinī saiva,

krpā kṛtyeṣvaśaṃ niyatamamuṃ niyamāyantyabhūnniyatiḥ."

(ṣadatriṃśat tattva saṃdoh, pg. 12)