



Research Paper

Mind: Through the Lens of Some Schools of Indian Philosophy and Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT:

We know mind is swifter than wind. The concept of manas (mind) is commonly seen as one key issue in Indian Philosophy. The term 'manas' means 'to think' derived from the root 'man'. The concept has a gradual development in Indian Philosophy. We can classify them into three groups such as materialistic view, psychic view and spiritualistic view. Here, an attempt has been made to highlight the concept of manas in Nyaya-Vaisesika Darshan, Vedanta Darshan and Ayurveda in a nutshell. Both Orthodox and Heterodox systems discussed mind in their own standpoint. Some are in opinion that mind is atomic in dimension whereas other holds that it is all pervasive, i.e., vibhu. It is a subject widely studied under various disciplines such as Philosophy, Religion, Psychology and Cognitive Science.

KEYWORDS: Mind, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Vedanta, Ayurveda, Indian Philosophy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The nature of mind and the nature of its constituents have been agitating the minds of people for a long time. There have been explanations but none that meets the situation completely. The whole literature on the subject in the west gives diverse points of view each conflicting with the other. The basic difficulty may arise because of the fact that all these thinkers differentiate mind from the body on the one hand and equate mind with the self on the other hand. Indian Philosophers from the very beginning avoided pitfall by recognizing mind or manas as something distinct from the self, though partaking of its nature as intelligence through association with it. It is a subject widely studied under various disciplines such as Philosophy, Religion, Psychology and Cognitive Science. In layman's sense, mind is attributed to thought or if we go by dictionary it is that part of a person which makes it possible for him or her to think, feel, emotion or understand things or it is element of a person that enables them to be aware of the World and their experiences to think and to feel, the faculty consciousness and thought.

In the Upanishads, the word used for mind are manas, prajna, sankalpa and chitta. The quintessence of mind is not consciousness but it is a subtle form of matter and like the body it is made of matter. The mind is also said to be two-fold, i.e. pure and impure. The impure mind is driven by desire and volition, the pure mind is devoid of desire.

We know the system of Indian Philosophy are divided into two broad classes, namely, Orthodox and Heterodox. Under Orthodox, there are six schools, namely, Nyaya, Vaisesikas, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimansa and Vedanta. Under the Heterodox, there are three schools, namely, Charvaka, Bouddha and Jaina.

Among three Heterodox schools, the Charavakas are materialist and do not recognize the reality of the soul and God. According to them, mind is a by-product of body and consciousness is the end result of mind, at death body disintegrates and so does the mind and consciousness. Mind is not an organ of knowledge but it only regulates the sensations, which in turn leads to perception. The Buddhists are phenomenalist and accept the reality of phenomena, change and impermanence. According to them, soul is mind-body complex. There are four schools of Buddhism namely, Vaibhyasikas, the Sautrantikas, the Yogacaras and Madhyamikas. The first two believe in the reality of external World. Yogacaras are subjective idealist, they hold that there are external objects, they are nothing but cognition of the percipient mind which itself is a stream of consciousness. The Madhyamika hold that there are neither external objects nor internal cognitions. The Jainas are dualist, they believe in the reality of souls and non-souls. They attribute all mental activities such as cognition, affection and conation to the self or jiva (soul). Manas has only limited function to perform.

Furthermore, we can also mention that in Orthodox system, the psychology of Samkhya school falls under two heads: a) Instruments of knowledge and b) Functions of each instrument. The instrument of

knowledge are Antahkarna consisting of intellect (buddhi), ego (ahamkara), the inner sense (manas) and the five external senses of ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. The function of manas is said to be samkalpa. There are two meanings of Samkalpa. The manas confirms to the nature of a sense of knowledge and that of an organ of action being involved in the functions of both. The function of manas is vikalpa i.e., doubt about the nature of an object whether it is this or that. In connection with the later the function of manas is Samkalpa i.e., desire to do something. The function of senses of knowledge is to get knowledge of an object, it is mere acquaintance with their appropriate object. The more definite and articulate knowledge of the objects involving that of their name, class etc. is regarded as being due to intellect after the manas has performed its function of doubting.

Yoga is predominately a psychological philosophy. It is a science of mental discipline for attaining the highest state i.e., samadhi. The ultimate aim of yoga is complete freedom from the mind and its modification i.e. vrittis. In Yoga Philosophy, mind is called chitta. The word 'chitta' is derived from the root 'cit' which means 'to know'. Chitta is used in yoga system to mean the entire knowing mechanism. It has three chief aspects with distinct functions to perform namely, manas, ahamkara and buddhi. Buddhi is the capacity for illumination, determination and certainty. Ahamkara is an ego principle. It arrogates to itself the experiences held by the manas and passes it onto a buddhi to be determined. Manas is the directing power behind all action. It possesses the capacity of attention, selection etc. It synthesizes the discrete manifold of the sensations. It can perceive but cannot conceive as does buddhi.

Mimamsa school admits that man consist of physical body, sense organ, mind, consciousness and soul. Manas is an internal organ through which the apprehension of the sense organs and also pleasure, pain, cognition and other qualities of self are perceived. The mind is not atomic in dimension as the Nyaya-Vaisesika maintains. It is all pervasive i.e., vibhu. It is an intangible substance which is neither an effect nor cause of anything else.

NYAYA-VAISESIKA:

Both Nyaya and Vaisesika are allied system, but Nyaya system is called pramana shastra, tarka shastra or anvikshiwereas the Vaisesika School is known for its metaphysics and cosmology. In these systems, the concept of existence of manas is aptly highlighted. Manas is one of the nine karana dravyas. According to Nyaya, mind is an organ for attaining knowledge. Vaisesika Philosophy also opines that all type of knowledge is gained by manas directly or indirectly. It gets the report of the sense organs and carries it to the atman. According to Chakrapani, Abhidhiyate itself indicates that it is a definition of manas. It contains two parts i.e. the entity which establishes a contact of atman or jiva with spriikasharira and the entity which carries out control and coordination of indriya i.e. manas can be defined as bridge or connecting entity between soul and soma. Mind or manas cannot carry out multiple functions of perceptions at a time. All perceptions occur one by one which is the characteristics of manas. Manas is having property of anu and it is not vibhu. If the mind was possessed of magnitude, it could come in contact with many senses at a time. Since, this is not possible, mind is atomic in size. Manas is also an organ of attention and it attains to one thing at a time in quick succession giving rise to a stream of thought or attention which appears to be one continuous act of attention or stream of consciousness. There are eight qualities of manas namely, partva, apartva, samkhyā, parimiti, prthakatva, samyoga, vibhaga and vega. Nyaya believes that manas is a single and subtle entity. It also apprehends internal states of pleasure, pain, jealousy, anger etc. According to Nyaya darshan, Smṛti is the result of the trade-off of internal impressions produced by the union of experiences of soul and mind. Smṛti is a special function when it comes in contact with atma attach with manas, having samskara of the previous knowledge. Nyaya darshan describes that concentration is achieved by contact between atma and manas in a special mode and time. In Nyaya Philosophy manas is included under the object of valid knowledge (prameya). Manas is antarindriya which perceives sukha, dukkha, sankalpa (i.e. determination), vikalpa (i.e. option), cintana (i.e. thinking), vichara (i.e. consideration) and tarka (i.e. hypothesis of the mind). Manas is dravya. It is neither produced during shrishti or creation nor destroyed in pralaya or dissolution. Therefore, Nyaya-Vaisesika School of thought consider manas as to be nitya.

VEDANTA:

The advaita concept of mind directly follows from the main principles of Advaita Metaphysics. The Advaita system admits a single reality which is called Brahma. This single absolute reality is identified with pure consciousness. The Advaita vedantis admit a very strict criterion of reality on the advaita view and entity is said to be real, if it is not falsifiable at any point of time i.e. past, present and future. They establish this criterion by refuting the other criteria of reality prevalent in classical India. Since, pure consciousness is devoid of all properties and is changeless, the internal states such as cognition, pleasure, pain, etc. cannot be properties of the self, which is identical with pure consciousness. So, the Advaita vedantis regard these states as transformation of the mind. This thesis is supported by the scriptures, Kamah Samkalpo Vicikitsa Sradha, Sradha Dhrtiradhrtir - Hirdhirbhirityetat Sarvam Mana Eva (Bṛhadāraṇyokapaniṣat, 1.5.3). For this reason, they consider the mind to be a composite substance. In this context it is noted that Advaita vedantis differ among themselves regarding the

issue: is the mind a sense organ? The Bhamati school consider the mind to be the internal sense organ but the Vivarana school does not adhere to this thesis. In fact, the mind is admitted as a sense organ primarily to account for the perception of the internal states, such as cognition, pleasure, pain, etc. Advaita vedantis adhere to an entirely different conception of perception. This conception is intimately connected to the Metaphysics and Epistemology of Advaita system. Mind plays a vital role in Advaita Epistemology. Pure consciousness even though all pervasive does not have any relation with object. Besides any object is an evaluate of avidya and an object is revealed only when the consciousness on which the object is super imposed is revealed but the object – consciousness is covered by avidya. A particular kind of transformation of the mind is called Antakarana vrtti is required to relate the object with consciousness and to remove the cover of avidya which prevents the object consciousness from being manifested. The mind and its vrtti plays a very crucial role in the genesis of a veridical perception. The mind is indispensable also for the genesis of the various forms of mediate cognitions.

The mind also plays a vital role in advaita metaphysics. It plays an important role in distinguishing the subject consciousness from a veridical cognition, the instrument of the veridical cognition and the object of the veridical cognition. The Advaita vedantis recognize four states of the individual self namely, jagrat, svapna, susupti, turiya. These states are not real state of Brahman but are super imposed on Brahman by avidya. In the waking state, the mind and the external senses are operative and in this state the subject knows and enjoys the gross physical. The waking state is followed by the state of dream. In this state, the external sense organs cease to function but the mind remains operative. In this state, the subject enjoys subtle objects created by the mind. The state of dreamless sleep, i.e., susupti follows the state of dream. In this state, the mind gets dissolved in its own material cause, i.e., avidya. The subject is not aware of any external or internal object during the state of dreamless sleep and the individual also loses the awareness of its own individuality during the state of dreamless sleep. So, in a way the mind is responsible for the individual's individuality in the advaita system.

The mind also plays an important role in advaita soteriology. The advaitins however, differ among themselves regarding the role of mind in bringing about liberation. Vacaspati Misra, in his commentary, Bhamati upholds the thesis that mind is karana of the final immediate awareness of Brahman that leads to liberation. This view is refuted by Prakastmayati, who holds that the final immediate awareness of Brahman is produced directly by the Mahāvākya “tattvamasi”. This view is known as śābdāparokṣavāda.

AYURVEDA:

Ayurveda and Indian scriptures accord mind, the highest tribute only to God in terms of its immense potentialities. Here we may mention that the concept of Nyaya- Vaisesika Philosophical system not only, has enormously been used in Ayurveda, but also, they formed the fundamental base for acquiring the main objectives of Ayurveda. It is very necessary for an Ayurvedic scholar to screen the philosophical views which are present in Ayurvedic classics for the better understanding of the science in all aspects. Mind as manas has a very important position in Indian system of medicine. In Ayurveda, diseases are classified into physical and mental categories. We know the term ‘Ayurveda’ is made up of two words ‘Ayu’ and ‘Veda’. ‘Ayu’ means life and ‘Veda’ means knowledge, so, the literal meaning of Ayurveda is science of life. Apart from the attributes of consciousness and creative energy, mind is also accorded an immaterial nature by virtue of its association with soul in psychical body. A traditional system of medicine of India which considers the mind to be one of the three pillars (tristhuna) on which life depends. The concept of mind is both broad and illuminating. Mind (mana) the mental faculty which makes of a man an intelligent and moral being and distinguishes him from the animal. The ancient science of Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to mental health that integrates the mind, body and soul. The concept of health in Ayurveda encompasses not only the physical and mental aspects but also the spiritual aspect which is missing in the modern psychological discourse. The Ayurvedic objective for the mind is to attain peace of mind (samadhi) and liberation from the trappings of attachment through discrimination (moksha, vairagya, viveka) as mentioned in Yogic literature which is considered to be the ultimate goal of life. It does not look upon the human beings as limited set of biochemical processes. It does not regard mind as merely the function of brain. “Sharirendryasatvaatmasanyog dhari jivitam” – it means that mana (mind), atma (soul) and sarir (body) together leads to a healthy life of an individual.

The Ayurvedic view of mind derives from Yoga Philosophy and its understanding of the different levels of consciousness. Ayurvedic and Yoga psychology were thus originally the same and have only recently began to diverge. Ayurveda is the healing branch of Yogic science. Yoga is the spiritual aspect of Ayurveda while Ayurveda is the therapeutic branch of Yoga.

Ayurveda views the physical body as a crystallization of deep-seated mental tendencies carried over from previous lives. It regards the mind as the reflection of the body and the storehouse of the impressions we access through the senses. It recognizes a true self and immortal nature beyond the mind - body complex in which we can transcend all physical and mental difficulties. The Charaka Samhita or Compendium of Charaka is a Sanskrit text on Ayurveda. Here, mind is defined as the entity which even on contact with self, sense organs and sense objects is responsible for production or otherwise of knowledge by its attending or non-attending respectively. Subtleness and oneness are known as two qualities of mind. While the actions of the mind are

object of thinking, analyzing, reasoning, meditating, determination and whatever is to be perceived by mind is its object. Action of mind consist of control over senses, self-restrained, reasoning, analyzing. Beyond that is the jurisdiction of Buddhi (intellect).

Ayurveda not allowed manas as elemental, i.e. made up of five basic elements. Manas enter the zygote at the time of fertilization along with soul. It is known as Antarindriya or Antakaran. It is the prime cause for all miseries. It is responsible for 'avabodhanam'. The source from which knowledge and thoughts arrive is called manas. Heart as well as brain is considered to be the location of mind by Ayurveda. Sensory and motor functions of mind are chiefly attributed to brain and psychological functions particularly the emotional aspects of psyche are attributed to the heart. Manas is without any rupa. It is nirvikara. Man is exposed to vedanas like dukkha, vichara, krodha, kama, etc. only through manas. Charaka says that we cannot learn without coordination between manas, soul, sense organs and subjects. Acharya Charaka, the author of Charaka Samhita opines that when manas combines with any of the substance only then proper knowledge about that substance can be perceived. Ayurveda accepts two features of manas instead of eight features, i.e. anutva and ekatva. Anutva is one among the four parimana and ekatva denotes samkhyā. If anutva and ekatva qualities of manas are not accepted all kinds of perception would occur at a same time, but this is not possible. In Ayurveda, the ability to recognize the basic nature of all matters is Smṛti. There are eight factors for Smṛti, one of them is Satvānubandha i.e. concentration of mind. Here we mention that, in Ayurveda skin is considered as a seat of manas because manas has Samavayi sambandha with Sparsendriya i.e. skin and as skin is spread all over the body, manas keeps contact with the external environment through it. The action of manas in gross body occurs through the body's functional faculties of tridosā. Ayurveda states that just as the body has three doshas, namely, vata, pitta and kapha, the mind have three gunas, sattas, rajas, tamas play a role in maintaining a stable mind when they are in equilibrium. Rajas and tamas affect the psyche when psyche or body or both is/are affected the morbidity arises otherwise not. Manas activates bodily functions through cala guna of Vada. Artha grahana, medha, buddhi, all these activities of manas influence the stability of bodily functions through sthira guna of stable features of kapha. In this way it influences each and every cell of the body. Charaka consider manas as adhyatma dravya. The mind is called atindriya because it is responsible for internal perception. It is not only the cause of knowledge of the external world but also responsible for internal perception. All the sense objects are grasped by the mind but mind cannot be grasped by the senses and it is the superintendent of all the senses.

II. CONCLUSION:

In the Indian Philosophy, both mind and matter placed in the same category as they become the object of knowledge. But in the Western Philosophy, both are based on clear distinction between mind and matter. In the Indian Philosophical tradition mind helps in knowing consciousness whereas in western paradigm mind becomes the subject as well as the object of knowing. Knowing gives the understanding of the truth and could lead to realization. In Indian Philosophy, knowing becomes a being and becoming. This knowledge of the self (atman) helps the individual in attaining happiness and welfare in this world and realization of the supreme reality leading to liberation. Thus, knowing and understanding about consciousness become complimentary in both Indian and Western philosophical and psychological system.

It does not look upon the individual as product of social circumstances, Ayurveda view the human soul as pure awareness linked with but not limited to only mind body complex which is its instrument of manifestation. Charaka suggest that who has his mind under control does not contract any disease. The entire approach of Ayurveda to the problem of phenomenon of mind than that of body. Modern Neuroscience research indicates that all mental functions are the projection of brain function. The current trend is to identify every element of the mind in terms of bodily molecules. Thus, no human study is complete without the implication of both this component, body and mind. It is generally believed that man is a composite of psycho-somatic organism and accordingly he has to be studied or classified on one parameter which of course has to be comprehensive enough to implicate both the body and mind.

In Rig Veda, mind is the primary factor in disease. It is considered sub-stratum of disease to maintain a healthy body, a harmonious and pleasant state of mind is absolutely essential. Adi Shankaracharya kept this in mind when he taught his disciples that a right mental imagery would calm the person and thereby create a good mental condition to play a role in recovery.

To conclude we can say that mind being a constituent part of human being has a vital role in the development of human personality. It has been defined in various ways by different trends of thought in the Indian as well as in the Western Philosophy. Since, the main emphasis of Indian Philosophy has been on the realization of ultimate reality within the innermost depths, one's own self, the attempts are making it possible by understanding the nature of mental modifications and by recommending the ways for their cessation.

Ayurveda recognized disease as manifestation of a failure to fulfill the values of life. The body and the mind are equally involved in the causation of disease. Besides the contributing role of the mind in disease, the system takes into account the required attitude which can hasten the cure.

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