

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND MIND

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Abstract: The study of consciousness and mind is the subject of exploration in the branch of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience and yoga with the quest of nature, function and their results. This study focuses on the nature of consciousness and mind in Samkhya, Yoga of Indian Philosophical systems and modern SKY-Yoga Philosophical Perspective of Vethathiri Maharishi. The focus is also on functional intricacies of bio-consciousness, the network functions of mind, the functional boundaries of mind, and also on whether the consciousness exists independent of physical world with reference to Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY). The revelation of Vethathiri Maharishi on the link between the Brahman, Cosmic consciousness and bio-consciousness supports his hypothesis as 'each energy-particle that goes to make up this Universe is both physical and psychic quality'.

Keywords: Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY), Vethathiri Maharishi, Brahman, Bio-Consciousness, Mind.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of consciousness and mind is the subject of exploration in the branch of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience and yoga with the quest of nature, function and their results. Yoga is an ancient technique practiced to promote physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Patanjali is known for compiling and systematizing the yoga. In this modern age, Yogi Raj Vethathiri Maharishi (1911-2006), a philosopher from the Tamil Nadu in India, formulated the Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY) system and established World Community Service Center (WCSC) in 1958 and through which he taught the SKY to the people in various walks of life [1]. Like some other yogic practice, SKY also provides theory on self-transformation of consciousness, and its modifications. Vethathiri Maharishi observes that 'Realization of consciousness is one of the aims of SKY Yoga and which involves journey of consciousness' [2]. The experiment of Dhamodharan [3] appears to attest the view of Vethathiri Maharishi as 'mind is a wave function of Consciousness.

This study focuses on the nature of consciousness and mind with the aim of providing insight into the subject. The area of study here is limited to Samkhya, Yoga Perspectives of Indian Philosophical systems and modern SKY-Yoga Philosophical Perspective of Vethathiri Maharishi. Along with broader understanding of subject in Samkhya and yoga philosophy, the focus is also on functional intricacies of bio-consciousness, the network functions of mind and the functional boundaries of mind with reference to Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY). This knowledge will be the key to open the doors of the inner self of the man.

2. SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Purusha or Self is defined as pure spirit and non-attributive Consciousness, regarded as Knower, pure awareness. It is Absolute, Independent, Free, imperceptible, unknowable, all-pervading, eternal reality. It is in all organic beings, is not the mind, life or body. Consciousness is not the elements. Purusha's nature as unfailing light (sadaprakasavarupa) does not change. Purusha is silent and peaceful spectator but not bliss and devoid of gunas. Since it belongs to every being that has life in it, Samkhya proposes the plurality of selves and are identical in nature. It freed from all accidents of life and lifted above time and change but it illuminates the whole sphere of thought and feeling. It does not participate in any

activity and is present in dreamless sleep, as well as in the states of waking and dreaming, which are all the modifications of Buddhi, the evolutionary product of Prakrti.

Manas is said to be matter, not evolved from consciousness but from Prakrti. The thirteen factors (eleven indriyas including manas, Ahamkara and buddhi) assist the individual in acquiring experience, and together constitute the psychic apparatus with which every Purusha is endowed in the empirical state. The functions that we describe as mental are really mechanical processes of physical organs, which assume a psychological character only when illumined by Consciousness.

3. YOGA PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

The fundamental distinction between consciousness and manas is that the Consciousness is the one who reflects the qualities of all the senses and yet is devoid of all the senses, the one who knows whatever is to be known but of him there is none who knows. Whereas the manas needs senses to perceive and, unlike the Self, may be known as an object through self-reflection.

Apart from accepting the metaphysics of Samkhya, Yoga proposes that the pre-eminence to them, there is a particular self (purushavisesa) called Isvara, is omniscience and eternal. Being free from all entanglement in worldly existence, He lives in eternal bliss, without merit or demerit. He is unlimited by time, all-merciful, untouched by taint of imperfection and above the law of karma. Yoga brings Buddhi, Ahamkara and manas of Samkhya in one umbrella termed as Citta or mind, which is the first product of Prakrti. It is unconscious though it becomes conscious by the reflection of consciousness which abides by it. The knowledge results when the consciousness is reflected in the mirror of the thinking substance (citta), and assumes its form. Citta is said to be in five stages, ksipta or restless, mudha or blinded, vksipta or distracted (rajas and tamas), ekagra or single-minded (satva) and niruddha or restricted.

4. SKY-YOGA PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Meaning of Consciousness and Mind:

Consciousness is defined as the state or activity that is characterized by sensation, emotion, volition, or thought; mind in the broadest possible sense; something in nature that is distinguished from the physical matter. Consciousness is the quality or state of awareness, or, of being aware of an external object or something within oneself.

Vethathiri maharishi observes that the meaning of consciousness is 'Truth'. It is also expressed that consciousness is 'Knower' and fundamental. Consciousness extends its feeling and knowing through the bio-magnetism all over the body and perceives the external world through five senses in living being. The extended psychic activity of consciousness is 'mind'. Mind is a phenomenon of momentary, transient concepts, feelings, and sensory perceptions; it is wave function of the radical consciousness. So, the core of the mind is consciousness. It is defined by Vethathiri maharishi as 'The extension of consciousness through bio-magnetic field is mind'. The distinction between consciousness and mind is as 'Consciousness is Totality and has no limitation, but mind is a limited action of Consciousness'. When knowledge is attained from knowing and intellect is attained from the experiences, they are said to be the fraction and function of consciousness, mind. It is also stated that consciousness was there even prior to mental states as 'order of function'. Since the mind is not a separate entity, Vethathiri maharishi observes that the meaning of both consciousness and mind is one and same.

Kinds of Consciousness:

The SKY perspective of how inactive primordial consciousness has self-transformed and becomes active in inorganic substances throughout the universe and emerging as knowing in living beings, is explained through understanding the different kinds of consciousness and its nature.

1. Total Consciousness: Vethathiri Maharishi observes that when the consciousness is in inactive state, it is termed as Brahmam and it is the Primordial state of the universe, also termed as Total consciousness or Mutrarivu. It is infinite omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. This is the Supreme Being and all powers of Nature are managed by its Super Consciousness. This un-manifested, almighty part of universe, exists beyond the universe is also referred as Absolute Space, Pure space or Stock force state.

2. Cosmic Consciousness: The Absolute Space has four aspects of inseparable Plenum, Force, Time and Consciousness. This potential and inactive aspect has blossomed as the three consequential factors of self-transformation, mutation and cause and effect. So its functional expansion is appreciated as universe.

The inherent, latent force in Absolute Space emerged as a dynamic wave in self propulsion. By the surrounding omnipotent pressure of Absolute Space, this wave of force was compressed into an infinitesimal spherical volume with continuous self-rotational motion. The concomitant inseparable consciousness designed it as globe-shaped particle and this powerful globe shaped whirling wave is said to be 'energy particle'. When this Absolute Space itself has transformed into the particles, the particles can only be fractional units of Absolute Space, endowed with all its potentials.

One which makes the energy particle to function in perfect order is called as Consciousness. The dynamic wave state contains both Force and consciousness. The Consciousness regulates the Force, and works as its precise order of function. This precise and un-prejudicial order of function in entire universe is 'cosmic consciousness'. Consciousness, which maintains the order of function in everything, is the invisible quality of Nature. Consciousness directs and orders the compressive and repulsive force of everything by determining and maintaining the three parameters of pattern (structural specifications), precision (the sum of characters and qualities accrued up to the present) and regularity (the timing of every existence and action). The whole universe is a physical manifestation of Force; its functional order and results are the significance of the Consciousness.

The emerging compressive and repulsive forces from stock force state becomes magnetic waves and operates as universal magnetic function, is appreciated as 'Cosmic Consciousness'. This imperceptible mighty universal magnetic wave state is Perathma (cosmic soul). This wave is comprised of all the appearances in universe, its functional laws and experiences of all living beings, and valued as Cosmic Consciousness, Arthanaari, Pranava, and also Athirstamoolam.

3. Bio Consciousness: In the living being, when the magnetic waves of elements are in circulation, they become intensified at the centre of the mass as a concentrated wave pool. These magnetic waves extend and interact with the universal magnetic waves according to the transformation of the ambient universal magnetic wave into pressure, sound, light, taste and smell around the mass. The interaction with environment continually characterizes the quality of the central pool, which becomes the 'genetic centre'. This magnetism which functions within a living being is said to be 'bio-magnetism'. The living being interacts and is affected by the external environment by the transformations of its bio magnetism.

The very same magnetism is getting transformed into a marvelous mind wave in all the organisms, including mankind, which is able to exhibit all wonderful qualities of consciousness. Since the consciousness is immanently present in all kinds of transformation of magnetism, every transformation of magnetism is felt, measured and experienced by the mind, which is the extension of consciousness through bio-magnetic field. As a result, it feels each such transformation as pain, pleasure, peace and ecstasy.

Perception is one of the functions of mind which characterizes the human personality and develops the innate wisdom by contact with men and materials of the external world. Perception has three inseparable aspects of cognition, experience and discrimination. Perception is the result of an external magnetic wave in contact with one's own bio-magnetic wave. The physical transformation of bio-magnetism into pressure, sound, light, taste, smell and mind become 'perception'. The Space, energy, masses and living beings are in fact one and the same substantially, but the mind separates them by differentiation through sensory perceptions as follows: 1) cognizing appearances as quanta of volume, force, time and distance; 2) experiencing of pain, pleasure, peace and ecstasy as a result of cognition; and 3) discrimination among different quantities and qualities perceived.

Levels of Bio-Consciousness in Human beings: The bio-consciousness may be explained as 'Peripheral Consciousness, Sub-consciousness, Super-consciousness and State of Brahman' .

Sl No	Levels of state of Consciousness	Activities	Functioning station
1	Peripheral Consciousness	Assessing the objects with the help of senses	Senses
2	Sub Consciousness	Controls and supports Peripheral consciousness	Brain
3	Super Consciousness	Functions in connection with all	Seed (viththu)

		events in the universe	
4	State of Brahman	Great basic force producing, activating, bearing, protecting and destructing everything	Space in and around the atom, continuity up to the Space beyond universe.

1. Peripheral Consciousness: The peripheral consciousness is working through the physical body, is limited to the sense organs where the energy is utilized to attain material pleasures and also will result in misery and revulsion. This conscious mind is the fourth stage in function of bio-consciousness and is also termed as 'Buddhi'. This level of consciousness analyses by leaning on the reasons for the appearances and events. By this greatness, it gets the ability in assumption, intelligence and plan and so also trying to realize self and origin of self.

2. Sub Consciousness: All the waves emanated by the activities of mind are imprinted in life force (energy particles) of organism and emerges as memory; this functional state is called sub-consciousness. The sub-consciousness is working through the brain and is the third stage in function of bio-consciousness and also termed as 'Chittham'. It possesses subtler functional waves, triggers the billions of nerve cells and modifies the bio-magnetic force into pressure, sound, light, taste and smell to the required level for the function of consciousness. If this stage is not functioning, Buddhi cannot operate its cognitive activity. When Buddhi functions, Chittham functions in helping the Buddhi and make impressions of the activities of Buddhi. Chittham functions automatically even when the activities of Buddhi stop or lose its strength. It will function continuously except during sleep. It pulls up the Buddhi and show as an inner vision by spending the energy of body according to the availability of magnetic pressure then and there similar to how the senses spend the bio-magnetic energy.

3. Super Consciousness: The functioning centre of super-consciousness is said to be the genetic centre where seed, vitthu or sexual vital fluid is concentrated. This possesses all the impressions as stock starting from the energy particle, which was felt by consciousness. This is third stage in function of bio-consciousness and is termed as 'Ahamkara'. The functional secrets of universe, and the experiences of the previous births are in the Super-consciousness and this consciousness blossoms as perception through the Buddhi by spreading to Chittham whenever gets opportunity. If Buddhi withdrawn from external function and habituated towards inner travel, meditation, so much level the Chittham stops its reflective function and stands in co-operation with Buddhi. In this state only the function of super-consciousness will be perceived. The perception of inner revelation in this level is termed as 'Intuition'.

4. State of Brahman: Brahman is the basic state for the conscious-function of whirling actions of all the atoms and physical functions of physical body. The bio-consciousness attains this State when it attains intuition by the habit of inner practice of meditation, and by leaning on its Primordial state. In this level, the bio-consciousness realizes the 'Brahman'. This state is called as 'Samadhi state or thuriatheeth state'.

5. FUNCTIONS OF MIND

Consciousness is an invisible thread, starting from the Primordial State and penetratively pervading the universe, resulting in order of function in everything. The same consciousness blossoms into mind in living beings as the sixth stage of transformation of bio-magnetism.

The consciousness extends its function as mind with its base or working centre in the genetic centre, also said to be soul, in living being. Mind arises when the soul function in living physical body. Thus, it may also be expressed that the soul functions by extending its 'central core-consciousness' as 'mind'. Although the mind is a magnetic wave, it comprises a network in its functions involving several important parts of the body. The network of the mind includes eight integrated phenomena as Physical body, Life Force (energy particles), Bio-magnetism, Genetic centre, Brain, Sensing organs, Mind and the Soul. In the absence of any one of these eight there can be no function of the mind and if there is no mind there is no organism.

The mind comprises of five kosas or sheaths, according to the domain of its activities. This functional boundary of mind is termed as kosa. When it is at the level of cognizing and appeasing the needs of the physical body, it is in AnnamayaKosa. When the imprints generated at the level of AnnamayaKosa are being transformed into thoughts, it is ManomayaKosa. When the mind withdraws itself from all sensory perceptions and remains confined to soul, it is

PranamayaKosa. When it goes deeper, to realize its own self, its origins, the nature of the universe, its functions and results, it is VignanamayaKosa. When it attains perfection and realizes the Truth, it is AnandamayaKosa.

6. CONCLUSION

Samkhya and yoga philosophy considers consciousness is fundamental reality, pure awareness, eternal and non-material, but manas is said to be material. Vethathiri Maharishi's perspective on consciousness answers the question of what is consciousness, as 'truth and fundamental', where is consciousness, as 'omnipresence and pan-psychic entity', relationship between consciousness and matter as 'inseparable' and also explains that mind is 'the functional state of consciousness'. Thus, the revelations of Vethathiri Maharishi on the link between the Brahman, Cosmic consciousness and bio-consciousness support his hypothesis as 'each energy-particle that goes to make up this Universe is both physical and psychic quality'. This SKY-Yoga perspective may possibly give new insight to those who are in the field of yoga, philosophy, psychology and science and may also implicate profoundly on their understanding.

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