

The Educational Thoughts of Yoga Darsana

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Abstract

The present paper is based on the philosophical interpretations of the Mind or Chitta, its functions and modifications as presented by Yoga Darsana. The aim of the paper is to bring about the Educational thoughts and implications of the Yoga explanation of the Mind. The purpose thus is made explicit by the explanation of the role of Manas or mind in the Samkhya system of Indian Philosophy. This methodology is employed because the Yoga and the Samkhya system complement each other. The findings of this paper are the causes for the Chitta- Vritti Nirodha and the Moral prerequisites for Chitta-parisuddhi.

Introduction

The Yoga discipline is implicated by the Upanishads and the different Indian Philosophical systems. The

Upanishads take Yoga practice as means of achieving the knowledge of the self. The Nyaya- Darsana mentions Samadhi as the means of attaining Tattva-Jana or true knowledge and also the obstacles in attaining true knowledge. It is a noticeable fact that on the other hand Yoga Darsana depends on Nyaya and particularly on Samkhya. In fact, Nyaya Darsana offers to all Indian Schools of Philosophy its Logical technique whereas Yoga Darsana offers the technique of Spiritual discipline. The Samkhya system develops the Jnana Yoga or path of knowledge whereas the Yoga system develops the Kriya Yoga or the ways and means of achieving knowledge. Yoga Darsana is thus interested in offering the Practical art of attaining the true aim of all knowledge and learning. Yoga means the Nirodha or the inhibition of the Vrittis of Chitta. The mind comes in contact with matter with the five senses of cognition like eyes, ear, nose tongue and skin enabling vision, audition, smell, taste and touch and the five senses of action like and the organs of speech, hands, feet, evacuation and generation. The mind thus gets transformed and takes the form of a material object in the process of apprehending it. This is called the Vritti. Before going into the details of the Yoga analysis of the five conditions of the mind (Chitta bhūmi) and the five ways in which the mind functions (Chitta Vritti) let us first try to understand the Samkhya concept of Manas and how is this concept related with the Yoga Concept of Chitta.

Methodology

The Sāmkhya concept of Manas and its relation to the concept of Chitta

Sāmkhya provides a descending schema heading with Purusha and ending in the five fundamental elements of the world or the Pañcha Bhūtas. This schema explains how knowledge is possible. We need the Sāmkhya concept of Manas, Ahamkāra, Buddhi, Prakriti and Purusha in order to understand the Chitta of Yoga. The Chitta –vritti and Chitta-bhūmi will be dealt latter. We need to know the mind or Chitta first, for that we need the Sāmkhya scheme and then go on to explain its vritti (modifications). The Sāmkhyas actually has placed Purusha as primal consciousness and Prakriti as pure objectivity. Purusha is conscious (Chetana), eternal (nityah), present everywhere (sarva gatah), devoid of any impulse of action (akriyah). Purusha and Prakriti actually lie in the subtle zone, but then Sāmkhya shows how it descends to the grosser Bhūtas. So when we perceive an object or more particularly a real object then it is apprehended by the respective sense organs first. The mind or manas makes this sensory apprehension determinate by assimilation and discrimination. Mind or manas according to the Sāmkhya; it must be remembered is not self- conscious (svābhāsa) as it is itself the outcome of the unconscious Prakriti and grosser

than the Ahamkāra. So after the mind or manas has made the sensory apprehension determinate Ahamkāra produces Abhimāna or a self- appropriation; which comes in the form of consciousness of the 'I'. Ahamkāra makes the determinate sensory apprehension related to the superior concept of 'I' in the form of 'I am'. This apprehension explicates the sense that 'I am' superior to all perceived and known and these subsequently are of my use. It is here that Buddhi steps in and decides or determinantes what action is to be taken or how to react to the said knowledge. So manas or mind may be the highest form of matter, more subtle than Tanmātras, Jñānendriyas, Karmendriyas and Bhūtas but it is not self-conscious. Buddhi on the other hand is higher at the stage of evolution than manas and Ahamkāra; it rests as a link between the conscious Purusha and the unconscious Prakriti. Buddhi is perhaps the last grosser element which finally passes into the supreme subtler elements of Purusha and Prakriti. It is the link between the existence of self (Purusha) and the extra-mental object or pure objectivity. It is here that we must remember that while Sāmkhya presents a descending order where it shows how the subtler becomes grosser and even grosser; the Yoga system presents just the opposite. The Yoga system presents an ascending order where the mind or Chitta is presented as being burdened with all impurities. Chitta is presented as held in the clutches of matter as a result of sensory experiences. Yoga shows how

the Chitta can ascend to the higher levels of consciousness by freezing itself from the grosser limitations of matter. This in its turn helps the mind or Chitta to empty itself, i.e., all its content of sensory experiences, to make it more subtle. Yoga thus helps the individual self to get connected with the Absolute. The manas or the mind is thus found to move in an inverse direction in the Yoga-system. What the Sāmkhya system actually misses is complemented by the Yoga system. This is in fact true that we all the time talk and discuss the Chitta or manas as determining the sensory experience in the Sāmkhya system but the natural tendency of the Chitta to rest in the different states is not explained. Yoga here supplements the explanation by providing the five different phases of states of Chitta. Yoga in fact does not want to free the Chitta of all its normal states because all are not harmful. Yoga shows that the last two states of the Chitta, namely Ekāgra and Niruddha are in fact favorable for the practice of concentration. Yoga here is actually delving into the existence of mind and mind only. Yoga also examines the practices and states that are internal. It seems as if since the philosophy of the objective world as well as of pure consciousness was provided by Sāmkhya, Yoga deals with the pattern which can help an individual self only internally. So the ascend that the Yoga system is entirely and purely internal. The educational value of this which is in fact quite true to the Indian tradition namely, if the internal is at peace then it would definitely be exhibited

even outside. The serenity inside can be processed by the individual soul itself. The inside state finds a similarity with the magnified peace which rests in nature outside. It is perhaps because of this that since our minds are many times restless we can hardly find peace and energy even in silence. So it is actually essential to clean the mind and resettle the irrelevant impurities that bring about sorrow.

Chitta bhūmi and Chitta vritti

There are five conditions of the mind or Chitta. These are called the Chitta bhūmi.

(a)Kshipta(restless)-Here the mind is restless and wandering, rather hopping from one object to another.

(b)Mūdhā (torpid) - Here the mind is absorbed in pleasure or pain or blinded by passions like anger.

(c)Vikshipta (distracted)- Here the mind is distracted, but occasionally the mind may concentrate only on the pleasant and discard the unpleasant.

(d)Ekāgra (concentrated)- Here the mind is peculiarly characterized by a one-pointed thinking. The mind here concentrates on the thought of any one object.

(e)Niruddha (restricted)- Here the mental modifications are arrested. The mind here becomes ready for supra-conscious contemplation.

The Yoga system apart from explaining the five conditions of the mind or Chitta; also explains five ways in

which the mind works. These are five fashions; five routes undertaking which the mind functions. These are the usual ways of mind functioning. In fact these are the general functioning of the mind. The Vrittis are therefore the ways by which the mind interacts with matter.

Yoga system has grouped all possible mental processes in five classes thus;-

(a)Pramāna

Pramā signifies true knowledge whereas Pramāna signifies ways of attaining true knowledge. The three usual ways of achieving true knowledge as has been dealt with in almost all the Indian philosophical systems, are, 'Pratyaksha', Anumāna and Āgama. Pratyaksha is defined as indriyajanyā, Anumāna as vyāptijñāna - janyā and Āgama as sabdajñāna - janyā. The uniqueness of Pratyaksha is it is a direct apprehension of the object external to the mind. The mind in this case comprehends the object by way of its specific qualities. Anumāna on the other hand is a means where valid knowledge of an object can be derived from the knowledge of another object. It is quite understandable a fact that Pratyaksha precedes Anumāna, i.e. the knowledge of the object from which we further infer is furnished by Pratyaksha. Anumāna therefore reveals the generic attributes of an object. Āgama is what proceeds from a person considered as

āpta or unimpeachable authority to the person listening to it and accepting it with implicit faith without arguing it or doubting it. In case of Agama the hearer is also attributed by certain characteristics like; desire for learning or ākānshā, fitness or yogyattā, devotion or āsakti and insight or tātparya-jñāna.

(b)Viparyaya

This is when the mind is involved in some illusory perception. The mind is prone to both Viparyaya and samśaya. Viparyaya or misconception occurs when we think of a rope as a snake. Whereas samśaya or misgivings or doubt is when the mind is uncertain or is in doubt about the very position. So viparyaya can be later corrected though initially it starts with a sense of certainty of knowledge. On the other hand doubt or samśaya lingers on with uncertainty with which it actually starts. There are in fact causes of misconceptions. They are; - Avidyā (undifferentiated consciousness), Asmitā (sense of self-hood), Rāga (passion) , Dvesha (hatred), Abhiniveśa (attachment to life).

(c) Vikalpa

In this case words or śabda are used without correspondence to reality, i.e. without Artha. This is actually a state of imagination because a word or śabda has the power of structuring an object which may not exist in reality. Nevertheless such words do carry a meaning but have no

correspondence to reality. So here śabda or sound and the jñāna or the sense it conveys is there without any Artha.

(d) Nidrā

Here the mind is in a subdued state. There is lapse of consciousness (though only temporarily), but still this state is too considered as a state of mental activity. Sleep is definitely an anubhava and hence must be considered as a Chitta-vritti.

(e) Smriti

It is a state when the mind works on recalling the past memories. Smriti arises from anubhava or experience. We always have experience of what is unknown to us. Anubhava or Smriti leaves behind Samskāra or impressions from where Smriti arises.

Findings

Lessons from the Yoga system

It must be noted that the Yoga system does not propagate the annihilation of Chitta as such because as a whole Sāmkhya, - Yoga system actually equates Chitta with buddhi. Buddhi as evolutions of Prakriti is eternal. If this be so then the nirodha of the Vrittis of Chitta which is essential for the Yoga system must be based on some solid grounds. The different causes which Yoga cities in favor of Chitta-vritti nirodha are as follows

(a) Since man is a psychic being it is rather established a fact that he will have psychic qualities. Now there are some innate psychic qualities or it is possible that there are some innate

psychic qualities. What Yoga propagates is, except one's awareness or impulses (which had been there innately) the mind must be emptied of further multiplication of sensory experiences or else the mind would be found engaged with this and this only.

(b) Mind to be one with self instead of being one with matter. So the mind can be redirected from being external to being internal.

(c) The innate tendencies of the mind must be regulated. Here begins the cultivation of the state of sthiti, which is actually harnessing of the mind's tendency towards the external.

(d) The state of sthiti further leads to the state of Vairāgya or freedom from the passion of objectivity. Here the term 'freedom' must be understood as an effort to free the mind or give mind the freedom from objectivity. The earlier state mentions if sthiti be achieved then at least we can hope for a further gain i.e. freedom in percentage from objectivity. Our life is full of objects and it is hard to be free from them or from the relations that we develop around them so even at the state of Vairāgya , the mind still owns some intellectual functions like vitarka, vichāra, ānanda and asmitā or the sense of the self. These dispositions create troubles and ripples though if passionlessness be practiced then perhaps a certain advantage can be expected.

(e) The more the practice of passionlessness the easier is the setting of the state of Samadhi or the absorption of the mind in the object of contemplation. Here the object of contemplation is definitely not external but it is an object of contemplation which is rather internal. It is perhaps here that the Indian theme of drawing the mind internal and subsequently to know thy self lies. The real meaning perhaps lies in the very fact that, internally the mind should be cleaned or that it should be cleared of all internal malice. The negativity inside creates distrust, disrespect, instability for oneself and hence proves to be infectious for others as well. It is because of this that the mind requires a constant practice of self-regulation like the regulation of negative feelings, for e.g., (antarāya), sorrow (duhkha), and melancholy (daurmanasya). It must be understood that freedom from objectivity does not immediately lead to Samādhi, nor is it a state which ones reached can be clanged to forever. Samādhi is definitely the passion to cling to this process of cleaning oneself internally and hence becoming safe for society. It is rather like a therapy which we need to take for the benefit of all.

Conclusion

The educational thoughts of Yoga Darsana which is projected via all the analysis of the functioning of the mind, its modifications and the arguments in favor of the cessation of the Vrittis of the Chitta is actually unfolded in some moral prerequisite that the Yoga system puts forward as a conditions

of Chitta-parisuddhi. The Yoga Darsana propagates that if the Antarkarana is not purified then that would affect the Calmness of the mind or the Chitta-prasadanam. The Yoga Darsana actually holds on to the one aim that is projected by all Indian Philosophical Systems namely the attainment of mukti as the ultimate solace of all knowledge. Yoga Darsana wants to bring about Mukti not only by projecting the particular Marga or path which it prescribed but by inculcating certain moral attitudes in individuals. The positive effects from the practice of such moral virtues are also provided which may be called as the Moral means offered by the Yoga Darsana. The Moral Virtues are as follows:

(i) Universal sympathy (Maītrī)

This is the prerequisite of the Chitta-prasadanam. It means that one must feel happy about the happiness of others. This would keep away the envy or Irsha of others.

(ii) A feeling of kindness for all (karunā)-

This prerequisite speaks of considering others suffering as one's own and an individual must put in all efforts to remove it just as he would have done for himself. This will keep away the urge of injuring others in a person.

(iii) Happiness at seeing the virtues of others (Muditā)-

This precondition states that an individual must feel happy about the virtue present in others instead of finding faults. This would keep away the malice in an individual.

(iv) An attitude of indifference to joys and sorrows (Upekshā)-

This prerequisite is to keep away Krodha or wrath in a person, if he shows indifference towards the sinful acts of others. The

practice of such Moral virtues would help in developing a radiant consciousness and tolerance for fellow beings. By means of all the aforementioned values the tranquility of the mind can be achieved.

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