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The Mind and Consciousness.

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Mind has been defined as the creative power of Consciousness. Mind has not so far been identified by the modern scientists. If the body is dissected the brain can be seen but not the mind. It is the instrument of perception. May be with the help of modern technology one can detect the prana-vital airs. But there is no instrument which can measure or calculate the extent of mind, let alone the inherent quality of consciousness.

The materialist considers that the mental or spiritual process is merely an epi-phenomenon of matter. He believes matter to be the cause of all involution and evolution of mental processes, rather than the other way around. On the other hand, an ancient sage would say that spirit wills itself into mind and matter for the express purpose of allowing mind and matter gradually to take more and more part in spirit. Interestingly enough, scientific materialism lead to the discovery of quantum physics, which is now undermining the very ground which materialism has stood on so comfortable for all these years.

Mind-body unity

The mind is organically related to the physical body. We can observe this by noting how our mind's functions change with physical fluctuations, how our behavior changes along with our diet, exercise patterns or intake of sensory impressions. The mind is also a kind of body or organism. It has its metabolism, its appropriate food, its waste products, and its de-rangements that can occur from its malfunction. The body is the gross form of the mind. The body exists to allow the mind to perceive and act. Yet, though the mind-body complex is an organic unity, the mind and body are not the same. The mind can function apart from body consciousness as in sleep, trance and after-death states.¹

Our true awareness or Pure Consciousness, however, transcends both mind and body. It is inherently free of their problems and limitations. But to get to it requires that we detach ourselves from mind-body functions.

Location of the mind.

There is no particular place in the physical body where the mind can be said to be located. Wherever our attention is directed, the existence of mind can be felt. The mind moves with our awareness. It is not even limited to the body since it can observe the body as an object and use it as an instrument.

Shape of the mind.

The mind does not possess any shape. It takes the shape and size of the object perceived. Hence we get impressions and are able to recall the object to the mind screen at a later time. All our experiences from childhood till the present moment are condensed and accommodated in one part of the mind like a micro-processor chip in the modern super computer. It always consists of a series of points of attention. This mind is a point—sized awareness which precedes and transcends all other material components and interactions. Even though the mind appears to be atomic in nature, it can pervade the whole body just as drop of yellow sandal paste, coming into contact with a particular part of the body, producing a delightful sensation all over the body. (Br.S.11.iii.23)². The logicians had come to the conclusion that the mind is atomic in nature as we can focus on one particular object only at a time. The ever-shifting mental panorama of thought, emotions and sensations reveals the constantly changing or mobile nature of the mind. The mind is extremely volatile and it is well nigh impossible to prevent it from moving. The mind is ever changing with reference to the time and space. The mobility of the mind is not in the form of continuous motion like oil or water. It is like the series of lightning flashes which are discontinuous but occurring in rapid succession. It is therefore very difficult to control the mind, even though there is stillness beyond the mind.

Origin of the mind.³

We have seen that the mind is an organism and so it should have birth. The mind according to Vedas was born from the Supreme Self. The Sankhya theory makes it a product of Prakriti consisting of three gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The mind grows from the food we consume. "Food when eaten becomes divided in three ways. Of it, that which is the grossest ingredient, that turns into faeces. That which is the medium constituent becomes flesh, that which is the subtlest becomes mind." (Ch.Up.VI.5.1)

Thus mind is made up of the food consumed by us. The impressions collected in the mind could be erased only by deep prayer and meditation, profoundly energized and concentrated higher thought forms which can counter deep seated habits and addictions.

Levels of the mind.

Mind is the source of human personality. Yoga is the technique of developing personality. Personality is divided into five levels. These are

1. **Niruddha Chitta:** Steadfast mind. The man who has such a controlled mind never becomes distracted in any situation or circumstance.
2. **Ekagra Chitta:** Well-concentrated mind
3. **Vikshipta Chitta:** Occasionally concentrated mind.
4. **Kshipta Chitta:** Distracted mind
5. **Moodha Chitta:** Dull mind. There is no trace of concentration in this.



Creation of new minds.

Patanjali conceived creation of many minds by an adept yogi. These new minds are created from Asmita or egoism of the yogi. The new minds or vehicles of consciousness are created by manipulating the forces of the higher planes through a process called Samyama. Yogi operates in different spheres of his consciousness at the same time through these new minds. These artificial minds are completely under the control of the aspirant. These can be created and folded according to the will. Yogi multiplies his consciousness in different planes and with regard to different activities with the help of his original natural mind. The created minds are entirely dependent on the natural mind and have to work according to the consciousness of the natural mind. Sometimes they exhibit wonderful capacities in various respects. In many cases the intelligence working in the mind of a guru plays the part of the natural mind and it works through the disciple if he has been able to create artificial vehicles of consciousness.

When these minds are created artificially, the original natural mind becomes progressively free of past impressions. The artificial minds depend upon and serve the natural mind. It is something like a business concern with branches at different places. The branches are open or closed according to decisions taken in the head office or at headquarters. Similarly, the created minds may be considered as the temporary branch offices of the head office, that is, the natural mind. They have no independence because they have only one purpose, that of serving the natural mind. Yogis are able to operate in different minds, in different bodies and different places.⁴

Consciousness:

In all our perceptions both the brain and the mind are involved, the mind performing the general cognitive function. Not only do we have brain-determined sensations moderated by the mind, but perpetual knowledge also involves subjectivity, which is the awareness of that knowledge. Such awareness is what we refer to as Consciousness. It can be observed that the awareness which we call as consciousness can be dissociated from perceptual knowledge and no attempt to provide a viable physiological explanation for consciousness has yet succeeded. This Consciousness is full of energy. This could be viewed thus. Matter has many stages of existence and manifestation. At one level it is inert. In the process of evolution it manifests life. Later it manifests consciousness, then energy emerges and the final manifestation is knowledge and experience. This is the truth about both physics and metaphysics, about science, tantra etc. Modern research is finding that there is an energy link between the physical and psychic bodies. They have arrived at the conclusion that energy is convertible into material force and vice versa. This brings to the famous equation of Albert Einstein $E=MC^2$. That matter is energy in its potential form. Vedas too propound this ancient truth.

Consciousness – the primary element.

Matter, energy and consciousness are convertible and reconvertible. This is the basic principle of both Vedas and the modern science. Physics defines the matter as a combination of trillions of particles, molecules, atoms and subatoms. The difference between each mass is in the arrangement and vibration of the particles. When these factors are changed mass also changes its form.

In ice the particles are packed densely and so they vibrate very slowly. But when heated the ice turns into a liquid called water. The particles move away from each other and now vibrates quickly. When the same is boiled it turns into vapour and the particles move further apart giving rise to very quick motion. The forms are changed from solid to liquid and vapour without of course any change in the basic chemical elements. In the same way the consciousness is the basic element manifesting itself into various forms of creation. We get from Physics how atoms of every object is interconnected with themselves and with surrounding environment. Everything we conceive in the world is nothing but the field of atoms and their forms are changed only when the particles are restructured.

Scientists who have gone into the study of energy fields maintain that so-called motionless matter is also permeated by subtle energy. This consciousness is in the form of knowledge or light, as Vedas propound it. Now Modern science has come across an important discovery that the energy in the body emits an aura of light. Vedas clearly state that every object has a field which appears as an encompassing mass of light. Our earlier paintings of great persons and deities used to contain aura surrounding their heads. This is not an imaginary one. With the modern scientific equipment, such as Kirlian photography, researchers have shown an aura like an electromagnetic field which can be measured and photographed.⁵

Vedas state that the consciousness never changes. It is constant although everything else changes. The world of time and space, qualities and cognitions etc undergoes constant change, but this change has a permanent changeless background, a permanent basis, which is the consciousness. Whatever takes place in the sphere of the mind is automatically known to the Consciousness as it is the witness of the mind.

Connection of mind and the Consciousness.

As per the Vedas the Consciousness is beyond the mind. It is a mute witness for the various activities of the mind. Yet the mind gets all its power only from the Consciousness. Consciousness neither impels nor holds the mind. Mind is free to do whatever it likes. But it acts according to its previous impressions gathered already and the present information received from the sense-organs. This is termed as a free-will, available only for the human beings. When the mind is made still, by yogic or other methods, the mind grasps the reflec-



tion of the Consciousness and then falls leading to the liberation of the individual soul.

According to Jung and other modern psychologists the mind can be categorized into three states – conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious. These three states of the mind are familiar to all human beings wherein the consciousness undergoes the experiences of mind and body. They are termed as Jagrat, waking state, Swapna, dream state and Sushupti, deep sleep state. But Vedas talk about another state called Turiya, a state above the earlier three states wherein there is no subjective or objective experience.

Jagrat:

The mundane world is perceived in this state with the help of the gross body. The association with the external world to the consciousness is through the five sense organs (skin, eyes, ears, tongue and nose), through five organs of action (speech, hands, feet, reproductive and excretory organs). The information received is processed through the mind, sent to the brain for necessary action. Our sense organs are appropriately adapted to receive the stimuli. They convert the energy into an electrical potential which influence the nerve cells. The sensory quality experienced by us is not that of the stimuli but of the nerve cells activated by the stimuli. Thus our experiences depend on our sensory apparatus. Each one respond to certain ranges and sets of stimuli only. Humans are not able to detect ultraviolet radiation, but bees can. We are insensitive to infra red radiation, but rattle snakes can respond to it. Much of what goes on in the brain is not accessible to introspection. We are not introspectively aware how we perceive, think, remember, and imagine. Not only are we closed to the brain process sing involved, we do not also have introspective access to a great deal of processed information.

Swapna:

At the deeper level, the consciousness encounters subjective experience in the subconscious realm of dream. The experiences here are that of the subtle body mostly the mind with the impressions gained earlier. Though it appears that many sense organs and organs of actions are used, but really they are at rest. The consciousness is involved in the various impressions undergoing the memories. It is viewed by the Consciousness.

Sushupti:

When the mind goes to the unconsciousness state, this deep sleep happens. The gross and the subtle mind do not function and mind is totally absorbed in the Self — Consciousness, not bound by time or space. The physical clock stops and we are not aware of what happens to the world outside. Only when we come back to the waking state once again, interaction with the world begins.

In the ordinary course, all are continually undergoing only these three states of consciousness blissfully unaware of the Awareness per se. Only when we can control the mind by

constant practice with yoga techniques, we can be aware of the Consciousness that is beyond the mind and body. When this is attained all the earlier levels of mind can be experienced simultaneously.

Modern science, psychology, and neurochemistry may have discovered the chemical reactions which alter our states of consciousness, but they cannot define precisely what consciousness is. They cannot also explain the process where the consciousness can be set free from the limitations of individuality. Only Vedic yoga has been able to solve the problem with its techniques of developing awareness through subtler realms of consciousness. In its true essence, the consciousness has no mind or body other than its pure and cosmic form.

All physical bodies, like earth, sun, moon and stars are gross matter only. If one analysis one will agree with the great scientists and seers that the matter is nothing but one state of energy. In another state of manifestation, all the matter once again becomes the light which Vedas call deluge. Mind is a form of matter operating at a higher energy level or rate of vibration. When the mind is absorbed more in the physical world, it becomes grosser. Then the awareness or consciousness is not at all conceived by the mind, which has become tamasic or dormant. When the consciousness and awareness gets developed the mind starts to oscillate, becomes dynamic or rajasic. When by training, it is made to be one-pointed, it becomes awakened and is known to have become Sattvik. In its super conscious state of Samadhi it is able to realize the inherent consciousness.

As seen earlier, the mind was eluding almost all great thinkers from beginning. Only Patanjali could give a definition for the same through the two aphorisms as "A seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature when the mind is in the state of inhibition of its modifications. In other states there is assimilation with the modifications of the mind". Unless one learns to use his mind like a tool, he will become the victim of this subtle super instrument. At this stage he rarely uses this instrument. On the contrary it uses him for its convenience. Once one learns to observe the mind, he will cease to be the victim of the mind. By gaining control of the mind, one will no longer be dominated by the impulses coming from the senses and the conditioning of the outer world. Then only he will be able to be who he really is and create what is in harmony with the aspiration of his heart. Society will be advanced only with such people.

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