



The Concept Of Mind And Body In Indian Philosophy

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Abstract: The present work is an attempt to understand the concept of mind and body from the standpoint of Indian Philosophy. All the schools of Indian philosophy tried to know the reality and to understand the secret of life through the inner knowledge of human being. According to the Vedic literature, human body is composed of five elements, which are Earth, water, fire, air and ether. In the Upanishad, human body is constituted of Energy or etheric body, Physical body and Soul, which link the human body with the life in the universe. Human Body divided into three categories, Gross body, Subtle body and Causal body. On the other hand, almost all the Indian schools of philosophy accepted that mind is an inner sense organ of the body, which is master or controller of other sense organ. In Indian Philosophy, mind is considered an instrument of the soul. It is considered an inner sense organ or *antahkarana*. It is also related to the body, which is outer instrument or five sense organs and the five action organs. It is also an instrument of knowledge and helps in knowing consciousness.

Keywords: mind, body, gross body, causal body, subtle body, *antakarana*, *citta*, *ahamkara*.

Introduction

The concept of mind and body relation is one of the most important issues not only in western philosophy but also in Indian philosophy. In this paper, I have attempted to analyse the concept and functions of mind and body from the Indian philosophical point of view. The word 'manas' literally means 'measuring' and it was used in this sense in the early Vedas and Brahmanas. The mind is called 'manas' in Indian philosophy. Manas was considered to be part of that which was designated by name, (*nama*). It is an activity in the life of man, by which he measures his wisdom, pleasure, and pain etc. In the Chanddogya Upanishad, this manas is said to be *Annamaya*, of the form of matter. It is said that when food is eaten, the finest part of it becomes manas. It is not gross, but subtle matter. In the Satpatha Brahmana also, there are a number of references to mind which conceive the forms of knowledge as Name and Form. The word mind is used very often in the sense of soul, and in some places its capacity as a physical instrument is referred to. In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, we find manas treated as sense-organ i.e., as an instrument of knowledge with a physical basis. To link up matter which is gross, and self which is pure consciousness, *manas* or mind which is subtle matter is common to almost all system of Indian philosophy. On the other hand, the concept of human body is well defined in systems of Indian philosophy. Our knowledge depends on the number and nature of the sense-organ. According to Nyaya, body is the abode of enjoyment. The body could not exist without the senses, and the senses require the support of a body. The Indian thinkers believe that there is not only the gross body, which we are generally acquainted, but also the subtle body and causal body of the soul.

The Concept of Mind

In Indian philosophy the word mind is used in the sense of *manas* or *antakarana* (Internal organ) not in the sense of Atman (Self). The word 'manas' is used in many places in the Vedic texts. In Rgveda stated that mind as the cosmic principle. In the Upanishad, *manas* is not considered the same as soul or Atma. Almost all the system of Indian philosophy regards that the mind as sense organ. whereas the Jaina does not regard mind as a sense-organ rather mind is subtle matter. It plays a very important role in the perception. In the absence of mind there is no cognition. It is also the cause of bondage and liberation.

The Nyaya-Vaisesika philosophy

The Nyaya-Vaisesika schools of philosophy accepted that the *manas* or mind is the internal organ. It is one in each body. Mind is immaterial, corporeal, part less, atomic, unconscious, eternal and capable of action or movement. It is atomic because it cannot be perceived. In Vaisesika philosophy considered *Manas* is one of the substances or *dravyas*, mind is the internal organ serving as the instrument of knowledge for the soul. Both the Naiyayikas and Vaisesikas system maintain that *manas* is different from Atman. It is many and each is eternal and imperceptible. It is the organ through which the self comes into contact with the objects. The existence of the mind is not perceived but is inferred the perception of internal objects, such as cognition, feeling, pleasure and pain etc.

Sankhya philosophy

In Sankhya philosophy, the mind is categorized into three functions or parts, lower mind (*manas*), ego (*ahamkara*), and intellect (*buddhi*). *Manas* is the lower mind which collects sense impression. *Ahamkara* is the sense of I-ness. But in Vedanta the mind is divided into four parts, lower mind, ego, intellect, and "mind-stuff" or *citta*. The subtle body is combination of *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, eleven sense organ and *tanmatras*. Sankhya also agrees that the mind as a sense-organ. According to Samkhya, the entire world is evolves from the interaction of *Prakriti* with *Purusa*. In Sankhya, this interaction does not refer to any kind of orderly conjunction, as in the contact of two finite male and female substances. Rather it is a sort effective relationship through which *prakriti* is influenced by the mere presence of *Purusa*, just as sometimes one's body is influenced or moved by the presence of a thought. According to Samkhya philosophy, the goal of the manifestations of the universe is the attain liberation. Through the interaction of *Purusa* and *Prakriti*, a great disturbance arises in the equilibrium in which the *gunas* are held prior to manifestation.

The first evolve of *Prakriti* is *mahat* or *buddhi*, the intellect. This is the great seed of the universe- therefore the name, *mahat*, which means "great one." *Mahat* is the state in which *Prakriti* receives light from *Purusa*, the fountain light, and sees itself; and this process of seeing is the beginning of the manifestation of the universe. The individual counter part of this cosmic state, *mahat*, is called *buddhi*, the intellect, the finest aspect of a human being has the capacity to know the entire personality in its full purity. According to Sankhya *buddhi* is manifested from the *sattvic* aspect of *Prakriti*. In Samkhya system, *buddhi* possesses the following eight qualities: virtue (*dharma*); knowledge (*jnana*); ignorance (*ajnana*); attachment (*avairagya*); and imperfection or incompetency (*anaisvarya*). The first four are *sattvic* forms of *buddhi*, while the last four are over powered by inertia (*tamas*).

Mahat produces *Ahankara*. It is the principle of individuation. Its function is to generate a boundary of "I-ness", self-sense (*abhimana*), that means "I am, this is mine, and this is for me." It refers to the sense of "I" that separates one's self from others and creates an individual entity. *Ahankara* said to be of three kinds – *Vaikarika* or *Sattvik*, *Bhutadi* or *tamasa*, and *Taijasa* or *Rajasa*.

Manas or the mind which arises from the *Sattvika Ahankara* is the subtle or central sense-organ. According to Sankhya, the *manas* is neither eternal nor atomic, but it is rather a product of *Prakriti* and is therefore subject to origin and dissolution. It is made up of parts and so can come into contact with the different senses simultaneously. The *Sattvika Ahankara* produces *manas*, the five sensory and five motor organs. The five sensory organs (*jnanendriya*) are the functions of sight, smell, taste, touch and sound and the five motor organs (*karmendriya*) are the function of speech, prehension, movement, excretion and reproduction. *Buddhi*, *ahankara* and *manas* represent the three psychological aspects of knowing, willing and feeling or cognition, conation and affection respectively. Sankhya calls them material and derives them from *Prakriti*. All the three are called internal organs or *antahkarana* and vital breath (*pranas*) are said to be their modification. The five sensory and the five motor organs together are called the ten external organs or *bahyakarana*. These are thirteen *karanas* or organs of the Sankhya. Among the thirteen organs the mind is master of all the external senses, and without its direction and guidance, they could not function.

On the other hand, the *Tamasik Ahankara* arise the subtle essence which are called *Tanmatras* or thing-in-themselves. These are the essences of sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. They are neither qualities nor the differentia of the gross elements nor the functions which are the sensory organs, but the subtle essences which produce the gross elements as well as their qualities.

Yoga philosophy

In the Yoga philosophy mind called *citta*. *Citta* means the three internal organs of Sankhya-*buddhi* or intellect, *ahankara* or ego and *manas* or mind. According to Patanjali, yoga is the control of the modification of the mind. In yoga philosophy, *Citta* as having five modes or modifications (*vrattis*) which are responsible for all the activities. The modification of the *citta* is right cognition (*Pramana*); wrong cognition (*viparyaya*); verbal cognition or imagination (*vikalpa*); absence of cognition or sleep (*nidra*) and memory (*smrti*). And there are also five levels of mental life (*chittabhumi*). The differences in the levels are due to the predominance of the different *gunas*. The lowest level is called *Ksipta* or restless, because the mind here is restless due to the excess of *rajas*. The second is called *Mudha* or torpid. The mind here has the predominance of *tamas* and tends towards ignorance, sleep and lethargy. In this stage, mind is so sluggish that it loses its capability to think properly and becomes negative and dull. The third is called *Viksipta* or distract. Here, *sattva* predominates, but *rajas* also assert itself at times. In this state, mind runs from one object to another but never stays anywhere consistently. This is an advanced stage of the disturbed mind. The fourth is called *Ekagra* or concentrated. The mind here is entirely dominated by *sattva*, and *rajas* and *tamas* are subbed. The mind becomes concentrated or the object of meditation. The fifth and the highest level is called *Nruddha* or restricted. Here the mental modifications are arrested, though their latent impressions remain. Only last two stages of mind are positive and helpful for meditation and many yogic practices are designed to help one attain these states.

Vedanta philosophy

The Vedantic concept of mind is quite different from the other system of Indian philosophy. According to Vedanta, the mind serves as an inner instrument (*antahkarana*) for receiving external experiences and transmitting them into the self. In Vedanta philosophy the mind is divided into four parts, lower mind, ego, intellect, and 'mind-stuff' or *citta*. The lower mind (*manas*) is the importer and exporter of feelings and sensations from external world through the intellect to the self. Ego (*ahamkara*) is the faculty that is responsible for the sense of I-ness (*ahamkara*). Mind-stuff (*citta*) is that faculty in which all memories-whatever passes through the lower mind and ego and intellect. are stored and are occasionally recalled to the surface of the lower mind., intellect (*buddhi*) is the decision-making faculty. It is the aspect of mind nearest to the self and is predominated by *sattva*, the quality of brightness and lightness. According to Vedanta, the mind serves as an inner instrument (*antakarana*) for receiving external experiences. Acharya Sankara opines that mind is minute. But this minuteness is not the same as the '*anutya*' of Nyaya Vaisesikas. It is subtle and limited in size because at death when mind leaves the physical body, it is not perceived. It is *Suksma* or subtle.

The Concept of the Body

In the Indian philosophy human body is not only physical body by which we acquainted. Human body divided into three categories, physical body, Subtle body and Causal body. In the Atharva Veda, a human body is regarded by Caraka as a modification of five elements, ether, air, fire, water, and earth and it is also the seat of consciousness (*cetana*). Samkhya philosophy also accepted that the human physical body consist of five elements (*mahabutas*), while the subtle body consist of the intellect (*buddhi* or *mahat*), ego (*ahamkara*), mind (*manas*), five sense organ (*jinandriya*), five action organ (*karmendriya*). In the Sariraka-Upanishad very nicely explained the formation of body particularly human body in details. The human body is defined in the Saririka Upanishad, as the collection of five *mahabhutas* (elements) - *Prithivi* (Earth), *Apas* (water), *Teja* (Fire), *Vayu* (Air) and *Aksa* (Ether). "In the body that which is hard is called earth, that which is hot is (of the essence of) Fire; that which moves about is of the essence of Vayu; that which is perforated is of the essence of *akasa*. The ear and others are the *jnanendriyas* (organ of sense). The ear is of the essence of *akasa* (ether), the skin of the essence of *vayu* (air), the of the essence of *teja* (fire), the tongue of the essence of water, and the nose of the essence of earth; sound, touch, form taste, and odour being respectively the objects of perception for these organs. The mouth, the hands, the legs, the organs of excretion and the organs of generation are the *karmendriyas* (or organs of action). Their functions are respectively talking, lifting, walking, excretion, and enjoyment. *Antakarana* (the internal organ) is of four kinds-*manas*, *buddhi*, *ahankara*, and *citta*."

The western thinkers have given various theories on this mind-body problem which are different from each other. The question here may arise whether both bodily and mental states exist, and whether they are otherwise related, is known as the mind-body problem. Many of the school of Indian philosophy have considered this issue from the very ancient times. Physical body of each human being is divided into three parts such as Gross body (*Sthula sarira*), Subtle body (*Suksma sarira*), and Casual body (*Karana sarira*). The Nyaya-Vaisesikas regard that the human body is mainly earthly. According to Sankhya philosophy, the human physical body consist of five elements (*mahabutas*), while the subtle body consist of the intellect (*buddhi or mahat*), five sense organ, five action faculties. According to Vatsyayana, "consciousness is a quale of the body, for its exists if there is the body and does not exist if there is not body." For example, qualia like colour exist or come into being only if things such as pots are there. In Nyaya the body is not the enjoyer (*bhokta*), the self, being conscious, is the enjoyer.

Gross body (*Sthula sarira*)

Sankhya-Yoga thinkers accept that the gross body does not exist for itself. It occupies the six substances or cells (*kosas*) According to Samkhya philosophy the gross body is the modification of five primordial elements. The gross body has been very well defined in the Upanisads. The Taittiriya Upanishad recognises a complex of five sheaths or *pancha kosas*. The five Seaths are *Annamaya Kosa* (Physical Seath), *Pranamaya Kosa* (Vital Seath), *Manomaya Kosa* (Mental Seath), *Vijnanamaya Kosa* (the Seath of Wisdom) and *Anandamaya Kosa* (Blissful Seath). The *Annamaya Kosa*-this sheath, which constitutes the gross physical body, is produce by the combination of gross elements and consist of flesh, bones, blood and other elements. It is also called the Food Seath because it is depends on food and is made of food. Dependent upon food for its existence, it lives as long as it can assimilate food. Its existence is transitory and its virtues are temporary. It is changeable by nature.

The next sheath is the *Pranamaya kosa* (Energy sheath) is more subtle. This sheath is finer than the gross physical sheath. The gross manifestation of the Energy sheath in a human being is the breath. There are ten subtle levels of *prana* on which human biochemical functioning depends. *Pranamaya kosa* made up of five major which are collectively known as the *pancha* (five) *pranas*: *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana*, and *vyana*. There is another subdivision of the pranic force called the *upaparanas*. They are responsible for minor transformation of energy as for example; when we sneeze, hiccup or blink our eyes. These minor *pranas* are called *naga*, *kurma*, *krikara*, *devadatta* and *dhananjaya*. The next seath is *Manomaya kosa*. This seath is finer than the seath of *Pranamaya*. In the Mental Sheath, it comprises four inner instruments of cognition: lower mind(*manas*), ego(*ahamkara*), intellect (*buddhi*), and mind stuff (*citta*). The *Manomaya Kosha* consist of *manas* and the *jnanendriyas* or the rudimentary senses. In the Taittiriya Upanishada, "The *manomaya* is made up of *vruttis* or states such as *kama* (desires) and *samkalpa* (formative thought). It has been called the self, because it is subtler than the former and its controller also inasmuch as *Prana* is the vital energy working through the senses and mind controlling the later." The Intelligence seath (*Vijnanamaya kosa*) is the seath where subtle intelligence evolves. It is the prime mover of the mental *vruttis*. *Vijnanamaya* is the agent of all thoughts and action. In this seath, through which knowledge from eternity transmits into the intellect. The last sheath is the sheath of bliss (*Anandamaya kosa*). In this sheath whose essential nature is pure bliss. Compare with that bliss. This *Anandamaya* is the layer of all fruits of action and hence has it been said to be formed of bliss. These five sheaths are also divided into three types of body: Gross body (*Sthula sarira*), Subtle body (*Suksma sarira*) and Causal body (*Karana sarira*).

Subtle body (*Suksama Sarira*)

According to Caraka, the subtle body is the aggregate of subtle elements (*tanmatras*) of the earth, water, fire, and air. The Sankhyakarika maintains that the subtle body is the combination of *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, eleven senses and five *tanmatras*. In the Samkhya-karika speaks of a subtle body (*Suksma deha*) and the body inherited from the parents. It constituted of *mahat*, *ahamkara*, the eleven senses and the five *tan-matras*. In the Samkhya-pravacana-bhasya, it is said that subtle body is like a little tapering thing no bigger than a thumb, and it pervades the whole body, just as a little flame pervades a whole room by its rays. The Vyasa-Bhasya, in refuting the Samkhya view Says that according to it the *citta* (mind), like the rays of a lamp in a jug or in a palace, contracts and dilates according as the body that it occupies is bigger or smaller. In this view, the *citta* is all-pervading. In the Vedanta philosophy, the subtle body is made up of the five organs of action, mind, intellect, and five vital airs.

Causal body (*Karana sarira*)

The Samkhya regards the existence of an *adhithana* body which may be regarded as the Causal body (*Karana sarira*). It is the seat of the Subtle body. It is not seen because it is constituted of the five subtle elements (*tanmatras*). In the absence of this body there is no existence of the Subtle body. The Vedanta also agrees with regard to the existence of the causal body. It is made up of *avidya*. It is the composition of three *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. The causal body is the cause of subtle body and gross body. Deep sleep (*susupti*) is the manifestation of the causal body (*karana sarira*) in which the intellect (*buddhi*) and all the senses restrain to function. In the causal body the self knows neither itself nor any other thing. The adjunct (*upadhi*) of nescient (*ajnana*), which remains in the deep sleep, is called *karana sarira*. *Anandamaya kosa* is called the causal body. The link between physical body, subtle body and the causal body is the prana. The main centre of this *pranic* energy in each body is called cakras. And the *nadis* are the channels through which the energy from these centres is disseminated. Nadi is a means for transfer of prana from the cakras of the subtle body to the physical body and causal body.

Conclusion

The concept of mind and body occupies a place of supreme importance in the history of Indian philosophy. Almost all the system of Indian philosophy agrees in regarding that mind is subtle in nature. It has been considered as an internal sense (*antakarana*). In the Nyaya-Vaisesika mind has been described as *Dravya* (Substance). It is not a product of matter. It is immaterial and is devoid of material qualities. The Upanisadas, the mind is instrumental in the acquiring of cognition, it is only for the sake of the self that mind acts. It has already been stated that for the Naiyayikas the contact of the mind with the self and the contact of the sense-organs with the objects are necessary condition of perception. In the Samkhya philosophy, the mind and body are the transformation of prakriti. Prakriti is the cause of whole universe. Like sankhya, yoga also believes that mind has three qualities *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. According to the Vedanta the subtle body is made up of five particles of the elements. The concept of body is widely discussed in all the system of Indian philosophy as well as in the classical literature of Veda and Upanishad. There are three kinds of body – gross body, Subtle body and causal body. The Samkhya and the Vedanta agree in regarding the existence of subtle and causal body. Causal body is the foundation of subtle and gross body. The body is the measure and regulator of our actions. The gross body is made up of the *mahabhutas*, The Gross body is the same as the food sheath (*Annamaya kosa*). The Food sheath and the gross part of the vital-air sheath (*Pranamaya kosa*) together constitute the gross body. Whereas the Subtle body is a combined state of the energy, mental, and wisdom sheaths. And the causal body is the same as the bliss sheath, which corresponds to the state of deep sleep. The deep sleep is the manifestation of the causal body.

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