

Psychology of Hindu tradition in perspective of Personality

Dr. Vinod Nautiyal* & Dr. Rajni Nautiyal*

*Yoga Dept. H.N.B. Garhwal, Central University, Srinagar , Uttarakhand

Abstract :

Present study aimed to go through the systematic review of Hindu religious texts in context of Personality and its development. In India among Hindus; one witnesses a constant perusal of the development of Values, beliefs, mental health and practices in the attainment of Personality Development right from ancient Vedic era up to the contemporary time. This process has exhibited both continuity as well as development. The following brief review of Indian Values, beliefs and practices will prove this point. The study included the Vedic literature the Upanishads, the Satsang of seers, the sayings of Hindu saints, the Bhagawad Gita along with Ramanujacharya, Vallabhacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Swami Akhilanand and many other religious Saints.

Key Words: Personality Integration, Satsang, Swadhyaya, Bhakti,

Introduction

Indian religion, philosophy and psychology are interconnected. Indian ideas on psychotherapy and Personality Development are based upon thousands of years of cultural traditions, experiences and experiments. The ancient Upanishadic thinkers analysed the various states of consciousness, viz; jagrat or waking, swapna or dreaming, sushupti or sleeping and Turiya or transcendental. From Upanishadic seers to Sri Aurobindo, Indian thinkers have tried to interpret the lower from the higher psychological phenomena while Freud and other psychologists have explained higher from of consciousness in terms of lower forms resulting in a psychology of levelling down. The Indians always always aimed at what Gardner Murphy called super individual or transindividual and Sri Aurobindo called supra-mental and Mahesh Yogi called Transcendental consciousness which is not only higher but also integrates the lower consciousness. It has been called paramartha consciousness. It is the Brahman Consciousness or Atman Consciousness. Hindus have also called it self-knowledge or self revelation.

This however, is not a negation of sensual or mental experiences. Far from it, it is an integration of sensual and mental, the mind and body and also a transcendence of these.

Techniques of personality integration

According to Indian psychology, personality includes body, sense organs, mind, intellect and the self. Personality integration means integration of all these under the direction of the self. According to Bhagawad Gita, the senses and the mind should be controlled through reason while reason itself is controlled by the self. Thus, integrated personality is self directed. Personality integration requires self realisation. According to Kathopanishad, self alone is the enjoyer of the body, the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. (Kathopanishad) Disorganisation or disorder of vrittis (Modifications) of the chitta (mind) leads to disintegration of personality. Human personality is the personality. The effective karmas may not be of this birth itself but even of the past birth. If the past actions of a person are good, his personality is integrated. If the past actions of a person are

evil, his personalith is disintegrated. The Karma create samskaras (Impressions). While the evil Karmas create evil Samskaras, the good Karms create good Samskaras. Similarly, lust, jealousy, pride, etc., create evil samskaras leading to disintegrated personality, As are the samskaras so is the personality while good samskaras lead to integrated personality evil samskaras lead to disintegrated personality.

Satsang(Good Company)

According to the Indian psychologists, bad company leads to involvement in evil action. Thus lack of faith in scriptures is the result of bad company. While in the West it is considered desirable, at least harmless, that young men and women, evey young children are exposed to all sorts of companies and experiences, Indian psychology believes in the famous dictum that prevention is better than cure. Exposure to the company of evil persons leads to loss of mental balance while the company of good persons, great men and even great books leads to good samskaras and sound mental health.

Swadhyaya

Swadhyaya, the study of book leading to self development, is itself satsangati or good company. Therefore, one of the techniques of mental health propounded by Indian psychologists is Swadhyaya. Many Hindus, men and women, in middle and old age, daily read scriptures like the vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana and most popularly the Bhagawad Gita to preserve their mental balance and attain peace. This has been the most popular technique of maintenance of mental health by Hindus for thousands of years and it is effective evey now.

Leaving Kusangati

Indian psychologists have never limited themselves to surface meaning and surface knowledge but always tried to unravel the

inner and deeper meaning of a psychological concept. Thus the meaning of Kusangati (Bad Company) can be analysed with in depth and width. It is the company of bad character persons involved in evil deede. It is an evil socil, moral, political and economic situation. All types of corruption are evil and the company of those who are involved in it is bad company Therefore, Indian thinkers have been social reformers like Samkara, Ramads or Kabir. Socil evils create corruption and bad persons. In such an atmosphere the men and women can not retain their mental health. This is the malady of our age. This is the reason why the number of all sort of crimes, corruption and mental disorder is higher in metropolitan cities particularly of the developed countries like U.S.A. Delinquency is particularly due to bad company.

According to Bhagawad Gita, Asakti (attachment) itself is bad company. Attachment to objects of enjoyment forces even the scholars to the path of evil. (Bhagawad Gita) Attachment to objects is due to repeated brooding over their enjoyment. Attachment leads to awakening of insatiable desires, impediment to which causes anger. (Bhagawad Gita)

Anger creates confusion, confusion creates loss of memory, which in its turn kills the power of reasoning. Loss of reason leads to unending degeneration. (Bhagawad Gita II) It is only by conquering one's senses that one may realise self satisfaction.

Integration of Emotions

Will, according to the Indian psychologists, is the most important motive in life. It aims at transformation of personality. In transformation, the man rises from physical to spiritual level. To quote Edger S. Brightman, "Spirituality is a life of harminy, unity and integration." (Brightman-1942) Unity is characteristic of spirituality. Spiritual transformation requires emotional integration.

Indian psychologists consider a burning desire as a necessary prelude to any type of practice, particularly the spiritual one. Even personality development or personality integration require such a desire. Along with intensity there must be constancy. Without it, sometimes, the cycle begins to run in reverse direction. Examples of great men are always helpful in this process. Emotional impediments are the most common hurdles. It also requires constant from the teacher. Indian psychologists have placed spiritual teacher or the highest pedestal, equating him to God.

Higher Philosophy of life

According to the Indian psychologists no one can rise high or integrate his personality and life without a higher philosophy of life. Personality can not be integrated upon a hedonist philosophy. Man is not an animal, as believed by Sigmund Freud and other Western Psychologists. What distinguishes man from animal are the higher mental, psychic and spiritual impulses. Man, according to the Indian psychologists, is essentially divine in nature. All his problems, personal and collective, can be solved only by appealing to his divine nature and trying to bring it to the fore front. Self control is not repression but redirection. The proper philosophy of life is positive and integral. Hindu psychologists, as opposed to Buddhist psychologists, never recommend suppression of flesh. The fourfold social stratification, fourfold stages of life and finally the fourfold ideals of life provide Hindu psychology with a stable pedestal to build up a diviner man and diviner society. Sri Aurobindo has visualised it in his ideal of supra-mental in individual and collectivity.

Control of Primitive urges

However, any human advancement requires control of primitive urges. Indian psychologists would categorically reject the Freudian formula of free expression to attain mental health. Primitive urges are blind and

can never lead man to the path of good and welfare. Without the guidance of reason, they will ruin a person. This does not mean that Indian psychologists have never allowed free to instincts. Within the bounds of Dharma, for example within the married life, Vatsyayan has allowed all kinds of sex deviations to increase the intensity of enjoyment. Thus Indian psychologists reject none, however filthy and lowly it may be. They elevate all these and give them a proper place in the total man. Agreeing with such an approach Edgar S. Brightman has said, "No philosophy which does not satisfy his whole mind will permanently satisfy man. Since Plato first saw this principle and used it as a pulverising weapon against sexual sin, it has been a corner stone of any sound philosophy of life, But what is sound is not always effective. A tragic feature of human life is displayed in the violence with man opposes his permanent good in the interest of his temporary good or supposed good. Passion and greed are blind but intense, and they often sweep away the power of the truest and highest ideals as if they were more than thin air." (Brightman)

Direction of Emotion towards God (Bhakti)

Western psychologists have not been very confident about the possibility of personality integration. R.B. Cattell concedes, "We might be tempted to conclude that the goal of a fully self-integrated personality is at least theoretically possible, or that personalities could be measured by the extent to which they fall short of this aim." (Cattell) Positively denying the possibility of personality integration Allport says, "Personality is the progressive but never complete integration of all systems that deal with an individual's characteristic adjustment to his various environments." (Allport-1961) This dubious approach, this faltering process in western psychology is due to lack of all round or multisided attack so characteristic of Indian psychology. Indian psychologist does not isolate psychology from philosophy and

religion to arrive at an integrated personality. Man not only requires a sound philosophy, but also an intense religious faith to overcome obstacles in integration of personality. Swami Akhilanand rightly points out, “Indian psychologists believe that the personality is integrated only when the total mind is united and harmonised.”(Akhilananda) Bhakti or provides a spiritual environment. It leads man upwards,eliminating automatically all mental disorders and lower passions such as anger,lust,greed aggression,violence,competition,hatred,jealous y and what not.

Bhakti requires self forgetfulness. In it one surrenders every passion,every desire,every craving to God and feels happy in whatever God divines for him. It is unflinching faith and love for God.(Tripathy-1970) It requires constant remembering of God,chanting His name and thinking over Him. Ramanujacharya, Vallabhacharya, Nimbarkacharya and many other religious saints have written about Bhakti and surrender in details. According to Bhagawad Gita, a true

devotee of God will never face personality disintegration.”(Bhagawad Gita) Samkara has called even knowledge as incessant devotion.(Bhagawad Gita) Even detached action has been defined as action for God realisation or action according to divine dictates. For a detailed discussion of Devotion and Surrender,one will have to go deep and wide into Hindu religious scriptures which is properly the field of religion and not psychology.

Conclusion:

Indian religion, philosophy and psychology are interconnected. Indian ideas on psychotherapy and Personality Development are based upon thousands of years of cultural traditions,experiences and experiments. It is concluded from over studies that Hindu Psychology and Personality Development through Hindu Psychology areas Satsang,swadhyaya,Leaving kusangati,Integration of Emotion and Bhakti Yoga significantly Development the Personality level .

References

1. Akhilananda,S., Mental Health and Hindu Psychology, p.23
2. Allport,G. W., Pattern and Growth in Personality,p.100,
3. Bhagawad Gita II,67.
4. Bhagawad Gita II,62.
5. Bhagawad Gita II,63.
6. Bhagawad Gita II,64.
7. Bhagawad Gita II,71.
8. Bhagawad Gita, 9.31.
9. Brightman, E.S., The Spiritual Life,p.191. Abingdon Coherbury Press(1942)
10. Brightman,E.S.Nature and Values,pp.141-142
11. Cattell, R.B. Personality,p.659
12. Kathopanishad, Samkara's commentany,2,3,4
13. Manu Smriti II,215
14. Rinehart and Winston,New York,1961
15. Tripathy, B.N. Bondage and its Analysis in Indian Spirituality,p.542.thesis, Alld. University,1970.