

Manomaya Kosha – From the Perspective of Ancient and Modern Science

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Abstract

Manomaya is our psychological or cognitive faculties. Thinking, imagination, memory, perception, judgement etc. constitutes this Kosha. It is also said that Manomaya kosha is the conglomeration of thoughts and emotions. In Yoga is made up the components like Manas, Chitta, Buddhi and Ahankara. When any thought gets brooded over in the mind, it makes our agitated and percolates in Pranamaya kosha and its impact is seen in Annamaya kosha. It is also applicable for any negative emotion that we cultivate in our mind.

Introduction

As per Taitriya Upanishad, when Bhrigu finds his father, Varuna still not expressive on the question of Brahmn¹, Bhrigu gets deeply absorbed in Tapas. Now he focuses on the subtler aspects of energy and realises that it is the mind which provides the stimuli for this vitality. It is this Manomaya kosha, the mental layer, which triggers all senses of knowledge. Bhrigu becomes aware that the mind, too, is a manifestation of Brahmn and also realizes that the knowledge he acquired is also incomplete.

The third Kosha is Manomaya kosha which is composed of the Mind. Mind is otherwise called crude consciousness or present state of mind. It is also defined as the conglomeration of thoughts. Like Prana, Mind is also a field of energy by itself but the only difference is Prana is a positive field and Mind is negative field of energy. As it is discussed the present state of our being is Mind and in Sanskrit, it is called as Manas. The literal meaning of 'Manas' is to cognize, perceive and understand. There are ten stages in the evolution of mind from the crude to fine state, stated in Sankhya yoga. Out of the ten stages of mind, the only three stages are known to the modern psychology viz., Conscious, sub conscious and unconscious

mind. In other words these three stages of Mind are the division of human mind.

Our Mind is connected with time, space and causality and also past, present and future. It is said that Mind can take a Yogi beyond time and space and therefore an aspirant of Yoga can meditate hours together and be in the state of Samadhi for years together without the distraction of Mind. The speed of the mind is greater than the speed of the light and the objective of Yoga is to cut down this speed and allow it to be in the state of effortless dwelling called Dhyana and eventually to be with the object of interest for longer duration called Samdhi. The mind is a very subtle force which can go to the subconscious level and it begins to go into the unknown past.

Modern Understanding About Mind

Mind is a state of our cognitive faculties viz., Perception, thinking, judgement and memory. Perception can be defined as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information². Perception is all about how we respond to the information. We can think of perception as a process where we take in sensory information from our environment and use that information in order to interact with our environment. Perception allows us to take the sensory

information in and make it into something meaningful. Thinking is conscious and active. It is the kind of cognitive process that can make new connections and create meaning. It is also dialogic: it has the quality of an internal conversation between different perspectives. It is linguistic: verbal for those who use spoken language, visual for those who use sign language to communicate with others and with ourselves. Judgement refers to the process by which people make decisions and draw conclusions based on the information available and material combined with mental activity (thought) and experience. It causes a person to make the best possible choices in a given situation. Memory is also a faculty of cognition which includes encoding, storing and retrieving information. In general, Memory can be of three types' viz., Sensory, short term and long term memory.

Mind as Undertood by Yoga

In Yoga, Mind is understood as agitated state of consciousness. Mind gets operated through its four Upakarana (instrument) viz., Manas (the present state of Mind), Chitta (memory), Buddhi (intellect) and Ahankara ('I' component of living being). According to Maharshi Patanjali our Mind continues to modify itself, called as Vritti (mental modification)³. The five vrittis as quoted in Patanjali Yoga sutras are Pramana (correct knowledge), Viparyaya (incorrect knowledge), Vikalpa (imagination or fantasy), Nidra (sleep) and Smriti (memory). These modifications may result in afflictions viz., Avidya (wrong knowledge), Asmita (wrong notion), Abhinivesa (fear of death), Raga (attachment) and Dvesa (disinclination). Also as per Maharshi, our Mind has five various states of functioning, called Chittabhumi. These five states are Kshipta (distraction), Vikshipta (occasionally steady), Ekagra (one pointed state), Niruddha (restrained mind) and Mudha (infatuated mind). Out of these five states, Vikshipta, Ekagra and Niruddha are

influenced and powered by Sattva (pure), Mudha is powered by Tamas (lethargy) and Kshipta by rajast (activity). In addition to the above mentioned Vrittis and Chitta bhumis, mind can result into six varieties of negative outcome viz., Kama (lust)⁴, Kradha (anger), Labha (greed), Maha (attachment), Mada (arrogance and Matsarya (Jealousy).

Relation between Body, Prana and Mind

The agitated state of Mind or speed in Mind is called stress and speed in mind causes speed in Prana and vice versa as quoted in Hathayoga Pradipika (*Chale vate chale chittam nischale nischalam bhavet*)⁵. This in turn is reflected in our respiratory function e.g., our respiratory rate or breathing which becomes faster. Science has understood that more catabolic reactions lead to more production of super oxides and free radicals and they are responsible for wearing & tearing leading to Physiological aging. In other words we can say that the animals having higher respiratory rate e.g., dog and rabbit lives shorter and life span of tortoise and elephant is longer. Modern scientist has started understanding that Mind is the cause for all our malfunctioning and diseases, called psychosomatic diseases. In line with this, Hans Selye in mind nineteen century came up with the statement that 'Stress is the cause of all acute diseases'.

How to Control the Agitated State Of Mind?

The most effective technique through which Yogis have become successful in controlling the speed of the Mind is through Breath awareness and Pranayama. Not only Pranayama helps in establishing the uniform speed of Prana throughout the body but it controls the speed of the Mind very effectively. And that is the reason why many Meditation techniques involve the step of Breath awareness and Pranayama as the preparatory techniques for meditation.

Tools for Making a Healthy Mind

Various tools are used in Yoga to have a healthy mind, e. g. Meditation, Mind imagery techniques etc. Psychology uses ‘Hypnosis’ as one of the effective tool. Through these techniques, it is ensured that an individual works on his body through his subconscious mind. In many imagery techniques, ‘taking resolves’ has been found to be very effective, working at the body level because the positive resolve that we take gets germinated in our

subconscious mind and spreads out its branches in the organs and systems in our body. But when we culture a negative thought and emotion in our sub conscious mind gets sprouted out and reach to the systems resulting impairment and malfunctioning otherwise called diseases.

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