

THE CONCEPT OF MIND IN JAINISM

T. G. Kalghatgi

The problem of the nature and functions of mind has a significant place in philosophy as well as psychology. It has eluded the grasp of the philosophers and psychologists from the early past to the present day. Metaphysically, the mind was considered by some as the principle of the Universe existing in relation to the phenomenal world. Mind, in point of fact, was given primary emphasis as a cosmic principle by the idealists. Psychologically, what concerns is the individual mind,—individual's sphere of psychic states.

It is not easy to define mind; for its definition has to be in terms of psychic processes and states. Wundt says that mind is the pre-scientific concept. It covers the whole field of internal experiences.¹ McDougall defines mind as an organised system of mental and purposive forces.²

The philosophical study of mind shows that the ancient Indian thinkers possibly were aware that they were groping at grasping the intangible, ineffable and immaterial: But they could not free themselves from the material. In the pre-Upaniṣadic thought, the principle of *Rta* became the Principle of the Order of the Universe. Similarly, the term *kratu* is shown to be the antecedent of the term *manas* or *prajñā*. In the *Upaniṣads* the importance of mind and its functions was gradually realised. An expression such as "I was elsewhere in mind, I could not see, I could not hear" is met with in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.³

The old metaphysical problem of the relation of mind and soul continued to disturb the philosophers of the ancient world. Aristotle, for example, in his *De Anima* said that Democritus regarded mind as identical with the soul for the fineness of its particles. Titus Lucretius Carus avered that mind and soul are kept together in close union and make up a single nature.⁴ The Jaina thinkers, on their part, asserted the distinction between soul and mind. Jina Vardhamāna Mahāvira was asked by Gautama whether mind was different from the soul. "Oh, Gautama," said, Mahāvira, "mind is not the soul, as speech, like mind, is different from the soul. Non-living substances have no mind".⁵

Mind was postulated, and the postulation was based on the evidence of experience. The contact of the sense organ with the soul alone does not give rise to experiences, because there the mind is absent. Again mind has the functional connotation which speaks for its nature, just as speech signifies the function of speaking, fire expresses the function of burning and the light shows the light."⁶ (Miss) Washburn says that there is no objective proof for the existence of mind.⁷ We have to posit the existence of mind on the basis of behaviour and experience.

I intend, for this article, restrict study to the psychological aspect of the nature and functions of mind.

The Jaina approach towards the study of mind has been realistic. The mind and its states are analysed on the empirical level : Still the Jaina ideal is *mokṣa*, freeing of the soul from the impurities of *karma*. The purity as well as the divinity of the soul are the foundational principles of Jaina philosophy. The Jaina theory of mind postulates mind and nature as different in kind and as sharply separated and opposed. Traces of the primitive conception of the mind are still to be found in this theory. Yet, it tried to overcome the conflict between mind and nature and establish intimate relation between them. The function of the mind is knowing and thinking. The *Sthānāṅga* describes it as “*Samkalpa vyāpāracati*”. The *Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya* of Jinabhadra gaṇi (c. A. D. 585) defines mind in terms of mental processes⁸—“*maṇaṇam vā maṇaye vā anena maṇo*” It is taken in the substantive sense. The contact of the sense organs with the soul alone does not give rise to cognition in the relevant experiences, because of the absence of mind. Again, the mind has the functional connotation which speaks for its nature. For instance, a man may not hear a sound or see an object when the mind is preoccupied; when the mind is elsewhere we cannot perceive, as we already find mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Mind, in the popular sense, is not simply a ‘subject’ in the logical sense, but is also a ‘substance’ in real being, and the various activities of mind are expressions or notions. *Manas* has functional significance because it describes the functions of the mind like thinking, imagining, and expecting.⁹

From the functional significance of the mind, its structure is inferred. The Jaina thinkers have made a distinction between the two phases of the mind—*dravya-manas* (structural phase) and *bhāva-manas* (the functional phase). The first refers to the material or the physical basis and the second to the psychic functions of the mind. The first, we may refer as analogous (though not perhaps the same) to the brain and the second to the psychic states and functions, like thinking, imagining, dreaming, willing etc. The cognitive, affective, and the conative functions of mind refer to the psychic aspect, the *bhāva-manas*. The material, as we described above, is composed of the infinite, very fine and coherent particles of atoms, meant for the formation of mind. They are the *manovargaṇās*. They are meant for the functions of mind : *Dravyataḥ dravya manaḥ*. It has been further described as a collection of fine particles which are meant for exciting thought processes due to *yoga* arising out of the contact of the soul with the body.¹⁰ In the *Gommaṭasāra (jivakāṇḍa)* (c. late 10th cent. A. D.), there is a description of the structural mind as produced in the heart from the coming together of mind molecules like a full-blown lotus with eight petals.¹¹

The structural phase of the mind was recognised by the philosophers of India and the West as well. The Upaniṣadic philosophers supposed that mind for its formation depends on 'alimentation'.¹³ Mind was supposed to have been formed out of the food that we take—"annamayam manaḥ." Food takes three different forms—the subtlest part becoming mind. According to the *Sāṃkhya-yoga*, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas* are products of *prakṛti*.¹⁴ Hiriyanna says that, according to this view, the functions that we describe mental are really mechanical processes of the physical organism, which assume a psychical character only when illuminated by the spirit.¹⁵ In the Vedānta-darśana, *antaḥkaraṇa* is looked upon as *bhautika*. In Western thought also, there were philosophers who conceived of mind as material. Mind is formed of fine and exceedingly minute bodies.¹⁶ The Jaina distinction between the *dravya-manas* and *bhāva-manas* can be compared to the description of mind given by C. D. Broad in his *Mind and its Place in Nature*.¹⁷ According to him, mind has two factors—the bodily and the psychic. The bodily factor is described as the living brain and the nervous system; about the psychic factor, says Broad; it is sentience alone. Neither mental characteristics nor mental events seem to belong to it. Broad, however, seems to be vague regarding the psychic factor. Regarding the *dravya-manas*, we may refer to the view of McDougall who has likened it to the mental structure, though he was careful to suggest that the structure of the mind is a conceptual system.¹⁸

The problem of the instrumentality of mind for experience may next be considered. It was generally believed that mind is a sense-organ (*indriya*) like other sense-organs. In the *Upaniṣads* we find references to the mind as *indriya*. The *Praśna-Upaniṣad* mentions mind as the central sense organ. There were some philosophers who believed that *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra* together constitute the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* systems regarded mind as an internal organ. Gautama did not include it in the list of sense-organs. Kaṇāda is silent on this issue. Vātsyāyana, on his part, included *manas* under the senses.

The Jainas believed that mind is a "no-indriya" in the sense that it is different from the 5 sense-organs. Its sense contents and functions are not entirely identical with those of *indriyas*. The prefix 'no' does not mean the absence in the negative sense: It is at times rendered as *īṣad*. It is quasi-sense organ. They still accept the instrumental function of the mind. In the *Gommaṭasāra* (*Jivakāṇḍa*), there is a brief description of the mind as *no-indriya* mental states, and events are possible through mind. But there is no external manifestation as in the case of other sense-organs. The function of mind is assimilative.¹⁹ The *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā* describes mind as the thing which grasps everything. In the *vytti* of the same it is said, "*Manomindriyamiti no indriyamiti ca ucyate*".²⁰ The *Tattvārthasūtra* describes this function as *śruti*-cognition. The function is also the *mati*-cognitions and its modes.²¹ The Jainas have accepted the instrumental nature of mind

(*karaṇatva*), having two spheres of function :— i) *bāhya karaṇatva* (external function) and ii) *antaḥkaraṇatva* (internal function). Even the *dravyamānas* has been described as *antaḥkaraṇa*. Being the internal organ, it is different from the sense-organs.²¹ However, such a description of mind need not be interpreted in the sense that, according to the Jaina view, mind is not a sense organ; in fact it is more than a sense organ. The function is not specific like that of other sense organs : It is *sarvārthagrahaṇam*.

The relation between body and mind has been a perennial problem for philosophers and psychologists as well. Attempts have been made to solve it by presenting various theories based upon the fundamental philosophical standpoints of the philosophers. The problem has two sides— i) philosophical and the ii) psychological approach to the problem. Philosophically, there are the materialists who have given exclusive emphasis on matter, the mind, for them, being either a product of matter or a non-entity. The idealists lay emphasis on the primacy of mind. The realists emphasise the reality of both matter and mind. The relation between finite mind and finite body may be : 1) a complete dependence, as when mind is considered to be the secretion of the brain; 2) that of parallelism where the two series, the physical and the mental run parallel to each other and 3) the relation of interaction between the physical and the mental. The Jaina philosophers discussed the metaphysical aspect of the problem and they also brought out the psychological implications of the problem. This is very much evident in the exposition of the mechanism of the bondage of the soul, the psyche by the flow and accumulation of the *karma-vargaṇās*. Jina Mahāvira had pointed out to Gaṇadhara Vāyubhūti that it is not correct to maintain that consciousness is a product of the collection of *bhūtas*, material elements, like earth and water, or just as intoxication is produced by the combination of *ghṛtaki* flowers and jaggery, though not found in the elements separately. The *cetanā* in point of fact is the quality or property of the soul. In this we find the refutation of the Lokāyata or Materialist view.²² Similar arguments were put forth in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*.²³ On account of the rise (*udaya*), annihilation (*kṣaya*), and suppression (*upaśama*) of karmic particles, *jīva* has 5 *bhāvas*.²⁴ Being affected by the changes in the karmic material, *jīva* experiences certain emotional states. But whatever emotional states appear in the consciousness are due to causal agency of *jīva*. The extrinsic cause is the physical matter and the proximate cause is the *jīva*. It is thus parallelistic. Two distinct causal agencies have been discerned : *nimitta kartā* or efficient cause, and *upādāna kartā* or substantial cause of the psychic changes. The two series, the karmic and the psychic correspond to each other. Karmic matter brings about its own changes. *Jīva*, through its impure ways of thought that are conditioned by karmic matter, brings about its own psychic changes. But the Jaina parallelism is not merely the temporal correspondence of the two series, point by point : It is transcended by the doctrine of *nimitta kartā*. As in the Cartesian view, their thinking and unthinking are distinct, yet the two are related by the peculiar

concept of causal relation. The unthinking may be the *nimitta kartā* of the other and the converse may be also true. But the two causal relationships are independent. Kundakundācārya gives a graphic description of the process of the formation of the physical and the mental states and also their interaction. The world space is filled with material bodies, some perceptible, others imperceptible. These constitute the *karma*. These are the *karma-vargaṇās*. They are the physical molecules of a particular constitution which give them the tendency to be attracted by the *jīva*.²⁵ This is also known as the *karma-prayoga-pudgala*. *Jīva* and *karmavargaṇās* coexist, but by the mere fact of contiguity, *Jīva* and karmic matter are brought together, as the casket filled with black collyrium power becomes black by mere contact.²⁶ The relation of the *bhāva-mana-rūpa* has been described on the analogy of the mixture of milk and water *kṣīranīravat*.²⁷ Just as the lotus-hued ruby placed in a cup of milk imparts its lustre to the milk, so does the *jīva* residing in the body impart its lustre or intelligence to the body.

Radhakrishnan has pointed out that the Jainas have accepted the dualism of body and mind and the parallelism, with all its limitations. The Jainas have advocated a sort of pre-established harmony to explain the reasons for the soul to experience the fruits of *karma*.²⁸ But the Jainas do not merely speak the language of the pre-established harmony. That would be a mere mechanistic explanation. Metaphysically, they recognised the dichotomy of body and mind. Yet, the empirical approach showed them that there is an interaction and mutual influence. Their approaches to the problems were from two different planes—the noumenal (*nīścaya-naya*) and the phenomenal points of view (*vyavahāra-naya*). A clear and a consistent formulation from the *vyavahāra-naya* would have been possible if the metaphysical and the psychological analyses were clearly distinguished. “The Jaina theory was an attempt at the integration of the metaphysical dichotomy of *jīva* and *ajīva* and the establishment of the individual mind and body”.²⁹

Notes and References

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5. *Abhidhāna Rājendra* Vol. IV, p. 82.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Margaret Washburn, *The Animal Mind* (The Animal Behaviour Series 4th edition), McMillan & Co., New York 1936, p. 31.
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9. *Abhidhāna Rājendra*, Vol. IV, p. 74.
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17. McDougall, *An Outline.*, p. 42.
18. *Gommaṭasāra (jivakāṇḍa)* 444.
19. *Pramāṇa-mīmāṃsā* 24 and vṛtti thereof.
20. *Tattvārtha-sūtra* II, 21.
21. *Abhidhāna Rājendra* Vol. IV, p. 76.
22. *Gaṇadharavāda*, Part III.
23. *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* 8 and commentary.
24. *Pañcāstikāyasāra* 69, 70-78.
25. *Ibid.*, 70-78. *Sacred Books of the Jainas* Vol. III, Arrah 1920, Editor's Commentary.
26. *Ibid.*
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28. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I., Allen Unwin 1941, p. 310.
29. T. G. Kalghatgi, *Some Problems.*, p. 29.