



# Modern Psycho-therapy V/s Ancient Indian Psycho-therapy

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## Modern Psycho-Therapy

**M**odern psycho-therapy is a branch of medicine. It is an outcome of classical psychology—previously a part of philosophy—Analytical, Behaviouristic, Gestaltic, Introspective, etc. Not only that its scope has widened to such an extent that an integration of all the different approaches and divisions, had to be contemplated, and accordingly a new movement of psycho-synthesis has been started all over the world as back as in first quarter of this century itself ; it is yet widening and enriching its body.

This transition of psychology from a part of philosophy to the branch of medicine, almost an independent discipline to-day, so to say, historically speaking, is a very recent development. The factors that have contributed to the growth of modern psycho-therapy have mainly been industrial, scientific, and socio-political revolution in the last few centuries. The most important factor is the meeting of the East and the West, caused and made easy by means of modern transport and tele-communication, besides, the press and publicity. This change, however, is effected more from philosophical and cultural sides in the recent times, mainly through the ancient Indian tradition unique in its kind—it is Indian Culture.

Before the cultural and commercial transactions between the East and the West began, there was and is still continued to a certain extent a dispute between the philosophical view of the living being as a unit of Body, Mind and Spirit together as against a bio-physical and bio-chemical complex. It was thus a very fundamental issue as regards subjective and objective aspect of Life, Nature and the Transcendental. In a dispute between Science and Philosophy this is conspicuously present. Psycho-therapy, nay, medicine as a whole, being a scientific discipline, is affected by this tug of war causing such a heavy impact on psycho-therapy, that the very entity of mind, not to speak of soul, had lost its existence. In physical sciences Newton and others, Darwin and others in Biology etc., had given a radically different picture of Matter, Life and Spirit. Freud and his group on the other hand paved the way to Unconscious under the name Depth-psychology. There emerged, still side by side an opposite school of thought in psycho-therapy, through K. Abraham, Roverta Assagioly, etc., under the name Height-psychology in search of higher and brighter aspects of mind as against the darker ones of the former. Though Freud had already noted this dimension of mind, and Jung too had recognised the same, it were Assagioly and others, who incorporated it practically in the body of psycho-therapy.

The conflict between subjectivity and objectivity in fact is of inverse and reverse sides of the same coin—on the one hand and the height and depth of mind on the other, continued for a long time till the first quarter of this century.

By this time psycho-therapy had made a great advance on its march towards solving the problems of mental health. Three factors, however—population, over-urbanisation and



over-use of industrialisation created unprecedented complications and problems of life causing stress and strain so much so that psycho-therapy in its present form is not in a position to keep pace with the alarming situation that is being created.

Still in another corner, the new concept of mind, in Experimental Psychology, as nothing more than a chemical complex, as an object to be investigated and controlled in the laboratory, like an electronic model, (*i. e.*, as Cybernetics looks at it), led to the belief that all the problems of life could fall within the jurisdiction of Chemistry, and is therefore a place for their solutions. The result is manufacturing of tranquilisers, L.S.D's and other painkiller products. The problem is further aggravated by an advent of Penicilin, Antibiotics etc. Over and above pollution on various levels and of all possible kinds (even psychic pollution, if this could be granted), along with all other plausible factors, practically nullifying all human endeavours. In psycho-therapy thus the ratio of problems and their solutions is in inverse proportion. And therefore if there is a constant need both for a scientific pursuit as well as an individual aspiration, of enriching every branch of modern learning from any possible source, irrespective of Time-Space and Cultural considerations, much so in the case with psycho-therapy. A radically different branches in comparatively recent times under the name Para-psychology dealing with the problems of meta-psychological events, was started, while the outside pressure caused by an impact of the East also gave it a new direction. In Philosophy, slowly though, an evolution had already begun due to pressure from without. While in material science a revolution was waiting for Einstein's Relativity. It saw almost an end of classical physics, opening, thereby a new vista. It tacitly opened a back-door for subjectivity in the hitherto edifice of objectivity. Its culmination was witnessed by an introduction of principle of uncertainty of Heisenberg and Quantum 'physics of Masc Plank'. Thus in science itself the objectivity had to accommodate subjectivity, while philosophy had to give place to objectivity of scientific world, by adjusting itself with its progress.

### Yoga in the West

Emergence of Yoga on Western horizon saw the multiple impacts on its mental framework and cultural tradition. An aura of mysticism, the so-called exhibition of occult powers associated with the name Yoga, gave rise to as a reaction initially, a sort of disbelief if not a kind of hatred, in the scientific and rational mind of the West. A layman's reaction on the other hand was that of bewilderment, awe and sometimes disgust or a terror. As a matter of fact, both these were bubbles on the undercurrent of attraction and impulsion for its aims and objects on subconscious level. It is thus Yoga, which really happens to be the first prophet of Indian Culture to the Western Culture, and would eventually serve as a bridge between the two.

Curiosity of a common Western man restricted mainly to the practice of *Āsanās*, and certain types of *Prāṇāyāmas*, as well as a scientific belief of a scientist or of a man of medicine confining to an investigation of Yoga, based on modern scientific parametres, essentially go to Yogic spirit, has already arrived at certain generalisation. However it is really a matter of hearty commendation.

The overall impact of Indian Culture especially of Yoga, particularly on medicine of to-day, was a reorientation given to it basically as regards the concept of Health and ill-health, etc. That it is a psycho-somatic phenomenon as against previously somatic one's. This is a recognition and acceptance to the Spirit (in Indian sense), which otherwise was neglected by modern medicine.

However, this modern objectively scientific approach superimposed upon a basically subjectively objective Indian Culture, still needs more basic considerations, leading ultimately, the author supposes, to an hitherto unknown virgin scientific realm; for modern science and modern man. And that is opened by Ancient Indian philosophy and science.

Yoga in the West, at present, forms more a part of physical education or medicine ; much less an independent pursuit, a means of Realisation, Deliverance, as is still the case with many Indian branches of learning.

### Yoga

At the very outset it must be remembered that Yoga as such is independent of any religious impact even in its motherland, with its three great faiths Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, the names, forms and details only differ. And it is simply of because religious difference.

Since it is being subjected to modern scientific investigation Yoga has become known everywhere; and is thus quite at home in science as well as in philosophy. At present Yoga is in the hands of scientists, and is hence called a science. It is also called a philosophy. In India this sort of demarcation and distinction was not made. Actually Yoga really is a yoga *i. e.*, integration or synthesis of philosophy and science from to (युज्) yuj—to unite, join, synthesize. This permeable character of Yoga is unique in itself. From its proper Indian perspective this would, if looked into, be better comprehended.

Yoga with its Eight Limbs, is a combination of philosophy, science and practice. The *Yamas* and *Niyamas* form more of socio-ethical aspect, while *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* more of bio-physiological aspect, the *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, more of psychological aspects. Yoga as a whole thus is a characteristically happy combination of all the three.

Before proceeding further to investigate the integral character of Yoga, it must be noted how and how far it is related to psycho-therapy. Yoga, as is maintained, is prescribed even for a diseased, disable and deficient not to speak of the young and healthy one. In this capacity then it serves both as a preventive as well as a prophylactic measure (*Yoga* and *Kṣema* in its technical sense). Treatment of a disease as well as achievement of health is a bi-product, on the way to the ultimate goal of self-realization and union of *piṇḍa-brahmāṇḍ* (*i. e.* microcosm and macrocosm), which it advocates. In its capacity as a preventive measure that Yoga comes close to medicine and psycho-therapy. It is exactly here that we have to know deeply as to what medicine would mean in Indian context. And that straightway brings us to *Āyurveda*, the ancient Indian medicine, divine in its origin, coming down to us from a hoary past. Both are, if anything, but a twin-products of Indian Culture *i. e.*, Aśvinī Kumārs. Summarily taking into consideration all the features of life (*adhibhautika*, *adhidaivika* and *ādhyātmika*), Yoga is a higher type of *Āyurveda*, and vice versa. *Āyurveda* in its philosophic perspective is a mundane Yoga, with difference or rather a stress on subjective or objective characters respectively. It must also be noted here that in Indian tradition it is Patanjali who had composed Yoga, Medicine and Grammar to irradicate impurities of *Citta* (*Mental faculties*), Body and Language (*pada*), respectively. So also the Lord Brahmā is regarded as the revealer or Creator of Yoga as well as *Āyurveda*. Two more examples would suffice it to show an intimate relation of Yoga and *Āyurveda*.

Health, as *Āyurveda* defines is :

समदोषः समान्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः ।

प्रसन्नात्म्येन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ॥

He is called healthy, who is endowed with equilibrium of *Agni* (including *dhātuvagnis*) *dhātumala*-functions and whose soul, mind and senses are happy.

The word *Svastha* literally means “seated in one-self”, which nothing less than the aim set-forth by Yoga *i. e.*, established in ones own self self—realisation. The *Mahābhārata* explicitly speaks :

तत्त्वं रजस्तमं इति त्रयो स्युः मानसाः ।

तेषां गुणानां साम्यं यत्तदाहुः स्वस्थ लक्षणम् ॥

शीतोष्णे चैव वायुश्च त्रयः शारीरजाः गुणाः ।

तेषां गुणानां साम्यं यत्तदाहुः स्वास्थ्यलक्षणम् ॥



Health is an equilibrium of the three mental properties *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, as well as of three (corresponding) properties of body *śīta* (kapha) *uṣṇa* (pitta) and *vāta*. In these verses, we find that Health in its Indian medical sense is a higher psycho-somatic condition. The problem of Health then is to achieve that state if it is lost, and afterwards to maintain for a given life-span. This is precisely the aim of Indian Culture. A means to arrive at it is the treatment, medically speaking. This is what *Caraka* speaks :

याभिः क्रियाभिः जायन्ते शरीरे धातवः समाः ।

सा चिकित्सा मनुष्याणां कर्मनन् भिषजांस्मृतम् ॥

Yoga and Āyurveda have built up their edifices on this basement considering philosophy, science and practice. Therefore is than the need to know as to how Indian Culture, could correlate, manage and utilise these three and what is the linking factor that could make this effort possible. Before proceeding further it would rather be judicious and more feasible to find out whether there is something corresponding to this in modern Western Culture.

### Symmetry and Consistency

Each branch of learning evolves out its own philosophy, science and practice *i. e.*, the problem of Transcendental, Creation and Life. Leaving aside shades of meanings of these terms, it could be well said that modern science accepts energy as an ultimate source of Life and Creation, and that this expresses in terms of atoms, molecules and all the living and non-living entities from matter to unicellular organism to highly developed complex organism like man, including flora in between. A theory of evolution, accepted by modern science, is another basic principle. These principles differ from those of tradition ones. The modern Western approach compared to its tradition one, is experimental and objective than the previous subjective or the speculative one. Therefore the traditional philosophy in the West could not get space for accommodation into science and practice. And therefore there is a need for enrichment, especially so is the case of medicine and psycho-therapy. Modern medicine, particularly psycho-therapy is at present, a combination of its tradition, as well as the modern scientific disciplines.

Consistency and Symmetry are the two main important dimensions that modern scientific theories require for their progress and their correlations. The scientific advancements to-day in all respects, follow these principles as quidlines for extending their horizons. It is with this, perspective that physics and chemistry and mathematics for example, are solving these problems and enriching their bodies.

Keeping such basic considerations in view Indian Culture had its structure frame. Therefore its summary expression is very much necessary. For an evaluation of a system is in proportion to the aims it sets forth, the fundamentals it anticipates and the practice wherein it combines there two.

### Philosophy

It needs no mention that Indian Culture is of subjectively objective nature. And in this way it has arrived at two fundamental metaphysical principles. One is Unity in Diversity. Creation which represents diversity in a multiple expression of Ultimate Reality, the One, in terms of One and Many. Accordingly the Upaniṣadash have evolved out Vedantic formula as follows :

एकेन हि वा विज्ञातेन सर्वं विज्ञानं स्यात् वाचाऽरम्भणं  
विकारो नामधेयम्.....इत्येव सत्यम्

By knowing(that) One indeed: All (this) is known; the Modification and Name have beginning (*i.e.*, existence) only in Speech. . . . THAT is true. (ii) Identity of macrocosm and microcosm. *pinḍa brahmāṇḍa aikya*. The one represents the Universe while the other the individual.

The method adopted to have this knowledge is that of spiritual realization. It is stated that by the knowledge of the Self Indian sect arrived at the knowledge of universe.

The contents or the basic Creation are said to be 24/25 in Sāṃkhya. Its evolution presupposes levels or grades of expression—as one, duals, triads, quadruples, pentagonal, etc. It must be borne in mind that, excepting a very little variation here and there, Sāṃkhya system has been accepted by other sects as well as a framework of all the branches of ancient Indian scientific thought, even for socio-political ones.

### Religion

From the above mentioned two basic issues have been derived, adopted and applied other sub-issues in all Indian branches of learning. Thus the principle of Unity and Diversity gave rise to the secondary principle of *sāmānya-viśeṣa* (commonness and difference, genus and species, general and special, etc.).

सामान्यमेकत्वकरम्, विशेषस्तु पृथक्त्वकृत्

Commonness causes unification, speciality causes difference. From this further, a practical principle is derived.

बुद्धिः समानैः सर्वेषां विपरीतैस्तु विपर्ययः

There is an increase in similars by all similars, by contraries, (the result) is contrary. These two secondary principles are judiciously employed in scientific and practical fields of a system, right from Medicine, Yoga, Grammar, Politics, Sociology, etc. In Medicine, especially these two are always kept in view and based upon them are also the concepts of Aetiology, Pathogenesis, therapeutics, pharmacology and others.

With such and similar background Religion has laid out its structure. In India, irrespective of individual differences, all religions have a common belief and aim in self-perfection by self-realization. Four ends have been thus recognised under the name *puruṣārthas* i. e., *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. In fact every religion in this or that form has conceived and considered these aims, while evolving and establishing, social, moral and other similar institutions. West is not exception to this. The only difference is that of order and emphasis. The East keeps *artha* and *kāma* between *dharma* and *mokṣa* the West puts *dharma* and *mokṣa* if at all between *artha* and *kāma*. This attitudinal difference between the two, is the main reason, which seems to account for all the differences between them, in all respects of philosophy, science and practice.

In its modified form the institution of *varṇāśrama* system has been conceived and established.

### Ethics

Ethical and moral principles of the two fundamental principles stated above have been adopted to maintain social and individual balance. Without violating the basic biological instincts of self-preservation, self-reproduction and self-multiplications, three ethical deductions have been summarily formulated; they are *dāreṣaṇa* (desire for wife) *vitteṣaṇa* (desire for wealth) and *lokeṣaṇa* (desire for name and fame in the world). A whole realm of psychological factors seem to have been simplified in these three factors. This is what is called *sūtra-style* in its essence. All socio-moral codes of Indian society bases on this fact. Now, if a balance of all these three on individual level, in relation to societal level, is arrived at and maintained properly, there is naturally and individual and merely a social harmony. If on the other hand, if any one or more of these factors get overpowered, the individual life—also a social life to that extent—is disturbed, a seed of psychological disorder is sown.



## Psychology

The whole of complex structure of mind has been described by Indian Culture to have been simply characterised by three basic properties *sattva*, *rajas* and *tāmas*. Here too a societal and individual balance is desirable. The factors that work against this balance and harmony are said to be six enemies *Kāma* (desire), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (implusion), *Mada* (pride), *Matsara* (envy). Indian Culture conceived individual as subjected to cyclic order of births and deaths so also conscious, it viewed as continuous flow, with past, present and future as its phases. It is here that *punarjanma* and *karma* theories crop up. Indian Culture also knew very well the unconscious, subconscious and superconscious levels of mind, extending upto seven in all.

## Medicine

In Āyurveda and Yoga corresponding to the three *guṇas*, there are three *doṣas*, three *naḍis*, with their similar corresponding spacio-functional characteristics, as *uṣṇasīta* and *sama* etc. As has been indicated above in the definitions of health and ill-health, both of body and mind and the principle of generality and speciality with their practical application are derived from the same basic two metaphysical principles stated above.

In addition to these, the most important issues are *saṁskāra* (rites) in Hindu society. *Saṁskāra* is defined as a measure to inculcate and establish desired properties or impressions in an object in question on the one hand and also eradicate those properties which are not desired on the other hand. These started right before birth and even after death. Most noteworthy is *upanayana saṁskāra*, from that day onwards the *dvija* (the twice-born one) had to perform *saṁdhyā* (i.e., to recite some mantras, in morning, midday, evening and midnight). From psychological point of view this has a very great bearing upon mind. To strengthen conscious level of mind as compared to unconscious and superconscious levels was the practical consideration of Indian Culture. Besides, other traditions and conventions like *kathā*, *purāṇa-śravaṇa*, *prāvachana*, *kīrtana*, *japa*, *homa*, pilgrimages (*tīrthayātrā*), temples, *mathas*, music, drama, dance, painting, even sports and festivals had a great force to cultivate the conscious mind of man. The whole social structure was suitable for this, but the rise of individualistic trend and break-down of joint family system has greatly contributed to aggravate the problem of psychotherapy.

Summarily through philosophy, science and practice Indian Culture maintained consistency and symmetry to a great extent.

## Yoga and Āyurveda (Science and/or Philosophy)

The present situation in India to-day is that traditional psycho-therapy has become stagnated or rather is replaced by modern psycho-therapy. In ancient times the problem of psychological disorder was managed either by the then medical (i.e., Āyurvedic) or spiritual authority or by one who combined the both.

Being well aware of complications and implications of psychological disorders Yoga and Āyurveda had practically managed them by reducing them into two main factors out of 24/25 which constitute each entity of the universe according to Sāṁkhya. They are Mind and *Prāṇa*. Both of them have been assigned middle position in the scheme of psycho-somatic constituents of body. Mind is said to be practically material i.e., made of *pañca mahābhūtas* though metaphysically it is not, while *buddhi ahaṁkāra* and *citta* are purely metaphysical. Likewise *prāṇa* is said to be always present with mind, related with it by intimate relation is also peculiar. Though essentially it is also on a lower grade yet practically it is par with mind. *Prāṇa* also serves as a link between lower faculties like *kapha*, *pitta*, *vāta* and higher faculties like mind, *buddhi*, etc. Even in its form of *Vāta-doṣa prāṇa* is said to be vehicle for *kapha* and *pitta*.

Of eight limbs *prāṇāyāma* is the fourth stage. Upto *prāṇāyāma* Yoga is more a science, than philosophy or art, from *pratyāhāra* onwards it is more a philosophy and art than science. Āyurveda as a whole also is either a philosophy of life or science of life if viewed respectively so. Yoga and Āyurveda have practically utilised this position and intimacy of *manas* and *prāṇa* in health and ill-health, which are defined as psycho-somatic.

### Aetiology and Pathogenesis in Psycho-therapy

In psycho-therapy aetiology also is twofold, on mental level as well as on physical level. On mental level it is *prajñāparādha* (i.e., deviation from *prajñā* i.e., highest discriminating intelligence). This leads to *triṣuṇa* balance of mind causing disturbance in the whole scheme and order of one's life (*āhāra*, *vihāra* etc.). A psychological pathogenesis in this regard is very remarkable in Gita. It says ;

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः संगस्तेषूपजायते ।  
संगात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥  
क्रोधात्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।  
स्मृतिभ्रंशात्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

Thus this ultimately leads to disharmony of the whole being. As far *prāṇa* is concerned its mechanism as regards *naḍīs*, *doṣas* and *dhātu*, *mala*, etc., in Yoga and Āyurveda is almost the same ; difference is on emphasis on particular aspect, that too because the former is subjective more, the other is more objective. Āyurvedically speaking mental disorders are mainly due to vitiation of *Udāna* and *Prāṇa* (two modes, out of five modes of *Prāṇa*). Located and functioning from *Kanṭha* and *heart* respectively. As for *doṣas* it is a kind of *pitta* (five kinds of *pittas*) that gets vitiated. Thus the mind, *prāṇa* and bodily *doṣas*, etc. jointly cause psychological disorder. The treatment also therefore a joint one. Reversal of pathogenesis and removal of aetiological factor is the purpose of treatment. From this point of view Āyurveda, as Caraka exhibits it, very precisely lays down the aphorism *niyanta, prāṇeta ca manasaḥ* (i. e., *prāṇaḥ*). *Prāṇa* (Caraka uses *Vāyu* for that) is the controller as well as the leader of Mind. In these three words only Caraka masterly gives the quintessence of the whole problem of psychological phenomena. Modern medicine in general and psycho-therapy in particular is almost completely ignorant of *prāṇa* and its so intimate relation with mind. In fact Āyurveda says '*vāyus tantrayantra-dharaḥ*'. *Vāyu* is the upholder (supporter) of the Machine in the form of body (*Tantra*-body). A factor which has been assigned such a supreme fiat in body finds a little place in modern medicine, much so in psycho-therapy is real curse of the whole problem. Since mind has become weak, in such problems, they cannot be solved on mental level itself. Therefore Yoga and Āyurveda, judiciously resort to *Prāṇa*. Since sole of medicine is limited, Āyurveda prescribes also meta-physical remedies. And it is here the Yoga has its proper field after the problem temporarily managed by medicine. By the way it should be noted that in such cases and other that Āyurveda incorporates Yoga covertly and overtly as and when necessary.

The foregoing discussion thus brings us to study and investigate *praniclose*, so as to employ it for the welfare of humanity. Moreover it would serve as a liason officer or a scaffolding for the East and West to meet, scientifically.

### Sources of Prāṇa-Vidyā

Since there is no branch of learning, which has nothing to do with *prāṇa*, this lore ranges right from the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, Yoga and *Tantragranthas*, and Āyurveda as well as musical treatises are sources for *prāṇavidyā*. A short practical manual, of very recent composition, yet representative of ancient tradition, is available under the names 'Svarodaya' 'Śiva svarodaya or Pavanavijaya'. It is compared to the whole of its tradition—a surface layer of a iceberg on the ocean.

It is a necessity of collecting, editing this lost tradition, with a view to achieve human welfare.

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