

JAINA YOGA : A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

Great religions of the world are ways of life conceived and propagated by highly distinguished sons of humanity. Some of the insights that these great souls have had into life and its relation to universe as well as into the psychology behind, are indeed amazingly rational and potentially capable of standing the test of objective analysis.

Jainism being a great religion with powerful metaphysical conceptions and theories based upon sound logic and with the system of ethics of higher order, is rich with psychological insights relating to the evolution and behaviour of the individual. However, it should be remembered that "since the psychological analysis is subordinate to the metaphysical system, several facts of psychological interests are thrown into the background of the philosophical scheme. Nevertheless, there is no mistake about the striking psychological analysis exhibited by the Jaina thinkers". Such analysis is more profound with regard to the sensory and preceptual processes; the types of Samyagjñāna 'cognition'; Guṇasthānas 'the stages of evolution of the soul'; Mārganasthānas 'the multiple approaches to the understanding of the soul'; Leśyās 'the six thought colourings'; the activities of the body, speech and mind (Yoga) and a host of others. The rational and vivid depiction of the above topics would really attract any student of modern psychology and would encourage him for a scientific enquiry into the phenomena described. However, not many attempts worthy of notice have been so far made to evaluate the psychological insights depicted in Jaina thought, in the light of a modern psychological facts, except only a few like the studies of Dr. T. G. Kalghatgi and Dr. Mohanlal Mehta. In these studies a beginning is made and a few topics like sensory perception and higher cognitive processes are given more consideration while psychologically more significant topics like 'Yoga' and 'Mārganasthānas' have been given little psychological interpretation. Besides, the attempts made so far have not emphasised the need for an empirical verification of the well conceived psychological processes by means of scientific methods like objective

observation and if possible even experimentation. I may not be wrong if I say that some of these conceived psychological processes can be hypothesized and subjected to empirical testing. Such an approach would become more meaningful in the study of Jaina Yoga.

Jaina yoga :

The Jaina thinkers have used the term 'yoga' to denote the vibrations of the mundane soul resulting from one or more of the three types of activities—mental, vocal and physical. However, it is interesting to note that in the formula *KĀYAVĀÑMANAḤ—KARMA—YOGAḤ*, the activities of body, speech and mind themselves have been conceived as 'yoga'. This is more akin to modern psychological approach wherein the behaviour, rather than the individual, is the object of study. Such an approach becomes empirically more meaningful as the activities stated above can be subjected to objective observation. To explain the 'what', 'how' and 'why' aspects of the activities the Jaina thinkers have depended upon introspection and intuition but the modern psychologists, to describe them, use scientific methods.

The study of Jaina yoga from the modern psychological view point and in the light of the available empirical findings would help us in gaining better insight into Jaina yoga itself on the one hand and in utilising the concepts and theories put forward by the Jaina thinkers for a better understanding of the human behaviour in general. Besides some of the rich subjective observations and intuitions of the Jaina thinkers may be formulated into testable hypotheses and subjected to empirical verification which would in turn enrich the theory of human behaviour.

Aspects of Yoga :

Jaina thinkers have explained yoga in all its three aspects—'what', 'how' and 'why'. These three aspects are to be found in all the three main types of activities—mental, vocal and physical activities (manoyoga, vacana-yoga and kāya-yoga). The 'what' aspect comprises of the various activities, gross and subtle, and are subjected to different classifications. The physical movements as well as the various physiological processes of the individual are examples of kāya-yoga while the variety of vocal sounds produced

and the language spoken are examples for vacana-yoga and the thoughts, feelings and emotions are examples of manoyoga. It is surprising to see that the Jaina thinkers have made a minute analysis of the various psycho-physical activities and have assumed some types of interaction between the mental and the physical processes. Such an inter-action is well conceived and explained in the modern clinical psychology. For instance, today it is an accepted fact that some of the physical ailments like asthma, stomach ulcer and rheumatoid arthritis have psychological bases while some of the psychological experiences like the feelings of anxiety and tension, inferiority complex etc. have physical foundations. The obsessive and compulsive experiences are vivid examples for establishing the interaction between the mental and the physical processes.

Compulsive gambling, paranoid fears leading to murders, conversion hysteria, sexual perversions like nymphomania and manic reactions are a few clearcut examples of the influence of mental processes on the actual physical activities of the individual. Besides through hypnosis it is possible to demonstrate practically the influence of mental processes on the physical activities.

In explaining the 'why' aspect of yoga the Jain thinkers have attempted an extremely subtle analysis of the various psychological dynamics. Accordingly, the different activities of the individual and their effects are attributed to the operation of the five senses, four passions krodha 'anger', māna 'pride', māyā 'deceit' and lobha 'greed'; five types of vowlessness; twenty five kriyās are activities—Sāmyaktva kriyā, mithyātva kriyā, prāyoga kriyā, iryāpathakriyā, pradoṣikī-kriyā, kāyikī kriyā adhikaraṇikī kriyā, pāritāpikī kriyā, prānātipātikī kriyā, darśana kriyā, sparśana-kriyā, samanta-pātana kriyā, anābhoga kriyā, swahasta kriyā, nisarga kriyā, vidāraṇā-kriyā, anāvyaṇāpādikī kriyā, anākāṅkṣā kriyā, prārambha kriyā, parigrahi-kriyā, māyā kriyā, mithyādarśana kriyā, apratyākhyāna kriyā and also the activities performed by the individual while dealing with the lifeless things in the environments (e.g. two kinds of mixing-bhaktapāna and upakaraṇa). Any yoga is not only determined by the above stated activities but also by the variations in intensity, intentional character etc. of the activities.

It is interesting to note that some of the above mentioned dynamics of behaviour have their factual basis. The *kaṣāyas*, for instance, through their operation, can stir up the whole individual in gross or subtler forms. The gross changes taking place during emotional experience like thumping heart beat, increased respiratory rate, excessive sweating etc. are clear indicators of emotional experience. But in their absence when emotional experience is in a subtler form, one may not be able to recognize the operation of emotions. However, today even the subtler changes that take place during conscious or unconscious emotional experiences can be observed and recorded by means of sophisticated instruments like the psychogalvanoscope, polygraph and the electroencephalograph (E.E.G.) A person with guilt consciousness but who is concealing the same from others, can be made to confess his guilt by means of galvanic skin responses. Similarly, the E.E.G. for instance, can give us the subtle variations that may be taking place in the brain waves during normal and emotional states of mind. Besides modern psychology has also recognised the role of unconscious emotions and complexes in the disturbed behaviour of the individual. This fact supports, in a way, the operation of *Karmas* at the *upaśama* and *kṣayaopaśama* levels. This means that there are rich resources in *Jaina* theory of emotions which can be utilized for formulation of tentative hypotheses by the modern psychologists.

Many of the twenty five *kriyās* mentioned above seem to have empirical foundations as to their effect on *yoga*. A few examples are *prādoṣikī kriyā* (tendency to accuse others in anger) which is similar to projection of blame on others; *darśana kriyā* (infatuated desire to see a pleasing form) which is similar to the perversion of *darśana rati* and *sparsāna kriyā* (frivolous indulgence in touching etc.) which is akin to some other sexual perversion often expressed in the form of *kleptomania*. Today in modern psychology *darśana rati* and *sparsāna rati* are factually established forms of sexual perversion. Some of the twenty five *kriyās* which are not finding their similarity in modern psychology can be hypothesized and empirically verified.

The supremacy of *Manoyoga* :

The importance of the mind in the total behaviour of the individual is very well depicted in the line

‘*Mana eva manuṣyānām kāraṇam bandhamokṣayoḥ*’.

If mind is the root cause of both the suffering and happiness of the individual, it is necessary that its activities are to be analysed and understood in a more detailed manner which indeed has been attempted by Jaina thinkers in a more rational way.

The continuously flowing thoughts and feelings of the individual may be good or bad in their effect. On this ground the Jaina thinkers have thought of two types of feeling 'Bhāvas' in the mundane soul. They are 'śubha-bhāva and aśubha-bhāva', which are also sometimes known as śubha yoga and aśubha yoga respectively. If śubha-bhāva is the feeling of pleasant nature, aśubha bhāva is the feeling of unpleasant nature (It should be noted here that there is a third type—śuddha-bhāva which refers to the enjoyment of self by self. Since it is taken to mean the spiritual experience of the pure self, it is of little psychological importance for us in terms of the problem at hand.). However, the other two correspond to the normal feelings that can be accepted by students of psychology. These feelings are generally related to certain objects in the environment which may have either positive or negative values (attraction or repulsion).

In terms of thoughts, manoyoga can also be classified into three types—'śubha-dhyāna', 'aśubha-dhyāna' and 'śuddha-dhyāna' or 'śukla-dhyāna'. As it is in feeling, here again, the third type refers to the spiritual experience of the soul while the other two refer to the meditation of the mundane soul.

It is really surprising to see that the Jaina thinkers have had sound reflection on the nature and consequences of the first two types of meditation which today have factual support. The varieties of aśubha-dhyāna—himsānanda, steyānanda, 'mṛṣānanda' and parigrahānanda have their equivalents in 'sadism', 'kleptomania' 'compulsive lying' and abnormal acquisitive tendencies' respectively. The highly valuable insights into these forms of behaviour gained by the Jaina thinkers can make useful contributions towards the advancement of psychological knowledge. Similarly the types of śubha-dhyāna—padasta dhyāna, pindasta dhyāna, rūpasta dhyāna, and rūpātīt-dhyāna and their descriptions in Jaina thought may contribute towards the advancement of the theory of imagery and thought processes when they are meaningfully hypothesized and empirically studied.

Concluding remarks :

Jain yoga is a rich concept full of potentials for scientific investigations. The several aspects of this concept stated so far and also the Saṁjñās, anupreṁśās and the leśa aspects of yoga are to be thoroughly analysed, studied and interpreted from the point of view of modern psychology. Many of the psychological findings upto date do support some of the concepts depicted in Jaina yoga. They can even find their direct applications in the clinical, counseling and mental health activities of the modern psychologists.

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NOTES

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