

Historical Notes

Concept of *Manas* in *Sāṃkhya Darśana*

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Abstract

Since time immemorial *manas* has been the subject of curiosity for scholars, scientists and philosophers. Vedic, Philosophical and Āyurvedic literatures have a vast and deep description of *manas*. Philosophers either ‘āstika’ or ‘nāstika’ have described *manas siddhānta* vividly. Though these kinds of difference of opinions are there, all the *darśana* accept the importance of *manas* in the process of perception and even for the birth of any individual. Here, an attempt is made to highlight the concept of *manas* in *sāṃkhya darśana*.

Key words: *Darśana, Sāṃkhya, Manas.*

1. Introduction

Since time immemorial *manas* has been the subject of curiosity for scholars, scientists and philosophers. The reason behind this curiosity is its importance in the development of mankind. Human being is superior to other creatures in the series of development. This Supremacy of man remains in his quality to work after thinking, which is the function of *manas*. No other animal is capable of thinking logically. This is the only reason which leads mankind to the crest of development in every aspect. Simultaneously *manas* is also responsible for many of the problems of present era. These problems may be political, environmental, social or personal. Considering this fact, WHO included psychological health in the definition of complete health, only a healthy mind is capable of overcoming these problems.

In Indian culture mind has been described by various angles. Vedic, Philosophical and Āyurvedic literatures have a vast and deep description of *manas*. In *Samskrta*, the word *manas* is derived from the root word ‘मन्स’ which means ‘to know’ and was used in this sense in early *veda* and other literature. In *Yajurveda*, the *manas* has been conceptualized as the inner flame of knowledge. It is said that all the *indriya* (sensory organs) are directly controlled by *manas*. Without the help of *manas* the process of perception can't take place. *Rgveda* also has description of *manas*. It has been clearly mentioned that purification of mind prevents occurring diseases in human beings; therefore one should have noble thoughts. The capacity of *manas* in healing process has also been described in *Rgveda*.

Mañḍukya Upaniṣad described *manas* as a prime cause of birth and *mokṣa* (मनः एव मनुष्याणा-

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कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।). In *Kena Upaniṣada*, importance of *manas* in perception is described through various examples.

Philosophers either ‘āstika’ or ‘nāstika’ have described *manas siddhānta* vividly. All *darśana* also described *manas* but there is difference in opinions regarding origination, properties and number of *manas* etc. For example, *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* philosophies believe the *manas* to be *kāraṇa dravya* i.e. an eternal substance, always remaining present in the universe. On other hand, *sāṃkhya* philosophy believes that *manas* is not an eternal substance rather originates from *sāttvika ahaṅkāra* during *śrṣṭi kriyā* (evolution of universe).

Though, these kinds of difference of opinions are there, all the *darśana* accept the importance of *manas* in the process of perception and even for the birth of any individual. Here, an attempt is made to highlight the concept of *manas* in *Sāṃkhya darśana*.

यतः सर्वपारिषदमिदं शास्त्रं, तेनायुर्वदाविरुद्ध वैशेषिक
सांख्यादि दर्शनभेदेन
विरुद्धार्थोऽभिधीयमानो न पूर्वपरविरोधमावहतीत्यर्थः ।
च.सू. 8/3 चक्र

In some cases, while dealing with certain concepts, the *darśana* may also show dissimilarity in opinion among them but, it is still accepted in *grantha* by Ācarya. *Darśana* thought begins from origin of this universe, and of Āyurveda also.

The word *darśana* is created from the root word “दृश” which stands for ‘to see’. The other meaning of the word are looking at, observing, knowing and understanding. The scope of philosophy is extensive and wide spread. It includes all the efforts to accomplish and achieve the knowledge of all aspects. The beginning, development and destruction of universe are subject matter discussed in all branches of philosophy. *Sāṃkhya* or the enumeration of the various cosmic principles (*tattva*), which are

considered separate from the true self or consciousness (*puruṣa*)

The word *sāṃkhya* is derived from the word “*samkhyā*” which means a sense of thinking and counting. Here, thinking is with reference to some basic principles of knowledge of *puruṣa* and counting refers to the 24 principles born out of *prakṛti*. This double implication of the word has been set forth by *Vijñana Bhikṣu* in his preface to *sāṃkhya* -

संख्यां प्रकुर्वते चैव प्रकृतिं च प्रचक्षते । तत्वानि च चतुर्विंशति सांख्यं
प्रकीर्तितम् ॥

So, *Sāṃkhya* means knowledge of self through right discrimination.

Sāṃkhya is psychological system of Philosophy. It explains the evolution of the universe from the psychological perspective. It advocates that the ‘*mahat*’, an effect evaluated from ‘*prakṛti*’ itself is *manas* (Ishwar , 1837, p.6; *Sām. Kār.* 1.3).

2. *Utpatti of Manas*

According to ‘*sāṃkhya*’ system of philosophy, *mahat*, evaluated from *prakṛti*, itself is *manas* and it is further one of the effects of *ahaṅkāra* (Sharma, 2000, p. 3; *Sām. D.* 1.7, 2.17) ‘*buddhi*’ (intellect), ‘*ahaṅkāra*’ (egoism) and ‘*manas*’ (mind) constitute the psychic apparatus of living personality. They are also called *trividha añtahkaraṇa* (three internal organs).

To understand the origin of *manas*, one should have an overview of the cosmology of *sāṃkhya* philosophy. According to *sāṃkhya*, the universe has evolved from a primary principle called *mūla prakṛti*. In the presence of *puruṣa*, the *triguna* (three attributes) are latent in *prakṛti* *puruṣa* in a non-manifested state; hence, the *kārya* (effect) of the *prakṛti* also contain these *triguna* (Ishwar , 1837, p.6; *Sām. Kār.* 1.3).

The characteristics of these attributes are explained in *sāṃkhya*. *Sattva* is *laghu* in nature

and it is the cause of *prīti* (happiness) and enlightens the *prakāśaka* (knowledge). *Rajas* are having the property of *cala* (movement) and it produces action. It is the cause of *aprīti* (aversion). *Tamas* is *guru* (heavy) and causes *vishada* (depression). Even though these three attributes are having opposing characteristics, they compare with the flame (*sattva*), oil (*rajas*) and wick (*tamas*) of an oil lamp (Ishwar, 1837, p. 13; *S.Kār.12*).

From the *prakṛti*, i.e the *avyakta* (non-manifest), the *vyakta* (manifested universe) is affected sequentially. The first effect from the nature is a conscious principle called *Buddhi* (intellect) or *mahat* (grossness). This intellect is undifferentiated and is just a notion. *adhyavasāya* (determination) is the characteristic feature of *buddhi* i.e. intellect (Ishwar, 1837, p. 21; *S.Kār.23*). Determination like “It is this”, “It should be done” and “It should not be done”, are coming under the purview of the intellect. By the predominance of the attributes, intellect exhibits eight features—merit, knowledge, detachment and prosperity are the features presented by *sattva* and demerit, ignorance attachment and non-prosperity are the features presented by *tamas*.

From this undifferentiated intellect, a notion of ‘I’ ness is generated; this is a form of *ahamkāra* (ego) that exhibit possessiveness (Ishwar, 1837, p. 21; *S.Kār.24*). This *ahamkāra* (ego) differentiates itself into three according to the predominance of the major attributes, thus there are three types of egos namely *sāttvika ahamkāra* (virtuous ego), *rājasika ahamkāra* (active ego) and *tāmasika ahamkāra* (inert ego).

Jñāneñdriya (sensory faculties), *karmeñdriya* (motor faculties) and *sattva* (*manas-mind*) are evolved from the *sāttvika ahamkāra* (Ishwar, 1837, p. 22; *S.Kār.25*) (virtuous ego). But this evolution is assisted by *rājasika ahamkāra* (active ego). The sentient world is the effect of *tāmasika ahamkāra* (inert ego), this evolution also is assisted by *rājasika ahamkāra* (active ego), thus

one find that *manas* (*sattva*) according to *sāmkhya* is the effect of *sāttvika ahamkāra* (virtuous ego), Nevertheless this ego contains the other two attributes too in a subdued state, Because of the inter-convertibility of the attributes, *sattva* may exhibit predominance of any of the attributes by the influence of favourable circumstances.

Prakṛti (primordial nature) is not an effect; it is just a cause (Ishwar, 1837, p. 22; *S. Kār.25*). That is why it is called nature. *Ahamkāra* (ego), *mahat* (intellect) and *tanmātra* (five quanta of senses) are causes and also are effects. The eleven *indriya* (faculties) generated from *sāttvika ahamkāra* (virtuous ego) and the elements affected from the quanta are mere effects are not considered as causes as nothing new is affected from them. Thus, *manas* is just an effect not a cause.

3. *Guṇa of Manas*

Manas is considered as faculty as it has common origin with the other faculties. They all originate from various egos. Differentiation into various faculties is because of the peculiarity of evolution of the major attributes (Ishwar, 1837, p.27; *S. Kār.27*).

4. *Manas as Ubhayeñdriya*

According to *Sāmkhya darśana*, *manas* is considered as *ubhayeñdriya* (Sharma, 2000, p.23; *Sam. D. 2.26*). *Manas* is a dual faculty as it is working as sensory and motor organ too (Sharma, 2000, p.8; *Sām. D.5.69*). It is the instrument to gain its own object called *vicārya* (thinkable). Anything that can be thought of is thinkable. As a motor faculty it is instrumental to the actions done through *sattva*. It also helps sensory and motor faculties in their functions.

5. *Properties of Manas*

Manas is atomic, an instrument, a sense organ, always active, non morphological, hence is not *vyāpaka* (Sharma, 2000, p. 3; *Sām. D.2.42*).

Manas is base for all *samskāra* (Sharma, 2000, p. 3; *Sām. D.* 2.40) helps in functioning of all other *indriya* (Sharma, 2000, p. 3; *Sam. D.* 2.45). It is necessary to join *ātmā* to *manas* and *manas* to *indriya* and further *indriya* to *viṣaya* for process of perception. Perceptive material of *Indriya* is converged and analysed with the help of *manas* hence it is super sense (Ishwar , 1837, p.27; *S. Kār.* 33).

6. *Manas as Karana*

Manas analyses the knowledge and actions so it is called the instrument for analysis (Sharma, 2000, *Sām. D.* 2.26). Discrimination of the type, "This is like this and not like that" is done by *manas*. So *sattva* may be compare with the private secretary to the higher authority. Private Secretary collects the information from different sources and presents to the higher authority with notes on the merits and demerits of the matter to be implemented. *Sāṃkhya* enumerates thirteen *karana* (instruments). From them ten are *bāhya karana* (Ishwar , 1837, p. 10; *Sām. Kār.* 6.25) (external instruments) and three are *añtahakarana* (internal instruments). The sensory and motor faculties come under the external instruments. Intellect, ego and *manas* are considered as internal instruments. Internal instruments have the ability to realize the past, present and future. External instruments can act only in the present. For example, one cannot perceive past or future with visual faculty whereas one can think of the past and future with *sattva*. Internal instruments are more important than the external instruments.

7. *Jñānotpatti Prakriyā*

The condition in which *manas* stays away from objects is known as *dhyān* (Sharma, 2000, p. 3; *Sām. D.* 1.58). With absence of *aviveka* (inability to analyse or differentiate) the further process of *jñāna* proceeds to the ultimate truth (Ishwar, 1837, p.26; *S. Kār.* 30). Perception of knowledge and execution of action may occur in

two ways-simultaneous and sequential (Ishwar, 1837, p. 31; *Sam. Kār.* 2.45). In simultaneous perception and action; the intellect, ego, *sattva* and faculty are engaged simultaneously resulting sudden perception or action. In sequential perception and action faculties; *sattva*, ego and intellect work sequentially. This gives sufficient time for the *sattva* to contemplate.

The *Sāṃkhya* system considers three types of bodies (Ishwar, 1837, p. 31; *Sām. Kār.* 40) viz, *sukṣmaśarīra* or *liṅgaśarīra* (subtle body), *sthulaśarīra* (gross body) and *prabhūtaśarīra* (inanimate body)

Gross body is originally derived from father and mother. The bodies of mountains, tree etc. comes under inanimate body. Subtle body is the combination of eighteen subtle principles. They are intellect, ego *sattva*, five senses faculties, and five quanta of senses. The subtle body originates first and is *asaktam* (unattached) and *niyatam* (limited). It transmigrates without collecting *niryobhogam* (Shashtri, 2002, p.34; *AH Su.*1.26) (experience). It can experience objects only when in conjugation with the gross body. It leaves the gross body at the time of death and regains a new gross body at the time of rebirth. The transmigrating subtle body is loaded with eight features such as merits and demerits, mentioned earlier.

8. Discussion

The concept of origin of *manas/sattva*, as explained by *sāṃkhya* deserves prime importance in the field of *Āyurvedic* psychotherapy. The *dhairyā* (basic power) and *ātmādivijñānam* (Acharya, 2002, p.139; *CS* 2.36) (self-orientation) of the patient are the most essentials to increase the *sattva* in him to fade away *rajas* and *tamas*.

The different systems of science should finally meet at a point, if they are to reach the comparison reveals how far one has travelled in

search of this reality. *Vedas*, *upaniṣad*, *āyurveda*, ancient and modern philosophies, religious etc. are in search of finding out what *manas* is and how to keep it in peace. *Manas* remains the same in whatever way one studies it so different systems discussing about mind should be same if they are in right direction.

References from *vedas* denotes very briefly regarding sprintsness of *manas* and its ability to perceive, analyze and stimulate every object and action. In *Vedas* more emphasis is given on supremacy of Soul in that regard *manas* being supporter of it. Many a times *manas* is compared with coach (driver) of chariot (*śarīra*) which carries the soul and the Chariot is dragged along on the path of the time by the five horses as sense organs. This shows the importance as soul has to travel in the direction where *manas* wants to carry it. Being controller and conductor of five senses, *manas* is the only responsible one for knowledge or actions, as horses are useless without coach or driver. *Manas* being the only active and prime factor considered as the cause of all the blames and boons. *Śiva samkalpa sukta* of *Śukla Yajurveda* describes different dimensions of *manas*. Role of *manas* in awkeness as well as sleep and dreams has been mentioned in very first verse, which concept is accepted not only by *āyurveda* but by the modern psychology too. High speed functioning is another attribute and modern scientists. Even today it is well known fact that brain functions are being performed through nervous signals in the form of electric waves which are high velocity. All these concepts are highlighted very briefly in *Veda*, but don't reveal any clear picture of concept of *manas*. These concepts are elaborated from the respective point of view by each of the *sadarśana* according to the aim and goal of every *darśana*, concept of *manas* is dealt with.

Concept of *manas* bears a specific place in Indian Science. Almost all the Indian philosophies have discussed about its existence

and importance in phenomenon of cognition. Root of all these philosophies are found in vedic literature where it is said as an instrument of knowledge.

In *Sāṃkhya darśana*, *Indriya* (*jñānendriya*, *karmendriya* and *manas*) are said to be originated from *ahamkāra* which means the internal desires of a living creature like listening, hearing etc. are dependent upon development of *Indriya*.

The thoughts of *Sāṃkhya darśana* are psychological where *manas* is well described. It mentions that *mana* does the *Sāṃkhya kalpanā* between two or more *padārtha* that, the actual matter is that or not. On the base of this *Sāṃkhya Kalpanā*, *mana* is stated as *saṃkalpanātmaka* therefore *kalpanātmaka* is mentioned as *guṇa* of *mana*.

Sāṃkhya believes *manas* is necessary for *jñāna* and *karma* both because *jñānendriya* and *karmendriya* can perform work only when *mana* is involved. *Ācārya Suśruta* and *Vāgbhata* also opine that *mana* is involved in both *jñānātmaka* and *karmātmaka* activities therefore *mana* is called as *ubhayendriya*.

Sāṃkhya and *Vedānta* agree that the *manas* (*antahakarana*) go out to the object and assume it's form with its mental mode. They suggest that westerns give priority to the object than the subject where as *Sāṃkhya* and *Vedānta* admit that *buddhi* (intellect) or *antahakarana* is an intermediate reality between unconscious matter and conscious spirit.

In *Sāṃkhya darśana* the involvement of *manas* with *liṅgaśarira* is accepted and *manas* exist as a part of it up to attainment of *mokṣa*. This proves that *manas* is inseparable from its *karma* in *janma-mṛtyu paramparā* also. Hence its origin is from itself not from any other matter it remains indestructible like *liṅgaśarira*. This justify,

“रूपाद्वि रूपप्रभवः प्रसिद्धः कर्मात्मकानां मनसो
मनस्तः । the *Caraka's* quotation that *manas* is
originated from itself (Acharya, 2002, p.24; CS
1.42).

9. Conclusion

There are some similarities between the concepts of *Āyurveda* and *darśana*. *Āyurveda* is “*sarvapariṣada śāstra*”. But, *Āyurveda* has its own principles. The ultimate goal of both *Āyurveda* and *darśana* are same but the way to achieve the goal is different. *Sāṃkhya darśana* explains that if *sattva* increase, *mokṣa* will be achieved and if *tamas guṇa* increase *punarjanma* will be there. Hence, to achieve *mokṣa* one should follow *sattvika pravṛtti* and *sattva* is one *guṇa* of *manas*.

Sattva is also one synonym of *manas*. *Āyurveda* deals with धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामारोग्यमूलमुत्तमम् (Acharya, 2002, p. 24, CS 1.42). According to *Āyurveda* healthy status is required to achieve *mokṣa* and *darśana* explain about *tattva jñāna* to accomplish *mokṣa*.

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