

CHAPTER – IV

SOME CRITICAL AND EVALUATIVE REMARKS

While critically evaluating the role of mind the following philosophical issues can be raised, which is followed by probable solutions.

The phenomenon of knowledge (epistemic knowledge) is possible through the instrumentality of mind. *Pramāṇa* can yield cognition if and only if the mind acts in a correct way. While discussing the role of mind in Indian epistemology it has been shown how it is important in *pramā*-yielding means. In a nutshell, we can show its importance in perception; inference etc. Three tier methods have been admitted by the Naiyāyikas who believe that cognition arises in the self. Our sense-organs first come in contact with object which is again connected with mind. Mind is again connected with self where cognition arises finally (*ātmā manasā samyujyate, manah indriyeṇa, indriyamarthena*). Any type of cognition presupposes the existence of mind. Otherwise inferential, testimonial and other forms of knowledge would not have been possible. That is why each and every epistemic experience is mind -centric. The Naiyāyikas have admitted that the properties like desire, aversion, volition, happiness, misery and cognition are the marks of self (“*ichhā-dveṣa-prayatna-sukha-duhkha-jñānāni ātmano lingam*”- *Nyāyasūtra*-1.1.15). The existence of self is known in terms of the qualities like desire etc that are possible through the instrumentality of mind. Hence any type of cognition

presupposes the instrumentality of mind. For the any epistemic cognition two things are essential- the locus of it, i.e., self and the instrument of the same, i.e., mind.

Secondly, it has been shown that the non-simultaneous origin of knowledge is the mark of mind (*'yuga pajjñānānutpattir manaso lingam'*). To the Naiyāyikas mind is having atomic dimension (*anuparimāṇa*). Due to having such dimension mind does not have capacity of unfolding two cognitions simultaneously. Though the Naiyāyikas have used non-origination of two cognitions simultaneously, it should be interpreted as 'two or more than two'. If the term 'simultaneous cognition' means 'simultaneity of only two', one might think that more than two cognitions can be grasped by mind simultaneously, which is not the case.

In response to the above one may raise a problem. If mind cannot grasp the simultaneous cognition, how we experience a kind of cognition called 'collective cognition' or 'cognition apprehending many things collectively', which is technically called '*samūhālabana – jñāna*'. Though the simultaneous cognition by mind is denied, our experience shows a different picture. When we see a heroin in a film, we perceive various aspects of her, viz. the dress she is wearing, ornaments she is using, song she is singing along with her physical features. In this case multiple objects become the content of our cognition. Such *samūhālabana* cognition is also grasped by mind, which is not covered in the earlier definition. When a lady is knitting wool, she is knitting; talking with others, looking at the knot, design etc. this is also a case of 'collective cognition', which is very common in our life. How is it possible? The Naiyāyikas will answer in the following way. Though in these cases experience of many objects is found, yet it can be said that these objects are not having simultaneous occurrence. When we see a hero or lady in a

film, we see his/her dress, his/ her song enjoys the beauty, but they are not simultaneous, but successive. When we concentrate to song, we are not concentrating to her dress or ornaments. In this way, it can be said that all the experiences are successive, but not simultaneous. The experiences happen so quickly that they seem to be simultaneous, but actually not. Just as a ring with fire if handled speedily seems as ‘fire-circle’ called *alātacakra*, the successively occurred cognitions are mistakenly taken as simultaneous. Hence the definition of mind as the cause of non-simultaneous origination of cognition is not defective as claimed by the opponents.

Thirdly, it may be asked whether mind is instrumental to valid cognition (*pramā*) only or not. It has been shown earlier that mind plays a vital role in the field of attaining epistemic cognition. Is it essential for *apramā* also? The answer would be taken as positive. The phenomenon of doubt (*samśaya*), illusion (*viparyaya*) and memory – cognition (*smṛti*) is also possible through the instrumentality of mind. If there is a skeptical doubt, there are two alternatives e.g., *sthāṇurvā puruṣo vā* (whether the object is a trunk of a tree or a man). Here our mind is roaming with two alternatives, not other organs. That is why, Nagarjuna, a famous Buddhist logician, does not believe in the existence of doubt. To him anything which is mental does not exist really in the external world. The Buddhists in general believe in double status of existence of an object -unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universality or generality (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*). The latter is purely mental and hence it is not ultimately real (*paramārthasatya*), but empirically or phenomenally real (*samvṛtisatya*), which has got a secondary status in Buddhist epistemology due to its pure mental character. Should we accept such view on Reality by the Buddhist?

In reply, it may be said that though the empirical world or world known through concepts is purely mental, our day to day behaviour is possible through this and hence the role of mind cannot be ignored. Though mental concepts or ascriptions cannot fully catch hold of reality as endorsed by Buddhists, the picture received through the conceptual eye is inevitable for our day to day transaction or behaviour. For this reason the role of mind is an important factor for acquiring knowledge or communication. To the Buddhist the entity known through the conceptual eye is purely mental and hence it has got secondary status in epistemology. It is correct if emphasis is given to their idealistic character. Whatever is right in realistic philosophy may not be the same in idealism due to having different set of metaphysical and ontological presuppositions.

Fourthly, why is the primacy of mind taken into account in acquiring cognition? In reply, it can be said that mind has been admitted as an inanimate object which can move towards an object being guided by a conscious principal i.e. self. From this one might think that mind does not have any autonomy for regulating itself. It always depends on the self which guides it. For this reason it is self who must control the mind and hence mind as an instrument and self is the guiding principal. That is why, it moves towards an object without being controlled by us. In order to control mind we need certain procedures like *śama*, *dama* etc. Through the control of our sense-organs we can control our mind. First, our external sense- organs move towards the objects which are followed by mind. One sees the enjoyable object, thinks about its enjoyment has a mental attachment to that which gives rise to desire, anger, infatuation, loss of memory and at last loss of everything which is endorsed in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is said, “*Dhyāyato viṣayān pumsaḥ sangasteṣūpajāyate / saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah kāmāt krodho’bhijāyate /*

krodhād bhavati sammohah sammohāt smṛtivibhramah / smṛtibhramsāt buddhināśo buddhināśāt praṇasyati.” Mind is the root cause of one’s cravings. In Buddhism also thirst for enjoyment (*tanhā*) which is connected with mind is taken as the root of all bondages leading to this worldly involvement. Hence control over mind is the primary factor in our life.

Fifthly, in the Advaita Vedānta mind is described as inner organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) which plays a vital role in perceptual cognition. It has been told that our inner organ, issuing through the sense- organ goes to the object and assumes the shape of an object. From this one may think how mind can go to the object like a liquid substance and assume the form of an object. Can mind goes to the object and assumes the corresponding shape? It seems to be inconceivable to believe that it can move like conscious object towards a certain direction.

In reply it can be said that this liquidification of inner organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) may be taken as a metaphor. If the meaning is taken literally, it would lead us to the world of misunderstanding. Just as water goes to different place and assumes the shape of the substratum, mind goes towards object and assumes the form. In this context ‘mind goes to the object and assumes the shape’ means ‘mind illumines the object through its operation’. This expression has been conveyed to us metaphorically. In Sanskrit literature we often come across many metaphorical expressions which are called implicative meaning (*lakṣaṇā*).

Sixthly, there is a diversity of opinion among the philosophers belonging to different schools of Indian philosophy regarding the status of mind as a sense-organ. The

Naiyāyikas think that mind is a sense organ which is guided by a conscious principal, self. Just as an axe can cut a piece of wood being guided by a conscious agent, inner-organ also works being guided by a conscious agent. Hence it has got instrumental value in epistemology. If it is instrument, it must be sense-organ. But the Advaitins, particularly Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, are of the opinion that mind is not at all a sense-organ. Though they are committed to this view, they could not provide any independent view based on reasoning in their favour. In support of their statement they have quoted *Śruti*; mainly *Śrīmadbhagvādgītā*. They have taken a clue from the *Gītā* in which it is said that the subtle elements producing sense-organ are subtler than the sense-organs. Mind much subtler than the materials producing sense-organs (“*Indriyebhyaḥ parāḥ hyarthāḥ arthebhyasca param manaḥ*”). From this they try to justify that mind is not enumerated as a sense-organ. Though in the same text it is said ‘*Manaḥ ṣaṣṭhāni indriyāni*’ (‘mind is the sixth sense-organ’), the interpretation of the same has been given in a different way. It is told that though mind is sixth in the serial yet it is not a sense organ. Because mind has been added as a sixth member with five more. The number six is filled in by something which is other than sense-organ.

Now a problem may be raised which view is to be taken as justified. So far as my understanding goes, it is more logical and convincing to admit mind as a sense - organ, which is supported by *Kenopanīśad* also. In this *Upanīśad* we find the disciple to ask the question: ‘who is the impeller of mind?’ (*‘Keneṣitam patati preṣitam manaḥ*’). From this it follows that mind automatically cannot go towards an object unless it is impelled by a conscious being. Whatever our *Śruti* says is immaterial for us, because *Śruti* is always a matter of interpretation. It can be interpreted as per our own understanding as done by

Sankara, Ramanuja, Sayana, Dayananda, Sri Aurobindo etc. If mind is taken as an instrument or karana, it must be guided by certain conscious principle. The famous metaphor of an axe can be taken into consideration. An axe can produce cutting (*chidājanaka*), if it is properly operated by a conscious being. In the like manner, mind can rush towards an object being guided by self. Hence it is more rational to admit mind as a sense-organ.

Lastly, it may be asked: what is exactly the role of mind in epistemology? To know anything through perception, inference, testimony or any other means mind is the instrument and hence it is an inevitable tool in the field of epistemology. The Advaita Vedāntins have given much emphasis on the role of mind in the phenomenon of epistemic knowledge. To them consciousness limited by mind (*antahkaraṇāvachhinna caitanya*) is called *pramātrī-caitanya* and the consciousness limited by mental mode (*antahkaraṇa-vṛttiyavachhinna caitanya*) is called *pramāṇa caitanya*. Two positions are dependent on the position of the mind. When these two are amalgamated and maintain a distance with the object, it called *jñānagata pratyakṣa* (perception of knowledge). On the other hand, if these two are totally amalgamated without maintaining any dichotomy with the object, there is no subject-object-relationship, as object is identified with the subject resulting in *viśayagata pratyakṣa* (perception of the object). In fact, there is novelty in Advaita epistemology due to the fact that they have clearly maintained a distinction between perception of knowledge and perception of object, which is due to different role of mind (*antahkaraṇa*), played in epistemology. A knower (*pramātā*) is defined as a consciousness limited by inner organ while *pramāṇa* is defined as the consciousness limited by mental mode (*antahkaraṇavṛtti*). Mind can take a shape of the object which is

called mental mode. We can claim some object as known if and only if some corresponding mental mode is formed. Without it no object is really known. This role of mind is applicable not only in the case of objects capable of being perceptually known but to the objects which are super sensuous in nature, as in the case of knowledge of self etc. Even the inferential objects which are not perceived can be known through the corresponding mental mode or *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*. The grammarians also endorse that the utopian ideas like sky-flower, barren woman's son etc are taken to be meaningful as they capable of producing some sort of corresponding mental image in the form of *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*, which are called 'ideational meaning' or *buddhyartha* arising from mental mode. Hence no cognition is possible without the help of mind. Moreover, without 'one-pointed concentration' called *samādhi* no creative work is possible. The cognition arising from the study of literature, from the enjoyment of music, dance and painting are called *prātibha-jñāna*, which is also possible through one-pointed concentration. In these cases there is no room for absentmindedness. If there is any absentmindedness, it would lead to the break of *tāla*, *laya* in music and dance particularly leading to the non-melodious world. For this we need uninterrupted concentration. Even in the case of perception there are different stages depending on the function of mind. We can perceive an object in a very gross way or subtle way. If our concentration is of superior form, we can perceive many aspects in an object which cannot be seen through our gross eye. This type of subtle perception is called *paṭutara pratyakṣa* or subtler perception.

I beg to differ from the Naiyāyikas that they have admitted the atomic nature of mind on account of the fact that it is not capable of producing simultaneous cognition. To me from

the fact of its non-production of simultaneous cognition it is not rational to infer its atomicity. If mind is made powerful through its concentrative capacity and proper training, it can reveal much cognition at a time, even the past and future. This is due to power of mind enhanced through meditative exercise. The mind *aṇutva* does not remain when there is a transcendental perception as we get more than two objects simultaneously. It is also not true that mind can grasp all the objects of the world. It indicates that it neither has *aṇutva* (that is atomic magnitude) nor *vibhutva* i.e. all-pervasive character. It seems to me that it must have some character of medium magnitude (*madhyama parimāṇa*).