
UNIT 1 REMEMBERING

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, it is expected that you will be able to

- define remembering
 - recognize the relationship between memory and remembering
 - analyze how brain accomplishes the task of remembering
 - list and describe the factors involved in remembering
 - infer that remembering is intricately related to memory
 - discuss and construct the relationship between past experiences and remembering
 - summarize the role of memory in remembering
 - analyze the mind-body problem deliberated upon by various philosophers to arrive at the role of memory in remembering
 - summarize the views of Western and Indian philosophers on mind-body and correlate them with remembering.
 - formulate your own views on remembering based on the knowledge arrived at from this unit and various other sources
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

You must have heard people often saying that this child is good at remembering whatever is taught in the class. Sometimes, you may also have heard that this child is very poor at remembering whatever is taught in the class. What actually do we mean by the former sentence needs pondering upon? It perhaps gives the impression to most people that the child learns with ease or remembers for quite long time whatever is learnt or can recall easily something that has been learnt. In other words, when we talk of remembering by a person, we mean that the person has a “good memory.” What exactly does a “good memory” mean needs analysis. It means that we may be referring to either or all of these things: learning, retaining, recalling, recognizing. Remembering is about memory.

If 'forgetting' is the process of moving information from the conscious mind to the subconscious, the reverse process of moving relevant information from the subconscious to the conscious mind is 'remembering'. For the 'higher level' conscious mind to function properly, it is important for it to have relevant, contextual data. The task of providing such data belongs to the realm of the subconscious mind. Memory is about mind. When we talk of mind, we need to think of body

also. Remembering is, thus, about both mind and body. In this unit, are therefore, discussed philosophies pertaining to mind-body in context of remembering as remembering has a very intricate relationship with mind(memory) and mind with body.

How does the subconscious accomplish this task? The brain is a massively interconnected aggregate of numerous brain cells. The subconscious processes massive amount of data flowing through the network of the brain. The basic building block of information processing is a 'relation' or 'connection'. Relations/connections form 'threads' and 'flows' which keep the sorting processes of the brain/consciousness in check. (If we were to disproportionately exaggerate such a thread and remove it from its context/flow, we could create a 'conditioned process' or 'memory'.) Clarity is achieved by letting the twin aspects of 'perspective' and 'context' fall back into each other. At this point, the 'higher level' conscious mind is empty/full. From this starting point we can once again break the symmetry; by choice, let a 'memory' and 'context' emerge from the subconscious - and we set the 'higher mind' in motion. If your 'identity' is well constructed and in good balance with other aspects of yourself, 'remembering' is a process which emerges naturally by the very defining of the 'identity'.

1.2 NATURE OF MEMORY

All of us understand what memory as a layperson is. Let us now examine some of the definitions given by professionals from the field of psychology. Woodsworth says that “Memory consists in remembering what has previously been learned.” He regards memory as involving learning, retention, recall and recognition of objects, events or things. Let us not be too preoccupied in giving any formal definition to memory. Let us think of memory to be consisting of the collection of previous experiences as they occurred. It can be expressed as a complex process involving the establishment of dispositions, their retentions, and the recalling of experiences that have left the dispositions behind them. It is, thus, easier to understand memory by noting down the factors which are involved in the memory process. The next section deals precisely with the factors involved.

It can be concluded from the above that there are four main factors involved in memory. These are: Learning, Retention, Recall, and Recognition. Each one of these factors is equally important. Let us understand how by pondering on each of these factors one by one. Any event or experience or activity is first learned. Then, it is retained in the mind in some form or the other. The third factor in the memory is recall, that is, any future occasion when the event is brought to the mind. And, the final factor is when it is recognized to be the same experience which is learned again or retained for future recall. This can be understood by a very simple day to day example. You have been introduced to this person on an earlier occasion. When you meet this person on the way some day again and recognize that person's name, you have lived to all the four processes of memory. The name of this person has been learnt by you and then retained by you. At the time of meeting this person, you have recalled this person's name and in recalling, you have recognized that this is the name of a particular person whom you have met earlier.

Learning: It broadly means a modification of behaviour through experience to produce temporary or permanent changes in a person. This modification in behaviour happens in an individual's activity in a given situation due to practice in attempts to achieve certain goals or maybe to solve some problems. Thus, learning may be for conscious purposes to attain a certain goal or it may be for biological and social adjustment.

Retention: Memory depends to a great extent on retention. After you have learnt a thing, it is retained in the mind. The retention powers vary from individual to individual. Retention, to an

extent, depends upon how you have trained your mind to remember things and events. Retention depends upon a person's mind, health, interest, thinking capacity and reasoning ability. It is said that any event or what you have learnt causes a physiological change in your brain leaving on it an imprint which are termed as memory traces. Memory trace is also referred to as "*neurogram*" or an "*engram*". Of these, *Engram* is probably the most general term used to represent the neural basis of retention.

Recall: Recall is the mental revival of those experiences which have been learned. It is dependent on retention. It is an act of remembering the memory traces. If you have learnt the thing well and retained properly, it will be recalled relatively easily. Sometimes, we find that an idea or concept which we may have deeply retained, we fail to recall it at a suitable time like in an examination hall. One of the likely factors to which this can be attributed is emotional tension. Your recall of an event of a thing may be spontaneous or deliberate. When you are thinking without effort, it is spontaneous recall, but it is deliberate recall when you consciously strive to recall something as in an examination hall while answering the questions in the question paper. Recall depends largely on association of ideas. For example, when we say Taj Mahal, immediately we may also recall that it is made of marble. Thus, marble has also becomes associated with this monument. You must understand that remembering does not necessarily imply recollecting, recollecting always implies remembering, and actualized memory follows (upon the successful act of recollecting).

Recognition: Recognition is the act of knowing the object or the thing which has been retained previously. In recognition, there is awareness that the object or thing that was previously known is being known again. Recognition is usually in the shape of a certain or vague feeling of familiarity when you come across the object or thing again. The feeling of familiarity is basic to recognition and plays an essential part in all acts of recognizing. You must also understand this that the act of recognition is much more than the feeling of familiarity. It is not complete till the object or thing that is recognized is definitely placed in our past experience.

1.3 MEMORY AND REMEMBERING

Now, let us now connect the above with remembering. Here is given a simple example to connect the relationship between memory and remembering. Imagine that you are reading at 4pm and you suddenly remember that you have a pressing appointment at 5pm. The thought simply pops into your mind, and completely surprises you. What's curious about this example is that the process of remembering was carried out without your intending it to happen. The point to be noted here is that you did not do the remembering as your conscious mind was focusing on reading and understanding the text. It was the subconscious mind which did the remembering, and then forced the results of its processing into the input-tray for consciousness. As you were reading, your subconscious mind informed the conscious mind that it had just carried out a remembering process and that the result of the process is the content that you have a pressing appointment at 4pm. Your consciousness then completely reroutes itself and starts to focus on the process of getting to the appointment on time.

This example illustrates that there are many mental processes being carried out below the surface of consciousness. We usually think that remembering is something we consciously do. In a way this could be analytically true if we simply defined remembering as requiring our consciousness to be involved. But if we didn't define remembering in this way, then we get the interesting idea that crucially important mental activities like remembering can happen below the surface of consciousness. Often, the results of these subconscious processes are never even introduced into

consciousness, and directly influence the behavior of the body without our conscious awareness. But sometimes the end-products of the subconscious mental processes are loaded into consciousness and our conscious mind becomes aware of the content and is now able to start performing conscious operations on the content. These operations often involve the arrangement of the content into a mini psychological sequences (this is often causal, involving reasons), which then has top-down effects on the entire behavior of the system. For example, the narration of the subconscious remembering process about the appointment enables the conscious rumination of behavior possibilities and allows for a shortcut in the decision making process through the higher-order linguistic categorization of the appointment in terms of simpler, more abstract categorical structures and schemas like “5:00pm”, “get documents”, “find bus/metro pass”, “get in the bus/metro”, “take blue line”, “third floor,” etc.

These abstract categorical structures allow for the construction of a mental narrative-schema through which consciousness acts and is able to influence the world. We become capable of consciously thinking thoughts like “Discussion Meeting! My appointment is at 5pm; I better get ready now and take the bus/metro so I can make it on time.” Thoughts like these provide decision-making shortcuts and start a chain-reaction of reciprocal information exchange between the conscious and subconscious systems. The tight functional loops between these systems give rise to complex and fluid human behaviors, such as scrambling to get ready and reach the metro/bus station to be in time for the pressing official appointment.

As regards the question, therefore, what memory or remembering is; it has now been shown that it is the state of a presentation, related as a likeness to that of which it is a presentation; and as to the question of which of the faculties within us memory is a function, (it has been shown) that it is a function of the primary faculty of Sense-perception, i.e. of that faculty whereby we perceive time.

Correlate this statement with the example given above to understand it better. ‘Remembering’ labels a diverse set of cognitive capacities by which we retain information and reconstruct past experiences, usually for present purposes. Remembering is, therefore, one of the most important ways by which our histories animate our current actions and experiences. Remembering has very much to do with memory. For whenever one exercises the faculty of remembering, they must say within themselves, ‘I formerly heard (or otherwise perceived) this,’ or ‘I formerly had this thought’.

Memory is, therefore, neither Perception nor Conception, but a state or affection of one of these, conditioned by lapse of time. You must understand this that there is no such thing as memory of the present while present, for the present is object only of perception, and the future, of expectation, but the object of memory is the past. All memory, therefore, implies a time elapsed; consequently only those animals which perceive time remember, and the organ whereby they perceive time is also that whereby they remember. Whenever one actually remembers having seen or heard, or learned, something, he includes in this act (as we have already observed above) the consciousness of ‘formerly’; and the distinction of ‘former’ and ‘latter’ is a distinction in time.

Most notably, the human ability to conjure up long-gone but specific episodes of our lives is both familiar and puzzling, and is a key aspect of personal identity. Memory seems to be a source of knowledge. We remember experiences and events which are not happening now, so memory differs from perception. We remember events which really happened, so memory is unlike pure imagination. Yet, in practice, there can be close interactions between remembering, perceiving, and imagining. Remembering is often suffused with emotion, and is closely involved in both

extended affective states such as love and grief, and socially significant practices such as promising and commemorating. It is essential for reasoning and decision-making, both individual and collective. It is connected in obscure ways with dreaming. Some memories are shaped by language, others by imagery. Much of our moral and social life depends on the peculiar ways in which we are embedded in time. Memory sometimes goes wrong in mundane and minor, or in dramatic and disastrous ways.

Memory also varies with age of an individual. Both very young and very old persons are defective in memory; they are in a state of flux, the former because of their growth, the latter, owing to their decay with age. In like manner, both those who are too quick and those who are too slow have bad memories. The former are too soft, the latter too hard (in the texture of their receiving organs), so that in the case of the former the presented image (though imprinted) does not remain for a considerable time, while on the latter it is not imprinted at all. Hence, as a result remembering gets affected in all the cases given here.

1.4 REMEMBERING AND PAST EXPERIENCES

One of the paradoxes of life is that while we are exploring our past experiences, the exploration of a certain past experience becomes our present experience. Exploration of our present experience of exploring our past experience brings on parallaxes, as we remember ourselves remembering the same experience on multiple occasions. You will remember noticing how strange this feeling is, especially that of you remembering some experience, of recognizing that you had remembered that same experience maybe last month or a week back or even four days ago. Recall how that remembering had felt then, and recognizing that now once again, you were remembering that same experience (perhaps of being an even younger child), and realizing both that that earlier memory of that experience was still and perhaps always will be there to be remembered, and that your remembering of your multiple remembering selves and the experiences of remembering that experience would accumulate. You will notice that though you may remember those experiences, however vividly; you could not revisit in person any of the remembered experiences of remembering, yet they would accumulate around the remembered experience. Just ponder on this point. Has this happened to you many a times?

This is a problem probably for all us most times - the difficulty of being in the moment when the moment is often one of being in another moment. It seems that that is what philosophy and psychology are really trying to address - in attempting expressions, examinations, and explanations of experience, through thinking about thinking about living as thinking. The Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela have used the word-the term 'cognition' to reflect our experience of our experience. Let us take the example from Biology - the process of metabolism to understand this concept. Our view of metabolism is skewed, because we so often start with the experienced existence of the entity as an entity, and then ask what it needs to ingest to be healthy, in terms of nutrition, as though foods were like fuel for a car, a substance consumed by the car quite separately from the car's own substance maintenance. Grown entities (as everything not technically made technically, for want of a better term) consume environments that become those entities. In fact, the entities emerge in their substance and substantiveness from the environment that is around and become them, like a dust devil or a tornado or a hurricane or mould or rot or fungi, all differently experienced forms of continually

changing combinations of what we call elements and energies. Existentially experienced entities are environmental events, environments events, experiences, and existents.

1.5 ROLE OF MEMORY IN REMEMBERING: PHILOSOPHERS' VIEWS

Although an understanding of memory is likely to be important in making sense of the continuity of the self, of the relation between mind and body, and of our experience of time, it has often been curiously neglected by philosophers. Contemporary philosophical discussion of memory is continuous with the development of theories in the cognitive and social sciences: attention to these interdisciplinary fields of memory studies is driving renewed work on the topic. Many problems about memory require us to cross philosophical traditions and sub disciplines, touching on phenomenology, philosophy of psychology, epistemology, social theory, and ethics at once.

David Hume

David Hume, a Scottish philosopher had tried to formulate the laws governing the succession of our thoughts in order to understand the concept of memory. However, he was not very successful in arriving at any complete theory of the mind. Newton had shown that the entire material world was governed by the same mechanical laws. Hume's great project was to base the study of man and society on similar universal principles. Like most philosophers of his time, Hume conceived of thought as a flow of mental images. Seeing a tree, imagining a tree, or remembering a tree, were all thought to consist of our having a mental image, more vivid for the seen tree, less vivid for the imagined or remembered tree. A sentence like 'The Earth is round' would have a certain type of mental image as its meaning, and believing that the Earth is round necessarily involved a vivid mental image of that type. This theory also explained why certain beliefs were logically impossible. For example, a four-sided triangle was logically impossible (and a three-sided triangle logically necessary) because we could not form a mental image of a triangle that did not have three sides. (Try it.) Hume's disturbing insight from this way of thinking about thinking was that all our factual and moral beliefs can therefore only be justified in terms of the psychological laws that govern the succession of images in our minds.

Consider perhaps Hume's most famous argument, which begins with the question, 'What justification do we have for our factual beliefs?' By 'factual beliefs', Hume meant those beliefs that we can imagine (that is, form a mental image of) and as a result of these images say are either true or false, occurring or not occurring. For example, when we see two billiard balls collide on a table, we believe that the impact of the first ball will cause the second to move in a particular direction. This belief is 'factual' because we can also imagine the second ball not moving at all, or returning in the direction from which the first ball came, or vanishing in a puff of smoke. Since we can imagine any of these things, they are all logically possible. Therefore, Hume concluded, there is nothing in the motion of the first ball from which we can logically infer the motion of the second. That we have an accurate belief as to how the second ball will move is not based on any logical deduction from the movement of the first, but from our past experience of seeing billiard balls collide.

But, Hume persists, what is our justification for drawing conclusions from experience? Only our belief that the future will be like the past. But this too is a factual belief. We can imagine that the future will not be like the past – for example, that tomorrow billiard balls will vanish upon being hit by other billiard balls. So our belief that the future will resemble the past is itself not based on any process of deductive reasoning, but solely on experience. So how is experience itself justified?

To justify anything, you give reasons. And you justify those reasons by giving still other reasons. This implies three possible structures for any chain of justification:

- (1) Reasons go on forever, without repeating.
- (2) Reasons go in a circle – that is, eventually a reason is repeated.
- (3) The chain stops, with a final reason.

Structures (1) and (2) would plainly provide unsatisfactory justifications, which leaves structure (3). But if a chain of justification is to stop in a satisfying way, the last reason given must not require further justification. And since we can imagine the contrary of a factual belief, a factual belief cannot be a final reason. So a factual belief that the present is like the past cannot be the final justifying reason for any conclusions about the world.

For Hume, our beliefs about the motions of colliding billiard balls and other law-like natural behaviors are formed by the psychological principle of ‘habit’. Our minds are so constructed that having experienced a particular motion of one ball, constantly followed by a particular motion of a second, we form the image of the second motion whenever we are presented with the image of the first. The more frequent and invariant the past conjunction of motions, the more vivid our present image of the second motion will be upon being presented with the first, and this vivid image is our belief that the second ball will move in a particular way. There is no decision to believe that the motion of the second ball will follow from the motion of the first. Rather, the belief is forced on us by the associational laws of thought.

Hume thus replaces moral explanations in terms of wants, with psychological laws that, like the principles of Newtonian mechanics, are not framed in terms of wants. The images forced upon us which constitute our most basic factual beliefs cannot be justified by reason, nor can they be escaped from. So rather than our controlling our own thoughts, Hume argues that our thoughts are controlled by unthinking forces. We are not the captains of our mental journey, merely passengers. Hume’s vantage-point is always that of a psychologist attempting to explain human behavior.

According to Hume, just as our reasoning’s concerning matters of fact rest on a principle of association of ideas, there can be no ‘ultimate’ justification for our moral beliefs, beyond psychological laws. Hume and other philosophers like Macnabb have not dealt with the concept of memory due to limitations in their own thinking as can be seen from the description given in the earlier paragraph.

Now, we may question as to why is memory so hard to understand?

The answer, in part, is that the term labels a great variety of phenomena. I remember how to play chess and how to drive a car; I remember the date of Gandhiji’s death; I remember playing in the rain as a child; I remember the taste and the pleasure of this morning’s tea; I remember to feed the dog every morning. “Many very different things happen when we remember,” says Wittgenstein, 1974. Some philosophers take this heterogeneity as reason to be wary of any attempt to explain memory (Malcolm 1977, Deutscher 1989). All the above experiences denote subjective memory experience which need not be neglected or obliterated by careful theorizing. This is to say that an explanatory framework which omitted the phenomenological and interpersonal diversity of memory would fail on its own terms.

Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell says that initially he had alluded to Hume's thinking "all our simple ideas in first appearance are derived from simple expressions which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent." As per Russell, it is difficult to say whether this principle is liable to exceptions or not. He says that though it is the broad measure truth, it would be more correct to say that ideas approximately represent impressions. Russell raises the following questions: Why do we believe, that images are, sometimes or always, approximately or exactly, copies of sensations? What sort of evidence do we have of this? And what sort of evidence is logically possible? The difficulty of this question arises through the fact that the sensation which an image is supposed to copy is in the past when the image exists and therefore can be known only by memory. He further says that memory of past sensations seems only possible by means of present images. How, then, are we to find any way of comparing the present image with past sensation? This problem is acute in that both cannot be brought together in one experience for comparison. To deal with this problem, he suggests that one needs to have a theory of memory. In this way, the whole status of images as "copies" is bound up with the analysis of memory. In investigating memory-beliefs, there are certain points that need to be borne in mind. In the first place, everything constituting a memory belief is happening now, not in that past time to which the belief is said to refer. It is not logically necessary to the existence of a memory-belief that the event remembered should have occurred, or even that the past should have existed at all. According to Russell, the non-existence of past is logically tenable and that he is merely saying this to be able to analyze what happens when we remember. Russell concludes his observations on memory-beliefs by saying that the act of remembering is present, though its object is past. The process of remembering consists of calling up images with a feeling of belief so as to distinguish between memory-images and mere imagination –images. Sometimes, words may come out without the intermediary of images but in all cases, according to Russell equally the feeling of belief is essential.

René Descartes

Let us observe what Descartes says about mind to understand memory and remembering. René Descartes, a French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher is considered the father of modern philosophy. He is best known for the philosophical statement "*cogito ergo sum*" This is an interesting statement which reflects that he had a methodical doubt of all knowledge about which it is possible to be deceived, including knowledge based on authority, and also on the senses. He argued that the real source of scientific knowledge lay in the mind and not in the senses. In other words, he aimed to provide a sound basis for scientific method. His aim was to show that science and religion could be compatible. According to him this was possible by splitting the world up into two different types of substances: mind and body. Science will be completely true of body, extended matter; religious truths will deal with the soul or mind was his view. Now, it is for you to ponder whether mind and body are separable entities? Should we do away with the role that senses play in developing our memory and facilitate the process of remembering? Think! Think! Think!

Ryle

According to Ryle (a British philosopher), the classical theory of mind, as represented by Cartesian rationalism, asserts that there is a basic distinction between mind and matter. The classical theory attempts to analyze the relation between "mind" and "body" as if they were terms of the same logical category. This confusion of logical categories may be seen in other theories of the relation between mind and matter. For example, the idealist theory of mind attempts to

reduce physical reality to the same status as mental reality, while the materialist theory of mind attempts to reduce mental reality to the same status as physical reality. Ryle rejects Descartes' theory of the relation between mind and body on the grounds that it approaches the investigation of mental processes as if they could be isolated from physical processes. According to Ryle, mental processes are merely intelligent acts. There are no mental processes distinct from intelligent acts. The operations of the mind are not merely represented by intelligent acts; he says that they are the same as those intelligent acts. Thus, acts of learning, remembering, imagining, knowing, or willing are not merely clues to hidden mental processes or to complex sequences of intellectual operations; they are the way in which those mental processes or intellectual operations are defined. Logical propositions are not merely clues to modes of reasoning; they are those modes of reasoning.

The rationalist theory that the will is a faculty within the mind, and that volitions are mental processes that the human body transforms into physical acts, is therefore a misconception. This theory mistakenly assumes that mental acts are distinct from physical acts and that there is a mental world distinct from the physical world. This theory of the separability of mind and body is described by Ryle as "the dogma of the ghost in the machine." He explains that there is no hidden entity called "the mind" inside a mechanical apparatus called "the body." The workings of the mind are not an independent mechanism that governs the workings of the body. The workings of the mind are not distinct from the actions of the body; they may rather be described as a way of explaining the actions of the body.

Cartesian theory holds that mental acts determine physical acts, and that volitional acts of the body must be caused by volitional acts of the mind. This theory is "the myth of the ghost in the machine." There is no contradiction between saying that a given action is governed by physical laws and that it is governed by principles of reasoning. The motives of observable actions are not hidden mental processes; they are propensities or dispositions that explain why these behaviors occur. Thus, it may be said that the mind consists of various abilities or dispositions that explain such behaviors as learning, remembering, knowing, feeling, or willing. However, as personal abilities or dispositions are not the same as mental processes or events it can be conclusively said that to refer to abilities or dispositions as if they are mental occurrences is a basic mistake. The nature of a person's motives may be defined by the actions and reactions of that person in various circumstances or situations. The nature of a person's motives in a particular situation may not necessarily be determined by any hidden mental processes or intellectual acts within that person. Motives may be revealed or explained by a person's behavior in a situation.

Ryle criticizes the theory that the mind is a place where mental images are apprehended, perceived, or remembered. Sensations, thoughts, and feelings do not belong to a mental world distinct from the physical world. Knowledge, memory, imagination, and other abilities or dispositions do not reside "within" the mind as if the mind were a space in which these dispositions could be situated or located. Furthermore, dispositions are not the same as behavioral actions; actions may, however, be explained by dispositions. Dispositions are neither visible nor hidden, because they are not in the same logical category as behavioral actions. Dispositions are not mental processes or intellectual acts; they are propensities that explain various modes of behavior. Perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and feelings may be understood as observable behaviors that have various modes of production.

Ryle admits that his approach to the theory of mind is behaviorist in being opposed to the theory that there are hidden mental processes that are distinct from observable behaviors. His approach is based on the view that actions such as thinking, remembering, feeling, and willing are revealed

by modes of behavior or by dispositions to modes of behavior. At the same time, however, he criticizes both Cartesian theory and behaviorist theory for being overly mechanistic. While Cartesian theory may insist that hidden mental events produce the behavioral responses of the conscious individual, behaviorism may insist that stimulus-response mechanisms produce the behavioral responses of the conscious individual. Ryle concludes that both Cartesian theory and behaviorist theory may be too rigid and mechanistic to provide us with an adequate understanding of the concept of mind.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

It is evident from the above discussion that most Western philosophers have dwelt on the psychology aspects of the Mind. Most of them are Dualistic philosophers in that they believe that mind and body are separate entities. As a result of this, not much thought has been devoted to memory which has a intricate relationship with remembering.

1.7 KEY WORDS

Ghost in the machine: Descartes' description of mind in the body.

Remembering: It is one of the most important ways by which our histories animate our current actions and experiences. Remembering has very much to do with memory.

Memory: It is neither Perception nor Conception, but a state or affection of one of these, conditioned by lapse of time.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit gives general picture of philosophers' view on understanding. Philosophical positions of John Locke and Ludwig Wittgenstein on understanding in the human mind are briefly discussed in this unit.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"Understanding arises, first of all, from the interests of practical life where people are dependent on communicating with each other. They must make themselves mutually understood. The one must know what the other wants. Thus, first of all, the elementary forms of understanding arise." Said Dilthey.

We see people often claim that they understand cars, or a certain persons, or computers. Even more they claim not to understand the same sorts of things. Now the question to be asked is that what is understanding. Is it a process? Is it this understanding which makes man unique? In recent time Philosophers debated about the limits of understanding- for instance, how could we know either that there is something or not for every beyond our grasp. Keeping this in the mind I would try to explain in this chapter the general theory of understanding. In philosophy one cannot have the same view. Each differs in their view. Here we are presenting John Locke and Ludwig Wittgenstein two great philosophers who understand the 'Understanding' in different ways. Let me enter in detail about what do they say about understanding after explaining about the general theory of understanding.

2.2 MEANING OF 'UNDERSTANDING'

A common use of the verb 'to understand' is in the context of understanding a language. In this sense it is the concern of linguists and not of the normal speakers of the language. However, these normal speakers are also said to understand the language. Now what is the different

between these two understanding, is there first of all any difference? To the extent there is, but it is close enough that the use of the same word for both things is understandable, and not unreasonable. One understands the language when he understands the meaning of the word and grammatical construction. When the individual words and grammatical construction are under consideration, the situation is much more all-or- nothing: a failure to cope with all the nuances of a word is grounds for attributing a lack of understanding of that word. Thus one understands 'the dog is red' when, as a result of reading or hearing that sentence, he can construct a model of a red dog. A word is understood if the model so constructed responds appropriately to it: a grammatical construction is understood if the model is constructed according to that construction. From this one can conclude that understanding dependent on mental models. At the same it is worth noting that, on this model, the ability to understand a language and the ability to speak it are separate, and could have radically different levels in the same person. For example, I understand German does not mean quite the same as I can speak German. The word 'understand' carries with it the idea of something passive and the word 'can' carries with the idea of something active. In other words to understand a language, one must be able to go from the words to the model: to speak it, one must be able to go in the other direction, if the links between words and models are governed by something like mutators, there will have to be separate mutators for the two functions, and thus it would be possible to understand a language very well, but not be able to speak it at all. It seems that the reverse state should also be possible, but perhaps the ways in which we can learn languages rule it out.

2.3 JOHN LOCKE'S ORIGIN OF IDEAS

John Locke in his essay on human understanding he deals with many issues but his main concern was on knowledge and the capacity of the 'human understanding' to acquire it. In explaining first he enquires into the Origin of Ideas, notion, or whatever else one may call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his Mind; and the ways whereby the Understanding comes to be furnished with them; then 'to show, what knowledge the Understanding hath by those Ideas; and finally to 'make some enquiry into the nature and Grounds of faith, or opinion.

On the first part of his *Essay Concerning 'Human Understanding'*, we can see how Locke devoted the Book I in refuting the principles of innate ideas that says, there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it. All agree, he points out, that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to basic mathematical propositions and fundamental proposition such as 'what is, is'. These are not found in the thoughts of children. Why then call them 'implicitly innate'? it is to be noted, rejecting any innateness of knowledge would mean that what God gave us was not the knowledge that is necessary and useful, but rather the means to acquire it (In this he resembles Berkeley and Hume, and differs from Descartes and Leibniz.) So, at birth, the human mind is a sort of blank slate on which experience writes. In Book II Locke claims that ideas are the materials of knowledge and all ideas come from experience. The term 'idea,' Locke tells us "...stands for whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding or mind, when a man thinks." Locke does not identify idea with perceiving. Descartes had distinguished two senses of the word "idea": according to one of these an idea is an act of thinking, according to the other it is the

object of such an act. And it is true that much of Locke's understanding of idea- along with his basic decision to make ideas central to his philosophy.

What does it mean to say that an idea is an object of thinking or thought? The first thing to note is that it belongs to the nature of thinking to be directed towards something, to have a subject matter or target. There is no such thing as merely thinking- thinking, period- without thinking something, thinking of or about something. And the same holds for perceiving, and for all of the other more specific operations of the understanding, Locke uses the word "object" to refer to this required target or subject matter: the object of a thought is that which the thought is of or about. When Locke says all or knowledge derives from 'experience', he also puts gloss immediately on this which is very important for three reasons. First, he makes it clear that there are two sources of experience, sensation (external), and what he calls 'reflection; (internal), which provides the mind with ideas of its own operations, such as perception, thinking and doubting. Second, because the derivation of an idea from experience is not seen as always a simple matter (on the model of deriving the idea of green from seeing green things), in that it will be necessary to take 'a full survey' of our ideas, including 'their several modes, combinations, and relations', or as they are 'with infinite variety compounded and enlarged by the understanding'; and, third, because, from the outset, the existence of external objects is apparently taken for granted. Ideas of sensible qualities, such as that of yellow, are thus introduced as those conveyed into the mind 'from external objects'.

2.4 SIMPLE AND COMPLEX IDEAS

One basis for the charge that Locke's use of the word "idea" is ambiguous is that he applies it to entities of different kinds. He himself makes a number of divisions within the class of ideas: between simple and complex, particular and general, concrete and abstract, adequate and inadequate, and so forth. But the items so divided are still all ideas, in one and the same sense to the word: several species in a genus not only does not entail several senses in the term for the genus, it entails the contrary. A more substantial point is that Locke uses the one term "idea" indifferently to refer to things that his predecessors had called by different names. Here I would like to consider the more stressed point of simple and complex.

The ideas which sensation gives "enter by the senses simple and unmixed"; they stand in need of the activity of mind to bind them into the complex unities required for knowledge. This would include the ideas of "perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing and all the different acting of our minds". Sensation and reflection are each modes or forms or experiences for Locke and the two together exhaust it, so that any idea we have from experience must flow from one or the other of these two "fountain". On the other hand, Locke lists several ideas that he says are simple and yet certainly are not ideas either of sensible qualities or of mental operations: those of 'pleasure, or delight,... pain or uneasiness. Power, existence, unity,' to which list he later adds "the idea of Succession". He says these convey themselves into the Mind, by all the ways (both) of Sensation and Reflection". They do so because they always "join themselves to," or "are suggested... by," the ideas we do have by sensation and reflection. Finally he holds that every simple idea that is present in a mind has its source in experience.

The complex ideas of substance, modes, and relations are all the product of the combining and abstracting activity of mind operating upon simple ideas, which have been given, without any connection, by sensation or reflection. So in the process of creating new complex ideas, the mind is no longer merely passive. Instead it actively exerts itself, operating upon the ideas it has to

make the new ones. Furthermore, its action is voluntary, and the products thereof may be quite out of line with any pre-existent reality, external-sensible or mental-operational: ideas of fantastic voyages and fabulous monsters. Locke's account of knowledge thus has two sides. On the one side, all the material of knowledge is traced to the simple idea. On the other side, the processes which transform this crude material into knowledge are activities of mind which themselves cannot be reduced to ideas.

2.5 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCE

According to Locke objects have within themselves certain objective 'primary qualities' such as solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number, which are capable of producing 'sensations or perception', that is, 'ideas', in our minds. Secondary qualities such as odours, tastes, colours and sounds, which produce ideas or perceptions in our minds even though the qualities have no exact counterpart in the object. They do not belong to or constitute bodies, except as powers to produce these perceptions in us. The idea of primary qualities presupposes that there must be a something, a 'substance', which is solid and is moving. We do not experience 'substance' itself but we do experience the primary qualities or 'accidents' that cluster together in groups around a 'supposed but unknown' support or substratum which is generally called the substance, the 'idea' of substance lies beyond experience. It is obtained by abstraction, that is, by a separating of some 'ideas' from other 'idea' that accompany them; or rather, it is a 'supposition' of we 'know not what' as a support of qualities that appear to clump together around an invisible substratum. It is not perceived but it is inferred.

A Thing cannot both Be and not to Be

If proposition is to be innate, the ideas which are its component elements must be innate; but in fact no such ideas are innate; therefore, the proposition itself cannot be innate. E.g., the maxims "whatever is, is" or "A thing cannot both be and not to be," although undoubtedly true, are highly abstract and far beyond the comprehension of a child of several years, let alone a new born infant what could be possible reason for supposing that the human infant knows or accepts the truth of these maxims, when the ideas involved are far beyond anything that it is capable of? The chief argument for innate principle, viz., that such principles command a universal consent, Locke immediately counters with two objections. First, even if it were true that any principle did receive universal consent, this would not prove them innate. Simply because there are great parts of mankind to whom such maxims are not known.

Locke maintained his view that a man could not formulate or understand the proposition that white is black until he had learned the meaning of the words white and black, unless he had seen white objects. In advance of seeing white he could not formulate any proposition about white. Once he has by experience learned what it is to be white, to be black, and to be different. And this is what is self-evident for Locke. If by universal consent to a proposition is meant consent of all who understand the proposition, and if some propositions which are not innate command universal consent (in this limited sense), it follows that universal consent is not a sufficient condition of the proposition assented to being innate.

Secondly, Locke maintains that, if universal consent is used in an unlimited sense, no proposition does command consent. Taking what he pejoratively calls "those magnified principles of demonstration" "whatever is, is and it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be, which, of all others, I think have the most allowed title to innate; Locke replies these propositions are so far from having a universal consent, that there are a great part of mankind to whom they are not

so much known. For it is impossible to through life without ever hearing either of them, and children and idiots having not the least apprehension thought of them.

To conclude, Locke says 'we can have knowledge no further than we can have ideas'. Knowledge, there is nothing more than 'the perception of the connection of the agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas'.

2.6 LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN'S ACCOUNT OF UNDERSTANDING

It is generally believed that understanding, like thinking, is a mental process. Wittgenstein's approach to sensation and mental process is a bit complicated. According to him, we have to study the language in which certain phenomena are spoken about, but not the phenomena themselves. As regards human tendency, Wittgenstein holds: "where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, is a spirit." The reason for such a tendency is that we normally deal with physical objects in a simple manner. The paradigmatic interpretation of any real thing is that it is a physical thing. But, whenever we come across things that are not physical such as minds, sensations and so on, we tend to make negative bodies without any solidity and substantiality. Also, we attribute properties to them that can be attributed to physical bodies and later change the properties in order to say that they are applied only to those things that are not substantial.

Normally we consider meaning something as a mental act. What sort of mental act is it? A person may be deeply engrossed in some work and inadvertently he may hurt somebody's feelings by saying something offhandedly. Later on he says that he did not mean it. What goes on in a person's mind when he says something and means it but does not go on when he says something and does not mean it? We say eating and drinking are bodily activities. Similarly we tend to say meaning something is mental activity. It is like a bodily activity but of a different kind. This is the same old assimilationist mistake.

How does the philosophical problem about mental process and states and about behaviourism arise? The first step is the one that altogether escape notice. We talk about processes and states and leave their nature undecided. Sometimes perhaps we shall know more about them we think. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a definite concept of what it means to learn to know a process better.

The point Wittgenstein tries to drive home is that saying something and meaning it is not at all like saying something and scratching or saying something and sitting down. What could possibly go on in one's own mind that would count as meaning it? The search for what goes on in one's mind when he says that 'I mean it' is a useless search, for to mean something, is not a mental process. If to mean something is mental process occurring privately in one's mind like a thought, an emphasis, an image, then it is private to oneself. Under these circumstances one cannot know when someone was meaning something and when he was not. If it is private to one self, then it cannot be shared by others. But we know what one means someone says that he means it.

Therefore, it cannot be a mental process. Normally we know that someone means what he says. How is it possible? One way of knowing it is through his behaviour. Whether one is serious in what he says or not is determined by the context of the situations and people's actions that ordinarily guide us. Suppose someone tells that I love to visit Mysore because I like the palace. This is to concentrate on one thing rather than on another. Similarly, to mean this but not that is a matter of concentrating one's attention here rather than there. But Wittgenstein does not accept this. According to him, one's concentration is not a publicly observable act. Therefore to mean

something cannot be a mental process. Wittgenstein presents some counter examples to the thesis that to mean something is to concentrate on something. He writes: “Imagine someone simulating pain, and then saying “it’ll get better soon.” Can’t someone say he means the pain? And yet he is not concentrating his attention on any pain. And what about when I finally say “it’s stopped now”? The above cases show that in the first case pain is counterfeited and in the second case there is no pain for it has ceased. In both these cases there was no pain on which one can concentrate one’s attention. However one can say that the speaker meant pain he spoke. Therefore, to mean something does not mean to concentrate on something. In a similar fashion when someone says that “I mean this piece called the ‘king’, not this particular bit of wood I am pointing to.” But how could anyone concentrate on the piece as king without concentrating on it as block of wood, marble, plastic, or ivory? And if one is able to do that, then one is not concentrating when one means it. Similar is the case of understanding.

2.7 KINDS OF UNDERSTANDING

Two different senses of the word understanding can therefore be distinguished which mirror the ‘essential’ and ‘inessential’ use of pictures just described. These two different senses ‘internal’ and ‘external’ understanding respectively.

Internal Understanding

Wittgenstein notion of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other will be called internal, to register the fact, as Ridely says, ‘that what is grasped in it is, because “expressed only by these words in these positions”, understood as internal to this particular arrangement of words’

External Understanding

Whereas understanding the sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same will be called external to mark the fact that what is grasped in it is, because “something common to different sentences”, not understood as internal to any one specific formulation’. Taken together, these two senses comprise the concept of understanding which can therefore be said to consist of both a paraphrasable and a non-paraphrasable aspect.

According to Ludwig Wittgenstein the notion of understanding which is a correlate of meaning. It has been assumed as a truism that ‘understanding is a mental state or experience or process’. Wittgenstein has severely criticized this view. The thesis, which takes ‘understanding’ to be a mental state or experience or process, can be divided into two sub-thesis.

- (i) Understanding as a conscious state or process
- (ii) Understanding as a non-conscious mental state or process, e.g. brain process

2.8 UNDERSTANDING AS A CONSCIOUS STATE (EXPERIENCE) OR PROCESS

Understanding, Wittgenstein holds, is not a state or process. The logic (grammar) of understanding and that of mental states, experiences and processes is totally different. The two belong to two different language-games as their grammar of is different. Their meaning and employment cannot be the same.

Understanding as a State (experience)

There are certain experiential states which accompany when something is meant or understood. Wittgenstein does not deny this. What he repudiates is the view that meaning and understanding consists in being conscious of these experiential states, e.g. the view that meaning consists in being conscious of a picture or an image. (This is central to the empiricist's conception of meaning and understanding). The reason, Wittgenstein argues is that our investigation is logical or conceptual rather than being empirical or psychological. The coming of an image or a picture before one's mind, or being in a certain conscious state, may be psychologically relevant. This has nothing to do with the logical/ conceptual status of meaning and understanding.

The image or picture, which accompanies when something is meant or understood, cannot by itself determine that it is to be taken in the same connotation in future as well. However, it is characteristic of conceptual investigation that it must be used in the same connotation in all its occurrences whether in the present, past or future.

What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds – when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the same meaning both times? I think we shall say not. (PI 140) What comes before one's mind could well be a symptom of understanding? It could in no way be treated as a criterion of understanding without the risk of committing absurdity. There is a logical gap between 'an image that comes before mind' and 'understanding'. The conceptual maps of the two are different. This could be judged from the fact that temporal predicates are applied on them differently. Experiences and states of consciousness take place in "time". So is the case with understanding and meaning. But here the similarities end. States of consciousness continue or stop. They are characterized as strong or weak etc. Such predicates cannot be applied to meaning and understanding.

Understanding as a Process

A process comprises of a sequence of events which are linked together exhibiting both change and unity. Change in successive stages, unity as a whole in the purpose it serves. Events are internally joined together in a process. A certain sequence of the occurrence of events is necessary in defining a process. Any change in the internal relation will change the process. Again, the sequence of events that constitute a certain process must be independently given. It is only by seeing the sequence of events that we judge whether a certain process is going on or it has stopped, it is fast or slow, etc. The case of understanding is different. Change, unity and the sequence of events are characteristic of processes. They are not, however, characteristic of understanding. It makes perfectly good sense to talk about the sequence of events that constitute a certain process but it is senseless to ask about the sequence of events that allegedly constitute understanding. We say of processes that it is going to finish in ten minutes but not of understanding that it is going to finish in ten minutes. Again, had understanding been a process, the successive stages constituting it must have been independently given. There is no such series of events independently given which constitute understanding. Finally, temporal predicates do not have the same application in the case of understanding as is the case with processes. To say that understanding is going on at a rapid pace is non-sensical whereas to say that a certain process is going on at a rapid pace is perfectly all right. As the application of the two is different, therefore, Wittgenstein concludes that understanding is not a process.

2.9 UNDERSTANDING AS A NON-CONSCIOUS STATE OR PROCESS

With the rise of science in the 20th century there is a strong tendency to construe understanding as a non-conscious physical process occurring in brain and nervous system. This means that an increase in our knowledge of chemistry and chemical processes in the brain would further our knowledge of human understanding. Human understanding, it is implied, is nothing more than the sum of processes occurring in the brain. A little thought on the matter will bring to light the fact that understanding is taken here to be causally connected to the physicochemical processes of the brain. A causal process could be of a great interest but it can never define what understanding is. There is a big gap between causal investigation and conceptual investigation. The former needs empirical data whereas the latter demands grammatical rules or the rules for the use language. Moreover, the empirical data with which a causal investigation is done stands in need of a theory or hypothesis grounded in our conceptual schemes. This means that the grammatical rules or language is a pre-requisite for a conceptual investigation. In other words conceptual investigation is logically prior to empirical/ causal investigation. Causal connection, therefore, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for understanding. The following example will help us understand this point.

Let us take the example of a movie we see on screen. We know that the motion pictures we see on the screen are caused by the rotation of motionless pictures at the back. Now this knowledge of causal connection depends on our knowledge of waves and optics. This knowledge constitutes our background. (We know how difficult was it to convince that what we see through telescope is reliable until Kepler formulated the laws of optics.) Again, the crucial point is that in order to appreciate a movie or know the meaning of a feature film one needs not know this causal connection. It belongs to grammar or the 'form of life'. We need not know what process is going on in someone's head in order to appreciate the work of art. Wittgenstein hints to the same in the following remarks in Zettel:

No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought-processes from brain-processes. I mean this: if I talk or write there is, I assume a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with my spoken or written thoughts. But why should the system continue further in the direction of the centre? Why should this order not proceed, so to speak, out of chaos? The case would be like the following certain kinds of plants multiply by seed so that a seed always produces a plant of the same kind as that from which it was produced but nothing in the seed corresponds to the plant which comes from it; so that it is impossible to infer the properties or structure of the plant from those of the seed that comes out of it, this can only be done from the history of the seed. So an organism might come into being even out of something quite amorphous, as it were causelessly; and there is no reason why this should not really hold for our thoughts, and hence for our talking and writing. It is thus perfectly possible that certain psychological phenomena cannot be investigated psychologically, because psychologically nothing corresponds to them.

I saw this man year ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there in any form? Why must a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a psychological regularity to which no physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concept of causality then it is high time it was upset. (Z 610)

Wittgenstein's View of Understanding

Wittgenstein concludes that understanding is not an experience, state or process (conscious or unconscious). These states and processes have duration while understanding lacks duration. True, certain states or processes accompany when one understands something, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient condition of understanding. Understanding belongs to another logical category. *"He understands" must have more in it than the formula occurs to him. And equally, more than any of those more or less characteristic accompaniments or manifestations of understanding.* (PI 152)

In order to get clear about "understanding", we must inquire into the meaning of related terms (as they are used in language). *The grammar of the word "Knows" is evidently closely related to that of "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of "understands".* (PI 150)

Understanding is closely related to ability (or to mastery of a technique). Abilities and skills are always acquired. The ability to play chess is to 'know how' the game is played. Knowing how here indicates that there is a certain way of doing or using something. There is regularity in practice which is called habit or custom. This regularity is the regularity in 'actions'. The regularity in action is to be seen in ways of living or forms of life. There is nothing hidden as far as way of living is concerned. What is given in the final analysis is a description how an activity is carried out. Language, for Wittgenstein, is interwoven with action. The regularity in action is what is known as the 'rules' of language/action. Since, rules constitute language-games, therefore, understanding a language-game involves an understanding of the rules that constitute it.

Understanding, as we have seen, is a mastery of a technique or ability. Meaning is the content of understanding. Since understanding consists in knowing how, therefore, its content is given by the description of this knowing how. The description of this knowing how is the explanation of meaning.

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique. (PI 199) "Understanding is effected by explanation; but also by training," says Wittgenstein.

2.10 LET US SUM UP

We have presented views on understanding by two different philosophers. Locke and Wittgenstein talk about sensations and mental acts. Locke considers understanding as mental process but Wittgenstein refuses to call understanding a mental process. To Wittgenstein It may be true that some mental process may accompany our understanding, but that does not indicate that our understanding consists in having that process. There are sensations and mental processes and they are non-physical and non-behaviouristic ones. What is interesting to note here is that Wittgenstein discusses sensations and mental acts at length without committing himself to the notion of consciousness anywhere in his writings.

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UNIT 3 WILLING

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To initiate the students to the concept of will (volition) from a philosophy of mind perspective.
 - To impress upon them the complex issues connected with the simple notion of will.
 - To attempt to give a definition of “will.”
 - To see the relationship between volition and freedom (free will)
-

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Willing is the act of volition. Volition is the power or act of making decisions about an agent's own actions. A decision is the causing by a system of events which were not physically determined from outside the system but rather were at least somewhat contingent on the internals of the system (or agent), and which were not predictable except perhaps by modelling the internals of the system. Some the question we can ask is: Do minds have strong free will, or can their decisions in principle be inferred from sufficient knowledge of prior circumstances? In this unit we first study volition from scholastic perspective and then take it up from the perspective of philosophy of mind.

3.2 VOLITION AND SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

In scholastic philosophy, the will and intellect are the two spiritual faculties. The will seeks the good, while the intellect seeks the truth. Normally the will is presented by the choice of limited goods by the intellect. Then the will makes a choice (“freedom of choice”) corresponding to the world of limited opportunities and choices.

Since we are made for the unlimited good, when anything is presented (rightly or wrongly!) to the will by the intellect as the unlimited good, we would be powerless to resist or reject it. But so long as something – as should all the objects of our experience – be presented to the will by the intellect as a limited good, then the will is under no compulsion to reach out for it. We are free only in the face of what is perceived by us as limited goodness.

The will always strives or seeks after something under the appearance of good. Even that which is morally or physically evil (sin or pain) is consciously sought by the will (more accurately, by

us through the will) because of something in it which is perceived as good (pleasure and comfort, health and virtue). In the case of drunkard or drug addict, s/he perceives the drink or the heroin as the absolute good and so s/he cannot resist it. Thus, s/he is not morally guilty for indulging her/himself in these, nor even (in all probability) for the felony s/he commits to have access to them. We do not send such people to jail but for medical or psychiatric treatment. The addict is not guilty, here and now, for this particular act of indulgence for, as we have seen, s/he is not really free to check her/himself. But s/he is “culpable in cause”: s/he is guilty of having caused this sorry state of affairs to finally take possession of her/him. Frequent indulgence has slowly befuddled her/his brain so that her/his intellect has slowly come to be “brain-washed” into seeing drugs/drinks as the absolute good!

The possession by the will of the good constitutes happiness. But the will is not a cognitive or knowing faculty. It cannot know whether something is good for it or not. That is the job of the intellect which, on the other hand, is incapable of reaching out for the good seen. That is the role of the will. The independence of the intellect and the will is usually brought out by saying that the former is lame and the latter is blind. Remember the fable of how the blind person and the lame person formed an alliance of collaboration, the blind carrying the lame on her/his shoulders and the lame person directing her/his friend. That is a pretty good picture of how the intellect and the will work (Desbruslais 1997).

3.3 THE WILL TO LOVE

Thus human beings' identity as a volitional and intellectual agent comes to its fullest meaning when one loves. Then one fulfills oneself by dying to himself and going out of oneself into the world of value and persons. This could lead to a resolution of the problem of egoism or altruism. Thus, to repeat, self-fulfillment is achieved only in self-divestment (or self-emptying).

When one loves, one affirms the very values for which one is striving with his whole humanity: the fullness of knowledge, of love and of communion. When one loves, one testifies to one's own identity and one's demand to transcend oneself, to possess oneself, to give oneself away. This is the root of human dignity, uniqueness and irreplaceability. Only I can give myself to another.

What makes me “want” to love is the dynamism of personhood and unconditional drive to know and give (or want to give). I am prompted by the presence of the other persons and the horizon of values which I see in them, in which I partake and which not one of them, nor all of them can exhaust. Personhood thus drives me outside of myself towards the fuller realization of and union with the other. So when one loves, we may claim, that one sees the absolute value of person in the beloved, and it is one's own participation in personhood which induces one to affirm the value of the other. This leads certainly to the affirmation of the larger horizon of the whole universe. This “planetary” awareness of love is affirmed by Teilhard de Chardin (1961): “If [human beings] on earth, all over the earth, are ever to love one another, it is not enough for them to recognize in one another the elements of a single something; they must also, be developing a “planetary” consciousness, become aware of the fact that without loss of their individual identities, they are becoming a single somebody. For there is no total love - and this is writ large in the gospel - save that which is in and of the personal.”

Human beings in our animality, in our contingency, in our need for self-validation, often think what “must be done” is to appropriate, to saturate themselves with things and people added on to

themselves. However because of our unique (transcending) human nature, such attempts will only serve to intensify the real drive further, rather than still it.

To sum up, we can follow the observation of Kavanaugh (1971) on an integrated human approach to love: “On deeper questioning, human beings realize that their identity actually entails a demand to know themselves, to possess themselves, and transcend themselves in an act of free self-gift. Sexuality, if it is to be integrated with personality, must be a symbol of such a free gift and only then can sexuality have human significance. Experientially, if we truly love, we are brought out of ourselves in a response to the other and the world of values to which the other - in his personhood signifies.”

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Which are the two spiritual faculties in scholasticism?

.....

2) How is love related to volition?

.....

3.4 HUMANS AS RATIONAL AND VOLITIONAL

The traditional scholastic definition of the person as a “whole, distinct, subsistent of a rational nature” makes sense here. This is how scholastics in general, and Thomists in particular, define the person. But let us take a brief glance at how this definition evolved.

Etymologically, the word “person” comes from the Latin *per-sona* (literally, one through which sounds are made), a mask. The Greek equivalent was *prospon*. In the classical days of Latin and Greek drama, the characters, instead of make-up, wore type masks, called *personae*. Thus there was the mask of the old man, the hero, the heroine, the villain and so on. In course of time, the word was applied to the character depicted by the one who wore the mask. Eventually it was referred to the actor or actress.

It was Boethius, the 6th century Christian philosopher and forerunner of scholasticism, who gave us the definition of person as “an individual substance of a rational nature.” Aquinas slightly revised this and put it down as “distinct subsistence of a rational nature.” The reason why he sought to link up person with subsistence, rather than substance, was because he wanted to use the related (but not identical) concepts of substance and person to throw light on the mystery of the Trinity, Christian God. (Desbruslais 1997).

Aquinas stressed the role of reason or the intellect in personhood, giving pride of place to that spiritual faculty in the Scholastic perspective. Hence the “intellectualism of St. Thomas”. However, other scholastics, notably his mentor and co-Dominican, St. Albert (revered as “the Great”) preferred to underscore the priority of the will in all things: he is called a “voluntarist” or a “volitionist”. Not that there is any real contradiction in their views. The one emphasises the initially perfective act of the person (the intellect), the other the completive dimension of personhood (love, the act of the will). If Aquinas sees the beatific vision as primarily an act of the intellect and Albert as essentially an act of the will, they are reminding us of the scholastic adage that they both uphold, “The will follows the intellect.” Aquinas is underscoring the

spiritual faculty that leads and Albert is pointing out that the one that follows bringing full flowering to the activity initiated by the former. After all, you can't love someone whom you don't know, but, in a personal relationship, knowledge is fundamentally a drive which is meant to end in love.

Modern thinkers more inclined to go along with St. Albert than St. Thomas and define the person as a being capable of loving and of being loved. Of course, such a person would have to be an intellectual agent – that is implied by the very definition itself, for there can be no love of what is totally unknown (hence, a person must be capable of knowing): the will and its acts follow the intellect. Inasmuch as the will is blind, there must be a precedent intellectual act to stir it to action. They would rather put the emphasis on loving, rather than knowledge as the latter approach is more consonant with Greek thinking and the former is more in keeping with the biblical viewpoint. If Aristotle defined God as *noesis noeseos* (literally, “thought thinking about itself”), St. John called God love. Thought is essentially an inward movement (drawing things into oneself and making things what one is). Hence the traditional synonym for God as the Absolute (literally, the one cut off from), the unrelated. To call God love is an extremely radical, revolutionary idea: love, by definition is just the opposite of the absolute, unrelated, self-withdrawn reality.

By its very nature, love is turned to others, is related, is a movement away from self. Thus a person is fully a person not when he or she is cogitating in isolation and making things one with itself through the intellect, but when, Godlike, he/she is reaching out to others, entering into their lives and beings through love. This is what the incarnation is all about and we human persons would do well to remember that. Our perfection is not in withdrawal (Desbruslais 1997). If we wish to be God like, we have to be outgoing, community persons and not cold “Absolutes”, unmoved and locked up in ourselves! Maybe Aquinas' approach is not really opposed to all this but it is far easier to misunderstand this way and end up in precisely that conception of the person!

3.5. VOLITION AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

The Russian-American philosopher Ayn Rand asks: “I know what I want, and that something which knows how to want: Isn't that life itself?” Contemporary philosophy of mind and theory of volition are still living under deep shadow of Cartesian and non-Cartesian mind-body dichotomy (Fainberg 2007). The text book description of this fallacy runs as: “According to some, minds are spiritual entities that temporarily reside in bodies, entering at birth and departing on death, others reject the concept of mind, claiming that minds are just brains.” (Join Heil cited in Fainberg 2007).

And an artistic description of the same runs as: “They have cut man in two, setting one half against the other. They have taught him that his body and his consciousness are two enemies engaged in deadly conflict, two antagonists of opposite natures, contradictory claims, incompatible needs, that to benefit one is to injure the other, that his soul belongs to supernatural realm, but his body is an evil prison...” (Ayn Rand, *Atlas shrugged*, 1957).

Volition: Preliminary Investigation

In seeking to understand “willing” from the philosophy of mind perspective, it seems sensible to begin with an analysis of common usage of volition. Here, it is especially appropriate because whether or not an artificial system is perceived as being volitional will depend upon whether the system’s behavior is at least consistent with this usage. Webster’s New World Dictionary gives three definitions for ‘volition’. The most relevant for our purposes is: “the power or faculty of using the will.” The most relevant definition of ‘will’ in the same dictionary is: “the power of making a reasoned choice or decision or of controlling one’s own actions.” (Chadderdon 2010)

Considering these definitions, we can notice some important aspects of what is delineated as volition. It is a property possessed by some entities in the world: the property of being able to make a choice, i.e., a choice on some action the entity might engage in. This action might be an overt action, like locomotion, orienting sense organs, or emitting a social call; or a covert action, such as shifting attentional focus to color rather than shape features, revising a previous evaluation of a particular object encountered in the environment, or mentally selecting a future overt action out of a set of behavioral candidates.

A further component of the definition of ‘will’, “reasoned choice”, suggests that there is some internal mental representation of reasons which may be thought of as values or goals. With this common usage in mind, our task in this section will be to iteratively develop a suitable definition for the concept of volition, and specify an ontology for operationalizing it. Many definitions can and have been proposed which are generally consistent with common usage, but are either too permissive or restrictive, depending on individual tastes. Conceiving volition as a scale allows both the permissive and restrictive usages to be accommodated into one concept consistent with common usage. The remainder of this section, after underlying metaphysical assumptions behind volition, discusses the ontological status, i.e., the “reality”, of volition. Then we try to develop a definition of the will (Chadderdon 2010). This will give a taste of how philosophers of mind go about their work.

Metaphysical Assumptions

The approach in this section of the unit assumes a functionalist materialist answer to the mind/body problem (Churchland, 1996). For most Artificial Intelligence researchers, this is unproblematic, for the hope of successfully reproducing human intelligence (or volition) in machines rests on the idea that if a physical system is organized in a sufficiently isomorphic way to natural intelligent systems, it will exhibit “real” human thought, not just a clever simulation thereof. Another relevant metaphysical question is the relationship of volition to determinism. A compatibilist position holds that there is a concept of volition, or “free will”, which can exist in a deterministic universe, and which meets all of the concerns we care about (Dennett 1984).

The term ‘volition’ seems preferable to “free will”, however, because discussions of free will carry a lot of historical metaphysical baggage and “free will” is easily construed as meaning agent-causation which is the doctrine that we are “prime movers unmoved”, that “In doing what we do, we cause certain events to happen, and nothing—or no one—causes us to cause those events to happen.” (Chadderdon 2010). Such a view does not encourage inquiry into causal mechanisms of free choice, and it leads to unrealistic ideas of what freedom must mean. ‘Volition’ is a more metaphysically neutral term, so it will be used here instead of “free will”.

Now we try to provide at least a plausible story for how a naturalistic, causal, indeterministic system might lead to choosing behaviors. Either deterministic or indeterministic causal mechanisms could be developed for the various levels of volition. Deterministic and probabilistic approaches to implementation both seem viable theoretically, though implementation may favor that indeterministic approaches be approximated with chaotic pseudo-randomness (Chadderdon 2010).

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Give a relevant dictionary definition of will.

.....

2) Can deterministic mechanisms be developed for levels of volition?

.....

Ontological Status of Volition and a Preliminary Formulation

There is much debate in the philosophy of mind literature on whether propositional attitudes – i.e., “folk psychological” constructs such as desires, intentions, and beliefs—really exist or whether they are vacuous concepts such as phlogiston or ether were in chemistry and physics. This is relevant to our discussion of volition because volition is closely related to intentions and to desires. If intentions and desires do not have real ontological status, then neither does volition which can be thought of as a faculty that operates on intentions and desires.

In Dennett’s writings (Dennett2003), he uses the example of “Game of Life” to illustrate the ontological status of volition and to demonstrate how volition might be possible in a deterministic universe. Briefly, the laws of a cellular automaton may be entirely deterministic, but if you construct a sufficiently complex Game of Life configuration, such that the gliders, blinkers, etc., implemented a Turing machine programmed to play a game of chess, then the system would exhibit intentions, i.e., by choosing the next chess moves.

We would not be able to detect the goal-orientedness of the system by looking at the cellular automata rules, nor by watching individual gliders, etc. It is only by assuming what Dennett calls an intentional stance towards the system, that one could perceive that it is, in fact, a teleological system. Similarly, in biology a teleological approach to the study of an animal’s behavior would involve opting an intentional stance, since it is too difficult to derive an organism’s goal-directedness from phenomena at the molecular or cellular level. Thus, volition can be said to have real ontological existence even though it may not be apparent by looking at the cellular functions of an organism (Chadderdon 2010).

We can say that volition in the chess game software system is real precisely because the system engages in choosing behavior. Volition is an emergent collective property that describes dynamics at a macro-level of existence, i.e., the level of an organism engaged in behavior and decision-making. In this view, volition can be viewed as nothing more than executing one

behavior rather than another in a situation according to some goal (implicit or explicit). What makes the behavior a choice rather than merely a regular, fixed consequence is that in similar states of the environment, the organism may well engage in a different behavior.

This formulation effectively captures the notion of volition as synonymous with ‘autonomy’, i.e., self-directed action, because differential behavior in the face of similar environmental conditions implies that some difference of internal ‘self’ state was necessary to account for the difference in behavior. This internal state is effectively ‘owned’ by the agent/system which is consistent with the intuition of a volitional system having a degree of “ultimate responsibility” (Chadderdon 2010) for its acts.

At this point, it may seem that we’ve arrived at a good operational definition of volition: “The capability of exhibiting a different behavior in a sufficiently similar environmental context”.

Volition as Adaptive Decision Making

At its most basic level, volition amounts to the property of being a self-directed actor in the world, possessing some ongoing autonomous behavior, where ‘autonomous’ means that the behavior of the system is best explained by internal rather than external factors (e.g. a clock’s change of display, as opposed to a rock’s rolling down a hill). But this seems too permissive a criterion; it eliminates rocks and other inert objects, but allows clocks, plants, and even conceivably bodies of water to be counted as possessing volition. At the most refined level, volition means not only basic autonomy, but also having the ability to use internal verbalization to ponder questions and plan courses of action in advance and to deliberate on whether particular choices are likely to lead to positive or negative outcomes before committing to a particular action. Surely this criterion is also limited (Chadderdon 2010).

Even non-primate mammals which lack language may still exercise some kind of nonverbal deliberation process when, for example, foraging, or finding their way back to their lairs. A case for volition could be made even for insects with their largely reflex-driven behavior. Therefore, it seems that volition may be better conceived as a graded property (like “tall” or “bald”) rather than as a dichotomous Boolean property (e.g. “has eyes”). Lacking volition entirely are inert objects like rocks and cups and spoons. There are also entities that spontaneously enact some sort of behaviors like clocks and rivers and suns, but cannot be said to possess goals, so they may be eliminated as well. On the low end of volitional endowment are some artifacts like thermostats and heat-seeking missiles that do appear to exhibit some (implicitly) goal-seeking behavior. On the high end are beings such as humans that plan and make predictions and use language and cultural artifacts as aids in directing decision-making processes before committing to an action. In between is the whole animal kingdom and some of mankind’s more cunning technological creations. Consideration of volition as falling along a scale may permit a better systematic understanding of the concept and, additionally, might allow us to gauge the degree to which artificial and natural organisms possess volition (Chadderdon 2010).

In this discussion, we note that common usage suggests that volition involves the ability to choose actions based on values or goals. Another way of stating this is to say that volition entails the capacity for adaptive decision-making. Decision-making implies that differences in the

environment and one's internal state (e.g. degree of hunger or fatigue) select behavior. Adaptive decision-making implies selection of behaviors that are conducive to meeting goals which will either be those of approach or of avoidance.³ In natural systems, goal-seeking behavior (e.g. finding food and mates, and escaping from predators) is important for the survival and propagation of the organism; this explains how goals may be said to have evolved in natural organisms. We now have a useful, naturalistic general definition of our concept: Volition is the capacity for adaptive decision-making (Chadderdon 2010)

An increase in the capacity for adaptive decision-making, then, would mean that the system would effectively control more of the processes for choosing one behavior vs. the other possible behaviors, and as a result of the increased flexibility, the adaptivity, i.e., the effectiveness, of its behaviors would probably increase when the organism was in a complex, dynamic environment.

Volition is greater in organisms to the extent that:

- 1) their behavior is guided more by learned experience as opposed to "hardwired" reflexes,
- 2) their controlling mechanisms emerge more through a development process as opposed to being fixed at the beginning of their existence, and
- 3) their controlling mechanisms can be more regularly reflected upon and self-modified.

As volition increases, systems can be observed to have behavior differentiated on increasingly subtle variances in the environment and internal state, and their behavioral choices also become more frequently effective in meeting their goals, both learned and innate. (Chadderdon 2010).

3.6 VOLITION AND FREE WILL

Volition is closely connected with free will. Free will is either of the doctrines that human choices are a) determined internally rather than externally (volitional free will) or b) not pre-determined at all (indeterminate free will). Determinism is incompatible with indeterminate free will, but is compatible with volitional free will if agents have internal state, i.e., the agents can influence their actions. Since most effects seem caused rather than uncaused, and since the complexity of minds makes them hard to predict, minds appear to have at least weak free will (if not strong free will). Weak free will is sufficient for assigning ethical responsibility to decision-making systems even in the face of complete determinism. This is how materialists explain free will. Anti-materialists, on the other hand, posit an immaterial will that is free from both deterministic causality and random a-causality. The immaterial will is not subject to causes and so it is free. The actions of an immaterial will could be said to be caused by its own internal causal processes, but the same can be said of material minds.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Is volition real in chess game system?

.....

2) Give a good operational definition of volition?

.....

3.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit after having studied volitional from Scholastic perspective, we tried to study it from a deterministic (or materialistic) perspective of philosophy of mind. It must be noted that there are other non-materialistic positions in philosophy of mind, for which volition appears easily.

3.8 KEYWORDS

Folk psychology: Folk psychology (also known as common sense psychology, naïve psychology or vernacular psychology) is the set of assumptions, constructs, and convictions that makes up the everyday language in which people discuss human psychology

Persona: Latin, meaning: actor's mask, part, role / character, personality.

Prosopon: Prosopon in Greek is the face or the self-manifestation of an individual that can be extended by means of other things

Voluntarism: The doctrine that the will is a fundamental or dominant factor in the individual or the universe.

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UNIT 4 SURVIVAL OF MIND AFTER DEATH

Contents

- 4.0. Objectives
 - 4.1. Introduction
 - 4.2. Some Important Theories on Survival of Mind or Immortality
 - 4.3. Survival of Mind in Western Philosophy
 - 4.4. Survival of Mind in Indian Philosophy
 - 4.5. Let Us Sum Up
 - 4.6. Further Readings and References
-

4.0 OBJECTIVES

“Survival of mind” or immortality is one of the most ancient concepts posed by human civilization. The earliest peoples believed in some sort of survival after death. In this Unit, after a brief examination of some of the relevant theories on survival of mind or immortality, we proceed to survey a few of the prominent classical philosophical views on the issue before arriving at an affirmative conclusion of survival of mind or immortality. The Unit consists of the following main sections:

- Some Important Theories on Survival of Mind or Immortality
 - Survival of Mind in Western Philosophy
 - Survival of Mind in Indian Philosophy
-

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Ancient Indian philosophy embraced the divine nature of the soul and its survival through rebirth, a state not considered desirable either when compared with *moksha* or liberation. For Plato, whose thought has exerted a continuous influence on the West, the soul is considered to be the essential person and the body the vehicle of the soul. Survival is understood in terms of the immortality of the soul. In Hebrew thought we find a different picture developing, based on the psychosomatic unity of the person as soul and body combined. Survival after death becomes the prelude to the resurrection of the body. For St Paul it is clearly a spiritual body. Many modern scientists embrace a materialistic account of the human being, asserting that the mind or consciousness is a by-product of brain processes. Proponents of this model tend to ignore evidence that might call their materialistic presuppositions into question.

4.2 SOME IMPORTANT THEORIES ON SURVIVAL OF MIND

Dualism: Dualism maintains that at death a person continues to exist as a wholly immaterial substance, as pure consciousness or mind. There are two versions of dualism: Substance Dualism and Property Dualism. Substance Dualism claims that there are two kinds of substances: physical and mental. Property Dualism claims that there are only physical substances, some of

which have mental properties. Hence, according to the substance dualist the brain is a physical substance with physical properties, and the mind or soul is a mental substance that has mental properties. The property dualist says that the brain is a physical substance with physical and mental properties.

Epiphenomenalism: If we suppose that the physical and the mental are distinct, this does open up the prospects for disembodied survival. At any rate, it refutes a main objection against disembodied survival. However, disembodied survival requires more than both dualism and substance dualism. After all, one might agree that the brain and the mind are distinct, but one might say that the mind nonetheless depends on the brain for its functioning, and in that case, disembodied survival would not be possible. The epiphenomenalist says that while brain states and mental states are distinct, the brain is the cause of mental states, but mental states exert no causal influence on brain states. At a certain point in its complex physical processes, the brain is able to generate consciousness, but this is a one-way causal relation.

Dualistic Interactionism: The dualistic interactionist maintains that in addition to physical states causing mental states, mental states also cause physical states. Dualistic interactionists may be substance or property dualists, but some property dualists are epiphenomenalists.

Weakly Disembodied Survival: Given that weakly disembodied survival is logically consistent with the human person continuing to exist in some physical form without a conventional body or brain, weakly disembodied survival does not entail a denial of physicalism. Hence, even if physicalism were true, it would not rule out some form of disembodied survival.

Astral Body: An astral body is considered material, has shape, position and the characteristics of the physical body as well as the mind of its own. In principle, the astral body is detectable but in practice it is usually too difficult to detect. The astral body is supposed to be an exact duplicate of the physical body and it experiences all that happens to the physical body in its lifetime despite its lack of substance. One might argue that the astral body is like a shadow. The shadow behaves just as the object does. If the object is hit by an arrow, its shadow is hit by the shadow of the arrow. Why then does the astral body not die when the physical body dies? If someone died with an arrow through the heart, the astral heart must have been similarly injured. And if one tries to argue that the astral body is not an exact duplicate of the physical body, then the identity of the spirit with the dead person has been lost.

4.3 SURVIVAL OF MIND IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

The earliest Greek philosophers, especially Plato, often made immortality or survival of mind a theme of their discourses. Every philosopher and each major religion has explored its range. ‘Immortality’ or survival of mind, for them, means endless life.

For **Plato**, the soul is a spiritual principle distinct from the body. At the conclusion of the *Phaedrus*, Socrates prays: “O dear Pan and all the other gods of this place, grant that I may be beautiful inside. Let all my external possessions be in friendly harmony with what is within. May I consider the wise man rich. As for gold, let me have as much as a moderate man could bear and carry with him.” In this psychological dualism, which corresponds to Plato’s metaphysical

dualism, we see the pre-eminence of soul over body. This being so, the soul is superior to the body and must rule the body. The *Timaeus* understands the soul as the only existing thing, which possesses intelligence and is invisible. The *Phaedo* teaches that the soul is not a mere epiphenomenon of the body. It cannot be a mere harmony of the body. If the soul were a mere harmony of the body, it would follow that one soul could be more of a soul than another, which is an absurdity.

Although Plato asserts an essential distinction between soul and body, he is quite aware of the influence of the body on the soul. In the *Republic*, Plato argues that true education requires physical training. In the *Timaeus*, he admits the evil influence of bad physical training and evil bodily habits on the soul. For most of the ills of the soul are caused by a defective constitution inherited from the parents and a faulty education. "No one is willingly bad; the bad man becomes so because of some faulty habit of body and unenlightened upbringing, and these are unwelcome afflictions that come to any man against his will." Even if Plato speaks on occasion as though the soul merely dwelt in the body, he does not deny all interaction of soul and body on one another.

Both the *Republic* and the *Timaeus* teach a tripartite nature of the soul: rational part, spirited part and appetitive part. The word 'part' (meros) is used in a metaphorical sense. He regarded the three parts as forms or functions or principles of action, and not as parts in the material sense. Rational part (*logistikon*) distinguishes human from other animals. It is immortal and akin to the divine. The spirited part (*thumoeides*) is the nobler (more akin to moral courage) and is the natural ally of reason. Of course, it is also found in animals. The appetitive part (*epithumeitikon*) refers to bodily desires. The *Timaeus* locates the rational part in the head, the spirited part in the breast, and the appetitive part below the midriff. Plato declared that only the rational part of the soul, which is simple, is immortal. But in the Myths, it is implied that the soul survives in its totality, at least that it preserves memory in the state of separation from the body.

Plato introduced the tripartite nature of the soul mainly owing to the evident fact of the conflict within the soul. In the *Phaedrus*, the rational part is likened to a charioteer, and the spirited and appetitive elements to two horses. The one horse (spirited part) is good and the other horse (appetitive part) is bad. While the good horse is easily driven according to the directions of the charioteer, the bad horse is unruly and tends to obey the voice of sensual passion so that it must be restrained by the whip. To conclude: The tendency to regard the three principles of action as principles of one unitary soul and the tendency to regard them as separable parts remain unreconciled in Plato.

Plato's main interest is evidently the ethical interest of insisting on the right of the rational part (charioteer) to rule. While the rational part of the soul is said to be made by the Demiurge out of the same ingredients as the World-Soul, the mortal parts of the soul (also body) are made by the celestial gods. This is a mythical expression of the fact that the rational element of the soul is the highest and is born to rule because it is more akin to the divine. It has a natural affinity with the invisible and intelligible world which it is able to contemplate. But the other elements of the soul are bound up essentially with the body and have no direct part in rational activity by which one beholds the world of Forms.

The following are Plato's arguments for immortality: First, in the *Phaedo* Socrates argues that contraries are produced from contraries. Life and death are contraries. Death is produced from life. We must, therefore, conclude that life is produced from death. The second argument is from the *apriori* factor in knowledge. Humans have knowledge of standards and absolute norms. But these standards and absolutes do not exist in sense-world. Hence, humans must have beheld them in a state of pre-existence. The third argument is from the spirituality of the soul. Visible things are complex and subject to dissolution and death. The soul can survey the invisible and unchanging forms. By coming into contact with forms, the soul shows itself to be more like forms than it is to visible and material things, which are mortal. Moreover, from the fact that the soul is naturally destined to rule the body, it appears to be more like the divine than the mortal. The soul is 'divine,' which for the Greeks means immortality. The fourth argument is that a spiritual principle cannot wear itself out. The existence of forms is admitted. Now, the presence of one form will not admit of the presence of a contrary form, nor will a thing that is what it is by virtue of its participation in one form admit of the simultaneous presence of a contrary form. If fire is 'warm,' it will not admit of the opposite predicate 'cold' simultaneously. Soul is what it is by virtue of its participation in the form of life. Therefore, it will not admit of the presence of the contrary form, 'death.' When death approaches, the soul must either perish or withdraw. That it does not perish is assumed. It cannot also withdraw itself due to weariness. For a spiritual principle cannot wear itself out. Fifthly, a thing cannot be destroyed or perish except through some evil that is inherent in it. The evils of the soul are unrighteousness, intemperance, cowardice, and ignorance. But these do not destroy the soul; for a thoroughly unjust person may live as long or longer than a just person. So if the soul is not destroyed by its own internal corruption, it cannot be destroyed by any external evil. Sixthly, a thing which moves another and is moved by another may cease to live as it may cease to be moved. The soul is a self-moving principle which is uncreated. What is uncreated cannot be destroyed. Hence, the soul can in no way be destroyed. It is immortal.

For **Aristotle**, soul (*psyche*) is the principle of life. It is the entelechy (*entelekeia*) of a natural body endowed with the capacity of life (*De Anima* B I, 412 a 27-b 4). It is the act of the body. The body is for the soul. The body is matter to the soul and the soul is form to the body. The soul is thus the realization of the body and is inseparable from it. The soul is the cause of the body: as source of movement, as final cause, as the real substance (i.e., formal cause) of animating bodies.

There are different forms of soul. The lowest form of soul is the vegetative soul which exercises assimilation and reproduction. These functions are fundamental in all living things. Animals possess the sensitive soul, the higher form of soul, which exercises the three powers of sense-perception, desire, and local motion. Humans possess rational soul (*nous*) which unites in itself the powers of the lower souls. The *nous* is the power of both scientific thought and deliberation. While scientific thought aims at truth for its own sake, deliberation aims at truth for practical purposes. All the powers of the soul, except *nous*, are inseparable from the body and perishable. However, *nous* pre-exists before the body and is immortal. The *nous* requires a potential principle on which it may imprint forms. Here, Aristotle makes the distinction between *nous poietikos* (active intellect) and *nous patheitikos* (passive intellect). The active intellect abstracts forms from the images (*phantasmata*), which, when received in the passive intellect, are actual concepts. Only the active intellect is immortal. What Aristotle says in the *De Anima* is as follows:

“This latter intellect (nous) is separate, unaffected and unmixed, being in substance activity. For in all cases that which acts is superior to that which is affected, and the principle to its matter. And while knowledge in the actualized state is identical with the fact known, knowledge in the state of potentiality, though temporally prior in the individual case, does not in general even have temporal priority. Nor is it the case that the intellect is now thinking, now not. It is, further, in its separate state that the intellect is just that which it is, and it is this alone that is immortal and eternal, though we have no memory, as the separate intellect is unaffected, while the intellect that is affected is perishable, and in any case thinks nothing without the other.”

According to **Augustine**, human is constituted of body and soul. The soul is a substance in its own right. Human is a rational soul using a mortal and earthly body (> Platonic conception). Sensation is an activity of the soul using the body as an instrument rather than an activity of the total psycho-physical organism. The soul is superior to and better than the body. “For, every living creature or animal consists of both soul and body. Of these two components, the soul, assuredly, is superior to the body. Even when vicious and weak, the soul is, without doubt, better than the healthiest and strongest body, since it is higher by nature and, even though blemished by vice, is better than the body, just as gold, even when dirty, is worth more than silver or lead, however pure.” Being superior to the body, the soul cannot be acted on by the body. The soul perceives the changes in the body due to an external stimulus. Although the soul animates the body, it is an immaterial principle. Its immateriality and substantiality assure it of immortality. The soul is immortal because it apprehends indestructible truth which shows that it is itself indestructible.

Human soul, holds **Bonaventure**, is created by God out of nothing. It is the image of God and on this count its production can be effected only by God who is that Principle which has life and perpetuity of itself. God creates the entire soul, and not merely the rational faculty. There is only one soul in human endowed with rational and sensitive faculties. It is also the form of the body. It is an existent, living, intelligent form endowed with freedom. It is present in every part of the body. It is a spiritual substance composed of both spiritual form and spiritual matter. This doctrine may seem to contradict the admitted simplicity of the human soul. But Bonaventure points out that ‘simplicity’ has various meanings and degrees. ‘Simplicity’ may refer to absence of quantitative parts (which the soul enjoys), or it may refer to absence of constitutive parts (which the soul does not enjoy). The main point is that the soul can subsist by itself. In fact, it is the presence of a material principle to which a form is united is what makes possible subsisting in the full sense of the term. Being partly passive and mutable, it must have in it spiritual matter. The doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of the human soul is thus calculated to ensure its power of subsistence apart from the body. The hylomorphic composition naturally facilitates the proof of its immortality. But Bonaventure’s favourite proof for immortality is the one drawn from the consideration of the ultimate purpose of the soul which seeks for perfect happiness. But no one can be perfectly happy if one is afraid of losing what one possesses. Now, the soul has a natural desire for perfect happiness. Therefore, it must be naturally immortal. This proof presupposes the existence of God, the source of perfect happiness. In a similar way, he argues from the nature of the soul as the image of God. Since the soul has been created for happiness, which consists in the possession of the supreme Good, it must be capable of possessing God

(*capax Dei*) and so must be made in his image. But soul would not be the image of God if it were mortal. Hence it must be immortal.

Thomas Aquinas rejected the Platonic-Augustinian view of the relation of soul to body and adopted the Aristotelian view of the soul as form of the body. In this way, Aquinas emphasized the closeness of the union between the two. There is only one substantial form in human, the rational soul. This substantial form directly informs prime matter and is the cause of all human activities on the vegetative, sensitive and intellectual levels. Sensation is an act not of the soul using a body, but of the composite. We have no innate ideas and the mind depends on sense-experience for its knowledge. The soul is incorruptible because it is a subsistent form intrinsically independent of the body and extrinsically dependent on it since the mind needs the body for its activity not as its cause but as condition. Besides, a form, for Aquinas, is corrupted in three ways only: through the action of its contrary, through the corruption of its subject, and through the failure of its cause. But the human soul cannot be corrupted in any of these ways.

Again, a form is corrupted by three things only: the action of its contrary, the corruption of its subject, the failure of its cause; by the action of a contrary, as when heat is destroyed by the action of cold; by the corruption of its subject, as when the power of sight is destroyed through the destruction of the eye; by the failure of its cause, as when the air's illumination fails through the failure of its cause, the sun, to be present. But the human soul cannot be corrupted by the action of a contrary, for nothing is contrary to it; since, through the possible intellect, it is cognizant and receptive of all contraries. Nor can the human soul be destroyed through the corruption of its subject, for we have already shown that it is a form independent of the body in its being. Nor, again, can the soul be destroyed through the failure of its cause, since it can have no cause except an eternal one.... Therefore, in no way can the human soul be corrupted (St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book II, Ch. 79, Art.10).

The subsistent human soul is spiritual because it is capable of knowing the natures of all bodies. If it were material, it would be determined to a specific object without being capable of self-reflection, as, for instance, the sense of vision is determined to the perception of colour. For these and other reasons, it follows that every human soul must be immaterial (spiritual), and thus immortal. Secondly, the soul has a natural desire for immortality. The natural desire (*desiderium naturale*) implanted by God cannot be in vain. When Aquinas proves the immortality of the soul, he is naturally referring to personal immortality. Otherwise, it is impossible to explain the diversity of ideas and intellectual operations in different humans if they have only one intellect.

4.4 SURVIVAL OF MIND IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Upanisads and the Bhagavad Gita: The Kausitaki Upanisad (KU 4,20) states that the soul fills the body right to the tips of the nails and hairs just as a sheath. The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad (BU 5,6,1) and the Katha (Katha 1,2,20) describe the soul as the size of a rice or barely grain. The Katha also describes it as the size of a thumb (Katha 2,2,12), and the Chandogya as the size of a "span" (CU 5,18,1). The Maitri Upanisad (MaiU 6,38) describes the soul as all these sizes – grain of rice, a thumb and a span. What is important in this apparent contradiction among

metaphors is the philosophical content, and the usefulness of metaphors for the progressive realization of atman. The apparent contradiction is the best indicator that what is intended is to show that Self and Self-consciousness are not subject matters within any spatial, temporal and causal framework. It is the attempt to translate the metaphysical (a-spatial, a-temporal and a-causal), immortal soul to these metaphors that create the apparent contradictions. The key to understanding the Upanisadic metaphysics of death is that death is no termination. Death denotes one phase in a seemingly unending series of transitions that have as their underlying ground and ultimate outcome, immortality. The Kathopanishad (Katha 1,2,18-19) states that the atman is neither born nor dead. The soul is not killed with the killing of the body. The Bhagavad Gita says that death is merely like a change of clothes. One body is put off and another, newer one is put on (Gita 2,19). This is a necessary information given to the hesitant Arjuna by Krsna to encourage him to fight and establish justice in the world. It is true all will die, but all will return again.

Carvakas: According to Carvakas, the existence of consciousness is proved by perception. But consciousness is not the quality of any unperceived spiritual entity. It is the quality of living body composed of the material elements. It is the by-product of matter. Since there is no soul apart from body, there is also no possibility of immortality. All questions concerning previous life, after-life, rebirth, etc. becomes meaningless.

Jainism: A soul (*jiva*) is a conscious substance. Consciousness, which is present in the soul, is its essence. Of course, the nature and degree of consciousness may vary. Souls are arranged in a continuous series according to the degrees of consciousness. The perfect souls, that have overcome all karmas and attained omniscience, are at the top of the scale and the most imperfect souls, which inhabit the bodies of earth, water, fire, air or vegetation, are at the lowest end of the scale. Life and consciousness appear to be absent in the most imperfect souls. But even here consciousness is present in a hidden manner, in a dormant form owing to the overpowering influence of karma. The souls having two to five senses, like worms, ants, bees and men, lie midway between these two extremes. The soul is eternal, yet undergoes change of states. Its existence is directly proved by its consciousness of itself. Though it is eternal, it is not infinite since it is co-extensive with the body. Consciousness is present only in the body, in every part of it and thus occupies space. The soul's occupying space means its presence in different parts of space and not filling a part of it like a material body. No two material bodies can be present in the same space at the same time, but two or more souls can be present at the same place just as two or more lights can illumine the same area.

Immortality consists in the liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter, from the bondage of passions. The passions which cause bondage are anger, pride, illusion and greed. The presence of these passions in the soul makes matter-particles stick to it. Liberation is attained by stopping the influx of new matter into the soul as well as by complete elimination (*nirjara*) of the matter with which the soul has become already mingled. The passions or cravings of the soul lead to the association of the soul with matter. Passions ultimately spring from our ignorance about the real nature of our souls. Liberation from matter or passions is attained through right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. Right faith is the attitude of respect (*sraddha*) towards truth. In some this faith may be inborn and spontaneous while in others it may be acquired. Right knowledge is the 'detailed cognition of the real nature of the ego and non-ego, and is free from

doubt, error and uncertainty.’ The existence of certain innate tendencies (*karmas*) stands in the way of correct knowledge. For the attainment of perfect knowledge, which results in absolute omniscience, the removal of these karmas is required. Right conduct means refraining from what is harmful and doing what is beneficial. Good conduct helps the self to get rid of the karmas that lead to bondage and suffering.

Buddhism: In Buddhism, the conception of a soul is replaced by that of an unbroken stream of consciousness. The present state of consciousness inherits its characteristics from the past, from the previous ones. The past in a way continues in the present through its effect. Buddha repeatedly exhorts his disciples to give up the false view about the self. The people who suffer from the illusion of the self are like those falling in love with the most beautiful maiden who has never existed. There is, thus, no immortality of soul too. However, there is rebirth, which is not transmigration (migration of the same soul into another body), but the causation of the next life by the present. There is no immortal soul, but a series of ‘immortal’ (unbroken) causations in which ‘everything is dependent on something else, and that thing in turn does not perish without leaving some effect, called dependent origination’ (*pratityasamutpada*).

Nyaya: The Nyaya school understands immortality in terms of liberation (*mukti*). Liberation is a state of negation of all pain and suffering in which the soul is released from all the bonds of its connection with the body and the senses. It is soul’s final deliverance from pain and attainment of eternal bliss. To attain liberation one must acquire a true knowledge of the self and all other objects of experience, knowing the self as distinct from the body and undergoing no more birth in this world. The cessation of birth means the end of one’s connection with the body and consequently of all pain and suffering.

Vaisesika: The soul is an eternal (immortal) and all-pervading substance which is the principle of consciousness. There are two kinds of souls: individual soul (*jivatma*) and supreme soul (*paramatma*). The latter is the one creator of the world and the former is internally or mentally perceived, which is not one but many. *Manas* is the internal sense of the individual soul. *Manas* is atomic and partless, and cannot be perceived. It is the organ through which soul attends to objects.

Samkhya: The self (*purusa*) is different from the body and the senses, the *manas* and the intellect. It is a conscious spirit which is always the subject of knowledge. It is not a substance with consciousness as its attribute, but it is the pure consciousness. Consciousness is the very essence of the self. There are numerous selves, which are eternal (immortal) and intelligent subjects of knowledge. Self is distinct from *prakrti*, which is the one, eternal (immortal) and non-intelligent ground of the objects of knowledge, including *manas*, intellect and ego.

Liberation or absolute freedom from all pain and suffering is possible through right knowledge of reality (*tattvajnana*). Our sufferings are due to our ignorance of laws of life and nature. Reality is a plurality of selves and the world of objects presented to them. The self is pure consciousness free from the limitations of space, time and causality. The self is distinct from ego and mind. It is the transcendent subject whose very essence is pure consciousness, freedom, eternity and immortality. It is eternal and immortal because it is not produced by any cause and cannot be destroyed in any way. Immortality and eternal life are not to be regarded as future

possibilities, but as a reality which is beyond space and time, beyond mind and body, and therefore, essentially free, eternal and immortal. This kind of liberation is called *jivanmukti* (liberation of the soul while living in this body).

Yoga: Yoga system regards the individual self (*jiva*) as the free spirit associated with the gross body and more closely related to a subtle body constituted by the senses, the *manas*, the ego and the intellect. The self is pure consciousness free from the limitations of the body and the fluctuations of the mind (*citta*). Although the self undergoes no change, yet because of its reflection in the changing states of *citta*, the self appears to be subject to changes, in the same way as the moon appears to be moving when we see it reflected in the moving waters. When the waves of the empirical consciousness die down, the self realizes itself as distinct from the mind-body complex, as free immortal and self-shining intelligence.

Mimamsa: For this school, the soul is an eternal, infinite substance which is related to a real body in a real world and it is immortal. Its immortality enables it to reap the consequences of its action performed here. Consciousness is not the essence of the soul, but an adventitious quality. In dreamless sleep and in the state of liberation, the soul has no consciousness. There are as many souls as there are individuals. Although the souls are subject to bondage, they can also obtain liberation from it.

Advaita Vedanta of Sankara: Sankara accepts the identity of soul and God. Human is only apparently composed of body and soul. But the body, in fact, is merely an illusory appearance. The reality that remains is the soul which is nothing other than God. Hence, the soul is as immortal and eternal as God is. The great saying, 'That thou art,' means that there is an unqualified identity between the soul, that underlies the apparently finite human, and God. Being identical with God, the soul is in reality what God really is. It is the supreme Brahman. The soul appears as limited, because of its association with body which is a product of ignorance. Owing to ignorance, the soul erroneously associates itself with body, and thus is in bondage. When ignorance is removed, one realizes that one is identical with Brahman, '*Aham Brahmasmi*.' This is the moment of liberation from bondage. The liberated soul never again identifies itself with body.

Visistadvaita of Ramanuja: Human has a real body and a soul. The body is finite, material, and a part of God. The soul is eternal, infinite and immortal. The soul is so subtle that it can penetrate into every unconscious material substance. Consciousness is an eternal quality of the soul which remains so under all conditions. The bondage of the soul to body is due to its karma. Being embodied, its consciousness is limited by the conditions of the body it possesses. Though the soul is infinitely small, it illumines every part of the body in which it is. It identifies itself with the body. Liberation is to be attained through both work and knowledge (devotion). Real knowledge is a steady, constant remembrance of God through meditation (*dhyana*), prayer (*upasana*), and devotion (*bhakti*). Intense remembrance of God (devotion) ultimately matures into an immediate knowledge of God. Liberation cannot be attained simply by human efforts. God helps the devotee to attain perfect knowledge by removing obstacles. The liberated soul does not become identical with God, but becomes similar to God. The liberated soul attains unity with God.

4.5 LET US SUM UP

Almost all humans, in their thought and conviction, are oriented towards immortality or life after death. The immortality of the human soul, from a philosophical viewpoint, can be established from the immateriality or spirituality of certain fundamental operations in human. For, 'as the operation is so the being is'. The fundamental operations are: knowing, willing and remembering; these are immaterial or spiritual in themselves. As they are spiritual in themselves, they are intrinsically independent of matter and extrinsically dependent on matter or material conditions. It means that the human cannot know or will or remember without body or material conditions. Yet, the material conditions cannot cause any of these operations independently. If the operations of knowing, willing, and remembering are spiritual, the corresponding faculties – intellect, will, and memory – from which these operations proceed should also be spiritual. Although these faculties have their own distinct functions, they are not separate or apart from each other as they are coordinated by a coordinating principle, namely, soul which must also be spiritual as the spiritual cannot originate from what is material, but only from the spiritual. The spiritual is simple. The simple is not composed. What is not composed cannot be decomposed. What cannot be decomposed cannot die, since death is basically decomposition. What is not subject to death, therefore, is immortal. Hence, human mind or soul is immortal, i.e., survives death.

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