

Psychological Perspectives of Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

The afflictions, indifferences and other debilitating versions of negativity prevailing currently in the modern-day society, particularly in the context of interpersonal interactions and establishing relationships are sought to be thoroughly analysed, diagnosed, and addressed in an elegant and intrinsically consistent approach by insisting on reliance of such celebrated virtues as consciousness and meditation. Psychological implications of consciousness in trying to evolve a comprehensible paradigm are extensively adhered to so as to advance a narrative where only positive perspectives not only survive but also flourish aggressively in the social structure to produce outcomes of cogent development and progress in all spheres of human endeavors. The protocol encompasses a liberal recourse to the techniques of meditation which, unambiguously, have the innate potential to harness and concentrate the enormous available energy of the human body and to control the wavering nature of mind so as to allow both to act in tandem as an integrated whole to focus on attaining an ambitious framework of positive vibrational systematics. Based on these considerations, the ingredients that constitute negative thoughts encounter a scenario of their disability, leading to an eventual elimination to rid the society of their negative impacts on social interactions.

Keywords: *Consciousness, awareness, meditation, Self*

A sense of deep trepidation unleashed by the prevailing insecurities and insensitivities typified by the existing contradictions, conflict, and stress, among others, has adversely impacted social interactions and relations among human beings. It is indeed a cause of worry, for its consequences are potent enough not only to cause unpalatable situations but also systematically jeopardise peace and harmony in a significantly irreversible manner. Undoubtedly, an attempt to salvage this impending deterioration in society would necessarily entail consideration of a great many parameters and viewpoints that affect our psychological perceptions which ultimately guide our actions and set priorities within the framework of our own sensibilities or lack thereof. However, it may be prudent at this juncture to critically analyze all the differing versions and perspectives that might be interpreted to contribute to the current tribulation.

Obviously, the complexities involved in addressing the challenges of attaining an agreeable understanding of human interactions are not only enormously difficult but also, quite

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possibly, not even amenable to a reasonable resolution. Nonetheless, we must not abandon our pursuits to chase our dream goalposts in the overall interest and betterment of the society.

Let us take a pragmatic view of the divergent scenarios that have, regrettably, contributed to the stigmatization of the behaviour of the members of a family, considered as a basic unit on which falls the responsibility to lead to the development of a larger conglomerate of social interactions. The main essence of the conflicting situations is best captured by an eloquent description where the central idea revolves around two extremes but equally probable predictions about the ways there would perhaps be a catastrophic collapse of the social structure. One of the narratives stipulates that it will end in *fire*. Here the metaphor *fire* signifies desire, greed, lust or avarice, among others; and the more one tries to satisfy them the more they intensify and grow. The process continues more and more rapidly and ultimately reaches a level of such absurdities that its retrieval to sobriety appears practically impossible. Obviously, there is no end to this and its uncontrolled spread like a wild *fire* engulfs the whole human life. This *fire* is so potent that it can completely transform a human being into an utterly selfish and cruel person to others in his relentless efforts to fulfil his narrow objectives, without displaying even a semblance of regard or consideration for any scruples. He becomes a savage in achieving his ill-conceived goals by unhesitatingly applying unfair and, at times, outright dubious means towards realization of his inflated ambitions and self-goals. This leads to gradual acrimony amongst the people that vitiates not only peace and harmony but also brings down the social edifice completely and irreversibly. This unfortunate descent of the social norms into a dystopian, albeit deeply surreal world of hate must be halted on priority basis before it ushers in further draconian malfeasance and criminality.

Contrarily, however, some people believe that the other equally chilling and potentially devastating narrative responsible for bringing an unceremonious end to the social environment is symbolized by deep hatred, coldness, intolerance, insensitivity, indifference and rigidity in interpersonal relations and interactions. These debilitating features which can be collectively referred to generically as *ice*, are very dangerous, insofar as they too crumble the bonhomie and goodwill in the society steadily but surely. Those who harbour these arrogant traits do hurt the feelings of others and develop a psychologically negative attitude towards others. Needless to say that arrogance necessarily stems from ignorance. The power of hate is so strong that it consumes the relationships among members of a family or the society as a whole. Even though this paradigm of negativity brings an end to the beauty, sanctity and purity of relations and social behavior, it systematically overthrows the very basis of binding forces and principles underlying a peaceful and congenial social set up.

From what has been stated herein above, it is clear that that both *fire* and *ice* can spell a probable end to the social fabric giving rise to a dreary situation within which it becomes an impossible enterprise to lead a meaningful and worthwhile life [Frost, R. (1920)]. We would like to highlight that too much *fire* and passion can quickly destroy a relationship while excessive *ice* - hate, jealousy and indifference, on the other hand, is certain to cause an extreme disharmony and palpable damage to the prevailing goodwill that would gradually consume the society in an irreparable manner. The underlying thematic ideas of frequent reference to the twin causes of *fire* and *ice* responsible for virtual destruction of humanity are particularly relevant in the present Indian context. These two are possibly the darkest of traits of human beings who are known to possess limitless capacity to be consumed by extreme degree of desire and lust on the one hand, and then there are others, equally finicky,

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endowed with an overwhelming sense of burning craze to hate others in an effort to fulfil their nefarious dreams and unfeasible ambitions through whatever means possible, even at the cost of inflicting physical, mental or monetary harm to others.

For the sake of simple illustration, let us consider the case of a happy (nuclear) family, comprising the parents and the children, as a unit where they all enjoy the bliss of togetherness, deep love, empathy and concern for the good will of one another. With the passage of time, as the children grow up and acquire education, it is natural for them to aspire for appropriate career opportunities in their respective fields of interest and according to their ambitions. This is perhaps the beginning of a stage of competitiveness to succeed or even to excel in their endeavors to fulfil their aims. Towards this end, it is not improbable for them to develop a craving for success, even at the cost of deviating from the accepted norms such as use of fair means, respecting probity and strict adherence to good conduct. This *fire* symbolized by greed, and desire rages uncontrollably in the form of a cascading reaction, intensifying progressively in its sinister implications to realize those unrealistically set targets and undeserved goals. The resulting scenario seriously impacts the psychological abilities to deal with the escalating conflict internally as well as externally. The person not only loses his own sense of rationale and critical judgement for balancing the pros and the cons of his actions, but also continues to proceed towards ruination of his own peace of mind and physical wellbeing. He is destined to face the onslaught of public ridicule and disdain. In the process his unfathomable actions afflict incalculable harm to the justifiable pursuits of others. He transforms himself into a psychological wreck himself, bereft of all senses of proportion, self-esteem and positivity of thoughts. These psychological impediments become too evident and glaring to be ignored. This situation must not be allowed to continue in its ferocity and complexities for long and requires a determined effort to stop in its tracks on an urgent basis. This temporal exigency strongly mandates an effective repudiation by preventing its perpetuation lest it should become such monstrous as to cause destruction beyond repair.

It is precisely in the wake these circumstances that the social world order degenerates to an insidious end, without the apparent availability of any tangible framework to refashion the retrieval process for an effective rectification of the loss. However, it would be highly imprudent to feel dejected or even harbour a psychological impairment, or else consequently refrain from taking any remedial measures to eradicate these sources of negativities, psychological delusions and maladies, at least partially. We aspire for love, sympathy, equality, compassion, emotion, and mutual understanding, among other positive attributes, for one and all, to help in our quest for establishing a societal paradigm brimming with sustainable peace, happiness and harmony. The goal of self – promotion, untethered by any form of reality, has not only to be effectively arrested but also publicly condemned. We intend to seek solutions within the broad guidelines enshrined in the deepest realms of abstraction of consciousness which defies a precise definition in terms of known parameters, variables or concepts, and yet manifests in almost every action, decision and priority executed by a human or even a non-human being in relation to others. We shall, therefore, make a modest attempt to explore the abstract nuances of consciousness by appropriately mapping them onto our own frameworks to facilitate a better understanding of human relations and interactions [Parashar, D. and Kaushal, R. S. (2020)].

Possible Resolution through Consciousness

While a reasonably detailed analysis of the fundamental aspects of consciousness is carried out elsewhere in a recent investigation [Mukherji, N. and Parashar, D. (2020)], we shall

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delve into only the salient features to seek a credible resolution to some of the problems enunciated herein above. It must, however, be borne in mind that these ideas and prescriptions must necessarily correspond to a natural caveat which provides for limitations both in the physical as well as spiritual domains. Accordingly, aspirations should conform to reality checks which stipulate that a complete and/or perfect resolution to problems of social interactions is too ambitious to be theoretically possible, unless of course one is so deeply entrenched into divinity either through meditation or yogic practices whereby an ordinary human being elevates himself to the exalted pedestal of a sage or a seer.

The conventional four-dimensional physical space spanned by the space (x) and time (t) variables must now be suitably extended by incorporating an additional dimension by way of introducing an additional new variable (μ) to stand for a quantifiable measure of the intensity of meditation to represent spirituality so as to be able to study the working of various stages of consciousness and the role of divinity in addressing the complex aberrations pertaining to human behavior, emotions, interactions and relations [Kaushal, R. S. (2011)]. It is possible that different degrees of emotions that a person may go through during a particular period of time and circumstances manifest in various forms and intensities. For instance, a series of emotions such as being restless, anxious, nervous, jealous, unsure, depressed, etc. on the one hand and being relaxed, peaceful, confident, ambitious, positive and calm, among others, on the other hand can all be experienced within a relatively brief spell of time as a result of the subtle and unpredictable trajectory traversed by the thought process. It is, therefore, imperative to gradually develop a healthy rapport between our thoughts and tendencies by relentlessly trying to reform the spread of all these divergent forms of stray emotions which are responsible for jeopardizing the very rationale of consistency, stability, and peace. One is eventually led to the much-needed insight to comprehend these emotions by recognising the distinction between the two operations as to who in fact is feeling or thinking of these varying emotional states and who is essentially observing them and becoming aware of these thoughts within. The evident explanation for this is furnished by 'mind' for the former and 'awareness' or consciousness for the latter [Vij, R. (2021)]. It is through this awareness that one realises one's true Self.

In essence, awareness plays a dominant role in ending the sufferings that are attributes of the impairments of the mind rather than the pain which is merely physical [Vasudev, S. J. (2021)]. The distinction between pain, which is injury to the body, and suffering which is psychological must be understood in proper perspective. While pain caused by injury to the physical body lies beyond our control and serves as a warning signal, suffering is entirely our own creation and could well be avoided. In other words, we can always exercise a choice not to allow ourselves to suffer even if the body may experience pain at the same time. Human beings generally have a strong natural tendency to suffer on account of the way they react to the cause of misery in a particular situation. With awareness, however, this suffering can be avoided at least partially, if not completely, depending upon how well the working of the mind can be controlled in a holistic manner.

This pursuit involves uncovering the latent layers of the elements of this deepest and innermost abstraction of consciousness, the lowest one being limited to our body consciousness where perception carried out by our sensory organs of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting where we essentially interact with the outer experiences. The next level corresponding to inner, emotional, and mental consciousness facilitates examination of our inner states whereby our beliefs and attitudes start getting transformed preventing us from our tendencies to drift away from serenity and goodness. Delving

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progressively deeper, we achieve the desired level of spiritual consciousness within which we are led to develop full awareness of our true Self, enabling us to observe our emotions truthfully. At this spiritual level, it is easy to recognize that, in human form, we are just manifestation of the awareness that experiences these different aspects. However, if indeed we could live in this pristine domain of spiritual consciousness of our Self, we would not be naturally tempted to identify with the negative aspects of our physical and emotional tendencies and experiences, and in the process, we can carry out our responsibilities and roles with much better effectiveness and sense of love and happiness. On attainment of this level of spiritual prowess can a human being shed the baggage of negativity and ego to carry out the defined goal of nurturing healthy interactions with other human beings and thereby develop everlasting relationships not only with other immediate members of the family but also with other constituents of the social set up. Thus, consciousness helps in chiselling our psychological perspectives from an emotional state of 'distress' to that of 'de-stress' towards fulfilment of our social obligations in the interest of harmony in life.

Reflecting further on the Self as a true soulmate, we emphasize that people indulging in pretensions which is nothing but a tacit acceptance of defeat and escapism, are only deceiving themselves and preventing them from facing real life challenges. The only way forward lies in the simple act of acknowledgement of the bare facts in the form they actually exist. It is generally believed that every human is basically endowed with two broad categories of existence, namely, the one with ego-fed 'maya' which may help bring success in the material world but it cannot be described as a true Self, while the other corresponding to consciousness or awareness is indeed rooted in the authentic true Self and resides in the innermost precincts of soul where one experiences non-camouflaged truth emitting only brilliance of light with no shred of any shadows whatsoever [Chakraverty, S. (2021)]. Thus, an attainment of spiritual and psychological progression is possible only through an intensely conscientious practice of self-understanding.

It must be recognised that consciousness has direct bearing on how well we are able to listen to our inner voice so as to transcend into the realm of divinity within the Self which is unambiguously a manifestation of the advent of the all-pervading supreme spiritual power. Evidently, this supreme divinity provides unwavering guidance at every step to correctly perform our conscious actions to resolve our dilemmas and other ill-conceived notions, thereby facilitating our real progress and welfare. Naturally the mind, listening to our inner voice, impacts our thought processes and ushers in a paradigm of purity and positivity. Unfortunately, however, over-indulgence in certain transient emotional impulses such as greed, passion, vanity, among others, degenerates to negativities to an extent that our conscious thought process gets completely and irrevocably vitiated. This would invariably happen when we unwittingly tend to ignore our inner voice. Of course, listening to the inner voice has to proceed through a continual and sustained churning of the mind by effectively insulating it from extraneous external temptations and impulses. Consequently, we can expect the unfolding of a pristine and pure theoretical framework within which to carry out our actions in supremely ecstatic and deeply conscious settings.

Need for Training the Mind

It must be recognised that the extant lack of a specifically prescribed panacea to address the root causes of afflictions eating into the vitals of our social interactions and interpersonal relations prevents a resolution in terms of an ambitious framework with faultless mathematical exactitude from being evolved. In the backdrop of the nature of the prevalent conflicts, rampant indiscipline in almost every sphere of life encompassing social, political,

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financial, or education, among others, it becomes not only extremely difficult but also impossible to indulge in any constructive activity or priorities of actions. Therefore, it appears imperative to radically train our mind to effectively combat these acts of brazen indiscipline and other disruptive tendencies, actions and ill-conceived notions through concerted emphasis on inculcating a paradigm of moral and spiritual values in life within which to seek eradication, albeit partial, of these tenets of negativities in terms of pathological and symptomatic ways of treatment, as is normally done in circumstances to deal with physical infirmities and diseases within the domains of different modes of practice. While prescribing a symptomatic approach to the possible treatment may actually be an easier option to exercise but unfortunately it lacks the desired permanence to get rid of the malaise. In other words, only the conspicuous symptoms can, at best, be suppressed temporarily and cosmetically, giving the false impression of the problem having been resolved. This is nothing short of a quick-fix. Contrarily, however, the pathological process is so designed as to allude to the well-established principles of scientific investigations where the procedure involves first ascertaining the underlying causes of the problem and only then a recipe is suggested to bring about an everlasting relief even if it may entail a longer period of time for its treatment. Naturally, this option is worth the effort and the time in view of the relative credibility of the resulting consequences.

An obvious corollary is to seek an assessment of our understanding of the true Self which, we believe, happens beyond the confines of the physical, gross or the subtle forms of the bodies. It is the intricate sensibilities of the causes of unrest, anxiety and of course discord that require the mind to comprehend, analyse, and prescribe remedial procedures so as to transcend into a celestial world replete with full endowment of consciousness. There is then a feeling of eternal bliss and happiness, leading to a situation of attaining communion with the supreme oneness of the Almighty. The actual journey towards this achievement is neither easy nor straightforward but the rewards are too great to be ignored.

Let us continue the discussion further. We must realize that mind is difficult to control and keep it focussed, even more difficult than to control the wind. Mind forays into several different and generally disconnected domains at a fast pace, the frequency of which can be truly baffling in view of the infinitely high speeds of these excursions. The resulting scenario, being akin to the many-body system involving consideration of cataclysmic variables, poses a horrendously complicated prospect of finding a solution through the available techniques of physical or mathematical sciences. This leads us to think of exploring other mechanisms where a deep level of synergy of the body and the mind can possibly be realized with a view to destress our Selves, declutter our mind of extraneous considerations and aim to attain a wholesome unity in conformity with consciousness. One of the available possibilities is to try to perform yogic practices for a supple and receptive body in addition to carrying out meditative exercises to train the otherwise -wayward mind to stay intensely focussed and calm. However, the oft-repeated caveat limiting the scope of this ambitious endeavour is that complete perfection is only an ideal situation and cannot be achieved in practice. Nonetheless, yoga and meditation offer the best route to maximise quiet contemplation into the deeper realms of our Selves and consciousness.

Invoking Meditation

As alluded to herein above, mind is an extremely difficult entity to control, quieten, or harness to conform to positive psychological perspectives imbuing consciousness in the face of the seemingly intractable and apparently unavoidable negative forces. The ensuing scenario lends itself to remedial considerations by invoking the intrinsic beauty of the twin

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virtues assimilated in the form of meditation to reform the workings of the mind, and yoga to not only afford a healthy and supple body but also to purify the intricate neuron dynamics of the brain. The body and the mind need to be geared simultaneously to work in tandem so as to obtain the desired outcomes.

It is generally believed that the broad functions of meditation constitute healing and transforming inasmuch as it helps us to become a complete whole and to innately look deeply inwards within ourselves as well as to go beyond and look around us to gain a credible realization of what actually exists there. Of course, the process of meditation uses a form of energy that can be appropriately called 'mindfulness' which facilitates the inward journey to illuminate the recesses of our mind with the cosmic light and also to touch upon the heart of the innermost being in order to feel and experience their true nature. Thus the energy, mindfulness, empowers us to comprehend the true essence of the various artefacts such as perception, emotion, action and a reaction thereof, and presence of a human being or an object, among others, which are absolutely necessary for carrying out meditation. By delving deep into the innermost Self consistently and conscientiously with utmost devotion, the meditation practitioner will experience an ecstatic insight or wisdom that has the power to liberate us from the fetters by eradicating our bondage and surmounting our sufferings which were the root cause to have cluttered our Selves with heavy doses of negativities in variety of manifestations.

During the process of meditation, one feels relieved of the internal blocks of miseries and sufferings exemplified by curse such as fear, despair, anger or hatred. Not only is it capable of transforming the relationships between human beings and the society, the dividends are further consolidated the very nature becomes relatively easier whilst true freedom and real joy penetrate our system. The natural outcome pertains to our being fully aware of what really resides in our innermost Self. We also become more sensitive to and aware of our external surroundings in the course of our daily existence. Once we get liberated and acquire a state of happier and freer state of mind, we automatically and consciously tend not to inflict any sufferings on others, but rather to bring about a positive change in the lives of people around us. Consequently, a better and freer paradigm of social interactions and relationships would emerge as a natural offshoot [Ahimsa Trust (2021)]. It must, however, be appreciated that the continuous source of the energy of mindfulness lies in the very process of meditation itself where not only is the energy produced and nurtured but also continually bolstered for further utilization. Meditation can be performed by an individual without any external help from others but a practice under the guidance of a teacher is a better and an easier course of action, particularly in view of the fact that the teacher has already had experience of practicing meditation with tangible results. Furthermore, practicing in the midst of a meditation community offers an additional advantage of sharing various aspects of procedure or common difficulties with others who themselves have had some degree of realization of peace, harmony and transformation. No worthwhile success is possible in the art of meditation without going through the rigor of a series of deep breathing sessions, preferably under the supervision of a more competent and accomplished practitioner in a conducive environment of peace and quiet, so as to experience higher echelons of concentration, awareness, and consciousness.

It is worth emphasizing that our thoughts, feelings and consciousness are all nothing but different levels of energies that are responsible for causing vibrations of every little cell of our human body, people, nature as a whole and the entire universe. It is these vibrations that ultimately determine our physical, professional, social, mental and emotional health based

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on which we govern our thinking and actions during our interactions and relationships. The lower levels of these vibrations generate only negative thought while the high vibrations contribute to positive thoughts including love, compassion, humility, peace, purity, motivation, gratitude, faith and power, among others. Every human being is capable of creating these high vibrations at least once in a while and that evidently makes it our natural way of living.

In fact there exist three broad kinds of energy in the human being –physical, psychological (or psychic, for short) and spiritual. Physical energy is obtained entirely and exclusively by human's physical endeavour through exercises and/or by consuming healthy nutrients in a graded regime. It can, however, be converted into the psychic energy simply by affecting a change of attitudes, perceptions and personal endeavors. The prospect of converting the psychic energy into the spiritual one necessitates a truly dedicated and supremely evolved contemplation by virtue of deep meditation. Although these interconversions of energy are neither straightforward nor easy by any means, yet it is most certainly desirable to attain the lofty goals of salvation, renunciation and consciousness. Meditation, essentially meaning 'to heal', does the magic of healing the body, mind, social relationships, and the nature itself comprehensively and ushers in a domain where one encounters profound degree of consciousness, offering constructive paradigms and frameworks for delving into the resulting discourse of psychological perspectives for a better understanding of human interactions.

Concluding Remarks

The present investigation pertaining to the study of different psychological perspectives of consciousness has been carried out in a consistent and pedagogical setting to bring out the real issues of contradictions, afflictions and malaise that have the dubious distinction of not only corrupting the bonhomie and brotherhood in the society but also have the potential to generate negativity typified by several manifestations to the detriment of a cogent way of living in the society. We have endeavoured to highlight some of these issues and suggested ways and means to eradicate at least some of these aspects of negativity by way of reposing faith in the basic tenets of consciousness. An excursion into the deeper realms of consciousness is bound to be fascinating towards comprehending its subtle workings to attain our goal of positive psychological perspectives to offer remedial measures in our quest for a better and everlasting societal system of interactions and relationships.

In order to effectively harness the innate miracles of consciousness, credible procedural systematics needed to be put in place is by invoking the practice of meditation with a sense of complete detachment, selflessness, and transcending into deep contemplation in an environment charged with the field of spirituality. The natural outcome will be a synthesis of both mind and body, which is paramount in achieving the narrative of a sustainable development of the ingredients of a society that is undoubtedly emerging as a truly reverberating unit with hope and aesthetic living. Realizing that there does not seem to be available any singular approach to practice meditation, nonetheless, it is absolutely essential to continue the procedures without any laxity whatsoever for the cherished pursuit of creating peace, happiness, love and, above all, acceptance of all that we aspire to experience. We earnestly hope that the notions delineated herein above will inject pragmatism of positivity of thoughts and actions, and comprehensively eliminate the curse of dogmatism, conflicts and negativity to allow a society to progress cogently and flourish with ecstatic sublimation.

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Conflict of Interest

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