

**Psychology of Everyday**  
**Prof. Braj Bhushan**  
**Dr. Alok Bajpai**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

**Lecture – 06**  
**Revisiting normal-abnormal dilemma- II**

So, welcome back to this session of our Psychology of Everyday life. As we have to mention about and as you mentioned about the culture impacting behavior and how people adapt, I think which it is worthwhile that we take a step back and really go back to times since, we have the recorded history and all.

So, forget the 40000 year and 50000 year; we at least in eastern cultures and cultures like Egypt and India and China, we have stuff which is dating back to 4000, 5000 years. All the scriptures, vedas and upanishads and later on epics like Mahabharat and Ramayan and Gautam Buddha and around 2500 BC, then there was a period of bhakti poetry right around 1400 and; obviously, so religion what some people confuse it with a spirituality these days has always been there. Not maybe in the form of being a Hindu or Muslim or Christianity and; obviously, 2000 years of Christ and then 1500 years of Prophet Mohammed.

As far as modern human mind is seen; maybe we go to 30000, 40000 years back; when archaeologist say they talk about paleolithic period and later homo sapiens from where the modern mind comes. One way is that we say no; we are different and they were different, but I think that would be very very arrogant of us to say because; obviously, the genes I have carried whatever from them only till now, once you make artificial intelligence then we make robot and insert silicon chips into our head then that will be a different issue altogether, but that would be another discovery in itself, because whatever people claim that what is the artificial intelligence going to do; neither the proponents of it nor the opponents of it really know what impact is going to have.

Yeah.

Especially, when it becomes a super intelligence, isn't it?

Yeah.

So, if you look back this need to find out need for rituals, need for art, need for community living, need for sharing food, need for supernatural divine intervention was always there; maybe it is started at a certain point of time. And then as the brain groove complex and their skills increase; specially the language and socially skills and obviously, the mirror neurons were there in the brain. To identify the theory of mind; what the other person is thinking, the more you know what the other person is thinking; the chances of your bonding the rituals which were there to be together. Sharing food and even the burring of the dead and all that all this is evolved till now.

If you observe any behavior of a group in a bit of death after removing all the modern social etiquettes and protocols; you will find the same thing, the king would be sitting and the chief will be sitting and. So, you go to any meeting, the boss will be at the head, isn't it? So, from the hunter, gatherer, agriculture thing; I think our basic network of the brain have not changed.

Over and above that we have gathered lot of knowledge and knowledge networks which are all I think it is a layer and layer and layer of cloud which is there in the head. And that is why people do not behave in one way, it depends on what network your brain is responding to depending on the context, but the important question which I am asking myself and that this need to be together, to relegate the cause to a divine source or supernatural weed nature, weed God has always been there.

Yeah.

Right?

Yes.

The need for finding, rituals whether they were mantras and vedas or in other cultures they were other things; what was the need for this, why were they doing it? If life was very peaceful and normal, what was the need to find the supernatural cause? Why would people pray to God? You would not pray in happiness.

Yeah.

It said [FL] in Hindi this [FL]. So, when you are unhappy you remember God and when you are happy, you do not. So, when you are in dire straits; when you are even today and

if people tell honestly I do not know about atheist and maybe in their denial or maybe in their acceptance, but when it really comes to the crux of the matter, when there is very existence is threatened. First thing people; it is in our language oh God, most people.

In fact, in.

Unconsciously, they would say it.

Yeah, in psychology people use a term it is called locus of control.

Yes.

And the understanding of modern psychology is that some of us have an internal locus of control and some of us have an external locus of control. And those of us who have an external locus of control; for us it becomes very easy to either give credit to an external source, to keep oneself humble, rooted or to shift the blame to some external source.

Yes.

To make myself morally free from any such kind of a consequence.

Right.

Now, if you think in terms of the kind of social expectation that society is over period would have had and the inability of human beings; many a times that would have given them a realization that I am not capable of doing this or this is going beyond my control. So, I need.

Right.

An external locus of control to which I can blame.

Right.

And therefore.

Blame or surrender.

Blame or surrender and then I realize at there is a beauty in the object of blame because the credit can also be given.

Yes.

So, when I say [FL]. So, I am now relieved of that subjective; possible subjective kind of an experience.

Right.

Which would have resulted in case things would have gone beyond my control.

Right.

So, this is; this has a buffering effect.

Right.

So, it protects me, it also keeps me humble which in turn makes me a more social human being because others think man of achievement and still so humble. So, I am gaining from the social perspective also. From the personal side also I am benefited because I am rooted, I am grounded because I am giving the credit I am also not developing any kind of an anomaly because I am blaming also the external figure.

Right.

And when a large number of people would have realized it and when this would I have mixed with the; with the shared ah.

Belief.

See belief system people would have developed certain kind of standard practices which internally would have become.

So.

Rituals perhaps.

So, this rituals and standard practices whether format and the early forms of society. But also as they became rules, they probably they gave rise to lot of guilt and shame and all.

Exactly.

When you are not following it.

Exactly.

Because human mind does not blame in one line, it always has a possibility of contradiction.

Yeah.

So, what is devil can be a saint also; so, lust is bad, love is good. And then the institutions like marriage and clan and kinship and all, but the possibility of transgressing the boundaries always there for anybody.

Yeah.

One who does has to come a wall against this frame, all rules of society and all that is so society probably society evolve to keep an order otherwise as the population grew lot of the skews was happening. So, even today the solemn pleasure of marriage. So, that frame; so anybody would transgresses perforce whether you want; you may be whatever liberal you are, whatever may be a thought process either you will suffer a internal penalty of guilt and shame and all that or a external penalty of separation and loss and grief and which is fine. I am not saying it is right or wrong, but what I am saying it over thousands of years; that means, the problems and the misery and the unhappiness and the conflicts and the confusion is the original frame of mankind, it does not appear at any point of time that we do not know of peace periods.

Otherwise why was Gautam buddha so popular because he was telling a very scientific way of handling your; so he said sabbat dukham. So, if a person of Gautam Buddha's intelligence was saying sabbam dukham he imposed have recognize measure in everything and the futility of it.

Yeah.

So, one thing which human mind knows is the futility of everything, whatever you do at the end of it and this, I think the fear of extinction, fear of death fear of insecurity is the basic route emotion in the head. Against, this everything else is done to eliminated to suppress it and, but it keeps coming. So, why I am; what I am pointing out at trying to

point out is this state of affair of problems of living, of suffering of living, has been there always.

Yeah.

Right? How were they handling it? They were handling it through God, through rituals, through worship, through scriptures, through astrology. Astrology may not be a science, but I think astrology especial in country like India where most people covertly or overtly believe in it. If there is a crisis, nobody would mind seeing astrologer and knowing what is this planetary condition.

Yeah.

Right, they may be a science to it they may be some calculation to it maybe not in the sense of that those planets directly effecting your head because; obviously, it is that field cannot happen, but planetary conditions mapped into certain set of behavior is pretty possible.

The way we were discussing know that, I am in a particular state of life which in turn makes me suffer and when I realized at things again are beyond management, I just cannot handle it, I need someone who would tell me that life is still predictable.

Yes.

And that.

That can be a.

Can be a counselor, that can be a psychiatrist, it can be a psychologist.

Absolutely.

That could be anyone.

So, what I am saying is the category of psychiatry is also that to give you a certain sense of control. That I know it is predictable because it is schizophrenia; suppose it is not.

Is it that say when I accept that my clinician has told me that your state of affairs is because you are suffering from some kind of a chemical imbalance. Therefore, I am

convinced that the problem does not lie with me, the problem lies with the chemical imbalance.

Right, so excepting.

And the doctor has prescribed medicine and.

I will be all right.

This pharmaceutical intervention will make me happy. Similarly, when an astrologer tells me that the planetary positions are responsible for what you are suffering; I know, I am not responsible, planetary positions are unfavorable.

Because your mind is not ready to suffer; not ready to suffer or it is already suffered guilt and shame and the extreme pain in the mind. So, it is all of us know what it is all about and the whole brain is pushing towards living. Purpose of the brain is survival, if it is not survival then we will give to host to everything with what guilt and shame and what is right and wrong. I think the morality emerged from this and this whole chain of mortality, immortality, right, wrong, good, bad has over thousands of years has gotten into that very deep unconscious mind for everybody.

Yeah.

For everybody maybe threshold is different, maybe you somebody will feel guilty seeing poor person, somebody may feel guilty not seeing a poor person, but when the son is sleeping hungry then, but so on so forth. So, that brings us to the important questions if this problem of suffering was there all the time; people with; that means, the need for intervention or help was always there so, when psychiatry was not there, what was considered abnormal then.

If you come to epics especially Ramayan and Mahabharat which is within our psyche; what was the abnormal then? Lord Krishna himself led to Mahabharath. The war between brothers; so what were they fighting? They were fighting for property and see the amount of misery which would have happened at that time; continuously they were in trouble, they were hardly in the period of peace and happiness. And so one group was in; so our Gods and our heroes of the epics or any mythology were the people who were suffering all the time, I think this idea is carried on to Hindi films also.

The hero suffers for 2 hours in half-hour happy ending or poetic ending is done. So, the question is this; so is all this was abnormal? If all this is abnormal, then all of us are abnormal then because who of us can say, whatever action you maybe take you may be the most discipline, non-greedy person who lives according to a protocol of the society; totally dedicated faithful husband or wife doing your duty not looking here and there not trusting not; such a person does he suffer or not? So, I am asking you as a psychologist.

See, I do not think of.

For example, there is somebody (Refer Time: 17:14).

Any individual who would not suffer, the reason being that either you have an external yardstick or you have an internal yardstick. So, whatever comes your way; you will always look at it from these two yardsticks and the moment you find it there is a deficit between what you experience and what the yardstick tells you this is what was expected. There would be a conflicting situation.

So, this conflict.

You fall short of the expectation of others or you fall short of the expectation of your own self.

Yeah, so the there is.

And therefore, this shame guilt thing will still play.

Right.

Within you.

So, the guilt shame fear which has been created from the conditioning of the brain; absolutely healthy person would not have any regret and not no guilt.

Or it could be that you have guilt, but then you have found a way of mitigating it.

Yeah so.

Or regrets which helps you know mitigate things.



But if it is there, it is there.

Yeah, it is.

That quantification may be different, it may have less or more or like people who suffered in people who fought in partition in the partition of India; people killed, they got killed. So, everybody has grief. But like one person somewhere said Ashis Nandy quoted it actually somewhere; he that he met a person who said that I killed and they also killed. So, I have no guilt and I have no regret of loss. That means his mind would have resolved all this, but for a common person and it may not be also your mind which is creating this. It may be the people whom you are related to they may be because of there you have done something which; obviously, maybe it is not affecting indirectly, but the expectation is there. If a kid does not study, gets less mark it is alright he will study again, but why are parents so sad? And we know in this country how involve parents are; mothers will may land up in depression if a kid fail; so if he does not get select selected in a.

So, what we were talking you know previously that am I having some kind of a an objective parameter.

Yes.

Against which I would evaluate the outcome of myself or the other individual.

Right.

To which I am closely linked or would I again go for statistical average in the society that this child is doing, this child as like that; so my child should also do similar kind of things.

Right, so those.

So.

So, most people in putting in a common situation take marriage for example. Marriage the way it has evolved in Indian society is supposed to be the most sacrosanct thing. But then why are so many divorces; the divorce it is gone up in this country.

Yeah.

Right, now it may be because of lack of tuning, it may be because of the financial independence, it may be because of violence, but these are small causes. Transgression into physical relationship, outside the marriage nobody mentions, but I think it is much more common than what it is mentioned, otherwise the whole; pornography the glamour industry would not last. That means people were married are actually stepping into that all these websites in this and that. So, anybody can the question is not whether you have gone into the question, whether what you are trying to save the marriage, but within marriage this becomes a huge issue.

Now comes the big question on normal and abnormal a transgression once or twice by any spouse is that abnormal. So, that it can lead to destruction of the whole thing or people should just leave it and move on. Because, if the relationship is important suppose two people have a conflict because of some reason what is the best way to handle it? Best way is handle is shut it off and move on, look to future, but one may do one may not do.

Yeah.

The other person may gets stuck as we were talking about the memory keeps haunting you and then it may lead to whatever else like it happened in Mahabharat; a small land piece he would Duryodhana would have given, but it did not happen. The whole concept of normalcy and abnormalcy becomes (Refer Time: 22:22) when you talk about all these things if you.

Right.

Move out of clinic and then talk what is normal and abnormal then it becomes a huge problem how will you decide. What is normal abnormal; what would the normal person do in phase of conflict, what they would I think the Gandhi; Gandhi was normal I think then he was the most common man his tendency was very simple what has happened it is a fate a comply it has done. It may be my mistake your mistake anything let us move on; let us without destroying move on and let us ultimately the purpose of all human life and effort is peace shanta ras what you call.

So, if you are aiming towards piece then what is the point of going through, but we see so many war, so many conflicts so much violence religion, divorce also you know drama is going on which if you look it; if this is they somewhere by which you can look it up you will find it this is the extreme happiness and a misery. And I think then again normal this; so this normal and these are the situations which create psychiatric diagnosis depression anxiety; depression anxiety is all third layer, fourth layer.

Yeah.

Fifth layer we are talking of third fourth layer as if we have no control over the causes of it.

Yeah.

When we have no control of the causes how can we really see this is normal or abnormal. What we can say your mood is normal or abnormal, but that is a very restricted way of looking at it. You go down see the whole miserable situation and the conflictual situation; we have no control over that, but and we cannot change the human pretty comment. So, the normalcy and abnormalcy being looked upon the from within; we will assume a entirely different like two people see divorce is being looked upon in the society as very bad.

Yeah.

Right for whatever reasons, but are not people who after trying say that we cannot live together let separate; it may be how many years of marriage does not matter and they leave happily. Are they normal or people who stick no we have to save marriage and make each other's life miserable and happiness within the bedroom are they normal?

Perhaps, there could be another way of interpreting it that separation or divorce I consider as one of the events of life.

Yes.

So, what matters is perhaps not the event, but how life was after the event.

Process.

So, yeah; so if after the event also I have been able to maintain the degree of sanity that helps me leave happily in the society then fine. I am normal and if this event of carrying forward repeated happenings and still making my life miserable day after day, where I cannot enjoy life and I cannot productively contribute neither to myself nor to the.

Right.

Society.

Right.

Then one can question it its not the event rather; the consequences the result that.

So, isn't the.

Comes later on.

Isn't; so why was talking about all this sometimes I was a practicing psychiatrist I treat people when I do some psychotherapy you know, but sometimes I wonder whether the older ways of handling life was much more stable and healthy than the way we are trying to handle it. Because today even at a smallest problem people will rush to a doctor or they will go to meditation to this to that which is all replacements of medicines nothing else. But older time people were taught to do what to forget and forgive like Buddha thought allow things to come and go.

So, in spite of all these teaching my biggest question on the verge of normal and abnormal or is; why have not people learned? Why have not people learn that ultimately life has to move on. Why do not they; because if they learn to move on, lot of this concept of normalcy and abnormalcy will really shatter into a change.

Exactly.

Half the psychiatric diagnosis will disappear because this is; these are problems of living as long as the human brain and social life is there these problems are not going to vanish.

Exactly.

Maybe when artificial intelligence and robots start living then, but not.

Not now.

I do not see it now, and over and above we try to put situations and try to sort in sorting out we may create more problems at times.

So, in the next phase let us discuss at historically or in our cultural knowledge are there cases of the so-called psychiatric diagnosis or distinction of normal versus not normal or abnormal or subnormal in the history and then.

Right.

Gradually, we come to the modern times when we have all these classificatory schemes at place and when we are now debating where to draw the line between normal and not so normal.

Yes, I think it will be better if you do it because see; I do not think that we have developed in isolation right, as not that our brain has come some somewhere all brains are developed in some cultural context the conditioning. So, we have to do things which people in the past have been doing, that is one and second part is that those things are not disappeared, the meditation is not disappeared God has not disappeared, temple has not astrology has not disappeared and not only here, in US and Australia everybody sees those horoscopes right, we will may overtly not be believing in God. But we tend to why; why do we lookup.

Yeah. So, those things we will take up in the next session.

So, I; so we have to really look at this and then probably over next few lectures maybe we will come to this point where anything else which we want to say this.

We will come in the next session.

Ok.

Thank you.