

**Psychology of Everyday**  
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**Lecture - 07**  
**Revisiting Normal-Abnormal Dilemma- III**

So, right now we were talking that if you look at the collective cultural history of this country, mythologies scriptures and then if we look at the modern-day life, life of a normal individual who searches for normality and sub-normality or abnormality. And, then a hard code clinician or an academic researcher who tries to always the link between these two sides of life. I was wondering that when you read the celebrated scriptures of this country.

Right.

Even you look at the shared cultural stories that we all have heard in our childhood days.

Right.

The two epics.

Right.

We do not find the description of any pathology there.

Right.

Now, one argument could be that the society was very healthy at that time and various kinds of modern-day pathologies did not exist or was there in inclusion in the society where deviations also had a space.

Alright.

And therefore, this conflict of decoupling normal from abnormal, the need was never filled by the society and therefore, neither the scriptures, nor the epics, nor the shared cultural stories, none of them have a description of this.

Right. Yeah when so, continuing from what we were talking and placing the whole thing. So, let me for the benefit of the audience we should reemphasize that, it is important to look back into all this things because we have not define anything called cultural psychiatry.

There is a something called culture psychiatry, but psychiatry per se the model of last 150 years has come from West, and we are trying to look at our life from that and we have really not sat down to define what it means to us.

So, the modern concept of normalcy and abnormalcy maybe we fitted into the whole universal homogenous western model of living which is the globalization of cultural I should say. But that creates a sort of illusion because an I am, when I am not talking of India I not saying I am not trying to put down the western models or any other ancient cultural system of Egypt and China and all. It is just that we are sitting in India and I want people of India to identify.

Identify with topics being talked about.

Identify with it. Right. So, Greek thought and Indian thought almost simultaneous some 2500 year back. Egypt was even further, like our Vedas and all were from slightly holder. So, let us for a case as an example let us take India, right. So, be a when we talk of this we will try to look at it from the angle of psychology and not psychiatry.

Because that will give us although, Ayurveda had something called bhoot vidya which was probably the part of nearest to psychiatry where abnormal behavior in society was noticed, but whether they were I am sure mental retardation would have been there then also.

I am sure once in a while maybe not 158 at least 1 and 10,000 autistic kid would have been there or schizophrenia would have been a depression. Yes, it was there. But what you have your questions very valid whether that was considered as pathology or something else.

So, before coming to this let us see what the normal structure was. We were talking about that; obviously, because the human mind is such they would have been misery otherwise there was no need of creating god or worshipping god or.

Yeah correct.

Gautam Buddha telling meditation and.

Yeah, previously we discussed all that thing (Refer Time: 04:58).

Yagya and all. So, all these things were geared up towards one thing of reducing human suffering. So, suffering was there. Now, how are they handling it? They obviously, they were no doctors. So, the priest was the doctor. Not doctor per say, Vaidya were always there. Even in Krishna's life it is noted that once he fell very ill and Vaidya came and he got improved, but nowhere as you correctly said it was considered as to be abnormal or pathological. But even before talk of pathology what were these thinkers doing to reduce and or alleviate the suffering of people, where they doing it only for elite of kings and normal people or it was available for masses also.

I think it was available from masses, because look at the structure with they had created. They had create, apart from the rituals and (Refer Time: 06:06) which we were already talked, they had created a temporal structure, they had created a functional structure and they had created pillars of life which everybody was supposed to follow. Now, what were these? The stages of life, right. Brahmacharya, when you are supposed to study, grihastha when you are supposed to earn, bring out family. Vanaprastha where you should let the power go from your hand and sanyas where he should sit quietly.

So, you consider them to be 4 pillars.

4 stages of life.

4 stages, ok.

So, if you follow these, plus-minus not totally, plus-minus here and there largely a structure of society would be maintained reducing the unpredictability which is the hallmark of today's life, when do you retire, when do you let go, when do you maintain family and when you everything is mixed up jumbled. So, this was one way. So, they had send within a lifespan of man or say some 100 people born today, 70 years of their life was already this was the larger track of life which you had to follow, that reduces lot of unpredictability.

Second, they decided caste system as it is understood today is a wrong notion. Caste system was a division of labor. Brahmins into intellectual and academic pursuit, Kshatriyas of warrior ship saving the country running the system earning the wealth Vaishyas and Shudras for rest of the menial things. Somebody along the line turned it upside down. So, I think initial concept would not have been that Brahmin is superior to Shudra. It was Brahmin should do his job, Kshatriya should do this, and it was not determined by birth, possibly.

Ok.

It was determined by what pursuit you follow. Parashuram was a Brahmin, but he was braver than Kshathri. In our mythology also, right. Krishna was a Yadav. Krishna was as learned as Brahmin, as brave as a Kshatriya, as good businessman as Vaish, and he could feed horses, and he could take cows, he could clear that cow dung. So, Krishna had had no role division, he could do flew across. So, there was no superiority or inferiority.

Somebody around the politics, turn the whole side upside down, Brahmins are superior which is the cause of all this nonsense which is happening now. So, you have a track of life, so if there is a group of 100 people were moving on a track of life they will go through brahmacharya, through grihastha, through vansprasth, through sanyas ultimately. Within that, they will be further division, vertical, knowledge, ownership, administration, money and running the system.

I am just visualizing it that something like.

Four line highway.

Track and, track and field event.

Absolutely.

Where you have divided tracks.

Yes.

For different athletes. So, here a group.

Yes

Is put on one track another group. So, four tracks.

Absolutely.

And then the temporal limit is fixed that, ok.

Fine. So, but human mind is the way modern mind is modern human it is just not satisfied with day to day living. If because it has a develop neocortex, so it has to go into abstraction and imagination and art and this and that which was available for everybody. So, art, music, all this finer certainties of life was available for everything. But ultimately, what was the purpose of life? Because modern man started thinking the meaning of life.

See, how the problem of normalcy, a normalcy because the meaning. If you take a, if you everybody is convince there is no meaning in life. Tell me there is no problem. Psychiatry will finish. Where everybody is born, they are living the way you want, actually that is a fact. You have born, you are living. It is, when you do not fit you said it as in the beginning is statistical norm. When you are not fitting into the defined norm of the society, then you become abnormal. So, that means, finding a meaning. So, the thinkers give meaning also. The meaning which they give were the 4 pillars. 4 pillars were dharma, arth, kaam, moksha.

Moksh.

That means harm is not the religion. Be very clear, it is not religion. Dharma is your inner nature. So, if your inner nature is Brahmin follow the role of the Brahmin. If your inner nature is Kshatriya follow that. Do this, do that. So, through your dharma you move forward, that is the meaning of choosing the track. Arth you have to survive through material position. So, arth is all running of the world and, but you are also bond to procreate, genes have to procreate and run the human race, so kaam was there. Kaam was all the sensual things which you enjoy. And if you, and then moksha means final liberation. Moksha was not superior to these three things.

Yeah.

Never, in the real thought. It was somebody again like into the cast, they did is as if moksha is superior. So, everybody in India was running after moksha, but you cannot

attain moksha unless you have successfully transcended dharm, arth, kaam, moksh perfect system. If you follow this system not to the tea, but let even 50-50 percent lot of unpredictability is gone, because then you will not a desire unnecessary things which are out of your reach. That, itself will reduce lot of misery.

There is a parallel of this in modern psychology and I think that parallel is Erikson's classification. Erickson gave not while for talked about only childhood. Erikson did not talk of childhood only, he talked about 8 stages till that.

8 stages of life, yeah, yeah.

And in each stage this is a conflict. There are two conflicting situations which person has to resolve to move on; productivity versus stagnation, generatism versus, so on so forth.

Yeah.

So, that means, human brain was always cotton conflicts because it has like you said lot of options. Which one do you choose? And one has to successfully resolve to move onto the other one. You do not resolve you get caught. So, at some stage of life, so moksha is like cutting of all the past confusions and kadak doing a threshold and moving on. But you cannot reach moksha unless you have resolved all this. This was the larger grid of this country, which is still I think is very very deep-rooted in our minds.

There is a fraction in those who are in social psychiatry. They refer to the fact that all mental disorders basically your social heuristics.

Yes.

And the way you were saying know that you have dharm, kaam.

Arth moksh.

Arth and moksh and moksha was somehow made to be superior compared to the rest of the three. So, rather than considering that this was a process.

Yes.

Where you cross the first 3 stages to go to the fourth.

Yes.

Or the warned vyavastha was basically you know division of labour rather than pedestal where one is superior to the other.

Yes. Superior to other.

So, there was nothing like superiority or inferiority. It was division and it was also said a process where you cross from one to the fourth stage. Similarly, there was, there is nothing like say normal or abnormal behavior. This is just shades of behavior; shades of behaviour which at some point suddenly you know got converted into similar kind of pedestal.

Right, right.

Where those on the topic became normal and then.

Right.

The sub-normals.

Right.

And then the abnormals.

Right.

So, if you take this frame, and when I am including social heuristics apply these to the Indian grid.

Yeah.

With this frame why probably we never thought of pathology because you always thought of shades of behaviour. And the best example is what was like Vedas give a code of conduct of how to worship, this, that, natural anthropomorphic gods. Upanishads really brought in introspections that almost rebelled against things and, how to find the meaning of life higher thought. Rest of the Aranyakas and Brahmins they were giving in. So, narrative became very important in India.

Yeah

Like in Greek mythology story, Buddha used to tell in fables. So, storytelling which is the truth of the mind actually, like what we understand with neuroscience which I have also mentioned in one of my ted talks. Brain is continuously every 500 milliseconds of frame it just creating a scene, which your conscious mind believes and you have to view a story, rest all is all story of life. Now, this story may go down, up, right, wrong, all external labels. Labels arise from comparison with society. Society has this label, this is wrong right because, if you use these labels then everything will appear wrong.

Look at what happened in Ramayan, happens today also. Out of many kids, one kid is ostracized. He does not go to fight the demons, but everybody is fighting a demon inside.

Also, demon can be you know considered equivalent to adversity of life.

Adversity of life. Ram went through tremendous suffering. Sita went through tremendous suffering. But he followed one rule of obeying his father whatever the rule of the times was. But by Krishna's time things had change. Mahabharat that is why it is said whatever is there in Mahabharat is there in the world and what is not in Mahabharat.

Because Mahabharat does not, Mahabharat is totally Ramayan was black and white. Ramayan is totally great.

Yeah.

If Kauravas were bad, Pandavas were not too good. They were less bad than. Gambling is there, kidnapping is there, from modern life.

Everything, everything you find there, everything.

Murdering is there.

Yeah, yeah.

Burning is there, possession of property is there, right. Some subversive versions of Mahabharat have gone to the extent of blaming Krishna, but Krishna went through all shades of it. So, what was they doing? They were. But see the interesting thing in the it is such a brilliant document. There is a core story. Core stories about grid, last, this, that



whatever the lot of everything is there all human emotions. But Mahabharat too big, initial was an was 8,000 verses and what we have is 1,00,000 verses. There are all ancillary stories. And I think Indian should understand this. It will resolve this whole concept of abnormalcy and normalcy, that is how I have resolved, tried to resolve in my head.

I have lot say it is fully done; ancillary stories about everything. They bring in virtues vices like sacrifice, respect, dharm, this, that, there are lot of talk of dharma. Dharma is duty. They talk of dharma at the time of peace; there is the dharma of crisis. Ancillary stories bring in this core story does not talk of this virtues and vices and all that. It is the stories we will bring it. Now, those story I have been almost entwined in the core story which is very fine because, otherwise imagine somebody would have written, this 10 story say dharma truth this, this, this, now listen to the, people have got bored.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

So, for everything they have a story. And Krishna says, tells Arjun when he was Arjun what was Arjun doing, he was depressed. He was having acute reaction to stress and he was having a. So, we want we cannot talk of pathology at that time. He was the warrior who was ready to fight, the whole war has been arranged because of him. And what is he do? He lands up in almost depressive mode. The description is clear cut. [FL]. I am not able to hold, his mouth is fast, his heart is beating fast, he is so melancholic. If melancholy has a definition and description that is Arjun.

That is what people come to us with, whom we try to treat with the therapy and what not they. What to do? There were no medicines right. So, what we would do is give medicines, but we also do not realize that your medicine pumps up then we will look, another dose of medicine to pump up. So, how are you going to do with medicine. That is a why psychiatrist say that you take medicine, your chemical imbalance will improve and then you change your life. But people who very very medically oriented they believe it is all illness and all. People who were totally non-medically psychologist lot of them, we will say we will treat it and see, between both do not work.

So, Krishna to do everything; he had to give a mantra, he had to show his power, ultimately pushing him to what is dharma was. His dharma was the inner nature of a

warrior. So, when this is the style we have dealt with, there is so much suffering, they living in jungles, and Ram was living in jungle, Draupadi was almost being assaulted.

Yeah.

And Krishna's clan fought. Krishna was running from one place to another. Are we so naive to think that all this would have been happening in a very very happy mode?

It was not a theater which was being run, which be a tend to have to problem actually. The problem is we tend to think that as if it was so detached from us, that we can worship them and we can say they were gods and all that, but they did not have suffering. They were living life. It is very difficult for us to think the those times. But you just for a second also if you can think they were they were in jungle, they were no supply from Hastinapur which was coming to them. What would Ram be eating, you would be eating all this things which are available. And they would be taking help from the tribals in a small villages and all, who would be helping them. So, is not that suffering? That is suffering.

Are you then means of course, we are not talking of all this with respect to religious sentiments.

Yes, yes, the human suffering.

Human suffering. But say in entire Ramayan of all the characters who underwent and contributed to the storyline, the ancillaries. And finally, it is the one, one character or listing drama and we have two characters, who were consider to be the ones who did hold to their dharmas and therefore, they are celebrated as gods Ram and Hanuman.

Sita, yes.

Both have that (Refer Time: 22:47).

Yeah (Refer Time: 22:48).

And similarly, in Mahabharat also of all the characters somebody you know who did hold to the dharma and who also promoted others to do that became.

God

Or was recognized as god.

Yes.

So, Krishna got that recognition whereas, other characters still remain characters of Mahabharat.

So, you have hit the nail actually. You hit the nail because word which we have brought you know is human suffering. And we have continuing from the last one that human suffering is universal and omnipotent and always been there. Is not it?

Yeah.

That is why we are saying to reduce for common people certain protocol was told if you follow this. For people who extraordinary in Ramayan and Mahabharat they had to suffer in spite of all this. Why did they become god? Because they did not they went beyond suffering. So, it will be very unlikely, that they would be suffering the same guilt, shame, dust, anger, grief like we do. What they learned was to move on. They moved on, whatever happened. Maybe.

So.

They forgive, maybe.

So, now I am, I will just bring it two steps ahead.

Ok.

And then maybe it will be clear. Jump to Buddha. He was living a very comfortable life. He left to find out the answers. Suffered, suffered so badly that he could not even walk because of its weakness. And then came whatever enlightenment means. The people who claim enlightenment would not have gone undergone such suffering.

And he also move.

Yeah.

So, what was the trick? And then comes Mister Gandhi. In this long series of Indian thinking, we can have this pegs Ram, Krishna, Buddha.

Buddha.

Gandhi.

Gandhi.

Rest all is I am not saying inferior, but they have different track because they were not so generalized. People who were in bhakti mode, they were doing a very specific narrow thing. Gandhi also went through huge suffering. It is not easy.

Yes.

To ignore this spike of violence and range which comes to overhead every time. But he practiced it. He practiced fight is lust he fell, but he went up again till Noakhali. Imagine, Dandi March was no less than a migration and a Vanvas.

Yeah.

But he was taking help of villagers and all that. And Gandhi suffered, he almost imagine at the age of 77 if almost felt that he had says lost his life, wasted his life because this is the violence in the country and almost he was taking up that violence on himself. Went naked barefoot to Noakhali. Why would a old man who was at Gandhi's position do it? Because he was sticking to his dharma whatever. This is what I wanted to point out that India has a huge tradition of integrating what we call pathology today into the narrative of life and taking it as a basic part of life attempting to either mitigate suffering through worship and this and that or in an heroic attempt to rise about the suffering. So, that means, pathology is created when your mind is not able to choose one go beyond two and get stuck in one loop. Largely, pathology arise, I am telling the simplest term, forget the technical.

People if they get stuck to something either they have to forgive and shut up and move on or do something about it. Even then you have to choose whether doing will take you to liberation or not, or living is the. So, you have to learn to preserve. India was always about preserving not destroying.

Yeah.

So, this is about our basic cognitive template of this country. You may deny, you may agree, not agree whatever that is a different issue. So, in this type of living and when I am saying this type it was lasting till 48.

Yeah.

With Mahatma Gandhi.

Is not it. Indian freedom struggle is a prime example. The whole country became nonviolent in 31. People suffered, they left their property, they left their homes, they left their goodness, they left their badness, they live their left their devils, they left this aside to do what was right. They were suffering.

So, overall when we started the discussion we begin with the normal persons, conceptualization of normal versus what is not so normal. So, based on whatever we have discussed previously and now, if I can understand as a common man that I am duty-bound to perform few things in my life.

Yeah.

The aberrations that I have and whatever digression it results to, finally, if I am able to resolve it and I still remain duty-bound and perform it I do not have to ever think of establishing the distinction between the normal and the not so normal.

Yes absolutely and.

So.

Between the pathological and the.

Between the pathological and the (Refer Time: 28:41).

So, pathologies as normal as normalcy.

Normalcy, yeah. Normalcy and pathology does not have that distinct division.

Yes, absolutely. So, pathology what we call pathology is a pathology or it is again getting back to your thing. It is not fitting into the norms.

Yeah. And as you right now sometime back mentioned know, that you have to just take care of three things. You said that you do not have to play in loop. You should be able to rise.

Rise.

And then you should be able to stick to your dharma that, I am duty-bound.

That is.

This is my duty.

That is beneficial for most people.

But that would, that would also now be helpful for the social order.

Absolutely.

So, the life of the individual and overall the social order.

Right.

Both will be benefited out of this.

Absolutely, and because I if this is not the case if this is not true then what is the alternative. Because I mean; obviously, people may say that you know this is one way of looking at things. Fine, this is one way of looking at things. But, what is the other way of looking at things.

But, is this way of looking at things not something which encompasses the different shades of life.

I think, yes.

Else, we will again be you know categorizing things into different things.

I think we will discuss it in the next half (Refer Time: 30:09).

Exactly, exactly.