

Mind and Matter

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In a general discussion on logic and philosophy, somebody asked what is 'Mind'; for which the casual reply was 'It does not matter'. Then the question naturally was, what is 'Matter'. The reply in the same casual manner was 'Never mind'.. If one goes to dictionaries one can get exasperated or confused as Mind is described as an "element", part of process in human or "conscious beings" that reasons, thinks, feels, wills, perceives, judges etc as if it is a centre of an activity. But it is not clear where and how Mind exists There are also several shades to the word depending on its common usage in English language For example "Mind" gives different meanings when they say " Two people have the same mind" or "A person has two minds" or "I have given a piece of my mind" or " I had only half a mind to do something "or when you say "Mind your head when going under an arch" etc There are ever so many uses of "mind-boggling " shades of the word Mind in different contexts. Similarly the word Matter also is described in the dictionaries as a physical or corporeal "substance", distinct from Mind and Spirit , but occupying some space and existing in different forms like solids liquids and gases etc.. It has also different shades depending on its common usage in English language For example when we say to somebody "What is matter with you" or" Something is a matter for consideration" or When we talk of something as "matter of fact" or when we think of " A Matter of Life and Death" meaning something of very great importance. We have often heard that some people have a very strong Mind or powerful Mind,; and some have weak Mind or no Mind at all. Thus it appears that, Mind can only be qualified (even when we say 'half a mind' without knowing the full mind) and not quantified like Matter which can be measured in terms of volume or weight Thus for the common man there can arise conflict in English language whether Mind and Matter are related to each other or separate entities which have significant influence in human activities.

Before one goes deep into this subject of Mind and Matter, it will be interesting to know what some great men and women have said about the 'Mind' Mary Baker Eddy wrote in Science and Health "God is Mind and God is infinite, Hence all is Mind" signifying that Mind is a sort of Creator of the Universe and so it is beyond Universe. Samuel Johnson thought that only the true, strong and sound Mind can embrace equally great things and small signifying that Mind is an entity which is a part of human being, and capable of attaining different strengths. Lord Buddha preached that Mind is the precursor of all perceptions; most subtle of all 'elements' in the phenomenal universe , and that all 'objects' evolved in 'conscience' has its origin in the Mind signifying it is an epic-center of a power He further said if one acts or speaks with a 'Pure' Mind, happiness abides within him as his own shadow signifying it can contaminate or purify as any other physico-chemical substance. A Chinese philosopher, Chuang Tse thought that the perfect man "uses" his Mind like a mirror as it grasps nothing, refuses nothing, but receives everything and keeps nothing, as if Mind is a sort of a special receptacle or non-stick container Lord Chesterfield said the Mind must have some worldly objects to excite its attention signifying that itself is non-worldly , as otherwise it will stagnate and sink into melancholy or rise into visions and enthusiasm which sounds like an abstract projection.. Somebody thought that Mind of a man is like a clock that is always running down and requires to be constantly wound . Samuel Butler thought that Mind requires clothes as much as our bodies. . He also said we should not separate Mind from Body, and that, each is a 'function' of the other. The great Indian philosopher S.Radhakrisnan said that the Mind of a man who does not know his own Self goes hither and thither like the water pouring down the crags in every direction. He also said that in the experiences of our primal Mind , Truth, Beauty and Perfection are eternally realized Rajnesh thought that the Mind is the true search for a meaning and a search for immortality and it is the only basic necessity that can never be fulfilled completely suggesting that mind is the only means through which you can know anything... RigVeda extorts (Rig:10.22.8) that the extremely speedy Mind should always be engrossed in holy deeds; the searching Mind finds the objects of the search in one's own heart; and that an idle Mind is an easy prey to evil thoughts, all suggesting that your actions can be directed by your Mind Sankaracharya pointed out in his famous book *Vivekachudamani* (verses 93,94,103) that the Mind has its seat in various organs such as eyes of the body and in the body as whole. He said a 'disciplined' mind is the true instrument of realization of 'Self ' within ourselves and the Cosmic Mind is

the instrument which opens up the Reality in the creation of the Universe. This indicates a possible difference between the Mind of a single entity and Cosmic Mind. of the Universe or the Creator.

There are instances when objects which, as humans observe, have no special conscience of their own and yet responded to situations as if they have their own minds They say animals and birds act only on instincts and not through conscience. In the great epic Ramayana there is a case of a bird Jatayu who explained in detail to Rama how he had to fight with Ravana who had kidnapped his wife Sita. There are cases when trees, mountains, rivers and seas have responded to special situations . In Ramayana, when Rama desired to cross the sea to go to Lanka to fight with Ravana , the sea gave easy way to allow a bridge to be made . The sea was personified with a mind in the story. When Sita jumped into fire, before a large gathering, to prove her fidelity to Rama, the fire ‘God’ saved her from burning away. In Mahabharata, when Lord Krishna was to be transported across a torrential river to a safe place immediately after his birth, the river gave way for the same, The wise sages of ancient India usually personified the abstracts to indicate the possibility of such abstract or non-conscience entities to have acted appropriately in different situations. as if they had their own minds There are several other stories when trees and mountains have responded to various situations. There is the rock seat of Vikramaditya which used to bestow judicial knowledge to people who were sitting on the same to pronounce judgments. All these suggest there is a possibility of existence of a Cosmic Mind or individual Mind even in objects which do not seem to possess any conscience as observed by human beings, These objects may be animate or even inanimate or abstract forms. Whether these are all simply stories or only a way of explanation to the common man is a separate question

Scientists believe that all that exists physically in this Universe is “Matter” consisting of atoms and molecules in different configuration. Matter exists in different states; like solids, liquids and gases. Solids require some force to move them, liquids flow themselves from a higher level to a lower level and gases expand in all directions. It is Energy that activates Matter They have enunciated Laws of Conservation of Matter and Energy. They have even proved that Matter and Energy are intra and inter convertible into different forms. But there is no clear understanding of any “Conscience” or” Mind” in various types of these transformations in Matter, or to control and guide the various activities by Matter. Perhaps the talk of modern computers “thinking” “searching” “replying” etc is only an artificial type of the attributes to the computer performing activities. Similar to those performed by humans

Recently some medical professionals also have expressed views on Mind-Body relationship. While some of them think that Mind is only a fiction some others observed that the Mind of a patient has an influence in curing some types of diseases To understand the ability of neurons or neuro--transmitters to do their unexplained functions, which are in fact different from the type of chemical reactions in blood or hormones, one should look to Mind. This is the relation between Mind and Body (Matter). Some have observed that “aging” of the body also depends to some extent on the functions of the Mind, A man who constantly feels young and happy in the company of youngsters seems to reduce the risks of aging to some extent

From all the above it appears that existence of Mind is a Reality . It is an integral part of the body which is Matter. There cannot be a Mind without Matter and there cannot be Matter without Mind. The ecology of Matter is also related to the ecology of Mind Thus the integral whole of the Universe, or any part of the same, consists of both Mind and Matter Everything in this Universe consists of a Spiritual content and a Material content, which seem to relate to the Mind and Matter. It is not clear how Mind is shaped or sized, but it can grow, develop, construct or destroy as Matter can It has its own properties as Matter has As the possibility of conversion of energy into matter and vice versa is true, it may be possible to discover possibility of conversion of Mind to Matter and vice-versa, It may be possible to quantify Mind as Matter can be done . These are the problems to be solved in the new millennium, conversion of Spiritual content to Material content of the Universe or any part of the same and vice-versa