



Philosophy, a hope in COVID-19 pandemic and effect of concept of kaivalya

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Abstract:

Indian Philosophical Thoughts are flooded with the idea of Isolation/Kaivalya. Though Isolation is not a novel concept in Indian thought but it is determined as the only way to attain 'moksha'. The three classical systems of Indian philosophy namely - the orthodox(Astika), the heterodox(Nastika) and the Indian materialistic(Charvaka) broadly describe the concept of 'Kaivalya'. Hinduism describes the separation of Purush(soul) from Prakriti (matter)as 'kaivalya'. Buddhism describes 'Nirvana' (true knowledge) as the path to attend 'moksha'. While Jainism refers Kaivalya or kevala Jana(omniscience) as supreme wisdom or complete understanding. The current Covid-19 pandemic had also created situation of isolation but it is broadly different from the theory of Kaivalya. Covid-19 had created separation of individual from community and humans (being a social animal) can't live without community. Thus, philosophy can be used to show correct path to humans so that they can utilise this separation to attain true knowledge.

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Indian Philosophical Thought is highly motivated by spiritual motives. People in India are religious though religion in India is not dogmatic but Indian philosophy is not totally free from the fascination of religious speculation. India has a rich and diverse philosophical tradition dating back to the composition of the Upanishad in the later Vedic period. Darshanas, the classical system of Indian philosophy are categorised into three broad groups namely- the orthodox (Astika) , the heterodox (Nastika) and the Indian materialistic (Charvaka) . The orthodox systems are 6 in number namely - *Nyaya, Vaishesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta*. These orthodox systems are based on the authority of the Vedas. Buddhism and Jainism are heterodox systems which are based on the authoritative spiritual experiences of their prophets. Charvaka is an atheist, materialistic system which rejects spirituality in all the forms. According to Hinduism, four objectives in man's life are *Dharma* (right conduct), *Artha* (right wealth) , *Kama* (right desire) and *Moksha* (right exit).

The concept of Isolation/Kaivalya is greatly discussed in all the three classical systems of Indian philosophy. Samkhya or Sankhya (the oldest form of orthodox system) and Yoga (one of the six orthodox system) had described Kaivalya as a state of liberation (Moksha) from rebirth where Purusha is separated from Prakriti and vice versa.

Non-attachment is the controlling consciousness of a person who has no craving for visible and scriptural enjoyment. - Patanjali Yoga Sutras 1:15

Although this thought of separation of Purusha or soul (the consciousness of an individual) from Prakriti (matter) looks controversial due to the predominant view that it is impossible to isolate Purusha from Prakriti.

That non-attachment is the highest when there comes in the desirelessness for the qualities of the Purusha.- Patanjali Yoga Sutras 1:16.

The Samkhya School rests on dualistic cosmology. Both Prakriti and Purusha are mortal and of distinct natures. While Prakriti is always changing itself

and carries 3 gunas (i.e. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) and Purusha is constant. Due to ignorance of its true nature Purusha identifies itself with products of Prakriti and because of Karma (the effect of both good and bad actions) found himself bounded to this materialistic world and thus undergoes a series of reincarnations and sufferings. However once the realisation arises that Purusha is distinct from Prakriti, the Purusha self is no longer subject to transmigration and 'Kaivalya' arises. Solitude, detachment or separation was a central theme for liberation. Even in Buddhism and Jainism, central pillar to attain "moksha" is the way of isolation and detachment. In some Upanishads Kaivalya-mukti is known as 'Muktika' and considered as the most superior form of Moksha. It can grant liberation (salvation) both within the life (Jivanmukti) and after death (Videhamukti). Moksha has various meanings and definitions according to different schools of Indian religious and philosophical thoughts. Many schools of Hinduism considered

Moksha as a "state of perfection" and suggests that self-discipline is the path to Dharma and Moksha is self-discipline that it becomes unconscious, second nature. Hence, Dharma is a means to Moksha, however this concept of Dharma and Moksha is highly challenged by Nagarjuna, Adi Shankara and Vaishnavas.²

Sometimes Moksha, Nirvana (nibbana) and Kaivalya are used synonymously as they all refer to the 'state of liberation' from all causes of sorrow and sufferings. But in modern era literature, these words have different premises in different religions. Nirvana, is a common concept in Buddhism which is known as the 'state of realisation' that there is no self (no soul) and emptiness. While Moksha in Hinduism, refers to 'acceptance of self (soul), realisation of liberating knowledge, all existence and understanding the whole universe as the self (soul). According to Yoga school in Hinduism, kaivalya is the realisation that Purusha is distinct from Prakriti and can unite with the spiritual

² Kaivalya-Wikipedia. Retrieved from en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaivalya (Last updated: 11 February 2020)

universe. In Jainism, Moksha and Nirvana are same. Sometimes Jaina texts use the term 'kevala or kevala Jana' and the liberated souls are known as 'Kevalin' . According to Digambara tradition in Jainism, "only male can attend spiritual liberation and women must live an ethical life and gain karmic merit to be reborn as a male to achieve spiritual liberation. However in Sikhism, desire for Mukti is not considered important ,their main focus is "devotion to God". We can say Sikh concept of Moksha is same as Hinduism and refers to spiritual liberation.³

Thus , these thoughts on the concept of 'Isolation/ Kaivalya' prove that it is not a novel concept in Indian Philosophical Thought as there are many controversial views regarding Kaivalya. The current state of isolation arised due to Covid-19 pandemic had given a chance to re-think according to philosophical paradigm on this topic. Isolation caused due to Covid-19 pandemic is totally different from philosophical isolation. It had created

loneliness and 'opinion battle everywhere'. We all know that humans are social animals and separation from society will lead to the distortion of human mind. People are finding hard to practice social distancing and stay inside their houses because imprisonment (as in being intentionally detached from society) , is a severe punishment for anyone. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher in his book 'Zoon Politikon' referred human beings as political animals. Covid-19 had destroyed the mental health of people and pushing them towards the practice of suicide. The present scenario of isolation is making humans away from worldly boundations by taking their lives without any realisation of liberating knowledge. While, the concept of Isolation in context of Indian Philosophical Thought deals with the acceptance of self (soul) and this knowledge can also be gained within men's lifetime.

Conclusion:

Indian Philosophical Thoughts are spiritual and full with plenty of ideas

³ Moksha-Wikipedia. Retrieved from en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha(Last updated:18 August 2020)

which creates a huge confusion in human mind that 'what is the correct path to attain Moksha'? But as closely we examine the thoughts of Hinduism , Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism we get to know isolation or detachment is the only way to gain true knowledge and this knowledge leads to the path of Moksha. Also Western philosophers supports Indian philosophical thoughts to attain Moksha means salvation. If people start questioning themselves about their existence and try to attain true knowledge that is Kaivalya then only negative effects of Covid-19 pandemic can be removed. This is the need of hour when people should attain mental pleasure or peace and start looking inside their minds. Many theories say human mind contains whole universe , therefore people should do Yoga, Dhyana or meditation for acceptance of self (soul). Philosophy teaches us new thoughts and techniques which can help humanity to evolve efficiently in whole mankind community. During current situation of pandemic doctors,nurses, policemen, army men and labourers are frontline warriors but philosophers can also help people mentally and can be addressed as "backline warriors". As

you can see there are wide range of schools of thought that can help you get through. Philosophy can guide, help and explain things easily. You will always have a philosopher as an answer whether you question about government, individual choice ,freedom, anxiety, power, state, money or isolation. Henceforth, we can conclude philosophy can evolve as an only hope in current pandemic situation where people are deprived of life in a community. And it can show the correct path to humans to attain true knowledge in this state of isolation.