

Avoidable litigations burden the Courts

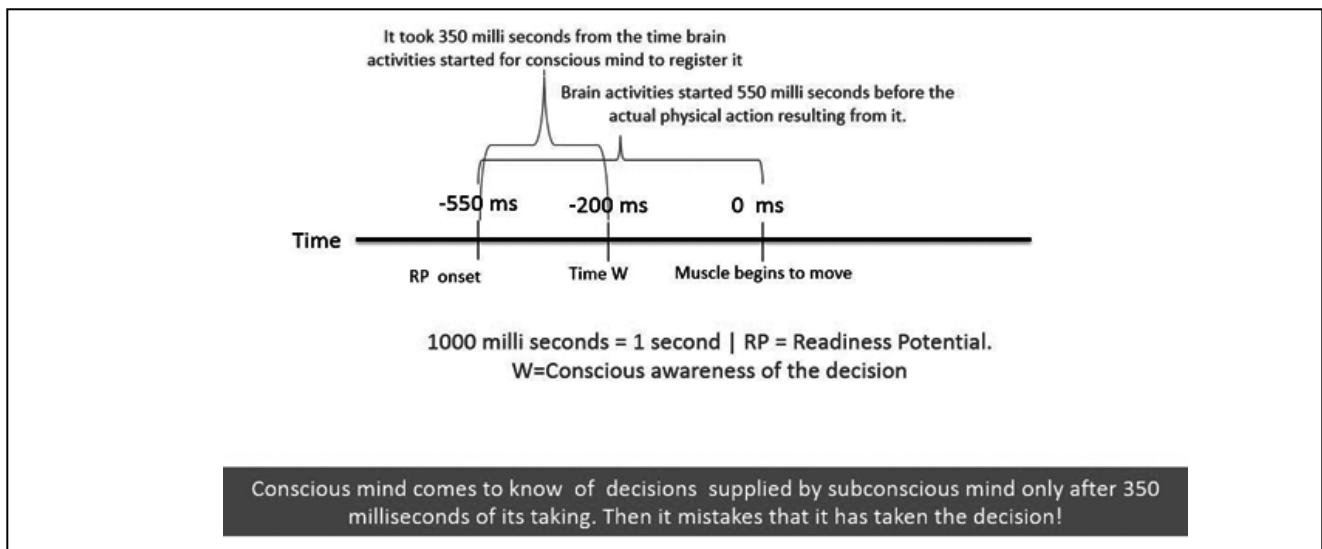
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So where has the desire to have the chocolate originated from? Has it originated from the freewill of my conscious mind? NO! It bubbled up from somewhere else unknown and thereafter it got registered in my brain. The whole sequence starts by evoking a silent “readiness potential “detectable in the ECG or by using any other brain mapping tools, much before my conscious mind became aware of such an event happening in the background. It is only after 350 milliseconds later, that my conscious mind captured the thought ‘bubble’; yet another 200 milliseconds later, my neurons fired commands, my muscles moved and consequently I got up from the chair!!!. My

poor conscious mind is under the mistaken notion that it took the decision to eat the chocolate, totally unaware of the drama staged in the background.

Several others, notably Marcel Brass and his collaborators, repeated Libet’s experiments using even more advanced instruments such as MRI and fine-tuned Libet’s results. Marcel not only confirmed the Libet-findings, but also proved that he can even predict the decisions we are going to make, upto ten milliseconds before these decisions are actually made! He used functional magnetic resonance imagery technique for doing this.



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All human actions originate from simple, innocuous thoughts in our minds. Mind is the springboard of all thoughts; thoughts are the springboards for our words spoken, for our actions and deeds done. If thoughts are of high quality, so will be the resultant words, deeds and actions too. This is universally true with all human deliverables, not just that of legal systems alone.

More About Conscious mind!

Tor Nørretranders (born in 1955) is a popular Danish Journalist who writes extensively on scientific studies. He has compiled wonderful facts about the human mind and consciousness in his book titled "The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size". Quoting scientific studies, he has reported that our conscious mind can only handle some 15 – 20 bits of information per second, whereas there are at least 10 – 12 billion bits of information available to us every second. Some 10 billion bits of pixels are brought in by our eyes every second. Another 1 billion bits of information are brought in by our touch every second! All the rest of our sense organs bring about another one billion bits! Out of this, our conscious mind takes only 15 – 20 bits per second, in the least.

Our conscious mind is a terrible under performer, isn't it? We believe we are consciously taking decisions and run our show of life. But it is not! So, who in reality, runs the show? Our subconscious mind! For the huge majority of humanity, the conscious mind is underperforming and is largely asleep for the most part.

Our Daily Experiences.

While the brain-scientists generally agree in unison that our conscious mind is a terrible

underperformer, let us examine, whether our day-to-day experiences too agree with their findings.

How many times have you gone back to your house to check whether or not you have locked the door before leaving? Invariably, you find that you had indeed locked the door. Your conscious mind has not taken note of the physical action you did. That is the reason why you had to return back home to check out. In reality, your body acted. Your conscious mind did not take note of it! It is true that only 15 – 20 bits of information are filtered by our conscious mind in a second! It is true that many actions are still done automatically much like how a bird sitting on the window sill flies instantly as you open the window shutters.

How many times, you have driven your car from your home to office and from office to home, like an automaton? Your mind will be thinking hundred thoughts, while your body is driving your car, automatically stopping at every red signal, taking the appropriate turns in the appropriate places.

If we examine our conversations and retorts, it is all too clear that they just come out of our mouths, without any conscious thinking or decision making processes involved. They just come out of us, much like a tape recorder blurting out the recorded sounds. What does it tell you? More often than not, we are automatons, going through the motions of life, without the application of our conscious mind to the words we speak or to the actions we do.

When we drive on the roads, we only see things that fall within a certain angle of our vision. We do not bring the capabilities of our eyes for lateral vision. We only see what we

want to see! Our conscious mind filters and operates with the minimum required input.

While reading what we wrote ourselves, most of us do not often spot the spelling mistakes and disjointed sentences. This is not because we are inherently incapable of spotting them; it is only because our conscious mind does the job without paying attention and does it largely unconsciously, and it is the subconscious mind that does the job.

Data-driven Biological Machines!

For most part of it, our life is driven by our subconscious mind sitting in the driver's seat, even though all the while our conscious mind illusions itself that it is driving our life.

How do we walk? It is the work of our subconscious mind. Our conscious mind does not take conscious decisions as to which muscle to flex first or which leg to put forward first, etc. It is an automated process, driven by the 'data' present within us, in the depths of our subconscious mind.

How do we breathe? It is in the same manner that we breathe! Imagine, if we have to breathe with conscious self-efforts! Our life would have been miserable then. So, at a subconscious level, there is a large repository of data, which drives the biology of our life – much like the programming data forming the operating system of a personal computer. Many of these are extremely useful in animating our body. But in our conscious state too, we continue that habit of passivity and allow the past data to drive our thoughts which is expected to be a conscious activity. This is where the fault or system corruption occurs. Instead of exercising our conscious mind's

freewill -discriminatory moral and ethical authority - over the subconscious mind in a harmonious manner in regulating our thoughts and actions, we lazily let our subconscious mind to take our decisions for us.

In a way we are sleepwalking! We think we are "awakened" when we get up in the morning from a good night's sleep. We are not, in the true sense of the word! We continue to be driven by subconscious data, even if we keep our eyes open and go through the motions of life. And what are these data? Our "saved" memories are our data. Our thoughts (and therefore our ensuing actions too) are the products of our data. They are the files saved in our subconscious mind and they drive our lives.

Have you noticed how the animals in a circus are trained to do many acts for the spectators? The activities of those animals in the circus are merely data driven. Animals are not doing any conscious acts in the circus. Training is nothing but hard coding the data on the canvas of their minds. The only difference with the circus animals is that humans are part of the external environment for the animals, giving those experiences repeatedly and turning those experiences into hard coding.

In our case, most of our day-to-day functions are the effect of our own self-coding. What is self-coding? It is an act of accumulating life-lessons, impressions, and sowing the seeds of tendencies in our subconscious minds through our own emotion-filled unconscious action-reaction cycles for ages. These impressions or hard coding are largely the result of our mind's responses in terms of its passionate likes and dislikes to experiences undergone. They are not necessarily the minds responses formulated

after careful and ethical analysis of all events. The complexity of this flaw will be understood only when we realize that we deal not only with the hard-coding done during our present lifetime, but also with the tendencies that we are born with.

Window of Opportunity

From Benjamin Libet's studies, we now know that our conscious mind hardly gets more than one or two millisecond's window of opportunity to override the dictates of the subconscious mind. It is extremely easy to miss this tiny window of opportunity to be able to correct our thoughts before it takes shape into words and actions. Practically, one or two milliseconds are instantaneous. Our conscious mind should be alert and watchful of our every thought, every word and every action of ours, if our conscious mind has to reign our thoughts and guide them to ethically correct words and actions. This is the reason why people fail to control emotions, which inevitably lead them to unpredictable action-reaction cycle and thereafter to unintended consequences in the course of time.

Vedic Understanding of Human Mind

The ancient Indian sages had profound knowledge about the human mind. Their knowledge of human mind was way ahead of the understanding of twenty first century psychologists. They had understood where the flaws remain in the working of our minds. They had developed methods to correct, and fix these flaws. Of the major six principal philosophies of ancient India, Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta had all dealt with the human mind with an unmatched clarity and depth.

In order to appreciate the depth and breadth of the Vedic view of MIND, it is important to understand the overriding relationship amongst these three cardinal philosophies. Samkhya is the foundation for Yoga and Ayurveda. Essentially, Samkhya explains where humanity stands in its present state. Vedanta explains where humanity should ultimately reach through its evolutionary quest. Yoga is the practical way to reach there. All these three philosophies are, therefore, mutually complementary. The mind receives special attention in all these three treatises, because mind is the tool that we need to use to transcend itself and reach the destination. This means, we have to use the mind to transcend the mind! It is like using a pole in the pole-vault game to reach the other side of the crossbar; but, one can reach the other side only after dropping the pole that one uses to reach the crossbar.

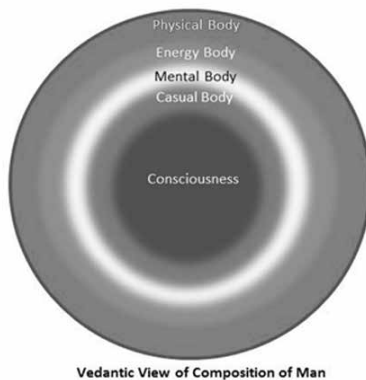
It is, therefore, helpful for us to understand the Vedic view of mind and how Vedic knowledge describes its functioning. According to Vedanta, human beings are composed of five aspects. They are, (1) a gross and visible Physical Body, (2) a subtle, invisible Energy Body, (3) an even subtler Mental Body, and (4) an even more subtle Causal Body. The substratum for all these four bodies are the fifth component, (5) a unit of identified pure eternal Consciousness. Consciousness is pure awareness, which for the time being existing in the constructs of space and time as an identified unit causing all other four aspects to come into existence. For the purpose of our subject at hand, our discussions here will be limited to the mental body or MIND alone.

The Mind, the third component, is referred as Anthahkarana (Inner Instrument) in Vedanta.

Vedanta is the highest understanding. Therefore, understanding the MIND in the light of Vedanta is most appropriate for our purpose. The purpose of this inner instrument is to receive all experiences by way of stimuli and transmit them to the identified unit of Consciousness, the seat and source of awareness. According to Vedanta, this inner instrument has 4 functional tasks as follows:

Lower Mind (Manas, in Sanskrit): It is that aspect of the MIND that relays the feelings and sensations produced as a result of the processing of the five sensory inputs. We experience and participate in the physical world through five sense perceptions, namely vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. It is in the lower mind where the experiences first arrive. After analyzing the experience, the lower mind gives it to the Ego.

Ego (Ahamkara, in Sanskrit): Ego is that faculty of mind that is responsible for the “I”-ness. It is the “Ego” that gives the feeling that we are separate from other similar body-mind-egos and other objects. Ego relates to the world dualistically, saying to itself that



“ I am different and separate from you and all other things”. It is the Ego that finally classifies all sensory experiences into one of the two

categories. (1) The ones that it likes and (2) the ones that it does not like. With the one it likes, it develops an attachment and with the one it dislikes it develops an aversion. The ego, thus establishes a specific relationship to an experience, either as “good” or as “bad”, either by clinging to it or by rejecting it. Ego labels it as such, before transmitting it to the intellect.

Intellect (Buddhi, in Sanskrit) :Intellect is the aspect of the MIND that is nearest to the unit of identified Consciousness - the seat and source of awareness. It has a quality of brightness and light. It is the decision making faculty of the mind. It is the highest mental faculty. It decides what to do with the information supplied by the Lower Mind, further coloured and labelled by Ego either as good or as bad. In the Western psychology, the lower mind, ego and intellect are all lumped together as the conscious mind.

Mind-stuff (Chitta, in Sanskrit): It is that faculty in which all memories of everything that passes through the Lower Mind, Ego and Intellect, are stored. These memories are recalled to the surface of the lower mind from time to time. In Western psychology, the Mind-stuff is called the “subconscious” mind.

Chitta or Subconscious Mind

Chitta or subconscious mind is a vast screen of the unconscious mind. Every step from the senses to the lower mind to the ego to the intellect is stored in the Chitta, much as how information is stored in a computer. The lower mind, ego and intellect function in the waking state, when we are conscious. But Chitta or subconscious mind is hidden behind it.

During the sleep stage, when the conscious mind is relaxed, when the sense organs are shut off, the ego is inactive. At this state of the mind, many of these memories will raise from the memory beds of Chitta as dreams. The huge storehouse Chitta-memory-disk, keeps enormous amount of memory data. Unanalyzed and misunderstood sensations from worldly objects do not allow one the freedom to explore the inner avenues of life or to understand one's own real nature within. Likewise, sensations and feelings in the form of memories arising from the Chitta also do not allow one to delve inward.

Benjamin Libet's experiments reveal that thoughts are constantly supplied from Chitta. It takes 350 milliseconds for the conscious mind to come to know about it. Even before the conscious mind gets a chance to review it with intellect and guide it ethically, the conscious mind mistakes that it has taken the decision and starts executing it. The window of opportunity available to the conscious mind to correct this flaw, is only one or two milliseconds! It is, however, important to understand that the opportunity to change our thoughts or decisions does exist. Our real freewill is limited only to this extend. If we do not raise up to the occasion and make the right corrections to our thoughts at the right time, we miss out our opportunity to exercise our freewill. Consequently, we become automatons.

Basic Mechanism and the "Yama" Principles

One of the major reasons for all human tragedies can be easily traced to automaton behaviour. We can reduce the number of conflicts (and therefore reduce the number of

court cases too), if we can free ourselves from our automaton behavior patterns.

Indian sages have found out that this flaw can be addressed and remedied by taking a three pronged approach in life. The skeptics may argue that these are not easy to achieve. Notwithstanding that, great ancient Indian sages have demonstrated its practicality by achieving it for themselves and leaving instructions for others on how to do that. The practicality and effectiveness of these methods would be realized only when these methods are practiced earnestly. The Yoga Sastras have indeed given methods to achieve a state of mastery over one's mind without the affliction of such mental flaws. Thus, a "Master" is one who has mastered one's own mind. The following are these three key methods to free ourselves from automaton behaviours.

The Chitta should be free of all memories, good, bad or indifferent, so that only pure inspirations from the original creative source of pure consciousness alone can emerge from Chitta. Ashtanga Yoga has prescribed the methods in its eightfold path.

We should simultaneously prevent the formation of fresh 'memory' clusters in the Chitta. We have seen earlier that it is the "manas" (lower mind) and "ahamkara" (ego) that interpret and modify these sensory inputs and categorize them as good and bad feelings and emotions. It is the resultant attachment of the "ahamkara" (ego) to these feelings and emotions either by way of the desires or by way of hatred and rejection, which causes the formation of "memories". If our conscious mind can remain fully alert and participate in all experiences in life as a mere witness without

evoking mental likes and dislikes, no memories will be encoded in Chitta and it would always remain like a clean unused hard disk, on which nothing is saved or will ever be saved.

The Conscious mind should always be alert, so that it can use its freewill to amend our thoughts and ensuing actions using its Buddhi or intellect. We, therefore, need to develop an alertly watchful attitude to observe all our thoughts at the moment of its formation and modify it with the application of buddhi/intellect. With diligent practice this watchfulness would become part of our attitude and habit in life.

Written by Sage Patanjali, 2400 years ago, the YogaSutra is the seeding text giving the eightfold path for the establishment of the aforesaid state in every human. It is for the purpose of developing the right attitudes that Patanjali's Yoga Sutra prescribed five basic principles in the very beginning of AshtangaYoga. In fact, these five principles form the foundation stones for ethics and morality for all times. These principles are called "Yama" – Five proscriptive controls – are the clarion call of Yoga to pay attention to our own thoughts, words and actions.

Essentially, Yama principles are the five tenets that everyone should observe in their relationship with the external world. They are the guidelines for building our relationship with our external world. These tenets are (1) Ahimsa, Nonviolence (2) Sathya, Non-lying (3) Astheya, Non-stealing (4) Brahmacharya, non-sensuality and (5) Aparigraha, non-greed.

They are, indeed, exhortations observe certain precepts at mental, verbal and activity levels in all our interpersonal interactions. The

apparent simplicity of these five principles defies its depth, range and application efficiency in our everyday life. Each of these tenets has multiple and deeper meanings. It can be seen that one precept is the refinement of the other. For example, non-lying also means truthfulness. Non-lying also means the need to have an attitude of non-injury which is a variant of non-violence. Non-greed also means non-attachment to things and objects that we already possess. Non-attachment has implications in Astheya or non-stealing. Without having an attitude of non-stealing, an attitude of non-attachment is hard to come by. The reverse is also true. We can, thus see, that all Yama principles are mutually intertwined, one reinforcing the other.

Yama - Ethical Foundation for Interpersonal Relationships

Yama principles of Ashtanga Yoga are the foundation for the edifice of ethics. Conscious practice of Yama principles at our mental, verbal and action levels of our interpersonal interactions will build a new ethical habit and moral attitude within us. Once these qualities are firmly established in us, no doubt, it will simplify our lives and will eliminate conflicts from our lives. Consequently, the number of cases in our courts would be drastically reduced to the minimum.

All great journeys start with small steps taken in the right direction. Human evolution is a great journey on the path of expansion of human consciousness. This great journey starts with the baby steps of Yama principles in our everyday life.

