

The “Ten-percent Brain Myth” guided with the Fundamentals of Jaina’s Theory of Knowledge

Megha Arora

***Abstract---** Great religions to pragmatic capacities sporadically abound in the stories of supernatural phenomena which subsumes telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. However, unfortunately treated as the topics of spiritualism, witchcraft and edification, not the materials of Scientific Enquiry. Whatsoever, have been deciphered about these queer speculations, the most prevalent sole concept is : namely, that there can be sense-experiences from the realm which is not accessible to human brain and sense organs. Possessor of these senses which are not currently accessible to average humans can be a omniscient being tapping to his full potential. Presently, we have no language or any communication system to describe them intelligibly. When inquiring about these affairs we cannot avoid absurdity as presently we lack any linguistic convention on it. Our linguistic convention is derived from the physical world in which the supernatural is not considered as "Normal". It is considerably strained with "Abnormality" in the first place. My aim in this paper is to reconcile this Orthodox Psychology with Science and Philosophy which certainly appears conflicting. This inquiry leads me to enable the 10 percent brain myth.*

***Keywords---** Ten-percent Brain Myth, Jaina’s Theory of Knowledge*

I. INTRODUCTION

Great religions to pragmatic capacities sporadically abound in the stories of supernatural phenomena which subsumes telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. However, unfortunately treated as the topics of spiritualism, witchcraft and edification, not the materials of Scientific Enquiry. Whatsoever, have been deciphered about these queer speculations, the most prevalent sole concept is : namely, that there can be sense-experiences from the realm which is not accessible to human brain and sense organs. Possessor of these senses which are not currently accessible to average humans can be a omniscient being tapping to his full potential. Presently, we have no language or any communication system to describe them intelligibly. When inquiring about these affairs we cannot avoid absurdity as presently we lack any linguistic convention on it. Our linguistic convention is derived from the physical world in which the supernatural is not considered as "Normal". It is considerably strained with "Abnormality" in the first place. My aim in this paper is to reconcile this Orthodox Psychology with Science and Philosophy which certainly appears conflicting. This inquiry leads me to enable the 10 percent brain myth.

An old myth which emerged often repeatedly claims that average humans use only 10% of their brains. Science has debunked the theory and there is a disparate pattern in tracing the origination of the myth. Pioneering American Psychologist William James fervently stated that average humans only achieve a small percentage of his or her

Megha Arora, St. Stephen’s College, University of Delhi, India

potential and a major amount left as undeveloped potential which has never been tapped. It gradually shifted to 10 percent of our capacity which originally James stated to 10 percent of our gray matter by those who laxly use it. Like the generation of "positive thinking gurus", Dale Carnegie in the book "How to Win Friends and Influence People". This Myth have never lost the headlines. German-born theoretical physicist Albert Einstein and American cultural anthropologist Margret Mead were also affiliated with the small usage of brain by average humans.

Scientists in the domain of neuroscience have debunked this theory which, initially interpreted wrongly by people, stated that 10 percent usage of brain is myth. First, there is a fallacy of argument from ignorance (argumentum ad ignorantiam). It says, something like 'Y' is true because it has not yet been proved false or 'Y' is false because it has not yet been proved true. Later one is quite obvious and affirmed with the process of scientific inquiry however, in former if it believed to be true that a great amount of human mind is not used this doesn't establish any implication that unused brain when used gives people paranormal powers.¹ Brain imaging tests such as PET (a positron emission tomography) and functional MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) which examines Brain's functional anatomy which clearly display that major portion brain is not empty. There are some activities which we do may use little part of the brain but in activities like eating, watching television, the whole of the brain is functional.² Third criticism is on the implication of this fiction. Myth entails that the "unused" portion of the brain takes up space unnecessarily. Minor damage in unused parts of the brain then should go unnoticed however, people do suffer from head trauma, brain injury or severely impaired.³ Lastly, the brain same as other organs has been developed through the process of natural selection. Brain tissues take up a lot of energy to function. It stains the credulity that so much energy is being used on an underutilized organ and evolution would have permitted. This criticism is from a developmental perspective.⁴

Prior to responding the criticism posed against the 10 percent brain myth which was in the first place interpreted wrongly by Scientists. William James said it's the 10 percent of our potential which average human use, not the 10 percent of the matter inside our brain which is associated with the quantitative aspect of the physical entity brain and not mind. Mind- Brain problem has always been a great debate in the history of Philosophy in the 1960s when behaviourism dominated much of philosophy and psychology at that time. Hilary Putnam, Noam Chomsky and Fodor, criticised behaviourism, alongside with functionalism Fodor has an influential version of Non- Reductive Physicalism, according to which mental states are realized by but not reducible to physical states of the brain.⁵ So, being a Philosopher my business is to connect this science behind 10% brain myth with the philosophical epistemology and coming onto a conjunction by devising a paradigm which will enable us to do two things : enable us to inquire about supernatural phenomena by stating the contexts of Indian Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Psychical Research and Occult Science. Second, establishing consistency between both the phenomena of Normal and Supernatural. In the 17th Century an entirely new outlook was devised by Rationalist Philosophers which transformed our way of perception towards the material world. If we were not concerned about this back then and left the enquiry of empirical facts to Science then Philosophy would never outgrow its infancy.

¹ Benjamin Radford. "The ten-percent myth." *The Skeptical Inquirer* 23 (1999): 52.

² Ibid.,53

³ Ibid.,53

⁴ Eric Chudler. "Do we really use only 10 percent of our brains?" (2013):1

⁵ Jerry Fodor . "The mind-body problem." *Scientific American*, 244(1) (1981): 118

Jaina School of Philosophy, which is a famous heterodox school in Indian Philosophy which does not believe in the notion of God and does not accept the authority of Vedas. *Tattvārtha Sūtra* stated that *Kevalajñāna* is within the reach of every thinking person who tries to attain it.⁶ It does not lay any Mystic theories dwelling in the realm of metaphysics but defines every concept and concisely indicates step by step what are the stages to lead a life of a Tirthankara. According to Jaina there are five types of knowledge, Intellectual Knowledge (*Matijnān*), Scriptural Knowledge (*Srutjnān*), Clairvoyance (*Avadhijñāna*), Mind Reading or Telepathy (*Manahpariyāyajñāna*), Omniscience (*Kevalajñāna*).⁷ First two are gained by external sources and last three are gained by internal sources.⁸ *Kevalajñāna* can be said to be the one using 100 percent of his or her brain potential. In the road to it telepathy and clairvoyance are the stages of the usage of the brain capacity. *Avadhijñāna* is of two types: *Bhavpratyay* and *Gunapratyay*.⁹ Former one is associated with the people naturally born with it and later is associated with the people who achieve it and this may not last the entire life.¹⁰ Occultists believe that there are some extra senses other than the ordinary five, i.e., Telepathy and Clairvoyance.¹¹ Few humans have developed sufficiently and know how to use them effectively. Occultists call them "Astral Senses". The term Astral senses is derived from the Greek word "Star".¹² Further, there are Six classifications of Clairvoyance. *Ānugāmik* (Clairvoyance stays with people wherever they go), *Ānanugāmik* (Clairvoyance restricted to certain areas), *Vardhmān* (Increasing Level of Clairvoyance), *Hiyamān* (Decrease Level of Clairvoyance), *Avasthit* (Steady Clairvoyance), *Anavasthit* (Unsteady i.e., which can come and go.)¹³

There are further distinctions in the domain of mind reading also i.e., Simple and Comprehensive. *Rjumatī* which knows the functioning of others mind to a certain extent.¹⁴ *Vipulmatī* which can go to a far greater extent. They arise by different levels. As it is clearly seen the difference between the type of telepathy and clairvoyance depends on the magnitude of the usage of potential and most likely following the end of *Kevalajñāna*. When one leaves the areas of human habitation and becomes extended the scope of omniscience extends to all the objects to all modes. It might seem unconvincing to you. We usually find these credulous regarding our everyday life activities and thoughts. I call this kind of dogma "insignificant halfpenny intellect". Ignoring almost all institutional phases of the mind is the equivalent of being and aware of the higher process of reasoning.

There is no incongruity in believing that there can be more ways in which knowledge can be channelized other than 5 sense organs. There are five sense organs and the back of the overt senses lies a web of the Nervous System or Brain centre which receive the message which were sent by the senses. However, back of this, is the Mind which is the real knower. In Indian Philosophy can be said as soul or ego. In Jainism, the senses employed are different from a tiny ant to humans. Each new sense which is added widens up our world. Likewise, with the increase potentiality of the mind, if it is employed more then our world widens up i.e., more information we can gather. This is the reality of Pluralism or *Anekantavada* in Jainism. The ultimate truth is complex and reality has multiple facets. However, the

⁶ Manu Doshi, *Tattvārtha Sutra*, JAINA Federation of Jaina Associations in North America & Shrut Ratnagar, (2007): 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*,21.

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid.*,25

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Swami Panchdasi, *Telepathy, Mind Reading, Clairvoyance, and Other Psychic Powers*, Max Bollinger, (2018):7.

¹² Swami Panchdasi, *Telepathy, Mind Reading, Clairvoyance, and Other Psychic Powers*, Max Bollinger, (2018): 28

¹³ Manu Doshi, *Tattvārtha Sutra*, JAINA Federation of Jaina Associations in North America & Shrut Ratnagar, (2007): 25-6

¹⁴ *Ibid.*,26

senses deployed in an ant or in a human or a Tirthankara may be different. But information processed through it is also not completely false. It's just a relative aspect or theory of Syadvada in Jainism. The way we look at something A can be in an infinite way. But only Tirthankara can know all the ways, who has achieved a hundred percent potential of his mind. Think how small the world of a deaf or a blind person is to the average person with all five senses. Likewise, think about how much greater and wider the world of an average person would be when new senses like telepathy or clairvoyance are employed. The significant share of a world being robbed from an average person. Maybe in some other Parallel Universe there are beings employing more than 5 senses who knows! Occultists believe it in a quite different way. There are two sets of senses associated with two different planes. Astral Senses and Physical Senses associated with Astral plane (plane which is immediately above physical plane) and Physical Plane, respectively. Astral Senses indicated towards the Astral body i.e., mind or ego whereas Physical senses indicated towards Physical body i.e., the brain. When on the lower level which is in the Physical Plane, brain can only acquire the messages of Physical organs however, when mind function of higher level of Astral plane it needs Astral senses to decode it. They can read ancient texts, to perceive things that are happening at the same time in some other place, can get the glimpse of past as well as future. There are two extra physical senses in Astral plane. Person may see a varied aspect of the same reality when on an Astral plane.¹⁵

The existence of these sense can be traced in past which can be extinct now . Primitive men have profoundly developed senses than compared to civilized men but barbaric men have also not even tapped a little of their potential.¹⁶ Acquiring the full potential and being on the route to acquire knowledge more than average men is different. Likewise being trapped in a small box or in a big box. Both are considerably away from reality. When men become more civilized they tend to lose the senses as there is more security in life.

Arguments presented about the functional traffic in the brain which is traced by brain imaging techniques, the ground on which the ten percent brain used is actually not even associated with the brain. Eliminating all the quantitative magnitudes to the brain and shifting to the degrees and the ratios about how minds are developed and unlocked, is the need. It can appear that telepathic abilities are not the higher faculty, however can be low.¹⁷ Ordinary telepathy in the case of modern and civilized men is highly convoluted matter.¹⁸ The analysis done by the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) and other investigators have shown us the proofs of mind reading between two subjects.¹⁹ William James 'Father of American psychology', a pragmatist and radical empiricist developed his interest in spiritualism in adulthood. Mediumships were used to communicate between the spirits of dead and living humans.²⁰ These issues have also been considered as religious orthodox trickery In 1882, SPR became actively engaged to conduct through a scientific investigation on these debatable phenomenon which were considered as religious, psychical and spiritualistic.²¹ The Society believed that the best methodology is conducted in following steps: First, gathering the evidence then filtering and subsequently eliminating which are doubtful and then using the remaining

¹⁵ Swami Panchdasi, *Telepathy, Mind Reading, Clairvoyance, and Other Psychic Powers*, Max Bollinger, (2018): 28

¹⁶ Ibid.,26

¹⁷ Ibid.,36

¹⁸ Ibid.,37

¹⁹ Swami Panchdasi, *Telepathy, Mind Reading, Clairvoyance, and Other Psychic Powers*, Max Bollinger, (2018): 37

²⁰ Krister Dylan Knapp. *To the summerland: William James, psychical research and modernity*, (2003): 152

²¹ SPR. "Objects of the Society". *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* Vol.1 (1882–83): 2.

data for the further evaluation.²² Methods of control and recordings were used to keep the scientific standards of time.²³ Then the goal is to see the similarities in the reports (final outcome) and developing a theory which can be explanatory.²⁴

James believed that, all experience is a process and no theory can be a termination.²⁵ Being a radical empiricist he believed to know the object in the context in which the world provide it.²⁶ If the world providing us with the matter have plural aspects then science must be in order to apprehend it properly, according to him no single scheme could ever contain the reality.²⁷ James broadening the concepts and mentioning that there is no termination in the ideas, ultimately dissolved all the boundaries between the knower and the known, the boundaries which we know now and things we think are now out of our capacities.²⁸

Maybe the wrong question is being asked. The question must be the causal explanation of the non-prevalence of the extra somatic senses rather than its appearance? Immediately our course of inquiry would change and so does the answer which we are expecting. The question would be, why our current knowledge gaining senses are so limited? Why are our current sense organs confined only to an overt display in physicality? It can be the case that our present perception state, which is an ordinary one, is a kind of myopia because the usage of extra-somatic senses is a normal state. Our different course of inquiry would direct the way we come to the conclusion. The inquiry then would be why the human mind is aware of only a few aspects of a reality when there can be multiple aspects of it. Our present sense organs and afferent nervous system can only grasp a small part of the material world. The explanation of Clairvoyance and telepathy or some higher level senses which are not normal, I am afraid we may have to look for light in works of Speculative Metaphysics. Having administered the shock, I hasten to mitigate its effects. The Positivists members of Philosophy may tell me that whatever we may think of the epistemological doctrines of metaphysicians, their speculative doctrines were certainly fictional; the propositions of speculative metaphysics are mere pseudo-propositions. To this I reply, that perhaps the great speculative metaphysicians of the past did not quite know what they were doing (men of genius often do not). If we determine not to be frightened of Metaphysics, three hypotheses suggest themselves. First, we might suppose that there is an omni-sentient consciousness which is aware of everything that is going on in the material world, and possibly some future events as well. If you like, it would be a kind of God however Jaina's Tirthankaras are the one who attained Kevalajñāna and these are not Gods but their teachers who were average humans. Second, this omni sentient consciousness would enjoy unlimited knowledge; and human clairvoyance would be due to a telepathic relation between ourselves and it. Third, Nor are they prevented from by the fact that we have at present no language for describing them intelligibly. If we are to talk about these subjects at all, we can hardly avoid talking a certain amount of nonsense. Philosophy and science both start with the crude ideas but does not end there.

²² Philip Cole . *Mrs. Piper revisited. Australian Journal of Parapsychology* 1(1) (2001).

²³ Harry Price. *Fifty Years of Psychological Research*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing Co. (1939).

²⁴ Richard Broughton . *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science*. London: Rider (1992).

²⁵ William James. "Pragmatism". *The Works of William James*, edited by Burkhardt FH, Bowers F and Skrupskelis IK. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (1907/1975): 55

²⁶ *Ibid.*,35

²⁷ Gardner Murphy. "Introduction". In: Murphy G and Ballou RO, 1973: 13.

²⁸ Theodore Flournoy. *La Philosophie de William James*. Saint-Blaise: Foyer Solidariste, 1911: 69

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