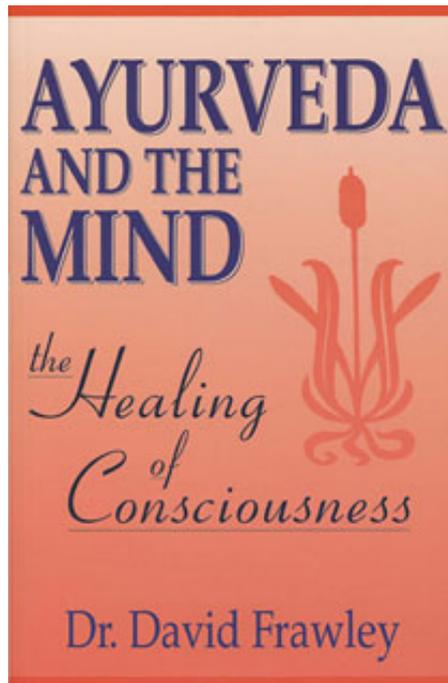


David Frawley
Ayurveda and the Mind - The Healing of
Consciousness

Reading excerpt

[Ayurveda and the Mind - The Healing of Consciousness](#)
of [David Frawley](#)

Publisher: Lotus Press



<http://www.narayana-verlag.com/b12821>

In the [Narayana webshop](#) you can find all english books on homeopathy, alternative medicine and a healthy life.

Copying excerpts is not permitted.

Narayana Verlag GmbH, Blumenplatz 2, D-79400 Kandern, Germany

Tel. +49 7626 9749 700

Email info@narayana-verlag.com

<http://www.narayana-verlag.com>





4. The Nature of the Mind

It is amazing to note that so many different ideas exist about the nature of the mind and how it functions.

Different systems of psychology, philosophy and religion define the mind in ways that can be radically different or even contradictory to one another. All of us agree on the basic facts of the physical body — its form, structure and function. No one holds that the body has three legs, or that the stomach thinks and the brain digests food. The reason for this is that the body is easy to observe. Yet while we can easily list the main systems of the physical body, we find it difficult to do so for the mind. The mind appears as an amorphous or structureless entity, rather than a precise instrument like the body.

Though we all have minds and use them constantly, we do not know what our mind really is. We are so caught up in the mind's activities that we do not take the time to discover what the mind itself really is. In the realm of psychology, we are still groping in the dark, trying to treat an entity whose character eludes us. Without knowing the nature of the mind and its functions, how can we really approach it? After all, how we perceive the mind is the basis of any psychological diagnosis and treatment. The problem is that to know the mind we must first know ourselves. We must understand who we really are. Thought, as we ordinarily know it, is a function of the ego or separate self. A subjective personal bias colors how we look at

Narayana Verlag, 79400 Kandern

Tel: 0049 7626 974 970 0

Excerpt from Dr. David Frawley: Ayurveda and the Mind - The Healing of Consciousness

the mind, rendering an objective assessment of its capacities almost impossible.

The first step in any true psychology, therefore, is to understand the mind and how it works. What is the nature of this marvelous instrument called the mind? What is its relationship with who we are? What is its connection with the body? What is the right function of the mind? Can we learn to see the mind as objectively as we see our hands and feet? Here Ayurveda and Yoga offer tremendous insights.

Getting to Know the Mind

Can one imagine being put into the driver's seat of an automobile with the engine running and not knowing how to drive, not knowing how to use the brakes, the steering wheel or the clutch? Naturally we would get into an accident and, should we survive, would end up permanently afraid of driving.

We are in a not too different situation with our minds. Our awareness is placed in the mind when we are born, but we are not taught how to use the mind, its sensitivities and emotions. We are not taught the meaning of its states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. We are not shown the comparative functions of reason, feeling, will and sensory perception. We are left in the dark because our parents and society do not understand the mind and how it works. The mind is the main vehicle we use for all that we do, yet few, if any of us, know how to use and care for it properly.

We all suffer from ignorance of the nature of the mind. All problems we encounter in life are based ultimately upon not knowing the mind and its functions. From this primary problem, various secondary problems arise — like how to fulfill our desires, or how to avoid what we fear — which, however important these may appear, are merely

the natural consequence of this basic ignorance about the mind. For example, if we do not know how to drive a car properly, the issue of where to go with it is not important. However, we take these derivative problems as primary or blame others for them, turning them into social, moral, or political issues, not realizing, that they are just one problem — not understanding the mind. From a wrong understanding of the mind, we develop wrong ideas about the world and run into difficulty in our social interactions.

To use another analogy, if we do not understand how fire works, we may burn ourselves. This does not mean we are a bad person or that fire is bad, but only that we do not understand fire and its properties. The mind has its qualities and, like fire, can be used for both good and bad. It can provide great happiness or wreak tremendous havoc in the world, as history has shown again and again. All psychological problems are nothing more than a wrong use of the mind, which arises from ignorance of how the mind works. The solution to all our mental problems is to learn to use the mind properly. This is true whatever our psychological problems may be.

More important than any examination of our personal or social problems is educating ourselves about the nature of the mind. All the problems that appear so immediate and important — like whether we will be loved or if our friends and family can be happy — are not the real issue and cannot be solved directly. The real issue is how to use the most important and central instrument in our lives — the mind itself.

Learning the right use of the mind not only solves our psychological problems, but directs us to our higher potential of Self-realization. It leads to the spiritual life, which is our real occupation as conscious beings. Then we

Narayana Verlag, 79400 Kandern

Tel: 0049 7626 974 970 0

Excerpt from Dr. David Frawley: Ayurveda and the Mind - The Healing of Consciousness

can transcend the mind — which is inherently limited — to Pure Awareness unbounded by time, space or causation. For all things in life, we must start with understanding the mind.

Mind as an Object

Though we have always had a mind, most of us have never taken the time to observe it. Let us look at our minds. For this we must step back internally and take the role of the observer. We must begin to witness the mind and its functions.¹¹ Imagine that your thoughts are a stream and you are sitting on the bank watching them flow by. Learn to see the contents of the mind flowing by, without judgment or interference, just as you might observe the currents or debris floating down a river.

By taking such a witnessing attitude, we can easily get to know the mind and its activities. We can perceive various fluctuations in thoughts, feelings and impressions, and various states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. We should strive to maintain our awareness in the attitude of witnessing the mind. This is the key for learning what the mind is. As long as we are caught up in the mind's activities, we cannot see the mind as it is, just as we cannot observe what is going in a theater if our attention is engrossed in the movie.

Whatever we can observe, like a cup upon the table, is an object and exists apart from our awareness, which is its perceiver. Yet we cannot only observe external objects, we can also observe internal objects. We can note whether our sense organs are acute or impaired, as when our vision begins to fail. Similarly we can observe our emotions, our thoughts, and even our own ego, which are all fluctuating phenomena, if we look deeply. We can observe the func-

tions of the mind just as we can observe the movements of our body.

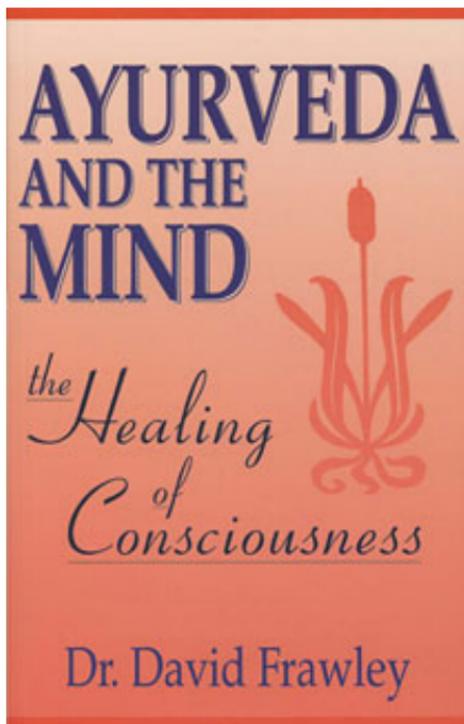
Just as the eye is not damaged when a cup falls onto the floor and breaks, so consciousness is not damaged when the contents of the mind get altered or damaged. The witnessing consciousness is apart from the objects and conditions that it observes. Therefore, the first thing we observe about the mind is that, as something observable, the mind is an object. The mind is material and part of the external world. It belongs to us but it is not who we really are, just as our house belongs to us but is not us. This may be shocking to consider, but it is really something intuitively known to us. When we speak of "my mind," we are defining the mind as an object that belongs to us and not as ourselves.

The mind has a material structure, a set of observable energies and conditions. This is not to say that the mind is a gross object like a stone or that it is an organ in the physical body like the brain, or that it is merely chemical in nature. The mind is not physical matter, but it is matter of a subtle nature, ethereal and luminous. As an organic entity, the mind has a structure, a cycle of nutrition, an origin and an end. The mind is invested with a certain quantum of energy that produces various tangible effects.

Just as we can both see and use our hands, so awareness can perceive and use the mind. But this requires a very high state of attention. It requires detachment from the mind, which means detachment from the mind's activities and interests.

Mind as an Instrument

The second important fact about the mind, which follows from the mind's material nature, is that the mind is



David Frawley

[Ayurveda and the Mind - The Healing of Consciousness](#)

360 pages, pb
publication 1997



More books on homeopathy, alternative medicine and a healthy life www.narayana-verlag.com