

Integrating Mach and Vedanta: a Note

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Abstract

In this note, the author brings the reader into familiarity with Mach, and his work on sensations, presenting a pathway for its integration with Vedanta *darsana*.

Ernst Mach was a great European intellectual who wrote two very important works from our perspective: The Analysis of Sensations and The Science of Mechanics. It seems to us therefore that since the former is psychical and the latter physical, he was aiming at a grand integration of the two strands of investigation, the inner and the outer. If these two strands can indeed be unified, we would have unified science and religion into one whole approach to reality that then stands apparent before the investigator. This could be the goal of all human endeavor since time immemorial.

Mach does a very careful analysis of permanence and persistence of sensations. This permanence is akin to the *asti* of vedanta. There being three qualities in every object: existence, glow, and attractiveness, *asti*, *bhati* and *priya*. Mach states that even though the form of my friend changes every day, I still recognize him as my friend. Here he is peering into the operations of the psyche, the relation between sensation and conception. This is a very important analysis, particularly since the objective of *neti neti* type self-analysis can be arrived at only by careful investigation such as this. Therefore, this suggests a potential pathway that can be used to integrate Mach's approach and terminology with *jnana* yoga.