

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation



Knowledge

What is knowledge? How do we know? How do we know what we know and that it really is knowing?

Is knowledge structured through 'consciousness'?

We have to understand and define both knowledge and consciousness, otherwise we merely engage in a tautological wordplay where the words knowledge and consciousness become definitions for each other, without either being defined .

Knowledge is here seen as the interpretations and meanings placed on processes, events, objects and their relationships. Knowledge is only perceived, grasped held and remembered by the functions manifesting as mind that we can call consciousness.

Consciousness has the aspects of awareness, continuity and perspective, it is the ground in which knowing can occur.

This process of knowing is then the exploration of the internal and external world through the senses. From this sensualisation as experience we create a translation into mind-speak and then store that sensualisation as accessible memory from which we can map out difference and similarity, connection and meaning, and thus construct belief about the nature of the 'world'.

Ultimately everything is passed through this filter of subjective consciousness, so in this sense there is no such thing as external reality. What we actually hold in mind is subjective interpretations and meanings of what may or may not be there.

Someone who habitually uses drugs or alcohol warps their perceptual capacity and senses in a potentially uniformed way, that leads to a less viable or complete view of the world. Conversely perceptual differences from different and more expansive states of consciousness potentially allow us to perceive the world in a more viable and informed way. Knowledge then changes and is different for us as we explore and engage in the viewpoints of different states of consciousness.

Traditionally Indian philosophical perspectives view these states as being a hierarchy of consciousness with the Yogic quest as a search for perfect and ultimate knowledge and understanding of the nature of things as they truly are, as opposed to knowledge limited by a less expansive state of awareness and perception.

These philosophical perspectives arise from a combination of the processes of rational thinking and contemplative visionary intuition, both processes being necessary as tools of inquiry.

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation

Just as we can view a mountain from the front, back, both sides and from inside a cave at its base as well as from its peak so Indian philosophy holds six major darshans or viewpoints on the nature of reality.

Knowledge of any perceived reality and any object can only be complete from this perspective when viewed from all of these six viewpoints.

The first view understands our angle of approach. Where are we viewing from? How do we know this? How can valid knowledge be obtained and how do we know when this is the case? Without some consideration of these questions there can be no further inquiry merely a falling into superstition and un-validated belief.

The second view consists of understanding the nature of difference. Our minds work in units of difference, perceiving the world around us because of the difference between things. So in what way does difference evidence itself in the objects, events, sensations and experiences we are inquiring into. In what way does between difference evidence itself between objects, events, sensations and experiences we are inquiring into.

Without valid inquiry into difference everything is an unsubstantiated and amorphous mass of non-information to which neither reason nor intuition can effectively be applied, leaving us in a state of darkness and ignorance.

The third viewpoint deconstructs, identifies and clarifies the building blocks of our experience, this being what we really study. In Indian philosophy this deconstruction of experience traditionally gives twenty-four categories of the components of existence, these components are the building blocks of our experience.

The primary source and cause of all of these categories is the absolute ground of being called Purusha, this purusha containing within it the seed of all potential, all possible manifestation, this is called Prakriti or Nature.

This Prakriti has as its essence three strands of energetic existence wound into it and these are all in equilibrium. The first of these strands or gunas is the energy of inertia called tamas, the second is the dynamic or kinetic energy called rajas, and the third is the refined and subtle energy of illumination or sattvas.

The will of God (Purusha, Brahman) moves as vibration, this is the same as the word or logos of Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition.

It is this vibration that leads to movement of the active principle of rajas, the gunas thus being imbalanced bring into being the separate experience of subject and object, of dualistic experience as the expansion and manifestation through this dynamic energy and its action begins to create the whole phenomenal universe.

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation

The most primordial aspect of this evolution is Mahat, the great one, also known as Buddhi. Buddhi or cosmic mind has the characteristics of luminosity, intelligence, intuition and cognition as reflections of its source, the infinite and absolute Purusha.

The initiation of relativity, of division into subject and object then follows, this division is characterised by the function of 'I' which in this system is called ahamkara. It is the quality of 'I' or ahamkara that it experiences itself as separate and perceives all things in units of difference. This ahamkara is both a function of this division and the sense of relativity and also that which sustains it.

As 'ego', ahamkara becomes a moment to moment process of stealing, as it, as subject, appropriates and grasps every internal and external phenomenal experience as object, in an endeavour to support and bolster its separate existence and thus protect it from the tensions and terrors of separation and non-existence.

From ahamkara comes manas the thinking-feeling 'vritti-organ' or organic system that experiences life as individuated psycho-emotional experience. From this arises our thoughts, our intellect and our emotions.

The ahamkara also produces the five senses of touch, taste, vision, hearing and smell and the five actions of life. The five actions of life being communication, prehension, movement, excretion and reproduction.

The ahamkara also gives rise to five subtle essences that are perceived to underlie the sensory capacities, these in turn produce the five gross elements of earth, water, fire, air and space whose qualities are respectively solidity, adaptability, volatility, movement and penetrative omnipresence.

This is in essence a reductive science, and similar to western science with its branches of physics, chemistry, biology and psychology, though through different and less empirical methodology seeks similar understandings of models of evolution. The models of evolution derived are different in western science and eastern philosophy. Eastern experiential philosophies seeing matter as a devolution or descent from absolute consciousness whilst western science sees consciousness arising from, and as a function of insentient matter.

The next darshan or viewpoint that assists the process of knowledge is Yoga.

Yoga is the experiential view of an object from direct and deep personal observation and inquiry. Yoga ideally takes us out of the waking state into deeper levels of consciousness and from this deeper state the eye of contemplation beyond the provisional truths of opinion and belief is awakened. It is this awakened eye of contemplation derived through deep Yoga practice that takes us deeper into truth. The truth here being an experiential knowledge of whom, or rather what we are.

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation

The next darshan or view is the view of appropriate ritual and action. This view is derived from the analysis of actions and the adoption of the actions considered most useful for personal and collective evolution and growth. Ritual is used as a way of opening ones experience beyond the limitations of conscious awareness to the more subtle levels and possibilities and seeks to align the individual with their greater purpose and context within the collective, within the greater whole. It is in this seeking of harmony through ritual appropriate fro the individual and collective within the frame of their culture that the individual can find real congruence with all aspects of their experience.

Seeking congruence in this way from a space of deep inner knowledge mirroring the interdependent view of external reality we step into the next viewpoint, which is the end of knowledge.

From this view any remaining separation between form and formless, between concepts of purity and impurity, between feelings or awareness of sacred and divine or non-sacred and profane are dissolved.

All boundaries gently become porous and disappear as the world is seen and experienced as the temporary and non-binding manifestation or play (leela) of the divine. Seen as it really is, leela and her impermanent display of nature is no longer a source of fear, no longer a token of personal destruction, but as the beautiful, playful, immanently sparkling face of beauty, that is also who we are beyond the narrow confines of our own personal and small minded agendas. From the vast view of the end of knowledge even our own destruction as individual physical entities is laughingly acknowledged as part of the beautiful play of leela.

This eternally free view that no longer holds great store and attachment to individual reality of opinion, of thought, of behaviour and belief is rooted in awakened awareness of the never born and never bound, the never dying totality of all of life as the true identity of who we are. This awareness of spontaneous and vibrant awakening as the nature of radically non-dual reality and as the nature of our deep identity is now the view from the peak of the inner mountain we have successfully climbed.

From this peak perspective the temporary, impermanent, world of form or nature becomes a flowing unity with the absolute, unchanging, formless. This peak perspective allows us to experience ourselves as our true nature of effortless and pure being.

This effortless pure being or Sahaja is then and always has been our true nature, this nature being ecstatic bliss, love, deep truth, and totally aware consciousness. The realisation also arises that what was seen, as steps in a hierarchy, is in truth a holarchy. What was each step in the hierarchy is now clearly seen not as a step but as an expansion that transcends yet also includes the previous viewpoints. The only bridge from the view of hierarchy to holarchy is greater and greater unobstructed and more expansive love, kindness and compassion.

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation

This greater and greater unobstructed love, kindness and compassion is both the road of the journey into knowledge and the outcome of this knowledge from the unified field perspective of Indian philosophy.

So knowing our angle of approach to viewing and understanding reality; getting to a deep understanding of our subjective experience and the nature of difference and our experience of that; realising the fundamental construction, the science of life and then viewing it through the internal eye of contemplation we come to a place where our actions can be made sense of in terms of our harmonisation within the greater whole. It is only from this deep internal and harmonised view that the awareness of spontaneous and vibrant awakening as the true nature of radically non-dual reality and as the nature of our deep identity, of who and what we are and all things are is now our view and our knowing.

So in answering the question what is knowledge? Knowledge is a deep experiential awareness of the nature of who we are as the ground and source of all being. How do we know, and how do we know we know? Because we have engaged in a process of cultivating each aspect of knowing that leads us inexorably into this deep internal awareness through the eyes of contemplation, following a rich exploration of the deconstruction of reality into its component pieces. Is knowledge structured through 'consciousness'?

Knowledge is now a process that is dependent on the perspective, different viewpoints allow us to experience different levels of knowing with the deep inner awareness gained through the Yoking of our minds, through our Yoga so that the interpretations and meanings placed on processes, events, objects and their relationships is based on this deep process. Consciousness now has both the aspects of blissful loving awareness, continuity and perspective and a lived experience of truth, it is the ground in which knowing can occur and the fruit of this knowing.

Christopher Gladwell