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Understanding Consciousness in Yoga Darśana and Modern Science

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Abstract

The concept of consciousness has been the focal point of all kinds of debate, discussion and creating conceptual framework regarding the nature of human being, universe, and relationship between them and so on in Indian knowledge traditions.

Regarding the cause of this universe there are some fundamental and philosophical questions like:

1. Is this Universe REAL or UNREAL.
2. If this Universe is REAL than what is the cause or foundation of the Universe
3. Does this Universe come into existence from MATERIAL REALITY or CONSCIOUSNESS?

All these Questions or Quests have been raised right from the *Rgvedic* period.

In ancient time our seers (*Rṣis*) addressed all these questions and declared consciousness as a key factor which plays a very important role in consolidating the material as well as the instrumental cause for the creation of macro-micro entities. In MODERN TIME Scientists are also trying to address the same questions to resolve their problems which are faced during their experiments.

When I gone through the Yoga Philosophy and Modern Science, I realized that there are some parallels between them. The basis of exploring these parallels is the statements made by Scientists as well as Yoga Philosophers.

In the first part of my paper, I have discussed the Nature of Consciousness and its Role in Creation Process as explained by Yoga Philosophers and in the second part I have discussed that how the CONSCIOUSNESS plays a very important role in the cognitive process as accepted by YOGA PHILOSOPHERS and MODERN SCIENTIESTS.

Keywords: Consciousness, Citta, Puruṣa, Prakṛti

Introduction

The concept of consciousness has been the focal point of all kinds of debate, discussion and creating conceptual framework regarding the nature of human being, universe, and relationship between them and so on in Indian knowledge traditions. Right from the *Rgveda* seers declare consciousness as a key factor which plays a very important role in consolidating the material as well as the instrumental cause for the creation of macro-micro entities. Whether it is metaphysics, epistemology, ethics or any other issues of intellectual thinking, consciousness gives a foundational base, which not only causes mental structure but also prompts behavioral processes. Almost all systems of Indian philosophy accept the existence of consciousness prior or at least parallel to the material reality.

Yoga philosophy, in particular, is a psycho-spiritual craft used for personal transformation, and to alleviate suffering in the human condition. It is unique in its contribution toward developing the meditational method as a means of realizing the ultimate truth i.e. pure consciousness. Yoga stands for union of an individual either to the universal principle or to control mental modifications by fixing mind on a particular object. Though the fixation of mind on a particular object is not the final means for the realization of *Puruṣa* or pure consciousness, it surely leads a seeker of truth towards complete restraint of mental modifications i.e. *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*. The meditational path as developed by Yoga philosophy is thus useful for sharpening the mind, which is necessary for any intellectual activity in any knowledge system.

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Nature of Consciousness

Yoga philosophy accepts the beginningless association between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* or the Seer is self-luminous, while *Buddhi* and other objects are revealed by something else. They appear as conscious under the influence of Consciousness. This is the nature of subject and the object. The *Puruṣa* being reflected in *Buddhi* and being identified with it, appears as possessing the properties such as knowledge, pleasure, pain etc. and hence seems to be influenced by *Buddhi*; on the other hand, the insentient *Buddhi* and its insentient knowledge being identified with the sentient *Puruṣa* appears as sentient or conscious one. In the *Yogasūtra* of *Patañjali*, we find mention of two layers of consciousness: (1) Pure consciousness (*Puruṣa*) (2) Consciousness reflected through material entity (*Pratibimbita Puruṣa*). This is evident in the third aphorism where the use of word *Svarūpa*^[1], denoting pure state of consciousness or the state of liberation, has been used for above-mentioned purpose.

Yogasūtrabhāṣyakāra Vyāsa, analyzing the nature of consciousness, put forth its five characteristics as (a) consciousness cannot go under change (*Aprīṇāmini*), (b) consciousness is devoid of movement or attachment (*Apratisamkramā*), (c) consciousness is witness to whom objects are shown (*Darśitaviṣayā*), (d) consciousness is pure (*Suddhā*), and (e) consciousness is infinite (*Anantā*)^[2]. To achieve this state is the ultimate goal of life popularly known as the state of liberation or *Kaivalya*. The third aphorism also indicates the other layer of consciousness realized through mental modification or the manifestations of nature (*Prakṛti*). This layer of consciousness is not as similar as that of pure consciousness due to its limitation and contrary nature. Pure consciousness at the same time though seems to be limited due to the limited nature of manifested reality retains its pure state^[3]. The *Bhagavadgītā* summarizes this in a very lucid manner:

“He enjoys the objects of the senses, using the ear, the eye, the touch sense, the taste sense and the nose as also the mind. When he departs or stays or experiences, in contact with the modes, the deluded do not see but they who have the eye of wisdom see^[4].”

Role of Consciousness in Creation Process

In *Yoga* philosophy there are twenty six *tattvas* or principles; 1. Twenty five elements 2. *Īśvara* (*Īśvara* is a particular *Puruṣa* unaffected by affliction, deed, result of action or the latent impressions.). Twenty five elements are described as insentient (*Jada*) and sentient (*Ajāda*). The other primordial material cause of this multifarious universe, comprising twenty three manifested principles, is known as *Prakṛti*. It represents three *guṇas* sometimes in the state of equilibrium and sometimes in the state of unequilibrium. The state of unequilibrium of three *guṇas* with consciousness as substratum and dominance of *sattva guṇa* over *rajas* and *tamas* causes *Citta*, the first manifestation of this universe. *Citta* with the dominance of *sattva* and *tamas* manifests itself into *ahamkāra* and five *tanmātrās* respectively. From

ahamkāra eleven sense organs including mind and from five *tanmātrās* five *mahābhūtas* come into existence. Thus from the above-mentioned metaphysical structure it's quite obvious that the whole universe is the amalgamation of consciousness and matter. Consequently each particle of this universe whether it's animate or inanimate is the combination of consciousness and matter.

Consciousness in Classical and Modern Physics

In classical physics founder scientists such as Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton banned scientific research in the area of consciousness, quality etc. and restricted it to the study of only those material objects which could be measured and quantified. This narrow world view became beneficial in classical science and technology, but had detrimental adverse consequences in the area of value, culture, spirituality, holistic way of life, environment, ecology etc. Fritzof Capra comments:

“This has been a very successful strategy throughout modern science, but our obsession with quantification and measurement has also exacted a heavy toll^[5].”

Fritzof Capra, quoting R.D. Laing, further put it emphatically: “Galileo's program offers us a dead world: Out go sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell, and along with them have since gone esthetic and ethical sensibility, values, quality, soul, consciousness, spirit. Experience as such is cast out of the realm of scientific discourse. Hardly anything has changed our world more during the past four hundred years than Galileo's audacious program. We had to destroy the world in theory before we could destroy it in practice^[6].”

Modern scientists do not accept the research model of classical physics by establishing ontological position of consciousness and its essential utility in scientific process. Werner Heisenberg, the father of quantum physics, declares consciousness a key factor playing very important role in exploring the truth of this phenomenal universe particularly in searching the nature of sub-particles. Swami Jitmanand putting forth the findings of Michael Talbot summarizes:

“Reality in the quantum world is no more purely objective but is connected with the ‘subjective’ element of the physicist. To describe this phenomenon Michael Talbot in his recent book *Mysticism and New Physics* uses the word ‘omnijective’. Realities like electron in the subatomic world have always an ‘omnijective’ existence for the physicist, that is, the objective reality is inextricably connected with the subjective consciousness of the scientist^[7].”

In 1899 Bose began a comparative study of the non-living like metals and the animals. Experimentally he found that metals become less sensitive if continuously used, but return to normal after a period of rest.....To the surprise of scientists, the boundary line between the so called ‘living’ and ‘non-living’ became hard to ascertain.....Scientists saw with wonder the similar curves of muscles and metals, when they are responding to the effect of fatigue, stimulation, depression and poisonous drugs. Subsequently Bose found that plants also responded in the similar way like metals or muscles. In

¹ (a) Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam. *Yogasūtra* 1.3

(b) Svarūpapratīṣṭhā tadānīm citiśaktiryathā kaivalye. *Yogasūtra-Vyāsa* 1.3

² Citiśaktiraparīṇāminyapratīsaṅkramā darśitaviṣayā suddhā cānantā ca. *Ibid* 1.2

³ Vyutthānacitte tu sati tathāpi bhavanī na tathā. *Ibid* 1.3

⁴ *Bhagavadgītā* 15.9.10

⁵ Capra, Fritzof, *The Web of Life*, (1996) Flamingo, London, p.19

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ Jitmananda, Swami, *Modern Physics and Vedanta*, (2006) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, p. 41

1901, May 10, Bose demonstrated all his experiments in England and concluded with these words^[8]:

“I have shown you this evening autographic records of the history of stress and strain in the living and non-living. How similar are the writings! So similar indeed that you cannot tell one apart from the other. Among such phenomena; how can we draw a line of demarcation and say, here the physical ends, and there physiological begins? Such absolute barriers do not exist....It was when I came upon the mute witness of these self made records, and perceived on them one of a pervading unity that bears within it all things.

It was then that I understood for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago. “They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth – unto none else, unto none else^[9].”

On January 25, 1931, *Observer* published an ‘Interview with Max Plank’ by J.W.N. Sullivan. In answer to the question, ‘Do you think that consciousness can be explained in terms of matter and its law?’ Max Plank answered that he did not. ‘Consciousness’, Max Plank continued, ‘I regard as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing postulates consciousness^[10].’

Fritzo Capra also recognizes essential role of consciousness in the future scientific research by appreciating bootstrap theory of Geoffrey Chew:

Increased use of the bootstrap approach opens up the unprecedented possibility of being forced to include to study of human consciousness explicitly in the future theories of matter.....Some physicist argue that consciousness may be an essential aspect of the universe, and that we may be blocked from further understanding of natural phenomena if we insist on excluding it^[11].

In Biological Science a very long debate is going on that Brain is the mind, and mind is located in brain - on this hypothesis was built up the mechanistic approach to mind, brain and consciousness. One of the protagonists of this mechanistic approach, D.M. Armstrong, said that scientists ‘Can give a complete account of man in purely physico-chemical terms^[12].’

As experiments progressed the mechanical approach to brain stood discarded. Karl Pribram, the world famous brain researcher and a neuro-surgeon, for the first time found that brain’s ‘deep structure’ is essentially holographic. Wilder Penfield who made extensive brain research for over two decades finally found that the mind is not inside the brain. He wrote:

‘The patient’s mind, which is considering the situation in such an aloof and critical manner, can only be something quite apart from neuronal reflex action.....And yet the

mind seems to act independently of the brain in the same sense that a programmer acts independently of his computer, however much he may depend upon the action of that computer for certain purposes.’ (Wilder Penfield, *The Mystery of Mind*, pp.75-80)

Professor George Wald, Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, who was awarded Nobel Prize for his research in biochemistry of vision, spoke about the latest trends in brain-mind study. When Penfield told George Wald that ‘it (consciousness) is not in the cerebral cortex,’ Professor Wald gave his own ideas on the mind-brain-consciousness relation:

‘So that is the problem of mind consciousness – a vast uncharitable domain that includes all science, yet that science cannot deal with, has no way of approaching; not even to identify its presence or absence; that offers nothing to measure, and nothing to locate, since it has no location^[13].’

Since the last 60 years biologists are trying to conceive of a single force-field in a living organism. In 1960s, F.S.C. Northop and Harold Saxton Burr postulated this field as the bio-gravitational field or the L-field.¹⁴ Recently Rupert Sheldrake, a Cambridge scientist, has started building up, on the basis of some of his successful experiments, a similar idea of morphic field which is the field of the activities of the life-force inside any living organism. The ‘morphic field’ located in a particular body, proposed by Rupert Sheldrake, is connected with an universal field. Rupert Sheldrake explained that ‘probability waves’ the morphic-field or the energy-field in a living organism works in a way which is strikingly different from a mere mechanical function.

On the basis of his experiments Rupert Sheldrake concludes that morphic fields work in a holistic way. He further writes: ‘The capacity to regenerate is, in fact, one of the most fundamental features of living organisms, and any theory of life has to try to explain it^[15].’ This ‘wholeness’ according to Sheldrake, could be a reflection of a transcendent unity on which they depended and from which they were ultimately derived^[16].

The transcendent Unity, suggested by Rupert Sheldrake, which direct the ‘wholeness’, and the holistic regenerative activities of a living being is, according to Vedanta, the One Supreme non-local, universal consciousness veiled in human body-mind. The thirteenth chapter of the Bhagvad Gītā describes the infinite Consciousness within the human body-mid complex as the knower of the field (*Kṣetrajñā*) which directs and runs the field of physical-body, intellect, ego (*Kṣetra*). And this direction is coloured by the level of thinking or awareness that the individual has attained. Psychologist Carl Jung found the action of a non-local universal consciousness. He coined the word *Synchronicity* to describe meaningful coincidences that people sometimes experience.

Role of Consciousness in Cognitive Process

Epistemology is the study of process through which knowledge comes into existence. In Indian knowledge tradition scholars explored and analyzed the essential constituents of cognitive process extensively right from the Vedic period. But it was *Vātsyāyana* who formulated the

⁸ Jitatananda, Swami, *Holistic Science of Vedanta*, (1993) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana, Bombay, 1993, p. 2-3

⁹ Jitatananda, Swami, *Holistic Science of Vedanta*, (1993) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana, Bombay, 1993, p. 2-3

¹⁰ James Jeans, *Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science*, (1932) George Allen and Unwin, London, p.12

¹¹ Fritzo Capra, *The Turning Point*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p.95

¹² Stephen Kaplan, *Hermenutics, Holography and Indian Idealism* (1987), M.L.B.D., p.27

¹³ George Wald, *Life and the Mind in the Universe*, {Paper submitted in a seminar (NCERT), New Delhi, Feb. 1987}

¹⁴ Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bard, *The Secret Life of Plants*, p.175

¹⁵ Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past*, p.p.11-12

¹⁶ Dr Gustaf Stromberg, *Man, Mind and Universe* (a scientist view), California, Los Angeles, Science of Mind Publications, 1977, pp.19-25

theory in his *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* and declared knower (*Pramātā*), means of knowledge (*Pramāṇa*), object of knowledge (*Prameya*), and Knowledge (*Pramā*) as four essential constituents for philosophizing any reality of this universe. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, a celebrated Naiyāyika of 10th Century, by summarizing Vātsyāyana's theory said in his famous book *Nyāyamañjari*:

Pramātā pramāṇaṁ prameyaṁ pramīriti catasṛṣu vidhāsu tattvaṁ parisamāpyate ^[17].

Yoga philosophy is well-known for its psychological and cognitive analysis. It also accepts above-mentioned four constituents essential for acquiring knowledge of realities. Vijñānabhikṣu, author of *Yogavārtika*, presents this model through following verse:

*Pramātā cetanaḥ suddhaḥ pramāṇaṁ vṛttireva ca |
Pramā'rthākāravṛttinām cetane pratibimbanam ||
Pratibimbitavṛttinām viśayo meya ucyate |
Vṛttayaḥ sākṣibhāṣyāḥ syuḥ karaṇasyānapekṣaṇāt ||* ^[18]

In view of above analysis, it is quite evident that without involving knower or consciousness (*Pramātā*) knowledge process cannot be completed and consequently real knowledge cannot be acquired. Fritzof Capra says:

"I shall discuss how the notion of the basic interconnectedness of nature arises in quantum theory, the theory of atomic phenomena, through a careful analysis of the process of observation. Although I have suppressed all the mathematics and simplified the analysis considerably the following discussion may nevertheless appear to be rather dry and technical. It should perhaps be taken as 'Yogic' exercise which – like many exercises in the spiritual training of the Eastern traditions – may not be much fun, but may lead to a profound and beautiful insight into the essential nature of things. (Capra, p. 143)

Classical or popularly known Newtonian physics does not see any role of consciousness in scientific process. It fully depends upon instruments made of material ingredients. Scientists are mere detached observers who are not capable to change the nature of knowledge process and hence the nature of reality. But modern science particularly quantum physics does not accept narrow approach of Newtonian science. Werner Heisenberg around 1925 firstly recognized the importance of the role of consciousness as observer in scientific process and proved it mathematically. Later on in 1955 Princeton University physicist John A. Wheeler reinterpreted this theory of Heisenberg and replaced the word 'observer' as 'participator'. Swami Jitmananda by summarizing this discussion says:

"A purely objective description of the subatomic world is impossible. As physicist John A. Wheeler has said, the detached observer-scientist of classical physics is no more a detached observer looking through a microscope at something separate from himself. But he is also the participator in the quantum drama. He is both the 'actor'

and 'participator' as physicist James Jeans puts it, in the great drama of existence ^[19]."

The *Yogasūtra* even goes further and accepts the inseparable state of reality where consciousness and material object merged with each other at the state of *nirvitarkā Samādhi* and at higher state of *Samādhi* too ^[20]. Modern physics recognizes this contribution of *Pātanjalyoga* as states Fritzof Capra:

"The idea of the process of knowledge being an integral part of one's understanding of reality is well known to any student of mysticism. Mystical knowledge can never be obtained by detached, objective observation; it always involves full participation with one's whole being. In fact, mystics go far beyond Heisenberg's position. In quantum physics the observer and the observed can no longer be separated, but they can still be distinguished. Mystics in deep meditation arrive at a point where the distinction between observer and observed breaks down completely, where subject and object fuse ^[21]."

Other important issue related with cognitive process is that in Yoga system consciousness through *Citta* moves outward, takes shape of object and acquire knowledge of that particular object. In modern physics Wolfgang Pauli, one of the founders of quantum physics and Nobel Laureate, speaks the same voice:

"From an inner centre the psyche seems to move outward, in the sense of an extraversion, into the physical world... ^[22]."

Samadhi as the Means of Absolute Knowledge (From Gross to Pure Consciousness)

According to Yoga philosophy sensuous perception can provide only partial knowledge. It is Samadhi or the in going intellect that prepares a seeker after truth to acquire absolute knowledge of Pure Consciousness as well as this universe. Samadhi may be defined generally as a process of diving into the deeper layers of one's consciousness which functions grades of the mind.

The word *Samādhi* is a technical term of Yoga used to connote a special meaning: ultimate concentration of the mind on an object. Stabilization on any object leading to cutting off all other modifications in the mind is the general characteristic of *Samādhi*. In it the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object of contemplation that it loses itself in the object and has no awareness of itself. Having obtained such power of concentration it has to be applied to the ultimate knowledge (*Samprajñāna*) of *Grāhya* (knowable), *Grahaṇa* (instrument of knowledge) and *Grahītā* (one who apprehends). Acquiring such knowledge leads to - *Samprajñāta-Samādhi*. Then, through arresting even *Samprajñāna*, *Asamprajñāta-Samādhi*, involving total arrest of all modifications of the mind, is ushered in.

The Three Stages of Meditation leading upto Samādhi:

1. **Dhāraṇā** (Concentration) - Concentration is the confine-

¹⁹ Jitmananda, Swami, Modern Physics and Vedanta, (2006) Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, p. 40

²⁰ Smṛtipārisuddhau svarūpasunyevārthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā. Yogasūtra 1.43

²¹ Capra, Fritzof, The Tao of Physics, (1991) Flamingo, London, p. 364

²² W. Pauli and C.G. Jung, The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche, (1955) Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., p.175

¹⁷ Nyāyamañjari 1.1.3

¹⁸ Yogavārtika 1.7

ment of the mind in a place either inside one's body or outside ^[23].

2. **Dyāna** (Meditation) is a continuous flow of i.e. it is a similar flow (of knowledge) untouched by any other knowledge ^[24].

3. **Samādhi**- (*Samprajñāna* and *Asamprajñāta*)

When the same Dhyāna (meditation) shines only as the object of meditation by becoming the object and appears as if devoid of its reflective nature, that it is known as *Samādhi* ^[25]. *Samādhi* will be defined as having One-pointed (*Ekāgra*) and Restrained (*Niruddha*) and used for the two *Yogas* i.e. *Samprajñāta* and *Asamprajñāta*.

A) **Samprajñāta Yoga**

Samprajñāta Yoga is that yoga, in which there is a special kind of restriction in which the object of concentration is made well known or brought face to face. When the veil of *Rajas* and *Tamas* is fully attenuated, the *Sāttvika* mind is brightly illumined as with the enlightenment of *Samprajñāta Yoga*.

The concentration attained by a mind which is one-pointed, i.e. occupied with one thought, illuminates the existing reality, weakens the *Kleśas* (afflictions), loosens the bondage of *Karma* (actions) and paves the way to the arrested state of the mind, is called *Samprajñāta Yoga*. In other words, there is a total identification of the mind with the object of concentration. Yoga with such enlightenment is *Samprajñāta Yoga*.

Four Layers of **Samprajñāta**:

i) **Savitarka** (Supposition): *Savitarka* means direct perception of the gross objects (*Pañcamahābhūtas*) by the mind because of its gross shape. When the concentrated mind is filled with the grosser form of perceptible, i.e. realizes them, then it is called *Savitarka*.

ii) **Savicāra** (Concentration relates to subtle objects): When concentration relating to gross objects is mastered, full insight is obtained of subtle principles (*Pañcatanmātrās*) by a special process of mental analysis with the help of the knowledge gained during the state of concentration. This is *Savicāra Samprajñāta*.

iii) **Sānanda** (Rapture): In the same support when the mind climbs above the step connected with '*Savicāra*', due to an increase in the quality of *sattva*, there is a direct perception of a special pleasure known as '*Hlāda*'. It is called '*ānanda*' because it has '*ānanda*' as its object. The object or basis of this concentration is a particular feeling of *Sāttvika* happiness felt all over the mind and the senses due to a particular state of calmness. The body is the receptacle of the mind, the sense-organs, organs of action and the *Prāṇas* or vital forces. Consequently, that sense of happiness is like a natural feeling of tranquility or *Sāttvika* calmness of the whole body. Thus *Sānanda-samādhi* (or concentration on the felicity of mind) really relates to the sense organs or instruments of cognition.

iv) **Sāsmitā**: In concentration based on the I-sense, the object of concentration is not the feeling of bliss but its recipient. *Asmitā-mātra* or pure I-sense is the object of this concentration. This I-sense is *Grahītā* or the cogniser. It is manifested with the help of *Puruṣa*. There is a subtle connection between *Puruṣa* or *Citta* and when that is

eliminated through *Viveka-khyāti* (Intellective Revelation), *Citta* (*Buddhi*) disappears. Therefore, *Sāsmitā-samādhi* or concentration on the pure I-sense is the ultimate realization of the principle of I-sense, that is, of the 'I' of common usage, the receiver.

B) **Asamprajñāta Yoga**

After gaining mastery of *Samprajñāta Yoga*, the *Sādhaka* has to proceed further and arrest even the acme of enlightenment he has just attained so that his mind itself becomes arrested i.e. totally devoid of modifications which is *Asamprajñāta Yoga*. The Ultra-Cognitive-Spiritual-Absorption appears on the cessation of all operations. This is the Seed-less Spiritual-Absorption. 'The Ultra-Cognitive' means 'nothing is cognized here.' When all the modifications have ceased, that restricted state of the mind, having only the subliminal impressions left, is *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*. The means to that is highest detachment.

In the state of *Asamprajñāta-Samādhi* there is a complete absence of four constituents such as *Pramatā* (knower), *Pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), *Prameya* (knowable object), *Pramiti* (knowledge) of cognitive process. In that state *Puruṣa* (consciousness) achieved its pure state (natural state) i.e. Self-illuminating, Pure and Aloneness ^[26].

In scientific research it is a matter of serious concern that whether science can provide absolute knowledge? The answer is 'no'. Fritzof Capra supports this thesis:

"In the new paradigm it is recognized that all scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate. Science can never provide any complete and definitive understanding. Scientists do not deal with truth (in the sense of a precise correspondence between the description and the described phenomena); they deal with limited and approximate descriptions of reality ^[27]."

Modern physics also believes in direct realization of truth and accepts yogic meditation as the only method for such experience. Fritzof Capra says:

"Absolute knowledge is thus an entirely non-intellectual experience of reality, an experience arising in a non-ordinary state of consciousness which may be called a 'meditative' or mystical state ^[28]."

He further states:

"In deep meditation, the mind is completely alert. In addition to the non-sensory apprehension of reality it also takes in all the sounds, sights and other impressions of the surrounding environment, but it does not hold the sensory images to be analyzed or interpreted ^[29]."

The path of yogic meditation transfers a person from rational to intuitive as said by Capra:

"The basic aim of these techniques seems to be to silence the thinking mind and to shift the awareness from the rational to the intuitive mode of consciousness. In many

²⁶ (i) *Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe*'vasthānam. *Yogasūtra* 1.3

(ii) *Tadā puruṣaḥ svarūpamātrajyotiramalaḥ kevalī bhavati. Yogasūtra-Vyāsabhāṣya*-3.55

²⁷ Capra, Fritzof, *The Tao of Physics*, (1991) Flamingo, London, p. 367

²⁸ Capra, Fritzof, *The Tao of Physics*, (1991) Flamingo, London, p.37

²⁹ *Ibid.* p.47

²³ *Deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā. Yogasūtra* 3.1

²⁴ *Tatra pratyayaikatānāḍyānam. Ibid* 3.2

²⁵ *Tadevārthamātranirbhāsaḥ svarūpasūnyamiva samādhiḥ. Ibid* 3.3

forms of meditation, this silencing of the rational mind is achieved by concentrating one's attention on a single item, like one's breathing, the sound of a mantra, or the visual image of a mandala^[30].”

Writer Ken Wilber describes the importance of Eastern mystical experience which, through intuition, helps us to see Reality directly:

‘In the Mystical Consciousness, Reality is apprehended directly and immediately, meaning without any mediation, any symbolic elaboration, any conceptualization, or any abstractions; subject and object become one in a timeless and spaceless act that is beyond any and all forms of mediation. (Paul Davis, *Mind of God*, pp.227-228)

Conclusion

Consciousness is the essence of individual and universal reality. It is consciousness through which we cognize this gross universe. It is consciousness that leads us from gross to subtle, subtler and subtlest aspect of this universe. It is consciousness that reveals its own nature, prompts us to get realized it, strengthen us to transcend all problems related with *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidāivika* and *ādhibhautika* pains and equip us with ecological or holistic world view. This is need of hour, because Newtonian mechanistic world view that caused all types of problems by disturbing ecological balance, destroying relationship between human beings, breaking fabrics of society, keeping human being away from nature, developing artificial way of living and finally forcing everybody to the state of darkness. It is consciousness that is aware of everything and also of itself. Newtonian model set aside the study of consciousness from research and developed a material world view that paved frustration among young generation especially in the western country as expressed by Fritzof Capra:

“The organic, ‘ecological’ world view of the Eastern philosophies is no doubt one of the main reasons for the immense popularity they have recently gained in the West, especially among young people. In our Western culture, which is still dominated by the mechanistic, fragmented view of the world, an increasing number of people have seen this as the underlying reason for the widespread dissatisfaction in our society, and many have turned to Eastern ways of liberation. It is interesting and perhaps not too surprising, that those who are attracted by Eastern mysticism, who consult the I Ching and practice Yoga or other forms of meditation, in general have a marked anti-scientific attitude. They tend to see science and physics in particular, as an unimaginative, narrow-minded discipline which is responsible for all the evils of modern technology^[31]”

Now it's well-known fact that Yoga as means, as world view and as study of consciousness is essential for dealing with all kinds of problems. It has been part and parcel in Indian life right from the Veda and now it has been accepted by even modern physics.

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³⁰ Ibid. p. 46

³¹ Ibid, p.30-31