

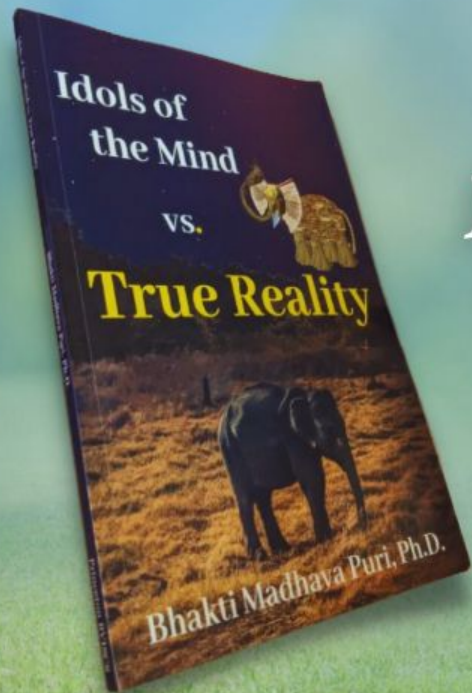


BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE
of Spiritual Culture and Science

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, USA



OSPREYHUB
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

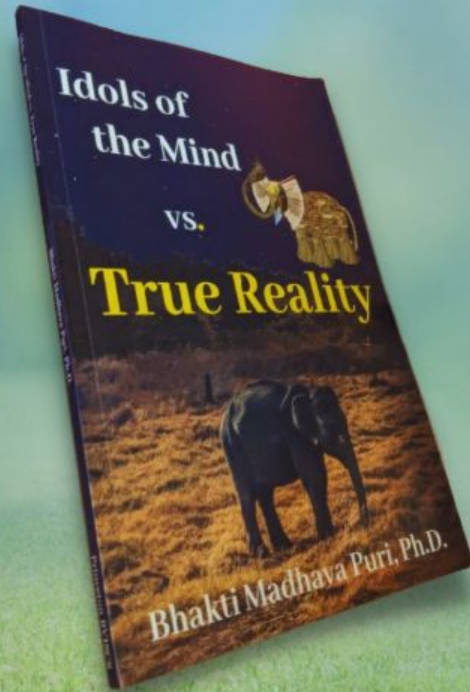


Idols of the Mind vs. True Reality

(by Dr. B Madhava Puri, Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute)

An Introduction to the Complementarity of
Science, Philosophy, & Religion

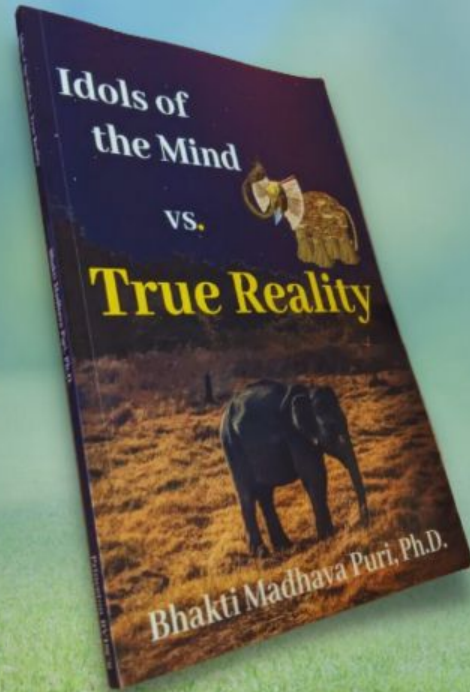
Chapters 4-5: The Unity of
Science & Religion



“The title of this book comes from Sir Francis Bacon (where human concepts are thought to be objectively true) and it synthesises a Vedantic approach with that of Hegel grounded in the primacy of the idea, Spirit and Consciousness. On the basis that there is no equivalence between organisms and machines, the author criticises the attribution of metaphysical qualities to inanimate robots as a serious category error: life and consciousness do not derive ultimately from matter. Interestingly, Nobel laureate and emeritus Honorary Member George Wald was persuaded by this approach on encountering Vedantic philosophy and switched his views accordingly to assert that mind had always been present in evolution. [...] This book makes a sophisticated and significant contribution to an emerging science of consciousness.”

::David Lorimer

Programme Director of the Scientific and Medical Network
(Full book review published in Paradigm Explorer - 137 p 65)



“Readers looking for a bridge between ancient Hindu philosophy and its Western counterpart will appreciate the general nature of this text. [...] This book serves as a useful synopsis of the main arguments for looking beyond materialist science toward a more holistic worldview. Although some readers will find the pace and breadth of Dr. Puri’s arguments disorienting, others will appreciate its comprehensiveness and straightforward presentation. In any case, the message is an important one, as materialist philosophy continues to wreak havoc on social relationships and the environment around the world.”

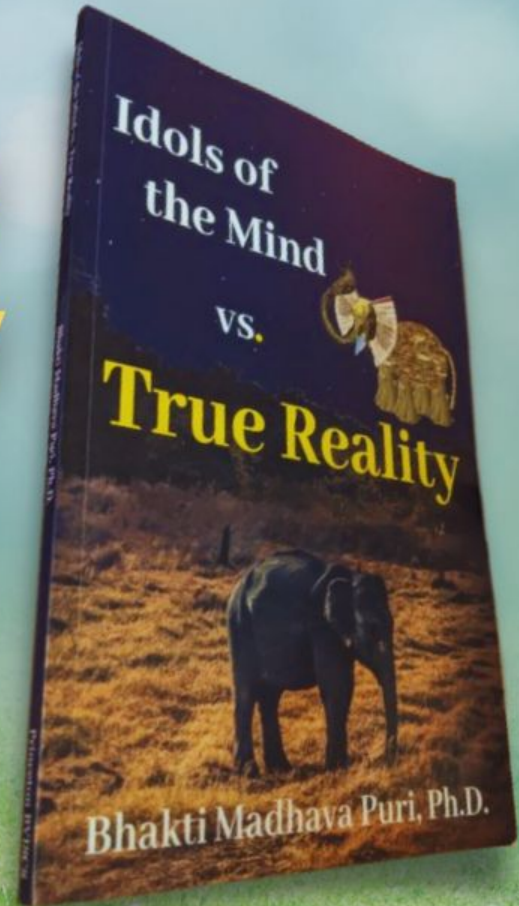
::Jennifer Lyke, PhD

Professor of Psychology at Stockton University
Science of Life Club Faculty Advisor

Idols
of the
Mind

vs.

True
Reality





Idols
of the
Mind vs.

True
Reality



Mechanistic,
reductionist, and
physicalist
presumptions

Idols
of the
Mind vs.

True
Reality

(Irreducible and
cognizant living entity)



CHAPTERS 4-5 : THE UNITY OF SCIENCE & RELIGION

**Humans are beyond mechanical, chemical, &
biological explanations**

Humans are beyond mechanical, chemical, & biological explanations



A **book** as a metaphor for the completeness of the mechanical, chemical, and biological aspects of a **living entity**:

1. **(Mechanical)** an externally unified aggregate of paper, ink, and glue where there's no inner relation among parts
2. **(Chemical)** an aggregate of alphabetical patterns, frequency of combined letters and words where parts have some inner affinity to connect based on sentence structure and the language spoken
3. **(Biological)** the intention, purpose, or message of the author that is expressed through the written words on the page
 - a. *only this level is the complete Concept of the book, which includes yet is beyond the lower levels of understanding*



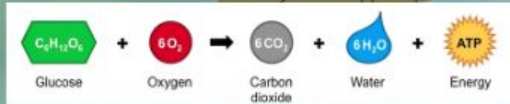
Humans are beyond mechanical, chemical, & biological explanations

1



A **book** as a metaphor for the completeness of the mechanical, chemical, and biological aspects of a **living entity**:

2



1. (**Mechanical**) an aggregate of atoms and molecules or subatomic particles, where there's no inner relation among parts but rather externally acting forces
2. (**Chemical**) an aggregate of chemical reactions where parts have some inner affinity to bond
3. (**Biological**) the purposeful activities (acting for the sake of them self) that cells and organisms pursue like respiration, photosynthesis, eating, and reproduction, which drive or perpetuate chemical reactions and influence atomic phenomena

3



a. *only this level offers an integrative Concept of a living entity, which includes yet is beyond the lower levels of understanding*

Humans are beyond mechanical, chemical, & biological explanations

	Necessity of Existence	Inadequacy	Relation to Identity (identity of self lies in the other)
Human	Through the capacity for thought, establishes unity that does not require the annihilation of difference	Unity of self and other is <i>not disturbed</i> , due to the accommodation of unity-in-diversity	Self-conscious
Biological	Establishes continuous unity where otherness is consumed and assimilated with the unchanged self	Unable to assimilate mate during reproduction, disturbing unity	Self-maintained
Chemical	Establishes an initial unity with otherness as a compound	Polar nature causes perpetual bonding, disturbing the unity	Unstable
Mechanical	The most basic existence of a spatially extended body where self and other remain external to each other	Dependent on otherness yet repels the other when encountered, preventing unity	Alienated



CHAPTERS 4-5 : THE UNITY OF SCIENCE & RELIGION
Analyzing human consciousness

Analyzing human consciousness



- Nonhuman living entities are conscious to various degrees, but only humans can develop self-consciousness, i.e. awareness of their conscious nature or self-reflective awareness of the content of their consciousness
 - *instinctual consciousness vs. rational consciousness*



Analyzing human consciousness

- This gives rise to a second nature of culture, government, art, science, religion, and philosophy, which strive to consciously express the self and comprehend its environment
 - *nonhuman living entities don't produce these things*
 - *an animal doesn't understand the whole of which it's apart. It doesn't understand that it's living in a world, what to speak of a government*
 - *the human being who doesn't understand that is a human in potentiality only, not an actual human*
 - *humans have to transcend biology to truly function in human civilization*



Analyzing human consciousness



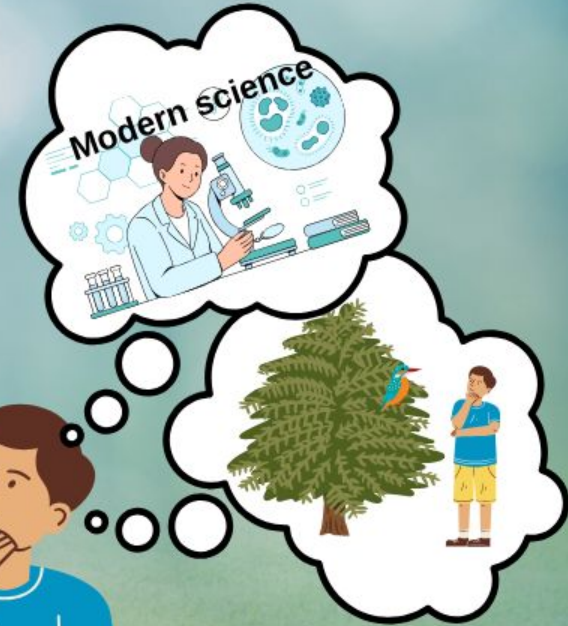
Analyzing human consciousness

- The bird can only integrate its other by consuming it, whereas the human can integrate otherness through thought



Analyzing human consciousness

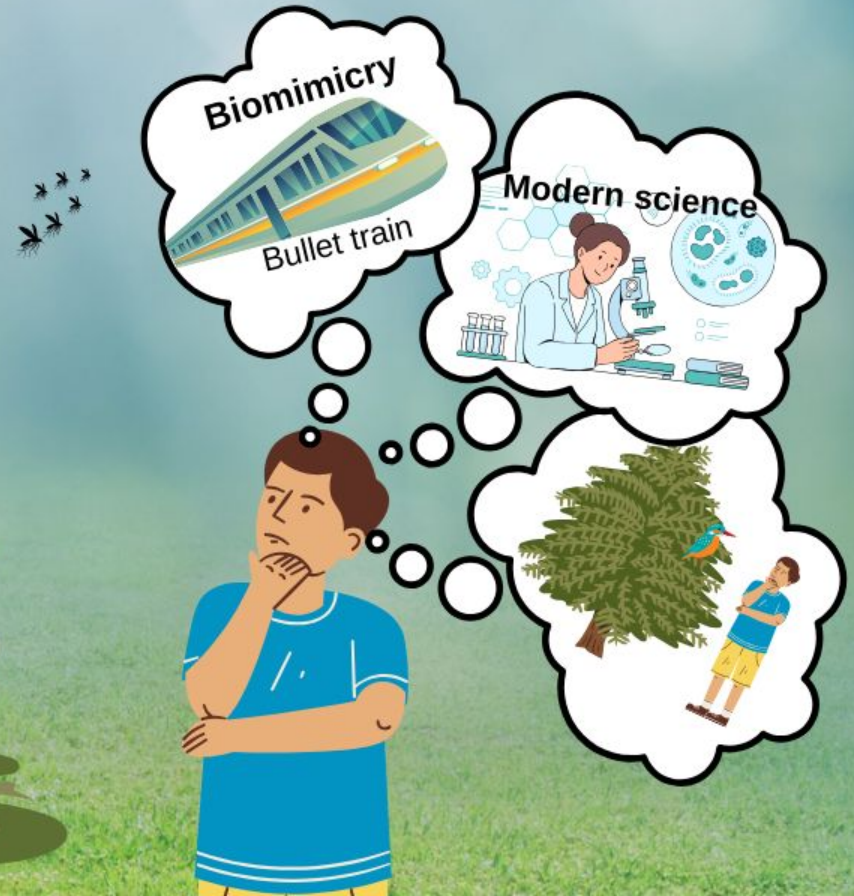
- Due to the capacity for self-reflective thought or self-consciousness, humans want to know beyond the mere appearance of phenomena and how humanity can benefit from such knowledge



Analyzing human consciousness

- Depending on the unique perspective and needs of the observer, the observed object appears differently, as strikingly evident in the field of Biomimicry
- This demonstrates the interdependence of the moments of consciousness

(Kingfisher)



Analyzing human consciousness

- Depending on the unique perspective and needs of the observer, the observed object appears differently, as strikingly evident in the field of Biomimicry
- This demonstrates the interdependence of the moments of consciousness

Coming up

This fact, confirmed by quantum physicists like Werner Heisenberg, is behind the unexamined presumptions (axioms) lying at the root of many scientific explanations

This disproves presumptions like physicalism, and restores consciousness to the primary position

Biomimicry

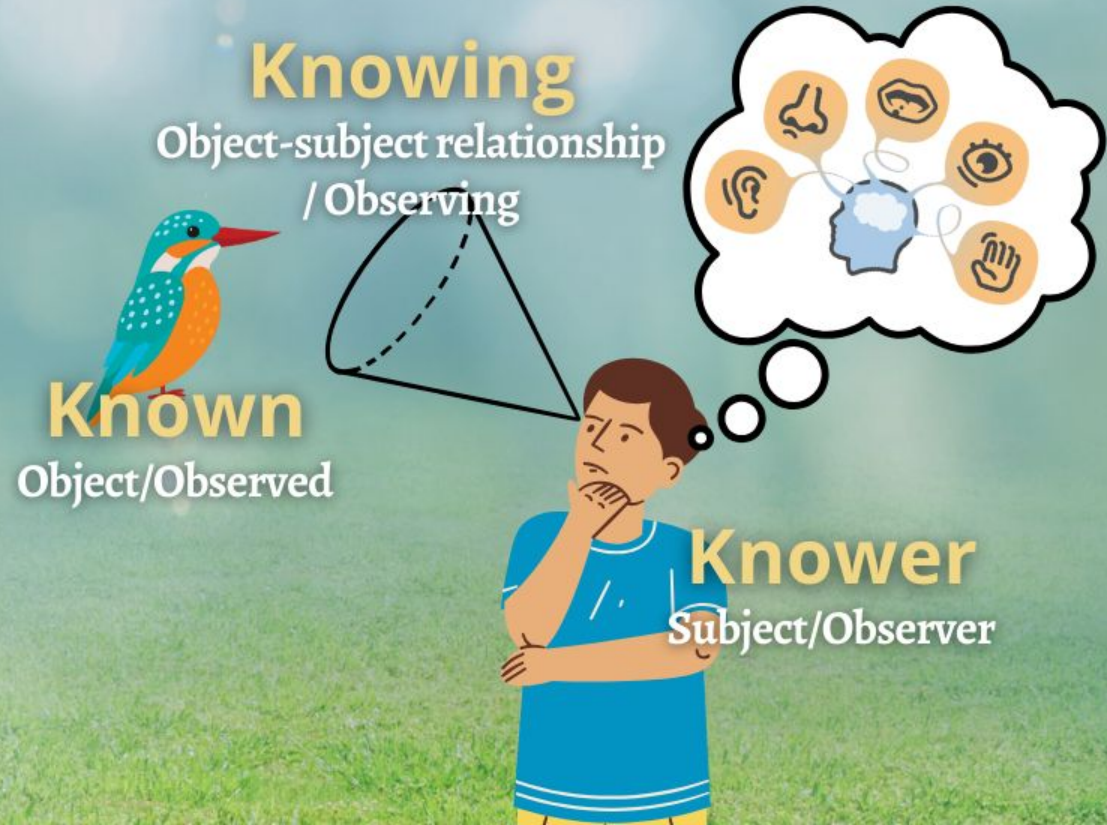
nce

(Kingfisher)

1930

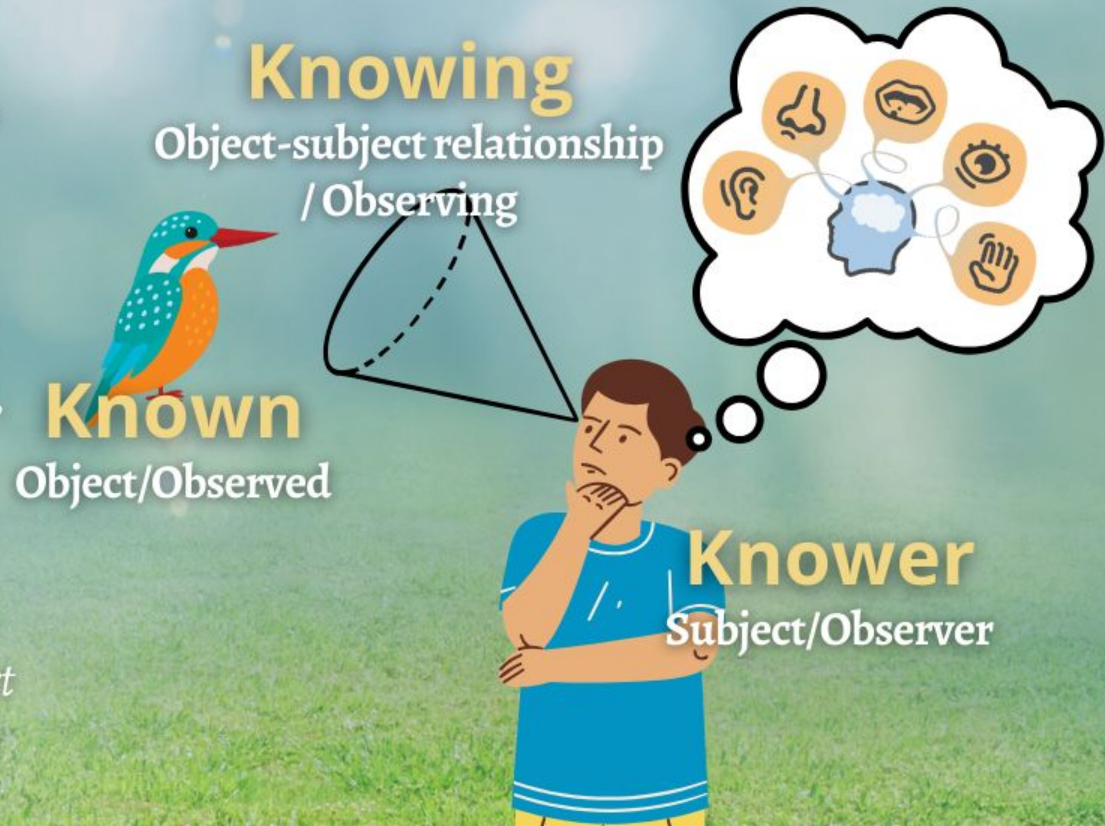
Analyzing human consciousness

Moments of consciousness

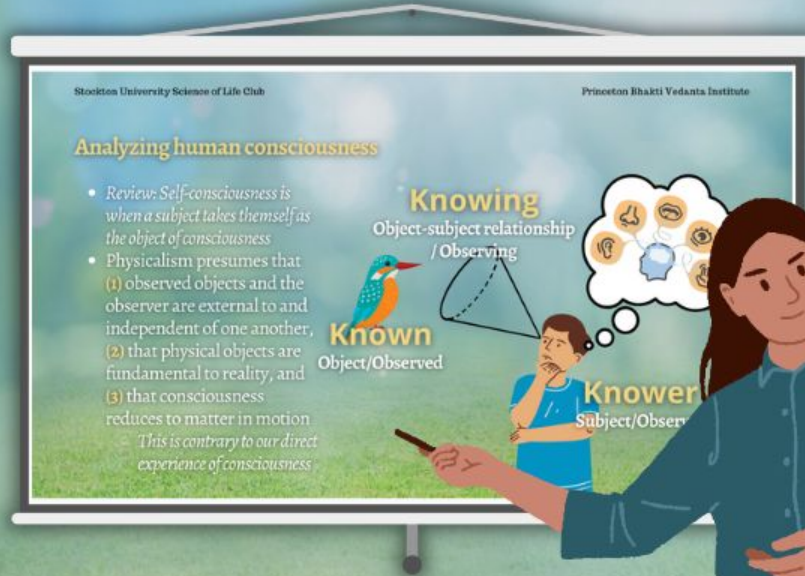


Analyzing human consciousness

- Review: Self-consciousness is when a subject takes themselves as the object of consciousness
- Physicalism presumes that
 - (1) observed objects and the observer are external to and independent of one another,
 - (2) that physical objects are fundamental to reality, and
 - (3) that consciousness reduces to matter in motion
 - This is contrary to our direct experience of consciousness



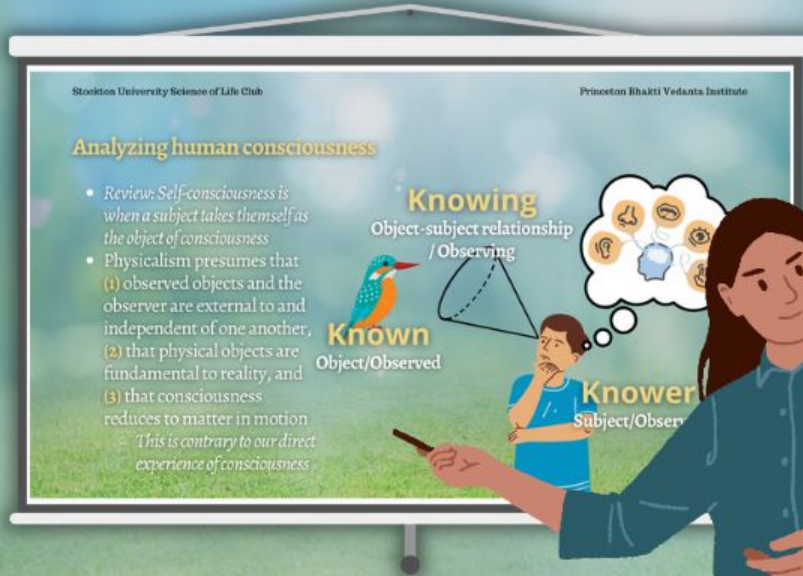
Analyzing human consciousness



- *This very presentation, by analyzing the moments of consciousness, is a demonstration of how known-knowing-knower are all contents of consciousness*



Analyzing human consciousness



- *This very presentation, by analyzing the moments of consciousness, is a demonstration of how known-knowing-knower are all contents of consciousness*

Consciousness

Content
known-knowing-
knower



Analyzing human consciousness

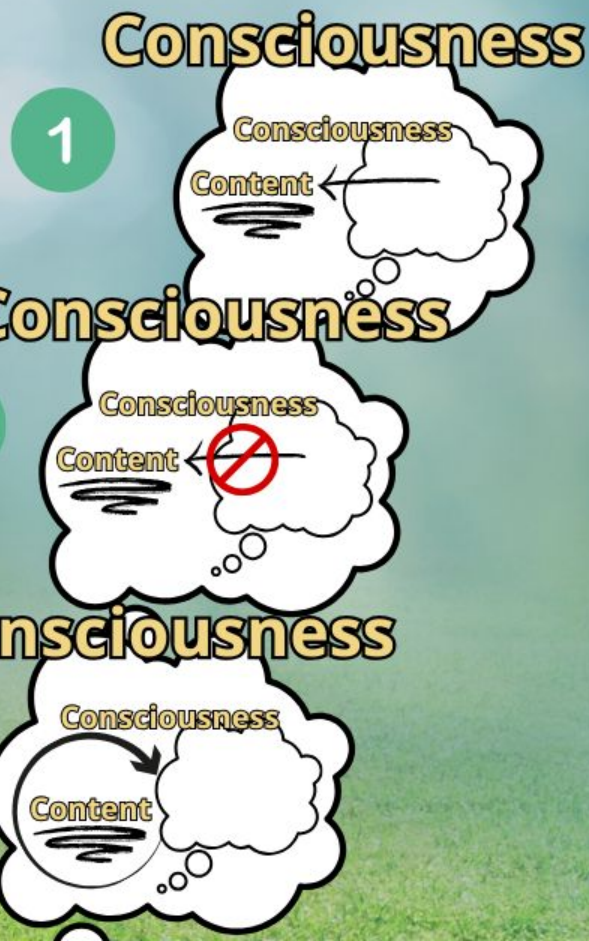
- ALL WE HAVE IS CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE!
 - We must be conscious of sounds, textures, sights, tastes, and smells in order to judge them as real and objective phenomena
- Physicalism, spiritualism, agnosticism, etc, are all experiences in consciousness, thus *the capacity of a given worldview to acknowledge this fact and help people to better understand consciousness* is a sober, unbiased, and rational standard by which to judge the validity of a given worldview



Analyzing human consciousness

From consciousness to physicalism

1. Consciousness projects its content outside of itself and presumes the external content to be more fundamental than itself
2. Consciousness forgets this process
3. Consciousness tries to become conscious of itself through this apparently superior external content



Analyzing human consciousness

- Science typically tries to understand things in isolation from one another, but this produces abstractions or “idols of the mind” because everything is relational
- Similarly, consciousness cannot be understood a part from its role as an instrument of the individual self and Universal Self
- Consciousness always implies a self (the conscious self), just as a hammer implies a carpenter (who does work through the hammer)
 - The senses are instruments of the intelligence
 - The intelligence is an instrument of consciousness
 - Consciousness is an instrument of the self
 - the self can also express itself through love and joy
 - The self is an instrument of the Supreme Self
- The tendency of the self to isolate itself from its instrumental function produces a false sense of self



CHAPTERS 4-5 : THE UNITY OF SCIENCE & RELIGION

Everything is floating in consciousness

Everything is floating in consciousness

- Recognition that consciousness is fundamental to reality has existed on Earth since ancient India's Vedic culture, based upon knowledge from the four Vedas
 - Texts such as the Vedas, *Vedanta-sutra*, and *Srimad Bhagavatam* are based on this foundation

*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv
abhiññāḥ svarāt*
(*Bhagavatam* 1.1.1)

“Everything is born from That which is cognizant and independent”

*This is unasailable because any refutation is
based upon consciousness*



Everything is floating in consciousness

- This idea has been known throughout history, which is why so many ancient civilizations saw everything as conscious, even the moon and stars
- Although this is opposed to the current modern scientific viewpoint, it is irrefutable due to consciousness being at the root of all arguments
- It is inerrantly true, and a commitment to unbiased intelligence requires accepting this fact
 - *Only then will genuine progress will be possible*



*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv
abhiññāḥ svarāṭ
(Bhagavatam 1.1.1)*

“Everything is born from That which is cognizant and independent”

Everything is floating in consciousness

- The previous two sections of this presentation started to trace out how modern civilization has arrived at the opposite idea, i.e., physicalism
- It is paramount to acknowledge the detrimental impact this has had on education and the urgency with which this issue must be unhesitatingly confronted
- Any educational system that spreads this misconception must be deemed bogus
- If the foundation is faulty, then the structure is compromised



*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv
abhiññāḥ svarāṭ
(Bhagavatam 1.1.1)*

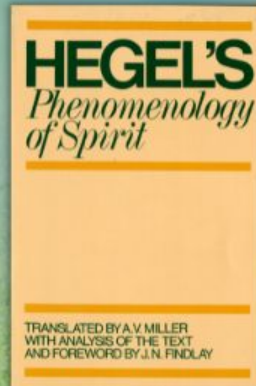
“Everything is born from That which is
cognizant and independent”

Everything is floating in consciousness

- What we mean by “consciousness” is more complicated than the confines of a single term
- All the components of consciousness, the science of consciousness, is delineated in a very competent way in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807)



G.W.F. Hegel
1770-1831



*janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv
abhijñāḥ svarāṭ
(Bhagavatam 1.1.1)*

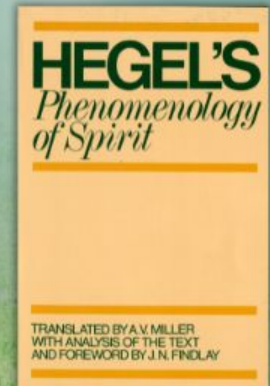
“Everything is born from That which is
cognizant and independent”

Everything is floating in consciousness

- Hegel's book was subtitled "The Science of the Experience of Consciousness"
- It describes forms of consciousness such as sense-certainty, perception, understanding, self-consciousness, and reason
- The general public is more familiar with terms like mind, ego (self), and intelligence, which make up consciousness, in addition to Spirit, which is beyond consciousness



G.W.F. Hegel
1770-1831



Everything is floating in consciousness

- The ancient Samkhya philosophy described these components of consciousness as subtle matter, where there was a dichotomy between the matter of the five senses as gross matter and the matter of consciousness as subtle matter
 - they divided consciousness and its content into two opposing antithetical principles.
 - this kind of development led Western philosophers like Descartes to separate mind and matter, and prioritize the study of matter



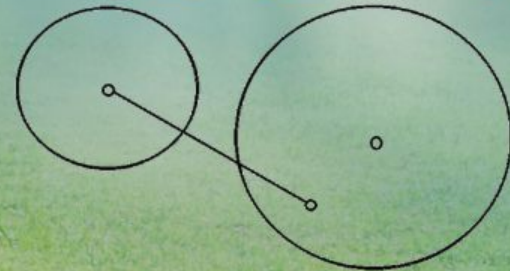
Everything is floating in consciousness

- All of this is summarized into one verse in *Bhagavad-gita* (chapter 3 text 42)
- The spiritual teachers caution us not to mistake the true self (*a subordinate instrument of the whole*) for the false-self (*the sense of self as a doer, a superordinate solipsism*)
- The false-self conceives itself as independent and as a whole within itself; it basically presumes itself to be God
 - this is problematic when confronted by other selves

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur
indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir
yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ*

Bhagavad-gita 3.42

"We start with the senses, then beyond them is the mind, then, digging deeper, is intelligence or discriminating power, still deeper is reason, and beyond this is the self."



*Ego centric
False ego*

*Theo centric
True Reality*

Everything is floating in consciousness

- Philosophy falters at this point in recognizing the subordination of the self rather than the superordination... it has to take a hint from religion and then establish the rationality of religion
- Like Kant had to establish the rationality of science, but that came later
- History has undergone a Copernican inversion or reversal. It used to see the world from consciousness, then they moved to the world and saw consciousness materially. Now we're finding our way back to the conscious view as a proven position rather than just a presumed one (Hegel's labor of the negative; thesis-antithesis-synthesis). The consciousness viewpoint has gone from a religious certainty to a scientific proof or truth
- The Copernican revolution didn't just come from changing people's minds, but from careful study and understanding of the superiority of heliocentrism

Everything is floating in consciousness

- One of the most significant realizations in a consciousness-based educational system like Vedanta is the recognition that the Organic Whole is conscious, as it must be for a part of the whole like us to be conscious



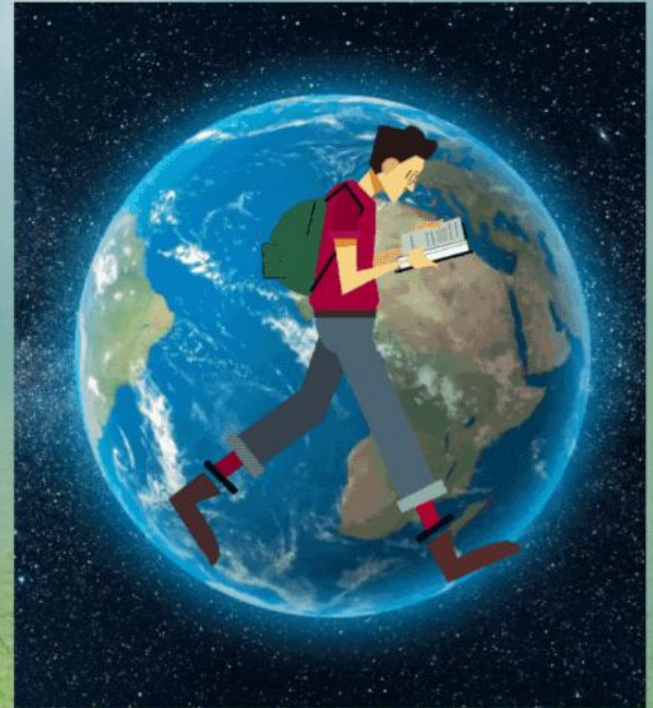
Everything is floating in consciousness

- One of the most significant realizations in a consciousness-based educational system like Vedanta is the recognition that the Organic Whole is conscious, as it must be for a part of the whole like us to be conscious
- Similarly, the Organic Whole also has selfhood, the Universal Self, Universal Self-Consciousness
 - *While philosophy has acknowledged the Whole as God, it has misconceived God as being without self-consciousness. Religion beat philosophy to this point*



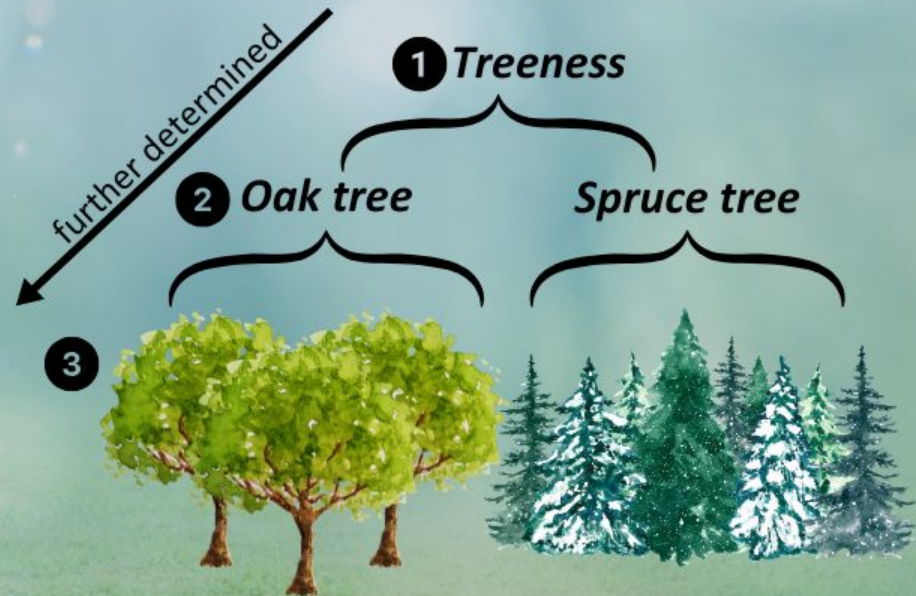
Everything is floating in consciousness

- Without consciousness, our body of flesh and blood, muscle and bones, would not stand
- It would just be a pile on the floor without consciousness
- In the same way, it is keeping the world and the whole universe erect
- CONSCIOUSNESS HAS FOUNDATIONAL IMPORTANCE
- It is the strongest force
 - *Gravity has a strong and weak force, but neither hold the body upright*
 - *Science should inquire about the force of consciousness*



Everything is floating in consciousness

- Consciousness not only holds the universe up, but it also creates it
 - This is not reducing the world to our individual subjective consciousness
- The world is founded in the Absolute consciousness of the Whole, which is why many individual selves have a shared identity in the world
 - they all exist within the Absolute Organic Whole



1. Universal (Genus)
2. Particular (Species)
3. Singular (Specimen)

Despite differences, they all have a shared identity (an identity-in-difference)

Everything is floating in consciousness

- Once the importance of this development of consciousness-based education is understood and has penetrated deep into the self, through all layers of intelligence, mind, and senses, then we can recognize that every individual has a relationship with that Organic Whole Person, the Supreme Person
- This is the highest and most subtle plane of reality
 - It can't be conceived through the senses or reason, only through faith and love, following the nonsectarian principles of Vaishnavism
- This is the ontology of Vaishnavism, the system of scientific personalism as given by the Vaishnava Acharyas



CHAPTERS 4-5 : THE UNITY OF SCIENCE & RELIGION

End