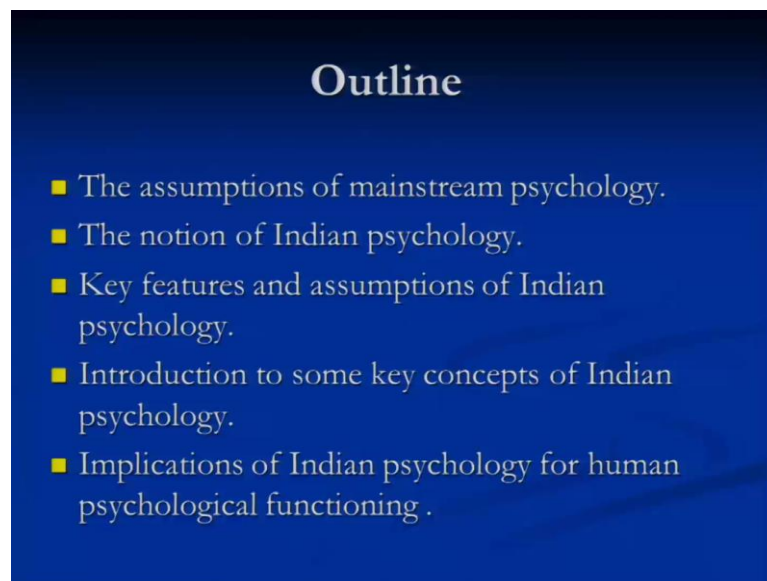


**Selected Topics in Psychology**  
**Historical Review of Psychology**  
**Prof. Girishwar Misra**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur**

**The Core and Context of Indian Psychology**

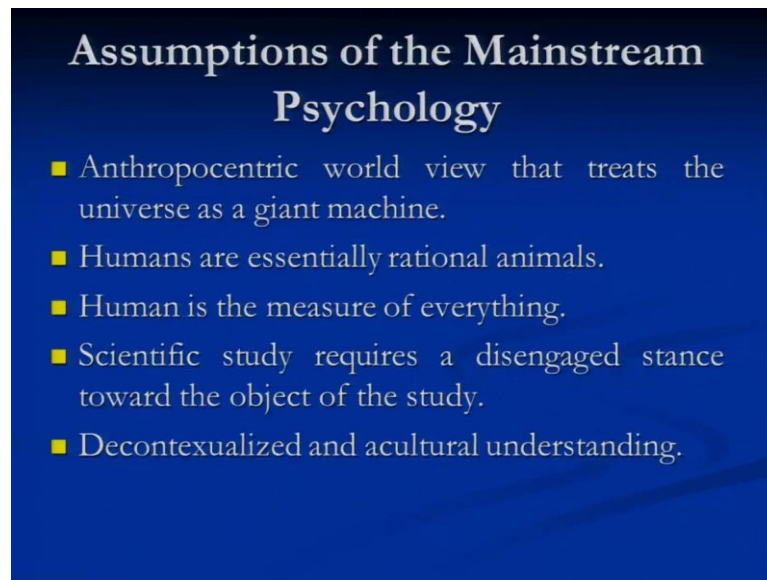
Friends, today, we are going to discuss the notion of Indian psychology as an emerging field of investigation and exploration. You may find it a difficult notion, because it often refers to some kind of geographical unit. India is a geographical unit and in that way, one can think of psychology for various places. Let me make it clear that it is not so. Indian psychology is an approach; it is an approach which is rooted in the kind of thinking, kind of perspective that has grown in Indian subcontinent.

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Today, we would like to discuss what are its basic assumptions? What is the relevance of Indian psychology? To be more specific, we are going to deal with some of the important ideas, pertaining to the discipline of psychology, and how Indian psychology is located in that discourse. So, we will begin with examining some of the assumptions of contemporary Euro-American tradition of psychology. Then, we would like to see the different facets of Indian psychology, its assumptions and some of the illustrative notions, which are prominent in Indian psychology, and what are its implications for psychological functioning.

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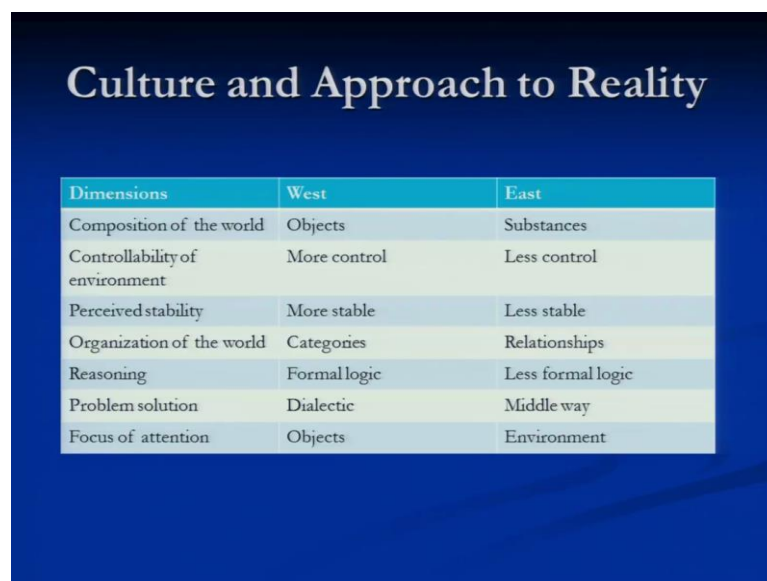


Now, we would like to focus on the way, Euro-American tradition of psychology has grown, and has treated human functioning. We find that this approach is primarily, related to a model of man, which is a kind of perspective that analyses everything, from the perspective of the individual. The entire universe is considered like a joint machine, and we can figure out the mechanisms. We can try to understand that using the perspective, which is often termed as anthropocentric. We also notice that most of the analysis, within the domain of mainstream psychology, considers human beings as rational animals, and they take logical linear way of thinking as the prominent way of understanding various mechanisms. There is also a very important feature of this kind of perspective, which is often implicit; that we take into account, the entire context ecology universe from the perspective of human being. The reality is that we are part of the whole, and in the analysis we often miss that whole, and we emphasize on the kind of patterns which emerge, when we take human beings as the center of our attention. That is an important limitation of this view. We also find that as a scientist, psychologists maintain a disengaged attitude, particularly, the perspective, which has emerged from positivism and logical positivism, has treated the pattern of understanding or the way of understanding, in terms of an investigation, which treats things objectively. So, there is an external objective reality, and the observer is independent of that reality, and he has to analyze that reality objectively, and draw conclusions. As we notice, most of our studies deal with some kind of disengaged analysis of the phenomena, and moving towards

generalization, based on limited samples. Now, this kind of empirical approach has been central to the activities of psychologists.

Finally, we would like to bring home the point that this analysis is often de contextualized, and it does not give emphasis on the cultural context in which, behavior takes place. It is important to realize that culture is not merely, a kind of variable or a context, but it provides some kind of framework. It is constitutive in nature. It contributes to the psychological phenomenon, and as has been recognized in contemporary studies where, the cultural perspective and indigenous perspectives are being considered important. That culture constitutes psychological phenomena and perhaps, there is a kind of reciprocal relationship in the famous court. One psychologist has mentioned that culture and psyche make each other up. So, we need to see the reciprocal relationship between the two. So, this is the framework within which, psychology has been pursuing its agenda, and it has been trying to engage with various psychological issues.

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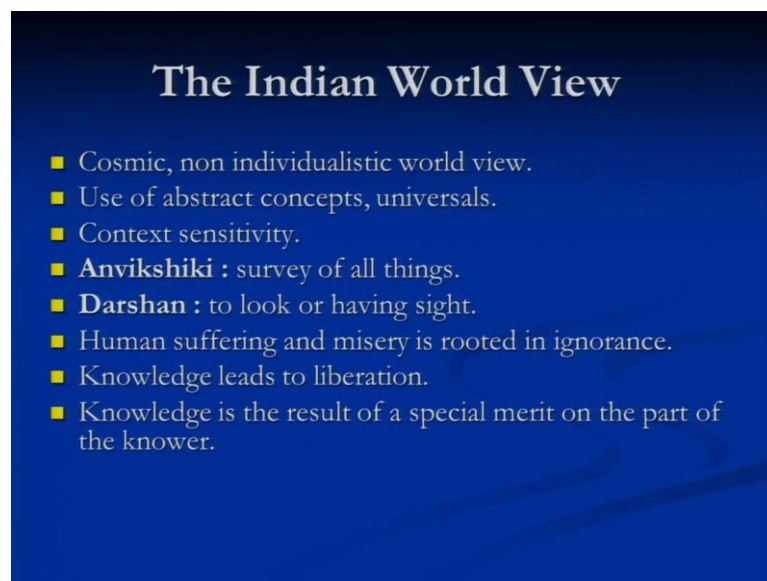


Dimensions	West	East
Composition of the world	Objects	Substances
Controllability of environment	More control	Less control
Perceived stability	More stable	Less stable
Organization of the world	Categories	Relationships
Reasoning	Formal logic	Less formal logic
Problem solution	Dialectic	Middle way
Focus of attention	Objects	Environment

Now, the current concerned about relevance of culture, has received impetus from many angles. Let me share here, some of the important observations, made by Nisbut and his colleagues, at Michigan. In their famous work on geography of thought, they come forward with some empirical experimental observations, which indicate how western cultural people and how eastern cultural people perceive, respond and act. Here, you can

see that while the emphasis of the western orientation is something, which focuses on the objects, which emphasizes greater control, which views reality as more stable, which tries to organize the world in terms of discrete categories where, formal logic is more important in analyzing relationships and going for understanding. The approach to analysis of reality and trying to solve the problem is more dialectical, and attention of the individual is focused on objects. Contrary to this, the eastern perspective emphasizes substances. It has lesser degree of control as far as environment is concerned. The stability is low. It emphasizes more on relationships, and there is less formal logic and analysis. Instead of approaching the dialectical perspective, it tries to find the middle way, and finally, the emphasis is on environment, rather than the object. What we find here is that the eastern perspective is more context sensitive. It tries to view objects in the environment in ecology, and in relation to other objects, which are present in the environment.

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Now, keeping those observations in view and some of the work, which has been done in the Indian context, there is a fairly, important analysis of how Indians think, and what are the ways in which they conceptualize their world, in order to create a context for Indian psychology. I would like to emphasize those perspectives here. It may be made clear that when we talk about culture, we do not mean that people, who live in one culture, are totally, different from the other culture. Let us remember that there are various kinds of patterns, and there are differences within culture, as well as between cultures, and culture

as a system of meaning and practices, where is so, in some sense, the kind of opposition which was shared with you, in terms of western perspective and eastern perspective is over simplification. Let us recognize that limitation.

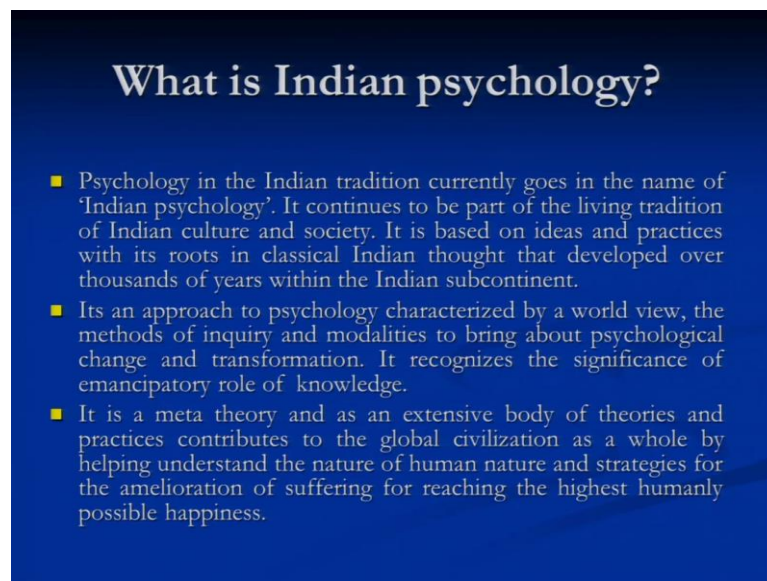
Now, let us see what are the important features of Indian perspective. So, here, I have tried to summarize, the key features of the Indian world view or the Indian perspective. There are varieties of sources, which I have used; they come from analysis of Indian philosophy, empirical studies of human behavior, and also, analysis of cultural differences. So, the first one is that the emphasis is on the whole context. It is cosmic and it does not emphasize the individualistic world view. It may be treated as non individualistic. It takes care of the entire whole. We also notice that the categories that are used are often abstract. They refer to universal categories. For instance, if you look at the notion of self, the terms which are available in the Indian languages; they refer to broader concepts. You have the word like purush, or you have the word like atman; the individual self which is so prominent in the analysis of self, is often translated as vyath, but I think that is not an appropriate translation..

So, the categories which are used are quite universal or abstract concepts are emphasized. The third important feature is that the Indian perspective, often sees in the context; something is good in a particular context, something is bad in a particular context. Now, one cannot make statements, which are true in all the situations. So, the relationships depend on the context. The individual, the time, the place, deshkal and pathr, appear to be quite important, in deciding our relationships and the way, we conduct ourselves in different situations. The words which are used for philosophy are darshan and anvikshiki, and they have a peculiar sense of looking at things in totality. anvikshiki means surveying everything, whatever is present. Similarly, darshan refers to have a view of the things, having insight and looking at things in detail. There is another important aspect, which is emphasized; almost, all kinds of theoretical enterprises, which are available in the Indian context, begin with the notion of, that the challenge before them is to understand the nature of suffering, and to understand the causes of suffering, and developing strategies to reduce suffering in human life.

Now, this suffering is often attributed to ignorance; lack of knowledge. The word which is used for this is avidya, and the emphasis is that, this avidya is misconstrual of reality, and that leads to suffering in human life. It is also emphasized that if you get rid of this

avidya, if you are able to understand reality properly, then it will lead to liberation; it will lead to emancipation; and it will lead to a life, which is rich, which is healthy and which relates to others in a positive way. We also find that the analysis of knowledge is also, in terms of change in the knower. If we understand some phenomena, if we understand some mechanism, it will have implications for the individual, who is learning. So, these are some of the key features of Indian world view.

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### What is Indian psychology?

- Psychology in the Indian tradition currently goes in the name of 'Indian psychology'. It continues to be part of the living tradition of Indian culture and society. It is based on ideas and practices with its roots in classical Indian thought that developed over thousands of years within the Indian subcontinent.
- It is an approach to psychology characterized by a world view, the methods of inquiry and modalities to bring about psychological change and transformation. It recognizes the significance of emancipatory role of knowledge.
- It is a meta theory and as an extensive body of theories and practices contributes to the global civilization as a whole by helping understand the nature of human nature and strategies for the amelioration of suffering for reaching the highest humanly possible happiness.

Now, we can come to the conceptualization of Indian psychology. Tentatively, we are using the word Indian psychology; because there is no other alternative. It does not refer to the geographical boundary. It refers to a school of thought as I mentioned earlier. Let me try to articulate the way, we can conceptualize Indian psychology. Here, we notice that it is psychology in the Indian tradition, and we have used Indian psychology to refer to that. It continues to be a part of the living tradition of Indian culture and society in different ways, in different practices, in different kinds of discourses. It is based on ideas and practices, with its roots in classical Indian thought that developed over 1000s of years, within the Indian subcontinent. We can say that it is an approach to psychology, characterized by a particular kind of world view, as we have already seen. It has certain methods of enquiry and it has certain modalities, to bring about psychological change and transformation in the person. It recognizes the significance of emancipatory goal of knowledge.

Let me mention that knowledge for control is one orientation, and against that, knowledge for emancipation, provides a different view. Knowledge which leads to liberation; it is said that knowledge leads to liberation sa vidya ya vimukthai that is knowledge, which liberates an individual. We can say that Indian psychology provides a meta theory, and it has an extensive body of theories and practices, and they have potential to contribute to global civilization as a whole. It can help understanding the nature of human nature, and it also provides strategies for the amelioration of suffering, for reaching the highest humanly possible happiness. Let me make it clear that in recent years, there are many manifestations at global level, at national level, which demand our attention to increasing suffering in human life. One of the important features of that is the kind of self construal, which we are fascinated with. This construal is largely dominated by an egoic notion of self, and there is a variety of investigations, which indicate the limitations of this egoic self. The kind of emotions, the kind of motivations, which are related to this egoic self, are creating problem for an individual's life.

An important work which comes to my mind is by Mark Liary. He writes that self has become a curse. Working at Duke University, he has developed this interesting notion, that self, it is focusing on ego and working with this limited view, leads to a variety of problems and people do have such difficulties. So, we need to go beyond that. An Indian psychology provides a perspective, which leads us to realize the limitations of this egoic functioning, and provides alternative ways to look at it. Let us see how Indian psychology helps in this domain.

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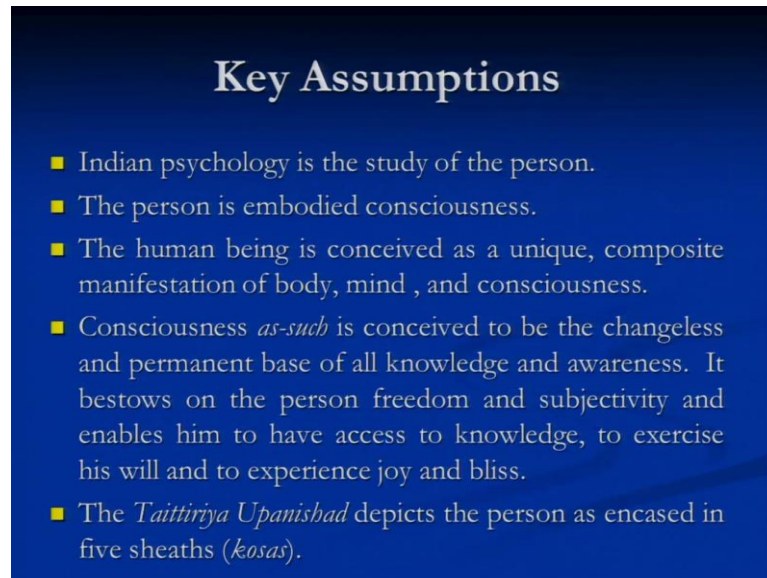
## Indian Thought Systems

Systematic development of psychological ideas are found in the different systems (*darsanas*) of Indian philosophy. The most prominent among them is Yoga. Nyāya-Vaisesika and Vedanta have made significant contributions for understanding human nature. Also, nonorthodox systems like Buddhism and Jainism contain many significant psychological ideas. The texts like Vedas, Upanishads, Smrities, Shastras ( e.g. Natya , Ayurveda, Artha) epics ( Mahabharat, Ramayan), and Neeti offer a wide range of theoretical and practical material.

Now, before we come to the way, Indian psychology contributes to understanding various psychological phenomenon, I would like to mention here, very briefly, that the psychological ideas in Indian psychology, emanate from a variety of traditions. I have listed here, some of the important traditions, like yoga nyaya vaisesik and vedant. We have other non orthodox systems, like Buddhism and Jainism. The kind of texts which are available, include vedas upanishads smrities. There are analysis pertaining to systems of emotions, or the way, we live our life or problems of politics and economics. So, we have not a shastra we have ayurved we have artha shastra. The mahabharat and ramayan, they provide and illustration of various kinds of complexities in relationships, conflicts and ways to resolve those conflicts in human life. We have various neeti shastras which talk about policies, and all these things provide a very wide spectrum of theoretical and practical understanding.



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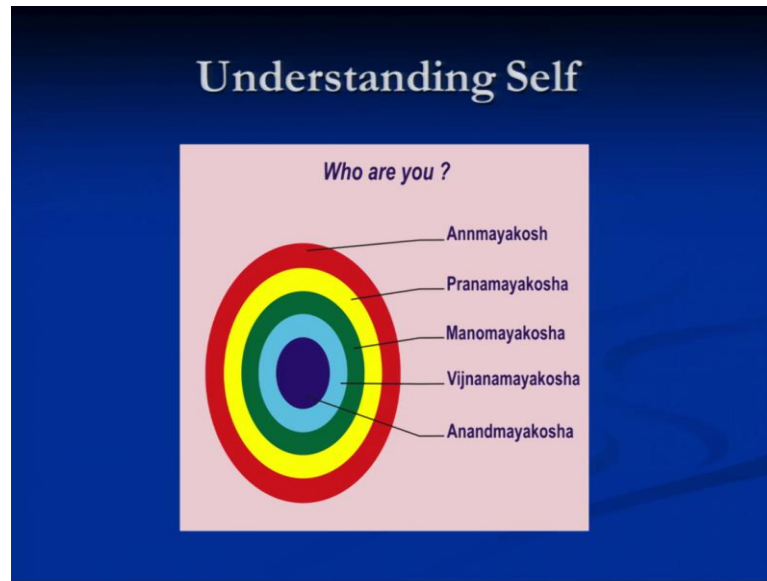


### Key Assumptions

- Indian psychology is the study of the person.
- The person is embodied consciousness.
- The human being is conceived as a unique, composite manifestation of body, mind, and consciousness.
- Consciousness *as-such* is conceived to be the changeless and permanent base of all knowledge and awareness. It bestows on the person freedom and subjectivity and enables him to have access to knowledge, to exercise his will and to experience joy and bliss.
- The *Taittiriya Upanishad* depicts the person as encased in five sheaths (*kosas*).

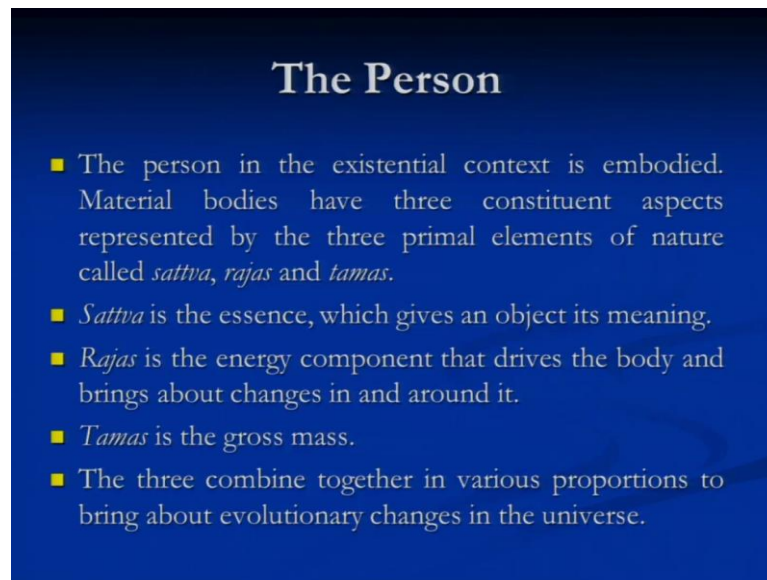
If we have to provide a perspective, which offers a different kind of psychology, or different perspective on human functioning; that has been developed by several authors, and many colleagues have tried to contribute to this endeavor, and we have mentioned those sources towards the end of this presentation. The Indian psychology tries to study the person, and the person is embodied consciousness. The human being is conceived as a unique composite manifestation of body, mind and consciousness. Now, here, you can see that the contemporary psychology, the main stream psychology emphasizes on behavior and cognitive functions. It is not very inclusive, and it follows a microscopic view, opposed to that, the Indian perspective tries to expand the analysis of human being by incorporating body, mind unconsciousness together. There is another important feature of this whole body of knowledge, and that is that tries to understand consciousness, not only consciousness of some object, but consciousness as such. The assumption is that this word is conscious, and this consciousness as such, provides a different view. So, it is changeless. It is permanent and it is basis for all knowledge and awareness. This is one assumption. It bestows on the person's freedom and subjectivity, and enables him to have access to knowledge, exercise his will and to experience joy and bliss. There is one interesting way to look at human existence, which comes from taittiriya Upanishad, it is very interesting.

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You can see that the self, the answer to the question; who are you; is one, which considers human existence as a multi layered entity. The outermost layer is called annamayakosh. It starts about the physical body, then the vital body; the pranamayakosh. Then the mental layer is there. Then, we have vijnanamayakosh, which talks about the intellectual layer and finally, there is a layer, which is full of bliss anandmayakosh. Now, the point which I want to convey through this diagram, which is a way to look at human existence is that there are different layers of existence. One has this option that one can relate to one layer, or one sheath, and one can go to the other layer and relate to that. So, there are different ways to identify. It has been mentioned that the athman is beyond these layers. So, the quest for that kind of understanding of human being, which is more inclusive, which recognizes various faculties, which recognizes the different kinds of existence; I would like to say that we are not only physical beings; we are not only social beings; we are also spiritual beings. So, this way to understand human being is an encompassing way, and it incorporates different layers of existence; it expands the scope of human understanding.

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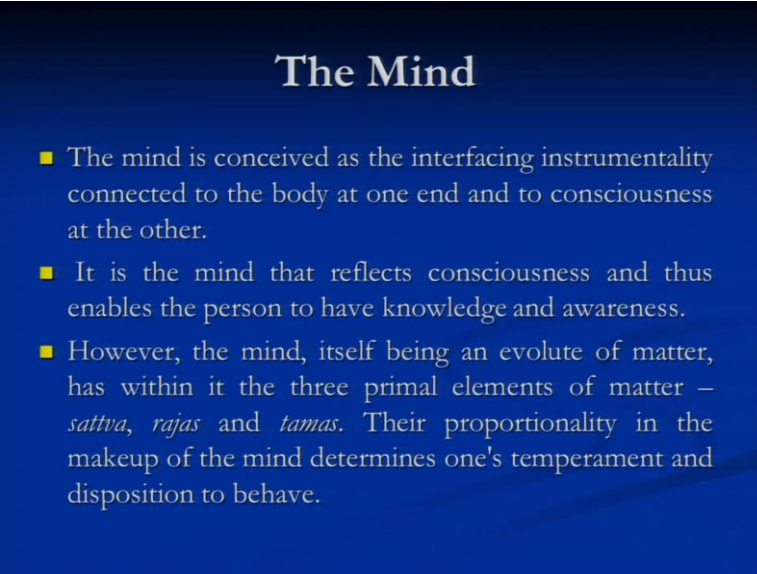


## The Person

- The person in the existential context is embodied. Material bodies have three constituent aspects represented by the three primal elements of nature called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
- *Sattva* is the essence, which gives an object its meaning.
- *Rajas* is the energy component that drives the body and brings about changes in and around it.
- *Tamas* is the gross mass.
- The three combine together in various proportions to bring about evolutionary changes in the universe.

Now, the person which is central in this analysis is one, which is considered as embodied consciousness, and the material body that we have and the material world within which, we live; both of them are constituted by three kinds of primal elements of prakruthi; that is nature. They are the *sattva*, the *rajas* and the *tamas*. *sattva* is the essence, which gives an object, its meaning. The *rajas* is the energy component, and it drives; it leads to action. *Tamas* is the gross mass; it is inertia; it is negative force. Now, these elements are present in individuals in different degrees, in different proportions, and they determine the way we move. It is interesting to see that the Indian system of medicine, ayurvedh considers the elements in the environment; the food that we eat; the environment in which, we live. They also have these elements of, different kinds of emphasis on the three elements; the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. So, there is some degree of continuity between the person and the environment.

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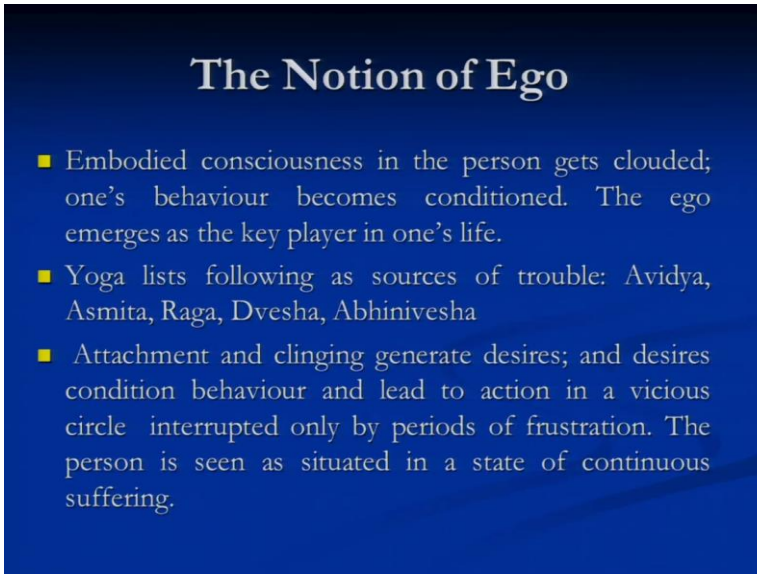


## The Mind

- The mind is conceived as the interfacing instrumentality connected to the body at one end and to consciousness at the other.
- It is the mind that reflects consciousness and thus enables the person to have knowledge and awareness.
- However, the mind, itself being an evolute of matter, has within it the three primal elements of matter – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Their proportionality in the makeup of the mind determines one's temperament and disposition to behave.

Now, there is a peculiar assumption about human mind. Human mind has a dual nature. It connects with consciousness and it also, connects with body. There is an interface between the two. It is the mind that reflects consciousness, and enables the person to have knowledge and awareness, but according to sankya, mind is considered as an evolute of matter, and it also has these elements of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The proportion of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* determines a person's temperament and the dispositions that they have.

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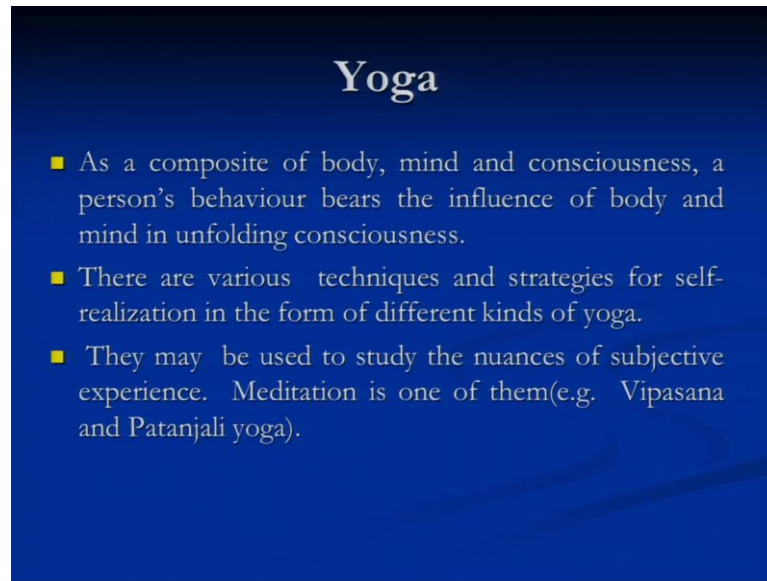


## The Notion of Ego

- Embodied consciousness in the person gets clouded; one's behaviour becomes conditioned. The ego emerges as the key player in one's life.
- Yoga lists following as sources of trouble: Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesha, Abhinivesha
- Attachment and clinging generate desires; and desires condition behaviour and lead to action in a vicious circle interrupted only by periods of frustration. The person is seen as situated in a state of continuous suffering.

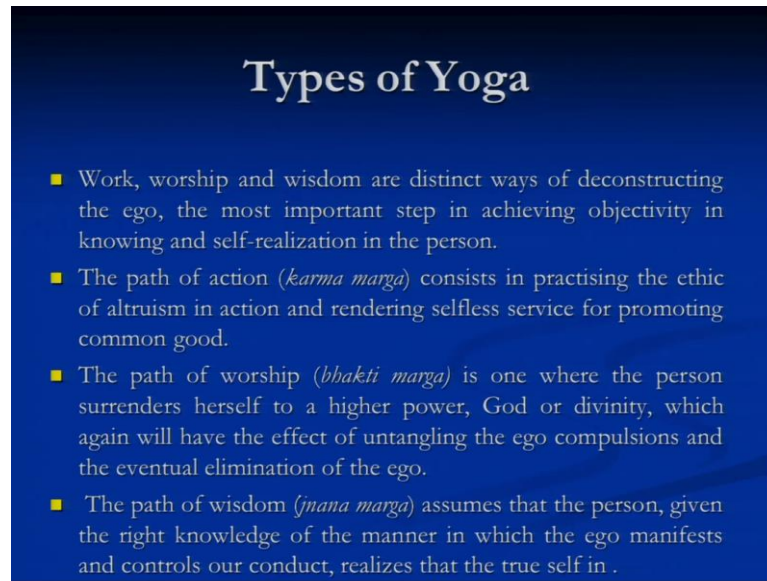
Here, one of the important challenges, which has been attended to, by Indian psychology is to understand the nature of ego. We, as human beings, have to address this challenge. Ego is related to the kind of attachment that we have with the word, ego or ahamkar, is a major construct. Now, we are naturally free, but we are conditioned, and this conditioning leads to various kinds of attachments and development of various kinds of identities. So, we move from the natural state. Sometimes, that natural state is considered to be sath, chith and ananda; the existence, which is blissful. Now, this ego which is conditioned being, becomes a major challenge in life, and it is manifested in many ways. The kind of associations that we form; they lead to attachment; they lead to various kinds of desires. These desires condition our behavior, and they lead to different kinds of actions. We also feel frustrated in responding to those demands of ego, and it is a continuous process. At least, pathanjali in his yoga suthra, identifies that the nature of suffering lies, because of the functioning of ego, and the goal is to make corrections in the way, we conduct our self; in the way we relate to world; in the way we regulate our life; in the way we aspire in our life. So, the challenge is to deal with various troubles, which emerge, because of the engagement of ego or ahankar. Now, here, we find that the major challenges are, because of ignorance avidya, asmita that is eyeness. We often relate everything, according to our own perspective. We do not recognize others. We celebrate self. We are engaged with that. raga which talks about attachment, dvesh which is a negative condition where, you hate to others, and abhinivesh, which is clinging to life, one thinks that he or she should live and live and live; there is no end to life. So, this kind of approach, which emerges because of the play of ego, is treated as a challenge. It appears that the challenge that Indians psychology considers is that right kind of life requires a balance. You have to live life and in that life, which is not in isolated thing, which relates to the context in which, you are living, which relates to a higher level of functioning, which relates to higher consciousness. One has to understand that growing or evolving from a lower level of egoic consciousness, requires an effort. yoga talks about various ways in which, one can make such effort and move forward.

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The system of yoga, which appears to be a very comprehensive way to live life, is often considered merely, as a list of certain asanaas, and I think that is not correct. Yoga provides, as it is developed by patanjali as a system of thought, a philosophical orientation, which provides a theory for cognition and emotion, and which also, provides a way to conduct our life. It tries to address the composite body, mind, consciousness entity. A person's behavior behaves the influence of body and mind in unfolding consciousness. There are various ways and techniques for self realization, which is considered as the goal in life, according to the yogic perspective and other schools of Indian thought. They also lead to changes in one subjective experience. Here, I have just mentioned meditation, as one example. There is a system, which is developed by patanjali. There is a Buddhist system called vipasana, and there are now, many studies on meditation from neuro psychologists, which do indicate, changes at the level of structure and function in human brain. So, there is a possibility that through meditation, one can perform certain functions; one can change life by changing thoughts; by responding to stimuli in an augmented fashion that is coming up from many studies.

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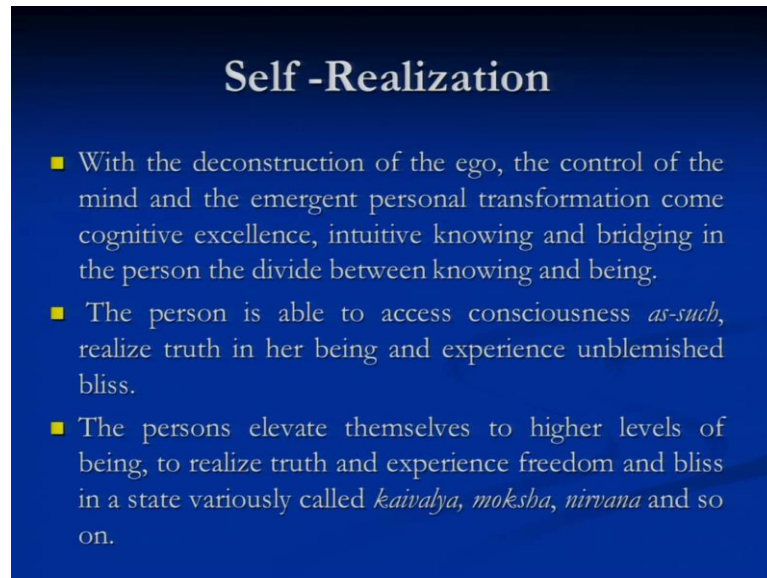


## Types of Yoga

- Work, worship and wisdom are distinct ways of deconstructing the ego, the most important step in achieving objectivity in knowing and self-realization in the person.
- The path of action (*karma marga*) consists in practising the ethic of altruism in action and rendering selfless service for promoting common good.
- The path of worship (*bhakti marga*) is one where the person surrenders herself to a higher power, God or divinity, which again will have the effect of untangling the ego compulsions and the eventual elimination of the ego.
- The path of wisdom (*jnana marga*) assumes that the person, given the right knowledge of the manner in which the ego manifests and controls our conduct, realizes that the true self in .

There is a very significant tradition, which talks of three main ways of yoga or relating to the higher reality, which includes the society, which includes the broader environment in ecology and higher consciousness. Depending on one's choice, one's preparedness, where can follow the path of action, the karma marg practicing the ethic of altruism in action, and rendering selfless service for promoting common good so. The saying that one should think about everybody, servey bhavanthu sukina, that is the goal of a person, who is on the path of action. There is another way to deal with the challenges in life, and that is bhakti marg; the path of worship where, the person surrenders herself to a higher power, God or Divinity, which again, will have the effect of untangling the ego compulsions and eventual elimination of the ego. The path of wisdom or gyan marg is relatively complex and it tries to deconstruct ego, and to realize the true nature of the being.

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## Self -Realization

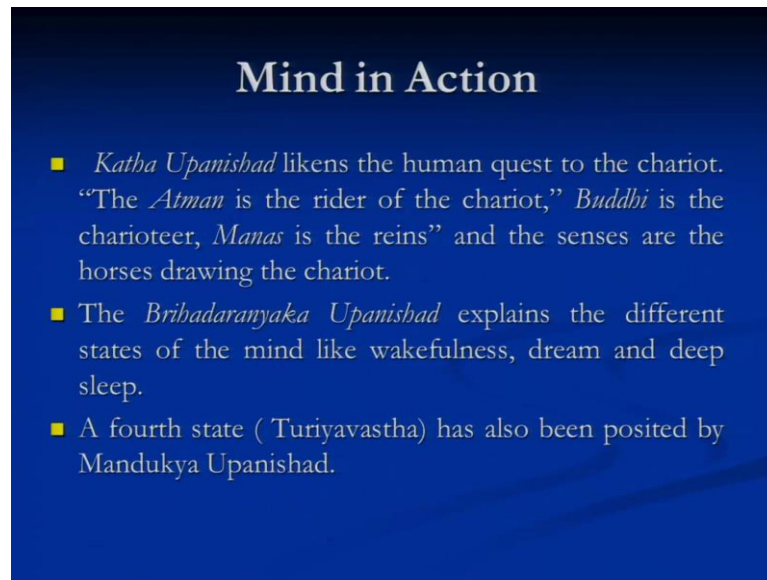
- With the deconstruction of the ego, the control of the mind and the emergent personal transformation come cognitive excellence, intuitive knowing and bridging in the person the divide between knowing and being.
- The person is able to access consciousness *as-such*, realize truth in her being and experience unblemished bliss.
- The persons elevate themselves to higher levels of being, to realize truth and experience freedom and bliss in a state variously called *kaivalya*, *moksha*, *nirvana* and so on.

These ways, these paths of karma or bhakti or gnana; they are primarily directed to deconstruction of the ego, which is considered to be the main challenge in life, and this is done by controlling the functioning of mind. This is done by kind of transformation, which is required in life; following yoga; following the eight fooded way of organizing life, as we called ashtanga yoga, where we talk about the yamas, niyamas, asanas dharana, dhyana, pranayam, pratyahar and samadi. Using these various steps, one can move towards self realization, self transformation and realizing an expanded notion of self vote. The person, if he tries to follow that way of life, that is the yogic way of life, becomes able to access consciousness as such; to realize truth in our being and experience with unblemish bliss. The persons elevate themselves to higher levels of being, to realize truth and experience freedom and bliss in a state, and this state is termed in many ways kaivalya or moksha or nirvan, but it should also be remembered that the yogic system talks about the notion of jeevan muktha, that one can live life where, there is no attachment. One can live life without the burden of attachment, and one can perform the duties, one can perform various actions without any kind of attachment. It is a big challenge. The notion of sthidadi, steady intelligence is elaborated in shreemath bhagavath geetha. It also relates to the notion of nishkaam karma that is performing an action without any anticipation of reward, or any attachment. Now, there are psychological studies are so, which bring home the point that if there is some kind of external control, then intensive motivation is lowered. The person, if he is interested in doing something on his own, and there is provision of reward, then it leads to decrement



in the intensive motivation, and there is interesting work, which talks about the hidden costs of reward. So, I think there is some relevance in the area of motivation, how these ideas can be used to motivate people in work situation, in social context, in familial context and in personal life.

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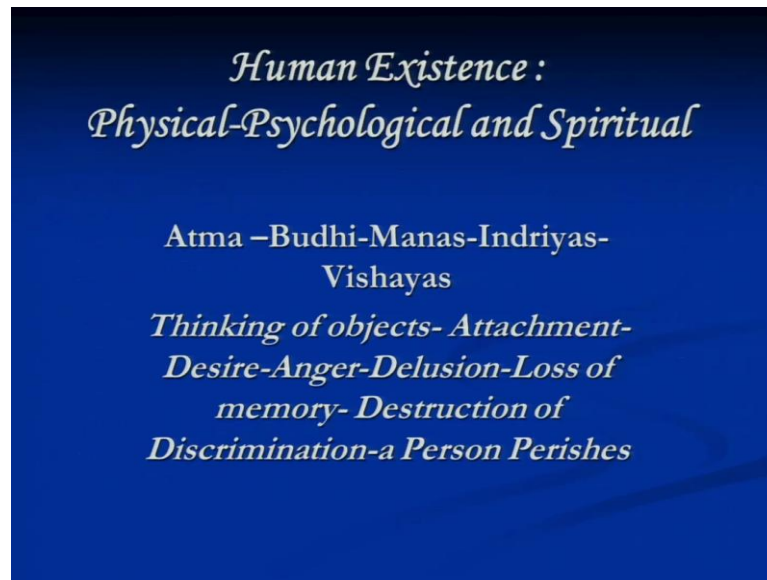
### Mind in Action

- *Katha Upanishad* likens the human quest to the chariot. “The *Atman* is the rider of the chariot,” *Buddhi* is the charioteer, *Manas* is the reins” and the senses are the horses drawing the chariot.
- The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* explains the different states of the mind like wakefulness, dream and deep sleep.
- A fourth state ( *Turiyavastha*) has also been posited by *Mandukya Upanishad*.

Now, there is a kind of metaphor used, which links the different levels of existence and the functioning of individuals activities. I would like to refer to every interesting metaphor, and it is from Katho Upanishad, and it considers that there is a chariot, and the atman is the rider of that chariot. buddhi, intellect is the charioteer and the mind is its race, and the senses are the horses. Now, the various objects in the environment; they are the vishayas, the objects, and the horses are drawn towards them, and if there is no control, and if the horses are not behaving properly, then they will create many problems. They will lead to various places, which are not appropriate. So, the person, the charioteer has the responsibility, and one has to see the connections across them. There is also an interesting analysis of different levels of consciousness. I have mentioned here, the ideas from brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which talks of the states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. There is a fourth state called turiyavastha, which is mentioned in mandukya Upanishad. Why I mentioning this, is the reason is that human consciousness should be looked at in more nuanced manner. Just to illustrate this point, I would like to draw attention to the turiyavastha, which is a very refined, transformed state of consciousness. It is called fourth state. From that state, the word appears to be an illusion. Now, if you

reach to that state, and it is more close to the state of samadhi where, there is lack of difference between the knower and the object to be known. There is an identity between the two. That is a state, which requires a lot of effort on the part of sadak, a person who is pursuing this line of activity and engaging in the yogic practices.

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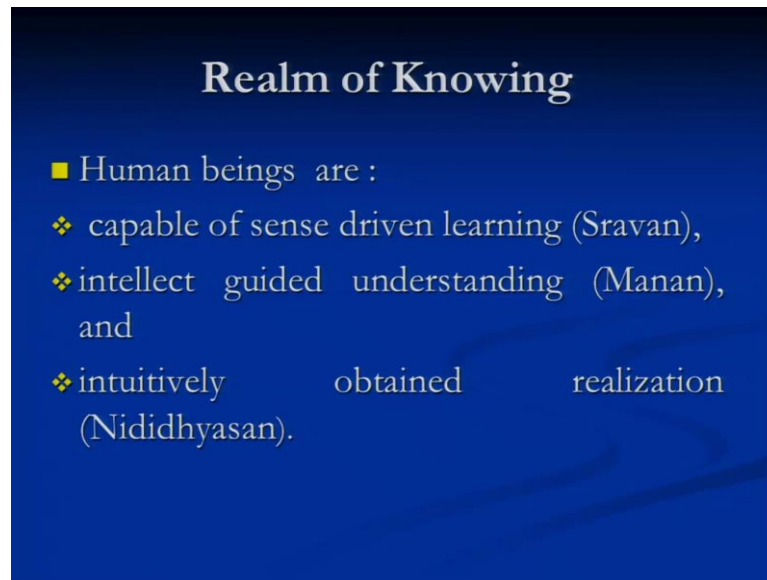


So, the human existence is physical, psychological and spiritual. As we have mentioned earlier, the athma is related to budhi. Budhi is related to mind; manas and that relates to indriyas; the sensory organs, and that is linked with vishayas; the objects in the environment. So, when you think about the objects, that leads to attachment; that leads to desire; that leads to anger; and when you are angry, then it leads to delusion, and that leads to loss of memory, and finally, that leads to destruction of wise discrimination, and the person perishes.

Now, this sequence is from shreemadh bhagavath geetha, and it tries to say, to give this message that there is a need to be detached. If there is detachment, there will be a change in life. Then, you will not be controlled by the desires. You will control the desires and then, you can grow and you can develop. In today's society, we often find the various kinds of problems. We have many cases, recently where, people have gone for all kinds of things, which are related to non humanly activities. For instance, when a son gives money to somebody to kill his father, for getting more money; it is a situation which is happening. A wife who provides money to get her husband murdered. I think it shows

the kind of complexities, which emerge, because of the egoic functioning, the kind of attachment, which is happening and the kind of difficulties, which emerge because of those attachments.

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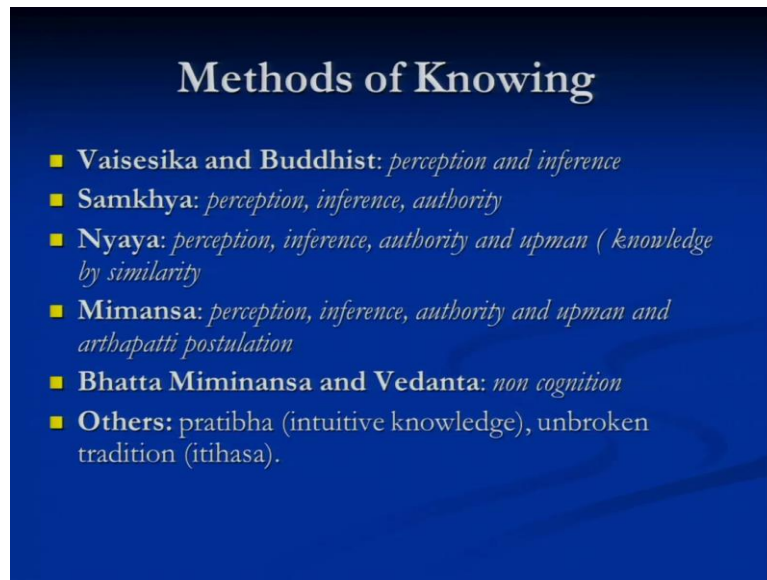


**Realm of Knowing**

- Human beings are :
  - ❖ capable of sense driven learning (Sravan),
  - ❖ intellect guided understanding (Manan), and
  - ❖ intuitively obtained realization (Nididhyasan).

Now, Indian psychology also talks about understanding the reality. So far, we have taught about the kind of challenge, which is viewed according to Indian psychology and how to deal with that challenge the understanding of reality, requires effort on the part of an individual. The vedanta system of thought provides these three methods, which are interrelated. As I have mentioned here, human beings are capable of sense driven learning, that is sravana. You relate to the environment, you acquired information from environment. Then, there is an intellect guided understanding, which is manan and the third is nididhyasan, that is intuitively obtained realization. So, there is transformation of an individual, who relates to the object of knowledge.

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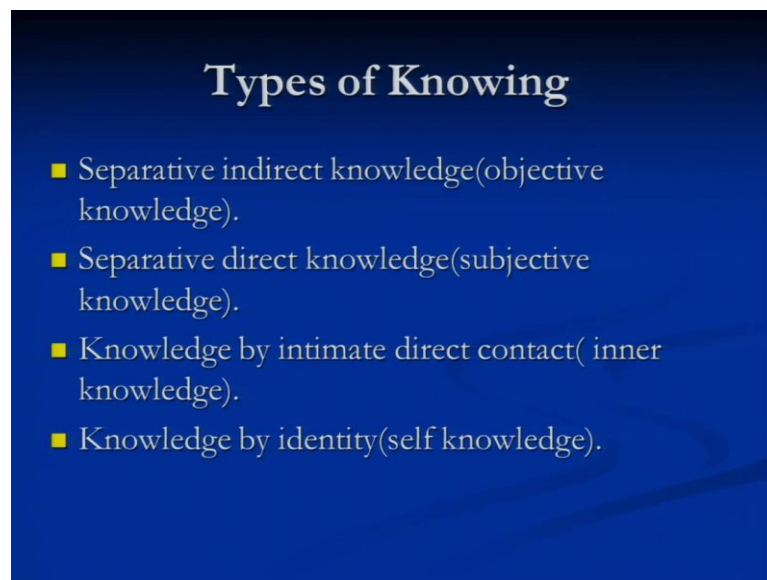


There is also a system, which needs to be recognized, and it is very important that the quest for knowledge has been an important theme in these traditions. They talk about different modes of relating to the objects of knowledge; knowledge, which is in the area of empirical world, and the knowledge in the area of spiritual world. The distinction is made between paravidya and aparavidya and here, I would like to bring home the point, the various systems that are available in the Indian tradition, do attempt to the challenges for the kind of issues, which emerge in understanding problems in everyday life; intellectual challenges in different disciplines. I have briefly summarized in this slide, the different methods. Actually, the Indian taught considers these as evidence, or the word is praman; these are the ways in which, we establish that we are able to understand something.

So, the vaisesik and Buddhist thinkers, they consider perception and inference as two sources of knowledge, or methods of knowing reality. While, shankh considers perception and inference, but it also considers authority as an important source. Those people, who know something; those, who have experienced knowledge and therefore, they provide information; they provide knowledge. So, authority is also considered as an important source. The nyaya system, which is larger related to logic, considers perception, inference, authority and there is one more method; they call it upman; that is knowledge by similarity. The miminansa school of thought goes beyond that, and uses another source, which is called artha pathi, which is postulation. You conceptualize, you

propose and you assume; that is also a source of knowledge. There is another interesting source of knowledge, which is proposed by the vedanta and bhata miminansa, another school of thought, and they consider absence of something; non cognition. Similarly, there is pratibha or intuitive knowledge or there is unbroken tradition; itihas. What I want to mention here, is that the sources of knowledge are quite varied, and perception is the empirical analysis that we do in experimental studies or in observation. The whole range of methods is quite comprehensive, and many of them provide a perspective on reality, in the social world, in the physical world. There is very detailed analysis of these methods of knowing, and its importance has yet, not been realized in many of our studies. I think that it should be a major impetus for our understanding.

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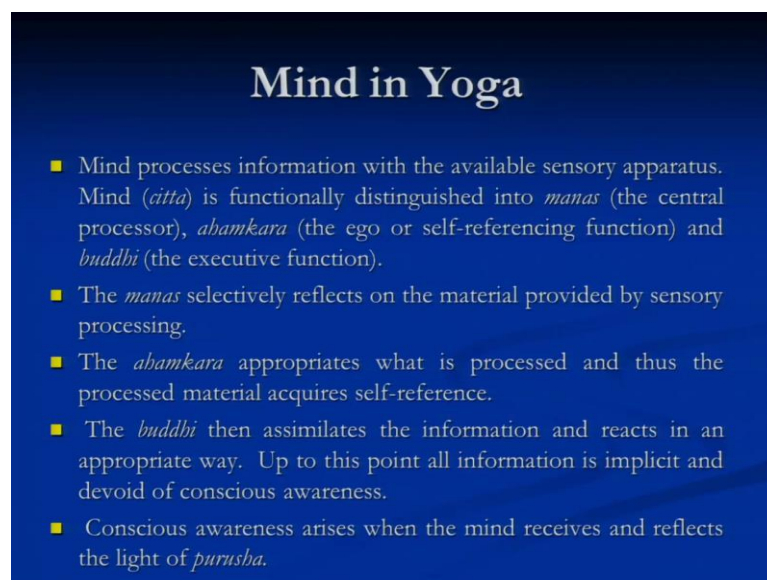


The scheme which is presented here, in terms of types of knowing, is derived from the work of Sri Arvindo, who has tried to use vedic knowledge, and the Indian system of various Indian systems, and it talks about the objective knowledge, subjective knowledge, inner knowledge and self knowledge. One is separative indirect knowledge, the third person knowledge. You have some material before you, and psychologists study behavior and they take it like that. So, this is objective knowledge. There is separative direct knowledge, subjective knowledge where, I am perceiving something. Knowledge, by intimate direct, contact inner knowledge of my own states and then, finally, a deeper knowledge of self understanding; the nature of self. So, knowledge by identity is a state in which, knowing and being become equal.

You are understanding something by living like that. I am reminded by an interesting work, done by an Indian psychologist, Ravi Kapoor, and he has published it in a book; Another Way to Live. He wanted to understand the effect of yogic practices on mental health and well being. He went to a yogic guru. He had a good protocol, a list of questions, and the guru was asked to read that and give feedback, whether it is appropriate or not. The guru said, why a yogi will tell you, what is the effect of yoga on him; why not calm and live, and do yoga and experience, what is the fact of yoga? Ravi Kapoor, a professor from Niyamas, decided to go there.

He lived, he learned, he used those yogas, and it is an interesting study in the sense, that he has reported his own experiences. He asked his wife, professor Malavika Kapoor, to observe his behavior and he also ask the guru, to tell what kind of behavior he is showing; what are his attitudes? So, there was a triangulation, a well known activity in qualitative research, and it is an interesting work. Within certain limitations, it tells what kind of changes take place. So, I think, it is important to take steps like that where, you realize things and experience for yourself. The functioning of mind, in relation to our environment is looked at, in a very interesting manner, and I would like to share some of the interesting parts of that, as developed in the yogic tradition.

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### Mind in Yoga

- Mind processes information with the available sensory apparatus. Mind (*citta*) is functionally distinguished into *manas* (the central processor), *ahamkara* (the ego or self-referencing function) and *buddhi* (the executive function).
- The *manas* selectively reflects on the material provided by sensory processing.
- The *ahamkara* appropriates what is processed and thus the processed material acquires self-reference.
- The *buddhi* then assimilates the information and reacts in an appropriate way. Up to this point all information is implicit and devoid of conscious awareness.
- Conscious awareness arises when the mind receives and reflects the light of *purusha*.

Let us examine this. It is proposed that mind process information with the available sensory operators. So, whatever comes from environment, reaches to mind. The term for

mind is chitta, and this chitta is functionally distinguished into three components; manas, which is like central processor; ahankar, that is ego or self referencing function and then, finally, buddhi or the executive function. So, the chitta includes manas, ahankar and buddhi. So, it is a function, which involves intellect, which involves emotions, motives; which deal with ahankar, and which also talks about rational disease and making, which involves buddhi. Now, manas, the whole, the chitta is actually one, which reflects the material provided by the sensory processing. Now, ahankar appropriates what is processed and ahankar, because of its earlier associations. Actually, we have two terms; one is vasana, and one is samskar. samskar is the one, which is based on earlier experiences, and vasanas are instinctive tendencies. So, ahankar works on the basis of that, and it emphasizes certain things, and it will reject certain things. So, it will bring in selectivity in processing the material or the information, which is coming from the environment. buddhi then, assimilates the information and reacts in an appropriate way. Up to this point, all information is implicit and divides of conscious awareness. Conscious awareness arises, when the mind receives and reflects the light of purush. Now, mind as such, connects with purush or consciousness, and also, connects with the external involvement in which, we are living. So, it is in between the two, and manas is conceptualized in terms of a complex configuration, consisting of three major elements, as you have mentioned; manas, ahankar and buddhi.

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## Mind in Yoga

- Therefore, the knowledge of the world mediated via the sensory channels is at best a credible image and seldom a direct apprehension of reality as such. The images are distorted by the processing mechanisms and biased by *buddhi's* own state, which is influenced by past actions, *karma*, *vasanas* (instinctive tendencies) and *samskaras* (subliminal influences).
- Yoga is a pursuit to transcend the limitations of phenomenal awareness to achieve higher states of awareness. The practice of yoga is to control the *vrittis* (fluctuating forms) of the mind. When transcendence is achieved, awareness is successfully delinked and dissociated from sensory mode in a state of *samadhi*.

It is very clear now, that the knowledge that we get is mediated by the sensory channels, and we do get an image of the environment, but it is not direct appreciation of reality. The image that we get, is often distorted by the processing mechanisms, and biased by buddhi's own state. People have all kinds of states of buddhi, which is influenced by past actions, your karmas, vasanas or samskaras. So, there is a filtering; there is variation; there is selectivity; at the level of manas. Now, yoga is a pursue to transcend the limitations of phenomenal awareness, to achieve higher states of awareness. Now, this practice of yoga would help in removing the distortions, which take place, because of the operation of manas; because manas is a tile to various things. So, the practice of yoga is something, which controls the fluctuations of mind, and these fluctuations are called vrittis.

If you recollect, you will remember that the first aphorism in yoga suthra of pathanjali is yoga citta vritti neroda. So, mental fluctuations have to be reduced; they have to be controlled; they have to be eliminated. Now, when these are eliminated, when these are reduced, then the person perceives through nature. When these distortions are gone, then the person is able to perceive self, in true nature. Yoga talks about two important methods; one, they call abhyas; the practice, and the second, they call vyragy; that is detachment. Unless you do it, you are not able to live in a state, which provides understanding of true nature.

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## An Account of Human Action

- Need for constant engagement and effort.
- Action is necessary( karma is making ).
- Seat of action (Adhithana), agent (Karta), instrument or material (Karana) , separate activities (Chesta), and divine providence (Daiva).
- Responsibility as agents ( Karta) and experiencer (Bhokta).
- Distributed locus of action.
- Mind training and control.



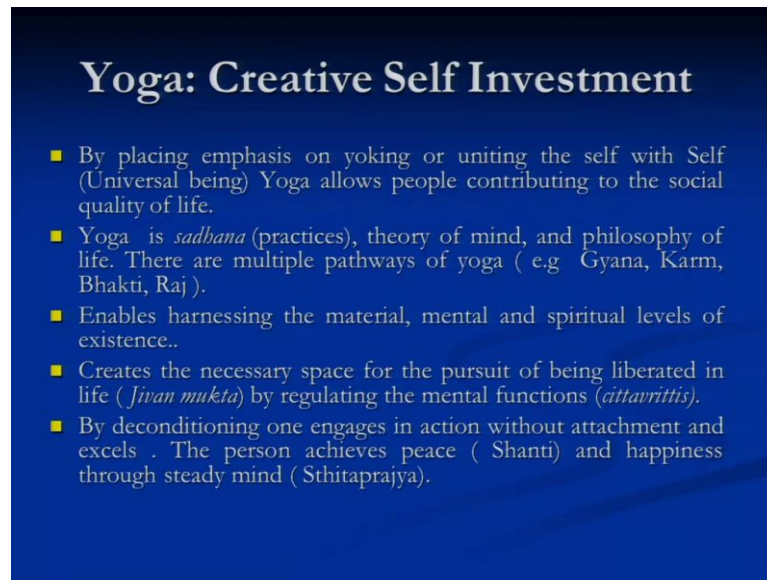
So, if I look at the context of Indian psychology, I find that there is a kind of theory about understanding human action. If we look at that, we find that this account of human action emphasizes on constant engagement and effort. As a matter of fact, in Shreemat Bhagavath Geetha, Lord Krishna says that I cannot live without action. One has to engage in action. Continuous action is important, but action without attachment. The second important feature is that action is necessary. One meaning of action or karma is also something, which relates to making, doing something. So, it is an important part of life. You cannot live without that. There is another important point, which comes to mind that when we talk about the various causes of action, then in Indian thought, there are many causal factors; a set of factors. In contemporary social psychology, we find about causal perception; various ideas from attribution theory. Here, we have a list of causes, which are important, and all of them are important. All of them are critically involved in any kind of outcome. Let us see. These include adhisthan; that is seat of action, the body, you are doing it. Then, the agent; the feeling that I am doing it. The instrument or material, the various instruments, which are contributing to a particular activity karan. Then, separate activities, specific activities that will perform chesta and the divine providence, that is daiva. So, it is not merely, fortune or daiva. It includes action; it includes individual; it includes agency. So, there are multiple causes, and all of them are equally important. It is not that one is more important, and the other is less important.

I also consider that in this analysis, the agent, the karta is involved in a responsible action, relating to others. The consequences are equally important. You are an actor, and you are also, an experiencer. You are a bhokta and you are a karta. So, one needs to recognize this. Then, I have tried to mention here, a perspective on control, because control is something, which is very central to contemporary psychology where, internal control is emphasized; it is emphasized too much. So, you have the notion of internal control, internal locus of control. Everything which is internal is good; everything which is external is bad. That is the way, we find. Here, the locus of action is distributed. It is not located in one particular cause, and it is located in the individual, as well as in the external environment so, distributed locus of action.

There is emphasis on mind training and developing control over mind. It is often mentioned that self is one's friend, and self is one's enemy. If you are able to control yourself by your self, then your self is your greatest friend. If you are not able to control

it, if you are controlled by the attachments, if you are controlled by the objects in the environment, then you are going to suffer. So, the notion of self regulation and controlling mind, through various kinds of exercises, mentor training is an important item on the agenda of an individual's life.

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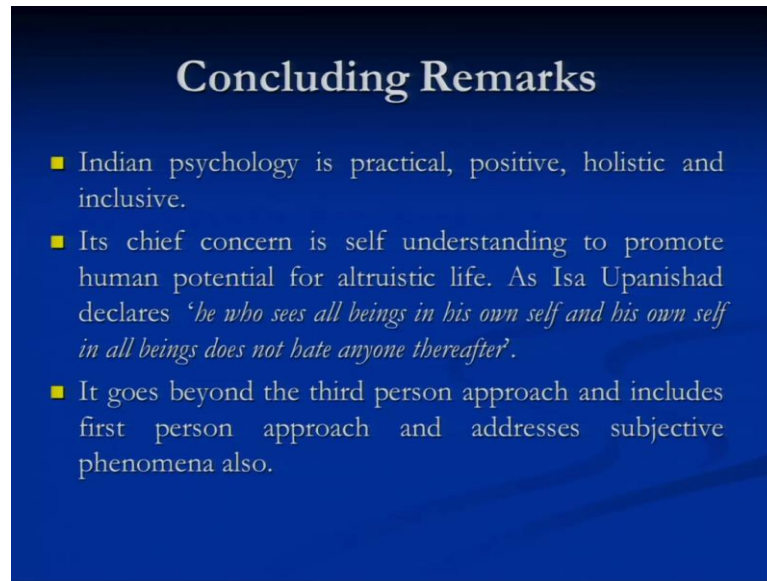


**Yoga: Creative Self Investment**

- By placing emphasis on yoking or uniting the self with Self (Universal being) Yoga allows people contributing to the social quality of life.
- Yoga is *sadhana* (practices), theory of mind, and philosophy of life. There are multiple pathways of yoga ( e.g Gyana, Karm, Bhakti, Raj ).
- Enables harnessing the material, mental and spiritual levels of existence..
- Creates the necessary space for the pursuit of being liberated in life ( *Jivan mukta*) by regulating the mental functions (*cittavrittis*).
- By deconditioning one engages in action without attachment and excels . The person achieves peace ( Shanti) and happiness through steady mind ( Sthitaprajya).

I think that the yoga, which is one of the prominent systems of Indian psychology, emphasizes on going beyond the limited self, and relating to the universal being; the higher self. That higher self is one, which is encompassing. I think it also includes the social life, and one has to contribute to that. The extent to which, one goes beyond the ego, and relates to the wider world; one becomes spiritual, one relates to the higher reality. Mahatma Gandhi has declared that he is a spiritual person, and his spirituality lies in relating to others, and taking care of others, and trying to help the social well being. Yoga is sadhana. It is also a theory of mind, and it is also, philosophy of life. As we have noted earlier, there are multiple ways of doing yoga, including gyana, karma, bhakthi or rajayoga. It also provides a basis for harnessing the material, mental and spiritual levels of existence. It also provides space for the pursuit of being liberated in life or jeevan muktha. By regulating mental functions, the goal is to de condition and become controller of one's own life and activities in life. It is only through that way that a person can achieve peace or shanthi and happiness, that requires a state of steady mind. Only, that can help to live life adequately, to achieve goals in life, and to contribute to social well being.

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### Concluding Remarks

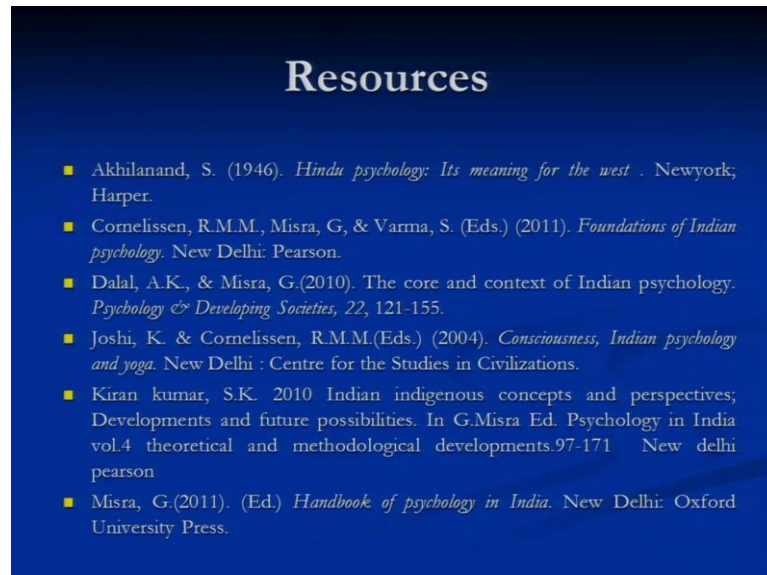
- Indian psychology is practical, positive, holistic and inclusive.
- Its chief concern is self understanding to promote human potential for altruistic life. As Isa Upanishad declares *'he who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings does not hate anyone thereafter'*.
- It goes beyond the third person approach and includes first person approach and addresses subjective phenomena also.

Here, I would like to share three significant realizations. One is that Indian psychology is not other worldly, contrary to that, it is practical; it is positive; it is holistic; and it is inclusive. I also like to submit that the chief concern of Indian psychology is to understand self. Through that self understanding, one contributes to human potential, for altruistic life. As Isa upanishad has mentioned; he who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings, does not hate anyone, thereafter. So, this kind of inter subjectivity where, you are able to communicate with others at equal level, is the invitation by Indian psychology. This approach goes beyond the third person perspective, which has become the core of modern psychology, and includes first person approach and addresses, subjective phenomena, more seriously.

I understand that if we try to give attention to these ideas as sources for hypothesis, as ways to address problems in various kinds of situations where, therapeutic interventions are required. If we use these insights to develop training programs for students, for developing various abilities, they can contribute a lot, and there is a potential in Indian psychology, which has yet not been explored. I think it is high time that we look at these ideas carefully, and we should not avoid them or disregard them, because they appear as non scientific. The term science is again, a term, which has received the same kind of emphasis, as we have given emphasis to religion. I think it is important to realize that science too has its own limitations, and the notion of science is also being criticized, and there are critical perspectives; there are feminist perspectives. There are multiple ways to

look at reality. Today, when we look at multiple reality as a possibility, the perspective, which is being developed, within Indian psychology, deserves our attention.

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Here, I have listed some of the important resources, which are available and one can go through them. I think there is need to use these resources. I have not elaborated these resources, but it is just, a small list of some of the important ideas, which are permanent work in it.